

Chapter 13

Mobilisation and Enactment of Malaysian ESL Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: From Professional Learning to Professional Practice

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is a review of a three-year journey into exploring the development, mobilisation, and enactment of Malaysian ESL teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge through a professional learning community known as 'Going Digital'. The first part of the chapter summarises the investigation on the effectiveness of the TPACK-IDDIRR + PLC as a transformative model of professional development to engender technology integration practices in the classroom. The findings reveal that the model is effective in enhancing technology integration practices of ESL teachers. In the second part, individual experiences of four members of the 'Going Digital' are narratively explored to understand the mobilisation and enactment of TPACK from professional development to practice in the classroom. The affordances and constraints of technology integration is explored in the third part. The chapter concludes with discussions on the interconnectedness of knowledge, context, and identity; and how it has led to the proposition of the model for TPACK mobilisation, appropriation, and enactment.

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INTRODUCTION

Research and scholarship on technology integration in the language classrooms are increasing in number since the last decade (Kessler, 2018; Warschauer, 2000; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Wu, 2014). This is mainly attributable to the prominence and ubiquity of technology in modern daily lives which have stirred the interests among researchers in the field to examine the use and impacts of technology on language education (Chapelle, 2009; Keengwe & Kang, 2011; Kessler, 2018). Despite all the enthusiasms, the levels of penetration and success of technology integration (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) are still shown to be discouraging, as reported by a number of studies on the challenges and barriers faced by teachers in integrating technology at classroom levels (e.g. Christ, Arya, & Liu, 2019; Herro, Quigley, & Cian, 2019; Regan et al., 2019; Vasinda, Ryter, Hathcock, & Wang, 2017). Substantial bodies of research identified teacher knowledge and perception of technology as among the reasons that contribute towards the low level of penetration and success of technology integration in the classrooms (e.g. Aljaloud, Billingsley, & Kwan, 2019; Muhaimin et al., 2019; Regan et al., 2019).

At the same time, researchers in the field of in-service teacher development have consistently worked on exploring approaches and strategies for effective and sustainable teacher professional development, as shown in a number of research and scholarships (Mak & Pun, 2015; Mohammadi & Moradi, 2017; Onguko, 2014; Zhukova, 2018). Literatures in the field of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers have explored and offer comparisons of the various models of CPD for teachers to provide some insights to what an 'ideal' model of CPD, particularly the ones that promote both continuous and sustainable development, should look like. Kennedy (2005) for example identified a number of key models of CPD and classified them in relation to their capacity for supporting professional autonomy and transformative practice. The transmission category refers to models of CPD which are conceived as fulfilling the function of preparing teachers to implement reforms. The transitional category includes models of CPD which can be placed in between the transmission and transformative categories. These CPD models are considered 'transitional' in the sense that they have the capacity to support underlying agendas compatible with either of the other two categories. The transformative category includes models of CPD which are conceived as supporting teachers in contributing to and shaping education policy and practices (Kennedy, 2005, p. 248). Various literatures have established how the needs of 21st century learners' have changed tremendously compared to yesteryears, and how teachers should adapt and tailor their pedagogical approaches to accommodate these needs better (Greenlaw, 2015; Herman, 2012; Maretich, 2017; Prensky, 2009). As the need for transforming methodology and instructions in the classroom is becoming one of the most prominent topic when discussing 21st century education, it can be argued that teacher professional development should also undergo transformation.

In an attempt to answer this call for transformation, this chapter aims to examine the experiences of Malaysian ESL teachers participating in a transformative TPACK-based professional development which adopted the IDDIRR instructional design (Introduce, Demonstrate, Develop, Implement, Reflect, Revise). In the first part of this chapter, the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the professional development model in engendering technology integration practices in their ESL classroom will be analysed. The second part will discuss the teachers' mobilisation and enactment of TPACK from the professional development setting to their professional practice in the classroom. The affordances and constraints of technology integration in the ESL classroom will be explored in the third part.

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