



Rethinking the use of video in teacher education: A holistic approach

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ABSTRACT

Video case studies are commonly used in teacher training programmes, usually to develop one specific area of competence. The need for an integrative model that meets diverse learning objectives and competences led to a study on how to effectively use videos to guide student-teachers towards professional development. The analysis of case studies helped develop a four-pronged holistic proposal that places student-teachers in the role of both teacher and learner allowing the co-construction of teaching knowledge and the acquisition of digital competences and media literacy. This article outlines the pedagogical scheme and provides qualified evidence that supports arguments for its basis.

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1. Introduction

The use of video for educational purposes helps bring new and imaginative perspectives to almost any subject matter, as it encompasses the systematic and creative blending of product and idea technologies (Hooper & Rieber, 1995) and engenders teaching and learning processes within and across disciplines (Bednar & Sweeder, 2005; Sweeder & Bednar, 2001; Sweeder, Bednar, & Ryan, 1998). Moreover, it is increasingly common to find that, in educational domains, questions emerge concerning the purpose and the adequate approach to language and literacy education in a world dominated by technological advances. In a shift from books to screens, the use of image has gained ground and has contributed to society moving "from print to post-print text cultures" (Lankshear, 1997:1). Kress (2003:1) talks about a "revolution in the uses and effects of literacy and of associated means for representing and communicating at every level and in every domain." The New Literacy Studies movement¹ is also responsible for a significant impetus to the study of multimodality in literacy and language learning. Thorne, Black, and Sykes (2009) underscore the influence the New London Group has had on research perspectives in language education and media literacy:

Over a decade ago, the New London Group (1996) put forth a manifesto that called for a broadening of traditional language-based approaches to literacy teaching and learning to acknowledge and accommodate emergent literacy practices catalyzed by "the multiplicity of communications channels" (...). (Thorne et al., 2009: 804)

Increasingly, researchers underline the mediating role of teacher, peers, setting, language, and technology (Lantolf, 2000) and in particular have begun to focus on communicative practices that are based on technological mediation (García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero, & Watts, 2001; Kendon, 2004; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008; Zheng, Young, & Wagner, 2009). While much of the focus has been on the introduction of Internet into teaching and learning environments, the role of videos should not be overlooked. Given both the relevance that videos can have for knowledge construction and the challenges their use in the classroom can bring, it is reasonable that teacher training programmes include contextualised video proposals integrated into their curricula.

Research shows that videos can provide significant input to the overall development of future teachers (Cullen, 1991), moreover, studies also show that student-teachers who learn to use technology during their pre-service studies are far more likely to incorporate technology in their future classes than those who have not had hands-on experience with its use (McKinney, 1998; Goldsby & Fazal, 2000). This implies that teacher educators can cover both theory and practice by using videos to serve a double-folded objective: as a means for constructing knowledge and developing reflective skills; and as a tool for forming critical video consumers and producers.

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¹ This is a group of independent but linked researchers, in a large part coming out of work by Gee, Street, Heath, Barton and Hamilton who specifically looked at literacy as a social practice.

The use of video cases in teacher education is quite common (Özkan, 2002; Masats, Sormunen, Hacklin & Ducos, 2007). Traditionally, such experiences could be grouped into three categories according to the way in which videos were used: video-viewing, video-modelling and video-coaching. *Video-viewing* is often used as a method to focus student-teachers' attention on certain topics and to set up a base for class discussion and assignments. *Video-modelling* is a means of getting student-teachers' to focus their attention on target skills or behaviour. *Video-coaching* has been used to refer to the use of taped activities of the student-teachers' themselves which then leads into group discussion.

The expansion of digital technology affords possibilities that go beyond the aforementioned categories. Because technology has become more accessible, cheaper and user-friendly, in-class *video-making* is gaining popularity in teacher education.

This article focuses on the how these four alternatives can be integrated into a sole socio-constructivist teaching approach. The authors will first discuss the current situation of video-use in teacher education, followed by an outline of a holistic proposal that integrates the four above-mentioned uses of videos into the teacher education programme. The proposal is then exemplified through four different cases, each one specifically highlighting one means of using video with teachers and student-teachers. An overview of data from the cases is given. Each case has been dubbed with a nickname associated with using videos.

2. Effective video use in the classroom: the role of teacher training

It is a common feeling today that the 'technological revolution' has left primary and secondary teachers breathlessly running to try to catch up and stay abreast of constantly evolving technological advances. More than a decade ago, O'Sullivan, Dutton, and Rayner (1998) talked of a 'media saturated world'. Several years along, technology has become even more mainstream and it is now commonplace to hear educators talk of 'new literacies' (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Hagood, Stevens, & Reinking, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) and 'media literacy' (see Goodman, 2003; Kist, 2005; Thoman & Jolls, 2005; Hobbs, 2007).

Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms -from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. (Thoman & Jolls, 2005: 190)

This implies that teachers must help their students move beyond simply 'viewing' the multi-modal texts they will be encountering daily. Students must be encouraged to use reflective thinking and critical evaluation of what they are seeing and hearing. The use of videos – in whichever way it is implemented – can help promote a student-centred environment where the pupils are learning by doing; as well as promoting a more critical awareness of their consumption of media products.

Casting an eye to teacher training, it can be argued that there is the added responsibility of going beyond demonstrating 'teaching strategies'; teacher training should encourage pre-service and in-service teachers *to learn to observe, reflect and think critically on their own teaching strategies*. In this sense, video-modelling and video-coaching in teacher training can play an important role. Student-teachers must learn to notice their own students' 'way of being' and develop practices that help them have insight into student thinking so that they are better able to adapt to their students' needs and the context in which they are teaching. Research shows that, to a large degree, student-teachers' previously held knowledge and assumptions about

teaching are based on their own learning experiences (Pajares, 1992). So teacher trainers are met with the challenge of ensuring that the future teachers in their classrooms are not only able to stay abreast of technological changes and be literate in multiple modalities, they must also subtly nudge them to adopt teaching approaches that they themselves have not necessarily experienced as learners.

The benefits (and challenges) of video-modelling and video-coaching in teacher training have been well-documented as it is evidenced by the wide body of literature on both topics (for video-modelling see, among others, Abell, 2004; Beck, King, & Marshall, 2002; Bliss & Reynolds, 2004; Campbell, 2004; Copeland & Decker, 1996; Dexter, Anderson, & Becker, 1999; Friel & Carboni, 2000; Kellogg & Kersaint, 2004; Nemirovsky & Galvis, 2004; Masingila & Doerr, 2002; Perry & Talley, 2001; Wong, Yung, Cheng, Leung Lam, & Hodson, 2006; and for video-coaching, see Atjonen, 1998; Gamoran Sherin & van Es, 2002; Kpanja, 2001; Nilssen, Gudmundsdottir, & Wangsmocappelen, 1998; Oonk, Goffree, & Verloop, 2004; Sharpe et al, 2003; Spurgeon & Bowen, 2002). Yet, video-viewing and video-making tend to play a minor role in teacher education and, as Gamoran Sherin & van Es indicate (2002:2535), "more research is needed to understand the affordances of video for teacher education and those aspects of teacher cognition that are influenced by the viewing [and making] of video".

We suggest that the aforementioned activities (video-modelling; video-coaching, video-viewing and video-making) can play an integrative part in a holistic teacher education proposal. Furthermore, while the content of videos used in teacher education is important, the way they are actually used may be even more so. Thus, our proposal aims to provide a series of coherently integrated video activities that guide future teachers through the co-construction of knowledge. In order to do so, we have devised a four-pronged integrated scheme that can be carried out to help ensure quality teacher education.

3. Analytical approach

Several video case studies were carried out over the course of a three year period in initial teacher training programmes for primary and secondary education in order to determine whether an integrative approach to video use in teacher education was effective. Longitudinal collection of case studies and students' reflections on the work done allowed the authors to draw hypotheses concerning how to design a holistic scheme of different video activities. These hypotheses were then highlighted and tested for validity through end-of-term surveys and focus group discussions of participants from each case. However, longitudinal data collection was not specific to individual teacher-students (data pertain to groups) and are therefore presented here as cross-sectional for each case.

To maintain coherency throughout the study, the surveys followed similar formats for all the groups. The survey was intentionally short and required minimal time and effort to complete to ensure that a maximum number of participants would fill them in (all of the questions are included in Annex 1). The participants used their university ID numbers for the coding. The answers were collated on a 6 point Likert scale with the following values:

- 0 = Not at all
- 1 = Minimally
- 2 = Somewhat
- 3 = Average
- 4 = Much
- 5 = Very much

Once the results from the surveys had been compiled, focus group members (four) from each group were invited to take part in

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