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FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF VIDEO FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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As educators, the challenge to improve and adapt for the benefit of the students we teach is consistently in front of us. Schools implement various forms of professional learning with the aim of improving achievement for their students. The professional learning tool that has had the largest impact on my practice has been the use of videoing. I am not alone. The benefits of using video for analysing and reflecting upon practice have been well established (Sherin, 2000). What can differ, however, is the way in which videoing is introduced and implemented in educational contexts. Based on my own experiences, I am convinced that there are factors that enhance the potential of video as a tool for professional learning. Here, I will outline the implementation considerations I would encourage schools to make, in order to enhance the benefits that video can offer. These considerations include establishing teacher beliefs about the value of using video, the repeated viewing of multiple videos, the developing of reflective conversational skills for peer viewing and finally, investing time in the process.

When the espoused goal for professional learning is the improved achievement of students, it can often be assumed that all teachers will participate with a high degree of enthusiasm. I have been part of an initiative in which teachers videoed their classroom practice and then shared snippets of the video with their team as the basis for reflective conversations. This involved a number of assumptions being made by the leaders of the professional learning initiative. These assumptions were firstly that all staff believed in the benefits of using video; secondly that all teachers felt comfortable sharing their videos with others; and thirdly that all teachers had the skills to engage in reflective conversations. These are assumptions that can undermine rather than promote the role of video in a learning community.

The observation of initial videos should not necessarily have the aim of immediate goal setting and change. Individuals can experience a sense of dissonance as their values and beliefs are either challenged or affirmed by the evidence provided by the videoed material (Youens, Smethem, & Sullivan, 2014). Providing opportunities for teachers to build their curiosity about using video and the possibilities for their practice will promote the chances for positive learning outcomes, for teachers and for students.

One of the suggested advantages of videoing is that it provides the viewer with a sense of intellectual distance from their practice and therefore the opportunity to view their actions in a more detached way (Orland-Barak & Rachamim, 2009). Blomberg, Gamoran Sherin, Renkl, Glogger, and Seidel (2014) describe using video as providing the "luxury of being immersed without having to interact" (p. 445). I found that this sense of distance was achieved only by repeated viewings of multiple videos. Video can give the viewer "a window into their own practice" (Sherin & Linsenmeier, 2011). The view through this window becomes clearer the more that videos are reviewed. Observations over time can become "more focused, specific and interpretative" (Gaudin, Flandin, Ria, & Chaliès, 2014). The viewer can observe voices, body language and interactions and, as such, video provides a more complete data set to reflect on (Koc, Peker, & Osmanoglu, 2009), When there are multiple videos teachers are able to notice patterns in their teaching practice. Analysing teaching behaviours also enables a heightened awareness of the impact of teaching decisions on students and enables a more valid picture of practice to be established. In comparison, videoing on a small number of infrequent occasions can result in the practice video being seen as relatively high stakes. Therefore, once the value of videoing has been established with teachers, the frequency with which videoing will occur needs to be considered.

Research has shown that teachers who have observed videos of their teaching are able to reflect on their observations during future teaching sessions as they replay the video mentally in their mind

(Rhine & Bryant, 2007). Drago-Severson, Blum-DeStefano, and Asghar (2013) write that building internal capacity enables teachers to be better equipped to meet complex challenges. By making connections to previously videoed situations, teachers' self-belief in their decision-making ability can be strengthened.

The use of video can be a vehicle for individuals to investigate and develop their understanding of their own practice. The purpose of videoing in schools, however, is often to provide the material for viewing between colleagues and/ or within teams. Peer viewing is a worthy goal as Harford, MacRuairc and McCartan (2010) propose that it has the potential for transformative understandings to be gained about an individual's practice. Adding discussion and questioning can further enhance the positive impacts of video (Christ, Arya, & Ming Chiu, 2014). Dialogue and community building, through learning conversations for example, are seen as being vital for any change initiatives occurring in schools (Gerard & Teurfs, 1997).

In reality however, there are a myriad of skills and depositions that are necessary in order for adults to participate in successful learning conversations (Dalton, 2016). Conversations that are supported by suspension of judgement, deliberate listening, and respect for divergent views can only add to a teacher's potential to learn and develop (Garmston & Wellman, 2013). When implementing video as a tool for professional learning using peer viewing, schools need to consider the conversational skills that are necessary for this and deliberately build these into the professional learning around videoing. How will collective trust be established and maintained during the establishment of video? Do schools believe that the deliberate building of trust and effective conversation skills will increase the potential that video offers as a tool?

When Cole (2012) questions how well we create the conditions for teachers to learn in deep and systematic ways, I believe this does not refer solely to teachers understanding of their own practice. Building an understanding of the benefits of video and constantly developing the conditions that will support learning conversations is an important and worthwhile investment of time. Developing collaborative critical reflection in conversation provides opportunities for colleagues to develop and deepen their understanding (Charteris & Smardon, 2013). This does not happen without the time and space to explore and practice effective communication skills.

The introduction of video as a tool for professional learning is neither a simple or quick process. It will be through well-considered implementation, that the use of video will have the most positive outcomes for both teachers and students.

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