

Public Abstract

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Title:REAL TIME VIDEO MENTORING INVESTIGATING SYNCHRONOUS VIDEO TECHNOLOGY AS A MENTORING TOOL FOR NEW MUSIC TEACHERS IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if computer based real-time video mentoring (RVM) is a possible tool for effective mentoring of music teachers in small or geographically isolated school districts. Each year a number of new teachers leave the classroom. To support new teachers and help them be successful, new teacher mentoring programs have been implemented in many states and school districts. Research has shown that good mentoring programs are effective in reducing new teacher attrition. One characteristic of successful mentoring programs is an appropriate match between a master teacher (mentor) and beginning teacher (mentee). In small or isolated school districts, where there may be only one music teacher, there is no one who shares the unique experiences of the music classroom to serve as the mentor. The growth of Internet accessibility in public schools has broadened the scope of the traditional mentor/mentee model, by permitting mentoring to occur by a teacher with appropriate experiences but in a different physical location.

This case study examined the mentoring exchanges of two mentor/mentee pairs who were remotely located and only communicated through the use of the online and real-time video/audio software program, Skype. Information was collected during the new teachers' first semester of the school year, and comprised individual interviews and video recordings of all online mentoring sessions.

Analysis of the RVM interactions revealed that discussions related to 7 of 12 challenges faced by new teachers, which had been identified in previous research, were present in the conversations of the mentor pairs. The time spent on the specific issues varied between the two cases, but both spent the most time and greatest number of interactions in conversations related to Emotional Support. The participants reacted positively to this type of mentoring example. The findings indicate that RVM can be an effective tool for providing mentoring to new music teachers in small or geographically isolated school districts.