

# Reflective video

## 3: Self-reflection

Kat Robb explains that her students aren't the only ones to benefit from this technique.

Taking the decision to use my students' personal mobile devices to encourage them to become reflective practitioners was a potential risk from a pedagogical point of view. I knew the learning goals I hoped to achieve, but the learning outcomes depended largely on the students themselves and their receptiveness to the idea of using their smartphones as learning tools. My rationale was that, as well as scaffolding reflective practice, I would be demonstrating a way of using their devices for autonomous learning.

### Learning to reflect

The learning has not been confined to my students. I, too, have learnt a great deal from implementing self-reflection through video. By recording myself giving talks about using video in the classroom at conferences and workshops, I have been able to reflect on my own practice as a presenter and educator and on the way I deliver content in both contexts. It was not until I started to record my students and watch their videos that I realised for myself the significance of becoming a reflective practitioner through viewing *myself* on video. This enabled me to evaluate critically what I do and how I do it, and to engage in deliberate and purposeful thinking about how to implement changes.

### Overcoming anxiety

The notion of recording themselves made many of my students nervous; as a result, they were unable at first to see the value and the potential for confidence-building. In order to make them feel more comfortable with being recorded, I allowed them to record me on my smartphone giving a presentation on a topic they had selected. The recording was played back on the classroom projector for everybody to see. It was an insightful experience because I, too, felt the students would be critically evaluating my performance. I was able, therefore, to gain a true sense of how they might feel before carrying out the activity, and a deeper appreciation of what it really feels like to be on the receiving end of the pedagogical decisions I make. I sometimes wonder if teachers ask too much of their students, particularly when trying and testing new methodologies, activities and technologies – especially if they have not experienced them personally. My experience with self-reflection on my reflective video technique has prompted me to take a different approach to my teaching practice: I now regularly discuss new ideas with colleagues and friends in order to view them from a different angle and consider

any possible hurdles. I find this especially beneficial because I am able to give activities and ideas a test run before taking them into the classroom.

### Reaping the rewards

The activity proved effective because each time the students made a new recording, they felt more comfortable with the concept of being recorded and viewing the content with their peers. I have already seen a noticeable difference in my students' oral skills. Peer correction is now commonplace, and not only do the students feel comfortable about receiving feedback from each other, they are also confident about offering each other constructive criticism.

What were previously segments of monotone spoken discourse have become transformed into chunked discourse, complete with intonation and stress. Slouching over the table with crossed arms, staring at a book or the desk whilst talking, has been replaced with full eye-contact interaction, hand gestures and nodding. Presentations are delivered assertively and with confidence, engaging the audience and maintaining interest with clear signposting and attitudinal intonation.

As a result of regular feedback on their performance, the students have a heightened sense of self-awareness when speaking, and an understanding of the features of connected speech and body language: because they have watched themselves on video, they have discovered exactly what they do when they are speaking and what they look like.



The successful outcome of this activity demonstrates the value of using self-created video for analysis and reflective practice. It provides a valuable learning experience for the students – and for me, too, because I am constantly learning from them. It has also become possible for me to reflect on my own practices, both in the classroom and when I am giving presentations.



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