Chapter 5

Video Analysis as a Reflective Tool:
Providing Pre-Service Teachers a Gradual-Replay Lens on their Developing Practice

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to present and explain the effects of a videotaping assessment instrument designed to help pre-service teachers hone specific aspects of their developing practice. In an educational era marked by emphasis on both quantitative assessment and reflective practice (sometimes considered conflicting targets), this instrument is particularly effective in providing quantitative data while simultaneously evoking gradual and productive self analysis in pre-service teachers. The authors begin with a discussion of the use of videotaping in pre-service teacher education over the years (the benefits and the drawbacks), before proceeding to discuss the merits of this particular assessment instrument as well as their thoughts on future revisions and research.

INTRODUCTION

We live in an era that is both ripe and rife with new technologies. At times, the unending flow of technological innovations and improvements is exciting, but at other times it is overwhelming. For teacher educators, whose primary work is to develop pre-service teachers into the next generation of effective classroom teachers, the draw of new technologies is strong. Certainly, they offer instantaneous communication and a wealth of materials to enhance learning—at all levels. Additionally, today's pre-service teachers are, in most cases, extremely comfortable with these new technologies. Many use video and audio files as part of their daily communication practices—through cell phones and Blackberries, Facebook and MySpace accounts, to name a few.

Today's pre-service teachers are used to technologies that offer fast and easy means of sharing pictures, thoughts and plans. But how does their comfort with technology translate into what they

will be required to know and do in the classroom setting? Most importantly, how will it lead to the deep, reflective practice that is necessary (but oftentimes disregarded) in the fast-paced world that is so familiar to them? This question challenges teacher educators today. It is the question that led us to develop a means for harnessing a useful-but-constantly-evolving technological tool, videotaping, in a way that would also encourage reflective practice amongst our pre-service teachers.

In this chapter, we discuss the steps we went through as we developed the Student Teaching Performance Checklist (STPC), an assessment tool designed to guide pre-service teachers' pedagogical progress while simultaneously triggering self analysis and reflection. To accomplish these tasks, we begin by viewing and discussing videotapes of their classroom practice with them, using the STPC to focus the conversation. Next, we encourage them to revisit the videotapes and the STPC categories on their own and at a pace that is comfortable for them—to, in effect, use a guided, gradual-replay lens on their practice vs. the instant-replay lens that seems endemic to many 21st Century endeavors.

Like many teacher preparation programs, we have used videotapes of our pre-service teachers' work in the past, but we have found that, without the specific assessment guidelines that the STPC provides, we sometimes overlook key aspects of what is essential to becoming an effective classroom teacher. More importantly, prior to using the STPC we did not consistently encourage our students to take a second (or third), deeper look at their own work while keeping the necessary components of good teaching practice in mind—to gradually replay their interactions with students in order to hone their teaching skills.

Our chapter begins with a review of the use of videotaping in teacher education. We share success stories as well as challenges from the field using Bandura's (1977) theories of self-efficacy and various research studies on reflective practice

in teacher education as a foundation. We follow with a brief discussion of the issues, controversies and problems inherent in videotaping pre-service teachers. Next, we offer an in-depth explanation of our experiences in this realm—our solutions and recommendations, including an explanation of the assessment tool we developed to guide our pre-service teachers' practice. We close the chapter with our thoughts on next steps; the research that is still needed in this area based on what we have discovered as we ventured into using an "old" (but constantly evolving) technology in a carefully designed way.

BACKGROUND

Teaching is arguably the most "human" of all professions. As such, it is riddled with the inevitable complexities that underlie human interactions and human growth. Because of this, mentoring and supervision of pre-service teachers has offered an invigorating challenge to teacher educators since public schooling became a governmental requirement in America close to a century ago. Teacher educator considerations include (but are not limited to): 1) the great range of natural abilities within the pre-service teacher ranks; 2) the array of areas and topics that perspective teachers need to know about and be able to teach; 3) the theory-to-practice debate... how much of a theoretical base is necessary and how do we (teacher educators) balance theory and practice? 4) the wide array of student needs that pre-service teachers will be required to accommodate and address. Needless to say, these are only the first round of considerations.

Ultimately teacher educators must find ways, within a relatively short span of time, to help their pre-service teachers become successful classroom professionals. One of the most powerful means of promoting this growth is to *show* future teachers what they look like in the classroom setting, to videotape and discuss their teaching performances

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