

Action! Teacher Video: Academic Review

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Academic Review Paper

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1.0 Introduction: Academic Review

- 1.1 In this report we want first to offer some contextualisation of the Action! Teacher Video project within the larger and linked debates presently taking place about learner-centred pedagogies, emerging technologies and CPD. The rationale for so doing is straightforward: to the extent that policy and crucially practice converge around these issues then the challenges faced by Teachers TV, and posed to all those working within the relatively new field of CPD will be changed, possibly very significantly indeed. While we are conscious that the A!TV project is presently very small and we are here debating very large issues, it remains true that this larger context **is** nevertheless the proper backdrop against which we must seek to position and explain the present and future potential positioning of this project.
- 1.2 In what follows we offer:
- a discussion and a limited critique of some of this literature;
 - a discussion of how the programmes made to date measure up against some of the advice and guidance offered within the literature; and
 - finally consider how programmes could be made that with the right intellectual and institutional infrastructure could make really significant contributions to the linked series of policy and professional practice debates that presently are such a feature of the CPD and wider landscapes.
- 1.3 Those readers who are most concerned with how the Action! Teacher Video programmes made to date measure up against the lessons of the literature, are keen to see how the teacher-participants themselves describe the impact of the project (upon them, their schools and wider networks) and are interested in what conclusions we draw for the future of the project, might like to pay special attention to sections 3 and 4 below. Section 2, will we hope, be of interest for those involved in some of the larger debates that are increasingly likely to influence the development of this and other projects in the future.

2.0 The literature

Two key themes

- 2.1 Two key themes run through the literature we reviewed here. First, there is a clear emphasis upon the need for teachers to be better trained to offer more **learner-centred, personalised, experiential education**. We have found for example no sustained arguments in favour of 'traditional', didactic, 'chalk and talk' teaching. Second there is a clear recognition by the writers reviewed here that the introduction of **new and emergent electronic technologies** have the capacity to render schools at one extreme almost unrecognisable from how they look presently. Not all writers are equally sanguine about the prospects of such radical change, but all recognise the potentiality.
- 2.2 We start our discussion with a consideration of a loose group of writers who believe that new digital technologies offer an opportunity to radically restructure educational provision, and that a main benefit of such far reaching technological (and as we shall see other correlate) changes would be to promote better and more personalised services. We shall later on contrast these writers with another larger more amorphous set who appear less fascinated by the possibilities opened up by new technologies and are more concerned with supporting an older tradition of 'learner-centred' experiential education.

Personalisation and New Technologies

- 2.3 The authors of a recent paper entitled "*Personalisation and Digital Technologies*" remark that their interest is not with the use of technology *per se* but with the recognition that:
- without the use of these resources, it is hard to conceive how the systemic change needed to re-shape the education system around the learner can be achieved, and on the other, an awareness that many learners today are **already** creating personalised learning environments for themselves outside school using digital resources" (Green et al n/d, Futurelab; emphasis as in original).
- 2.4 What is needed for the writers associated with Becta and Futurelab is precisely a very radical 'systemic' change in the structure and organisation of formal schooling so as to render the traditional classroom of all of our youths, fundamentally unrecognisable. As Dale et al. (Dale et al. 2004) point out, in some discourses "ICT is perceived as not only qualitatively expanding what it is feasible for education systems to achieve but also of transforming their very

character as systems". Dale et al. cite an OECD report which states:

Beyond what is commonly acknowledged, the increasing emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy and the more open approaches desired in schools – approaches that are strongly supported by ICT – require a radical *systemic* change for delivery in a truly effective way.... The extent of the challenge should not be underestimated (OECD 2001, emphasis as in Dale et al. 2004).

2.5 Indeed something more of the transformations implied can be seen if we look at the arguments put forward by this group of writers.

2.6 The following quotation is drawn from a very recent Becta document and shows, as does the accompanying diagram also reproduced here, something of the potential transformations that may lie ahead if these policies are carried through into practice:

For education and teaching more generally, the implications are manifold and arguably difficult to realise without greater freedom on the level of policy, and a reduction in emphasis upon targets, prescriptive practice, standards and 'content delivery'. But they also pose a challenge to teachers about the way they engage with learners and the role they play in stimulating communities of interest, and in co-creating with them, rather than just importing information (BECTA 2007, p. 17).

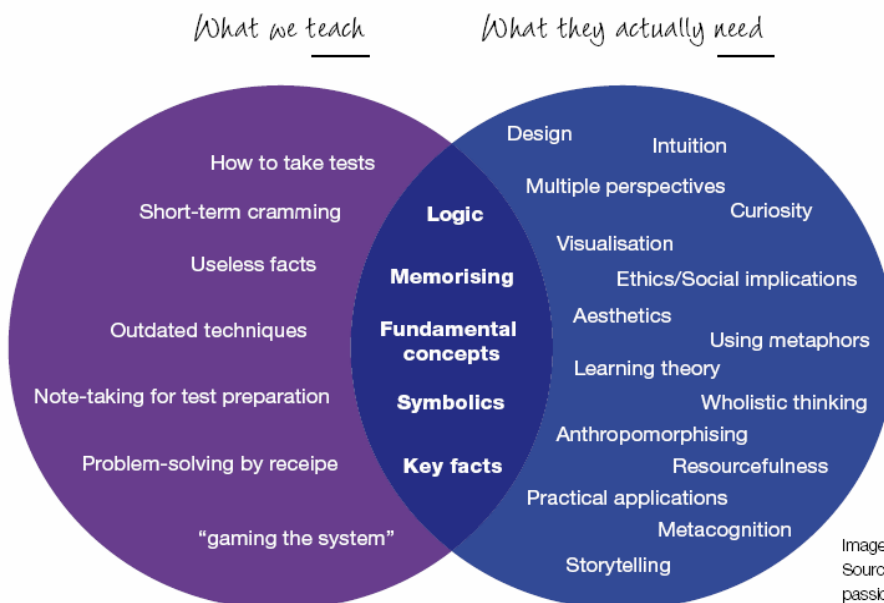


Image by Kathy Sierra.
Source: http://headrush.typepad.com/creating_passionate_users/2006/11/why_does_engine.html

- 2.7 The Futurelab report envisages a world where much of the learning may take place out of school and where teachers are simply one of many resources that could be brought to bear. So for example:

A personalised learning environment is also about each learner having access to people who are relevant to their interests. This sort of specialisation could not and should not be expected to be delivered by a single institution. In fact to rely wholly upon teachers as educators ignores the benefits and resources that individuals in a range of different settings can bring to learning.... If face to face contact is not possible or necessary, digital technologies offer the opportunity for collaboration and teaching at a distance through video-conferencing, e-mail and online communities..... One of the drawbacks of the current education system is that students have to learn in isolation from reality and often in removed and inappropriate environments" (Futurelab, n/d p. 20).

- 2.8 The report envisages a world where much of the learning may take place out of school and where teachers are simply one of many resources that could be brought to bear. So for example:

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- 2.9 It is very plain that the role of teachers would change quite markedly in such a schema. Some inkling of this can be gleaned by recognising that for the most part the paper talks not about pupils and their 'teachers' but about pupils (or 'learners') and their 'advisors'. More:

It is not just about expanding education out to more people by finding new ways to present or distribute information, but is about finding ways to understand the skills, resources and interests of children, parents, and local communities outside the school gate, and including these people as experts and participants in more expansive networks of learning. (ibid)

- 2.10 And again the potential distance from present practice can be gauged by considering what might be involved in "moving towards putting the control over the content, pace, environment and the process of learning in the hands of the learner" (ibid. p. 16). Similarly, the following set of far-reaching proposals culled from this

same report tell us that schools would physically, and in most other ways, look very different from the way they do now:

- learners should be assessed at times appropriate to their own development and in different ways depending upon the activity in question ;
- allocation of resources would need to be agreed between schools and other participating organisations;
- such changes would need to be predicated upon the widespread adoption of digital technologies in the classroom and the home and elsewhere (ibid. various pages).

Technological determinism and deskilling?

2.11 While, some of these writers state that they are not interested in technology *per se* - it does not always look that way. They offer an overly technological determinist vision of the future.

2.12 Indeed for all the talk of new challenges it does look as if the shift involved from the expertise involved in 'teaching' a specialised knowledge base to offering 'advice' on learning strategies and brokering contact with external experts, may in fact be perceived as a *de facto* de-skilling of the profession, and might therefore be strenuously resisted by teachers and their unions. This is a practical concern as well as a theoretical one because this current discussion revolves around a project intended to enhance teacher professional development, teacher autonomy and teacher motivation.

2.13 Robertson and Dale in a forthcoming article suggest that the widespread introduction of ICT in to the classroom:

challenges deeply embedded orthodox assumptions of pedagogy at a level, and in ways, that make it very difficult to rely on those assumptions as a guide to what ICT will mean and how it can best be used by teachers. It cannot easily be incorporated into any of them. Introducing ICT in the classroom is not like introducing a new history curriculum or work package, or even like modifying existing work package, or even like modifying existing work packages to make them more accessible to students from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

2.14 So while the new possibilities open up a radically indeterminate new world where widespread adoption of ICT may potentially "interrupt the existing grammar of schooling transform the organisation, interaction and spatialisation of social relations in the classroom, thus tipping the logic in a new direction", there is also the possibility

that teachers may somehow limit the transformative power of ICT by seeking to use ICT to find “different ways of doing the same thing, rather than doing different things” (Robertson and Dale, forthcoming 2007). Indeed Dale et al. suggest that an earlier wave of ICT investment (represented by the NGfL) enjoyed only uneven success because the initiative failed to offer “specific guidance on the ways that ICT might augment or combine with existing approaches to teaching and learning... and it was relatively silent about how these changes might be different from other curricular and pedagogic changes” (Dale et al. 2004, p.20).

A less technologically-driven vision of the future?

- 2.15 Another loose grouping of writers associated with Demos, have an arguably less technologically-driven vision of the future, certainly one that is more explicitly centred upon the challenges posed to CPD. Here we take the work of Horne (2001) and Horne et al. (2004) and Hargreaves (2003) to be exemplary.
- 2.16 Horne’s pamphlet called *Classroom Assistance* (Horne 2001) although concerned with technological change and with the opportunities presented by the ‘knowledge economy’ and so forth argues that schools need to change to revalorise the role of teachers, and to do so in large part by encouraging a culture of CPD.

In order to meet these challenges, it will need to rely even more heavily on the talent and commitment of teachers and other education professionals. Only with their active support and contribution can the system hope to adapt successfully.

Learning Profession and the Need for CPD

- 2.17 Horne argues that teachers need to exercise more autonomy, to be creative, and above all to acquire the habit of learning systematically. It is now imperative he says, that teachers more than ever, embrace a vision of continuing professional development that aims to help teachers learn continuously throughout their careers. He argues that teaching needs to shift from being a “learned profession” to a “learning profession” and that teachers need to recognise that “expert teaching and expert learning constitute teacher professionalism”. Horne sets out a vision where teachers are likely to be motivated to make time for professional development, and to apply lessons learned to their own practice:

only if they are engaged in the task of re-shaping the context in which they work. In other words there is a virtuous circle to be created, in which the task of transforming schools to meet the challenges of the next two decades can become the spur to boosting the quality and self-motivating elements of teacher professionalism, the consistency of efforts towards continuous improvement in school performance, and the level of esteem and respect with which society regards teachers (Horne 2001/Demos, p. 48).

- 2.18 There is an accompanying critique to the effect that teachers have been to an extent precluded from debates that directly and indirectly impinge upon the future of teaching, and that the weight of government centralised 'top-down' reforms has left teachers hard-pressed, lowered morale, and led to conditions (e.g. "an increasingly centralised, standardised system of training and guidance") not ideally suited to creating a culture where teachers can innovate and continuously learn from their own and others' practices. Horne argues that teachers are generally speaking not at all averse to change and indeed are welcoming "of new strategies that improve the way lessons support pupils' own learning strategies", and indeed are keen to be take advice from and learn from and with, staff at higher education institutions. He advocates a new culture of professional development based upon "transformational leadership" which would allow professional learning to flourish, which would break down barriers between educational research and practice, and allow changes in schools to be "self-sustaining". Indeed he argues that the teacher-pupil relationship could be transformed as teachers become "lead learners engaged in a process of enquiry parallel to that of the students" (Horne, 2001/Demos, p. 24).

The contribution of David Hargreaves

- 2.19 Hargreaves in a series of essays published by Demos foregrounds CPD as the central focus of the work required to transform schools to cope with the challenges posed by the 'knowledge society', stubborn inequalities in educational attainment, and the inevitable limitations of reform handed down by command and control bureaucracies. We can sum his argument in his *Education Epidemic* (Hargreaves (2003/Demos) perhaps over simply, as stating first, that much that is taken to be good, or even best practice in classroom practice, is not well evidenced, and that as a result present and future dissemination strategies are bound to be hobbled unless we address this lack. Second, we need to find ways he says of disseminating good practice through well functioning innovation

networks. Third ICT offers he argues, an under-utilised and under-theorised means of establishing nodal networks (“Innovation networks supported by ICT could turn ... schools into the small world that makes transformation possible”).

- 2.20 Hargreaves argues that knowledge creation through school-based educational research can really helpfully be supported and validated by external researchers from HEIs, and that the most salient and most teacher-friendly research is likely to be teacher-generated *in situ*, i.e. in school-based settings. This is one of the themes of his essay *Creative Professionalism* (Hargreaves 1998/Demos) and is amplified in the later *Education Epidemic*. In this latter work he argues that best practice has to be demonstrated, not just explained, and that teachers will more willingly try out ‘best practice’ when championed by other teachers (rather than by central government or acolyte agencies).

Differences between Futurelab/BECTA and Demos may be matter of degree and emphasis

- 2.21 While we think there is distinction to be made between the work published by Becta/Futurelab and Demos (e.g. with regard to the degree of technological determinism, and the potential for de-skilling, or otherwise doing away with the conventional notion of a ‘teacher’) we recognise first, that there is in personnel terms certainly, a fluidity between the two (so for example the first named author of the Futurelab piece was employed by Demos) and second, that traces of the Futurelab approach can be found for example in some of Hargreaves’ work. The following argument taken from Hargreaves’ /The Mosaic of Learning / (Hargreaves 2004/Demos)/ / undercuts any too sharp a distinction. Hargreaves writes of the considerable as yet unrealised benefits of new technologies, in that they have the potential to:

- motivate young people to learn;
- help teachers spend less time on the communication of information and more on the ‘heart of education’, namely the communication of judgement;
- overcome the geographical limits of the school (students working from home or elsewhere as ‘tele-commuters’);

- make possible new relationships which will undermine teachers' monopoly over teaching;
- make obsolescent the traditional school "still modelled on a curious mix of the factory, the asylum and the prison". *ibid*

2.22 He argues that schools in order to be liberated from present limitations need to open-out the curriculum to include:

- more time for project work and independent study;
- abandoning the conventional timeframe and settings of a school day to allow students to work on integrated real life problems in a variety of non-school settings;
- more time for students and teachers to plan and prepare their learning and teaching strategies.

2.23 The implications for CPD were mapped out by Hargreaves in a very recent presentation to the Teachers TV CPD conference. He set out what he saw as the key differences between 20th and 21st century approaches. We reproduce the mapping¹ since it appears to neatly sum his larger arguments, only briefly touched upon here.

20th century

occasional
 course based extra
 individuals
 documents
 vertical
 expert-to-novice
 lecturers and consultants
 markets and freebies

21th century

pervasive
 mainly school based
 networks and teams
 projects
 lateral
 peer-to-peer
 mentors and coaches
 self-organised

¹ Notes of Hargreaves' presentation have appeared on the web. Since there is consistency of reporting we are assuming that the notes are accurate. We apologise if we have inadvertently misquoted or misrepresented what was said.

Teachers TV : or how television could turn teachers on to learning

- 2.24 This first mention of Teachers TV gives us the opportunity to turn to the paper by Horne et al. *Switched On: How television could turn teachers on to learning* (Horne et al. 2004/Demos). This is an important paper, first because it draws explicitly upon much of the thinking we have rehearsed briefly above, and also allows us to consider the varied ways in which the Action! Teacher Video project has related historically to the underpinning principles of the channel, and could in the future, better relate to the needs of teachers.
- 2.25 Horne et al. argue on the basis of an EPPI study (a systematic review of the evidence of the effectiveness of various forms of CPD) that CPD needs to build on what teachers already know.
- It recommends that teachers need to choose the focus of their own learning so that each individual teacher can find an appropriate focus and level for themselves....Sustained CPD enables teachers to embed practice in their own classroom settings, with opportunities for feedback and for revisiting source material. (ibid. 43).
- 2.26 Horne and colleagues go on to argue, again following a review of the evidence, that the use of external experts who can provide access to the public knowledge base and validate the link to school-based activity through training, mentoring or coaching, is a key ingredient.
- 2.27 It is further argued that the ability to watch videos of one own's lessons, perhaps in conjunction with immediate colleagues and/or mentors/coaches/experts allows an individual teacher or teachers to reflect at leisure and appropriate length on performance and on the learning that arises.
- 2.28 While individual lessons can of course be very interesting to watch, albeit perhaps most interesting to those directly involved, the use of what Horne and colleagues call 'professional development design' allows for the systematic collection of evidence of the impact of teaching practices over time. In other words, if the video is designed to include sampling of embedded teaching practices over time, there is arguably much more chance of building a robust evidence base around the particular issue being researched and likely more to be learned, than if one simply videos an individual lesson however well planned and delivered. In a related point they

- argue that there may be some advantage in following teachers and pupils over time, perhaps over the course of several programmes. Although they do not press the point, it might well be that longer exposure to particular classrooms or embedded contexts allows the viewer to obtain denser richer learning than that ordinarily available from a short exposure to a particular classroom or site.
- 2.29 They argue later that one way of engaging an audience and of holding its interest, in the programme, and by extension the practices of CPD, is to showcase not 'best practice' necessarily but a programme or programmes that showed improvements over time. This they argue would appeal to many, who might benefit from seeing the novice teacher improve rather than the seasoned professional delivering a polished 'perfect' lesson.
- 2.30 They maintain that viewers of Teachers TV must trust the 'meta-data' they are provided with, that is to say the programmes must be purposive. Purposes cannot be ascribed post-production.
- 2.31 Horne et al. also argue that the practice of Teachers TV ought to model the kinds of pedagogy educationalists are seeking to promote in schools. In short, the programmes ought to feature "autonomous learning professionals" increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning.
- 2.32 Before we end our discussion of this paper we wish to briefly discuss one other point which is made almost as an aside but which has some resonance for our later discussion. Horne et al. end this section of their paper by suggesting that to the extent that schools take up the technological opportunities unfolding, the need for Teachers TV as a main conduit of CPD stimulus material, may be superseded. In short if teachers can be persuaded to make their own material, to manufacture their own learning, then they will arguably have less recourse to 'second-hand' material.
- 2.33 We return to this paper and to the series of points we have highlighted shortly since we wish to use the arguments as a scaffold to build our critique of some of the programmes made to date and then to suggest ways in which we believe the project could be strengthened subsequently.

Experiential learning and the power of student- and student-teacher-generated video

2.34 Here we wish to briefly review papers written by two sets of researchers, Hung and colleagues (Hung et al. 2004) and Shuck and Kearney (2004). Both sets of researchers have written multiple papers – we take one representative paper each as our focus here². We take these papers to be representative of a tradition that is mainly concerned with the advantages of ‘experiential’ learning, and have the additional resonance since both sets of researchers write about the use of student or student teacher-generated video (as opposed to the professional production of video by professional film-makers). Hung et al. in the lead up to their account of an off-campus trip by student teachers to make video films, make the interesting point that the:

use of video in ... education has changed to reflect the dominant pedagogy or theoretical framework at the time and will continue to change as different pedagogical perspectives are adopted. What has changed its usage in education ... has been the different theoretical frameworks of behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and social constructivism. In addition *the roles of participants have changed from passive viewers of the video medium to active involvement by the users in the creation of their own video* (our emphasis).

2.35 While these writers do not downplay the advantages of watching oneself or other teachers teach, they are most interested in the benefits of active involvement in the production of school-based videos. Both Hung et al and Shuck and Kearney in their respective work claim variously that student-generated (or authored) videos are meaningful and valuable because they are often successfully predicated on important learning principles.

2.36 These are cited by Hung et al as:

Meaningful learning is *active*;
Meaningful learning is *constructive* (i.e. learners begin to construct their own models of the world as they reflect upon their engagement with ‘real world’ environments);
Meaningful learning is *intentional* (“when learners have clear goals to achieve they are acting in a goal-directed manner”);
Meaningful learning is *authentic*;
Meaningful learning is *cooperative*. (i.e. learners work well to socially negotiate a group project).

² *Learners as producers: using project based learning to enhance meaningful learning through digital video production* (Hung et al. 2004); *Students in the Director’s Seat: Teaching and Learning across the School Curriculum with Student-generated video* (Shuck and Kearney (2004)

- 2.37 According to Hung et al. these theoretical advantages, which have been articulated by a great many writers over the last thirty to forty years, were all borne out in their small scale research project.
- 2.38 Shuck and Kearney preface their account of work within Australian schools by suggesting that although many, many articles have been written about the value of new technologies for best practice “very little evidence has emerged from these studies” and that to date what evidence there is tends toward the anecdotal. They then claim that in their own small scale study there is good evidence that the opportunity for students to create their own videos led to the development of more autonomous independent behaviour and the fostering of student initiative. Further they maintain that students were demonstrably on-task and well-motivated during the time involved in the process, and that this benefit was equally true of those young people, who might in other circumstances, be defined as ‘reluctant learners’. Students they say, demonstrated a marked degree of ownership of their work and appeared to enjoy the experience of exercising more control over the ways they approached their task. Shuck and Kearney suggest that there is evidence that the benefits extended beyond students having initially novel experiences – and that while there was excitement about using digital video cameras, this enthusiasm and excitement did not wane and was carried over into a consideration of the substantive content-base of the various video productions. They also make some limited claims that not only were students developing as autonomous learners, and becoming video-literate, but they were also improving, in some cases, their meta-cognitive skills. Shuck and Kearney describe teachers as taking more of an ‘instructor’ or ‘facilitator’ role and to having less of a role in either ‘transmitting’ or otherwise strongly guiding ‘content’ (the corollary of students taking more autonomous roles), and essentially concur with the benefits articulated by Hung et al.
- 2.39 Again, although we have sought to highlight the different rhetorics involved between our ‘technological determinists’, the Demos writers, and those who write in a more low key and more narrowly focused manner about experiential learning, there are it must be admitted common traces. So for example Leadbetter whose work in this field at least might be positioned somewhere between Demos and Futurelab/BECTA offers a strong definition of ‘personalisation’ as consisting of a process whereby “users are not just consumers but co-designers and co-producers of a service: they actively participate in its design and provision (Leadbetter

2004/Demos p. 24); and as we have just seen Shuck and Kearney echo those technological determinists who talk of 'advisers' not teachers, and who privilege the teaching of skills over the transmission of content-knowledge.

- 2.40 We return briefly to Hung et al and Shuck and Kearney; while both sets of researchers clearly believe that this is a field requiring further exploratory research, both conclude by recommending that teacher CPD needs to explore ways of preparing teachers to help their pupils use digital video.

Experiential learning and teacher-generated video

- 2.41 While we recognise that these videos were student-generated (and not teacher-generated as the Action! Teacher Videos have been to date), we would want to argue that many of the learning principles and benefits can fairly be read across as relating to benefits likely to be realised in the process of making teacher-generated videos. Indeed in the next section we will look at some limited evidence drawn from responses to questionnaire sent out to teacher-producers that bear directly and supportively on this issue.

3.0 The literature and reflections on programmes we have made to date (including analysis of questionnaire responses from teacher-producers)

- 3.1 We start this section as signalled above with a consideration of some of the points made by Horne et al in *Switched On* (Horne et al. 2004/Demos) as they relate to the work of the Action! Teacher Video Project. We also draw on an earlier explicit critique of the programmes undertaken by Coles and Hatcher (Coles and Hatcher 2006).

The consequences of too much autonomy in choice of 'learning'

- 3.2 Action! Teacher Video has been predicated to date on teachers choosing the focus of their own learning. What has been lacking to date is the timely use of external experts who can provide access to validated knowledge and can offer support to the project. Arguably teachers have been given too much autonomy and have not always rooted their inquiries within a well defined problematic or necessarily within a context likely to be of significant interest to

many teachers. The result might be that some of the programmes are “able to describe new interventions and strategies and pupils’ responses [but be] weak on explanation” (Coles and Hatcher 2006, p. 7). For Coles and Hatcher a consequence of this loss of what they term the ‘conceptual dimension’ following the work of Robertson and Murrphy is knowledge that is more readily transferable between situations and contexts. In short the programmes might be thought to have produced “situation-specific empirical knowledge” and not “abstract conceptualised and theorised knowledge”. Although abstract knowledge sounds like it might have a pejorative connotation, Coles and Hatcher are here meaning that possession and understanding of abstract knowledge would allow other teachers to adapt and generate new practice in their own situations, rather than seek to replicate lessons in similar environments.

3.3 Coles and Hatcher express this critique perhaps more plainly, in stating that support needs to be available

- to help teachers design their teaching strategy;
- to be clear about the issue they or problem they are addressing;
- to be aware of the relevant literature;
- to critically evaluate external ideas, theories, approaches and materials which they may make use of;
- to help teachers devise research aims and to decide what methods of data collection will be best suited;
- to choose samples;
- to address ethical issues in the design and conduct of research;
- and to be clear about the appropriate roles to be taken by the researcher;
- to help teachers make sense of their data and ensure their conclusions are properly grounded and then located within the body of existing research findings to draw out their significance;
- to help teachers conceptualise learning.

(see Coles and Hatcher 2006, pp.11-12).

3.4 Of course this near complete handing-over of authorial control was always likely to occur in the early phases of this project, where there was an interest in seeing what kinds of programmes teachers might generate, if given a relatively free hand.

Teacher reflection

- 3.5 Certainly teachers have been able to reflect at length on their own performance and have had ample opportunity to discuss their practice with colleagues from within and without their own school. As we shall see shortly a number of teacher-producers have had significant opportunities to disseminate their learning within their locale. Indeed even within the short time frame in which the films were being made teachers were able to look at uncut film of their practice and make note of ways that practice could be improved in the future. This of course is an obvious advantage of digital video technology – many teacher training institutions now routinely film classroom practice so as to allow mentors, coaches and academics etc. to offer feedback to help individual teachers to improve practice, or even simply to allow those being filmed the chance to reflect upon their performance away from the hurly burly of the classroom (see for example Fletcher 2002; Cunningham and Benedetto 2002; Powell 2004).

Longitudinal data collection and the need for 'professional development design'

- 3.6 While some of the programmes we have made have allowed for the collection of evidence over time of the impact of teaching practice (most notably in the Body Image film) on the whole most programmes have not featured longitudinal change, nor been of sufficient duration (in real time and in programme time arguably) to really flesh out and advance a nuanced argument. Again, there are good reasons why this has been so which we need not rehearse here. But what we do think has been lacking has been an element of professional development design – by this we do not mean professional production values – but a robust definition of the issue an individual film was seeking to address, some perhaps limited attempt to measure impact, and a robust analysis of why this issue was likely to have wide salience. To take another of the linked points made by Horne et al. many of the films may have been insufficiently purposive. Indeed in our opinion, some of the studio discussions did have the appearance of meaning being worked up post-hoc (see para. 2.30)

Engagement with the emergent dominant pedagogic practice – albeit on 'surface' level

- 3.7 That said, many have engaged with some of the key ideas of the moment – fostering independence, personalisation and the setting of individual targets, attempts to experiment with different out of

school learning environments and attempts to replicate successful learning environments in the conventional setting of the classroom, collaborative learning, pupil voice, refashioning of school day, and so on. Certainly the elements of meaningful learning set out by Hung et al. appear to have been realised at least in part in most of the participating schools. And there is anecdotal evidence at least to demonstrate that teachers and children (including less able pupils), have been galvanised and enthused by participation in the range of projects undertaken to date.

Results of questionnaire sent to participating teachers

- 3.8 We recently wrote to some of the participating teachers to ask some further questions about their involvement, particularly as regards their mature reflections on the experience and any longer term impact participation may have had on them as teachers, their pupils or their schools. The questionnaire is appended as Appendix 1.
- 3.9 Our expectation in framing the questions was that most teachers would feel that the experience was too short-lived and on too small a scale to make much of a lasting impact upon them, their pupils or the school.

Confounding and exceeding expectations

- 3.10 While we should be careful in generalising from a relatively small number of responses received to date (9), teachers have by and large confounded our expectations. The following quotations are drawn directly from the responses received to date. We quote from a number of responses below:

- 3.11 In answer to the questions:

Looking back on your participation in the Action! Teacher Video project would you say that you learned;

Nothing at all/Not very much/A reasonable amount/Quite a lot/A great deal

and

Looking back on your participation in the Action! Teacher Video project would you say that participation has changed the way you teach now

Not at all/Hardly at all/In some ways/Quite a lot/Very significantly

respondents answered as follows:

Looking back on your participation in the Action! Teacher Video project would you say that you learned;

Nothing at all / Not very much / A reasonable amount / Quite a lot / A great deal

0 0 1 2 6

Looking back on your participation in the Action! Teacher Video project would you say that participation has changed the way you teach now

Not at all / Hardly at all / In some ways / Quite a lot / Very significantly

0 0 3 4 2

3.12 We asked respondents to amplify their responses. While some “quite a lot” and “a great deal” responses were concerned with the technicalities of making a short film, others were more far-reaching:

About research and how to set up a project and measure the success of any work. I have learned a great deal about personalisation (the issue I covered) and continue to be interested in this area.

That pupils learn more if they do the work

Developed reflective practice with regard to teaching and learning. Directed focus upon specific objectives and how I work towards them. Focused evaluation of outdoor learning against classroom practice. Critical analysis of impact upon learning with SEN children

The value of using video – the project allowed myself and my colleagues to use the project for moderation – of consistent approaches/teaching strategies and evaluation of learning that had taken place.

The children really enjoyed participating and enjoyed being part of the project. The project gave my subject a very high profile in the school.

3.13 Even the one teacher who claimed to learn only “a reasonable amount” had this to say:

The whole project presented opportunities for my pupils to scrutinise their own work and make appropriate changes and this is something that I think could be developed in future similar initiatives. I discovered that those involved took absolute ownership of the project and were very proud and protective of it

3.14 As to the ways teachers taught now some months on and benefits to pupils:

I now think about the learning of the students rather than about producing a model lesson. Students are more able to see where they are and where they are going.

I use the children’s thoughts about the ways that they learn best as a kind of filter when I’m planning.

More assessment and feedback led.

I have become more aware of the importance of pupil-self and peer evaluation and the necessity for allowing children time to discuss questions and problems. For our team – the importance of sharing lesson evaluations and observations.

Using video is such a part of my practice with children now that I would be lost without it. It is strange to be in a new school [respondent has moved school since taking part in project] where they don’t use video to reflect on practice and collect evidence – though they are keen to start.

Not so much in the way I teach but more in the way I develop and assess projects such as this. I use peer assessment more rigorously than previously.

3.15 We asked how the video had been used within the school and within any network of schools. Here again we were surprised by the seeming reach of these short programmes.

Training other teachers in delivery. Has impacted upon development of personalised learning in other secondary schools in county.

Teacher viewing. PSHE consultant pleased by programme and ideas offered. Student viewing – encouraging active citizenship.

We’ve used it as a reference point in School Council and staff INSET discussions. Last week took it an LA presentation to heads and chairs of governors.

Great interest has led to INSET on use of voting systems in school and at county level.

I am in process of sending copies out to schools in the borough.

Initially to share practice with parents/community and staff. Also at a meeting with the LA with NQT.

Returning to the present and short-to medium-term future, we have no way of reliably forecasting the pace and direction of change, but can be confident that the challenges posed will need to be met at least in part by analogous changes in the ways teachers' CPD is conceptualised, organised and delivered.

- 3.16 Finally we asked whether any benefits had accrued to the school or schools as a result of dissemination. Here answers were more mixed. Of the 8 respondents who answered this question 4 answered 'yes' and 4 'no'. Even then the 'noes' were equivocal in some cases "Watch this space" or "Not yet! Still in process of fitting it into the timetable for teaching and learning evenings (New Head impressed)". Positive responses included a terse reference to "improved exam performance" while another mentioned a visit by the L.A Chief Inspector – "now we have been chosen as an innovation school within the Authority. It has been a truly wonderful way of celebrating and sharing what we do with other learners".
- 3.17 We should sound a note of caution here and raise three caveats. First as already admitted these very positive responses come from only 9 respondents. Second, some of the successes claimed, may well not withstand robust scrutiny. We do not know for example how the programme in one school purportedly led to enhanced exam results for example. Third the success of programmes like this could quite properly be judged not against what participants thought about the experience but to the extent that programmes like these are widely accessed and genuinely helpful as part of a wider CPD strategy. We do not have data that tells us about the cumulative TV/web-based audience for this programme, let alone any data about the impact such viewing might or might not have had.

Teacher-generated video and the power of outreach

- 3.18 However in relation this third point there is an alternative way of viewing the success of these programmes distinct from an understanding of the impact they might have viewed as programmes viewed on the TV or by web-streaming. This is simply to recognise, that these programmes have a life and a value outside the TV and web environments. The programmes have been widely viewed very widely within the originating school settings but have also been shown and viewed in many settings outside the schools (and viewed by a variety of audiences – teachers, advisers,

inspectors, governors, parents etc). There is in short a process of viral marketing taking place which may be very important. Certainly a number of those who have made films thus far are keen to make them again. If their enthusiasm generates not only a wider audience for these programmes, and perhaps even more importantly a community of teachers who might be interested in getting involved with the project themselves, then one could see that this kind of 'outreach' might be able to rival or even surpass the importance of engaging a wider television/web audience. This is the echo of the argument of Horne et al. alluded to earlier in para. 2.32.

- 3.19 While it is usual and quite proper to talk about television's and the web's power to allow communications between one and the many, it is probably also true as Horne et al. state that teachers "learn best from those whose practice is closest to their own, and in particular from colleagues with whom they work". While as we have seen and argued following Coles and Hatcher there is the potential if the product is right to allow large scale transfer of learning, there is also the argument which says that while fewer people might access programmes via outreach at local events, the quality of interaction and relationship might be such that there exists the strong possibility of wide local diffusion. We simply do not have the evidence to adjudicate between these two claims – and in any event it is difficult to see how there could be some iron law that says in all cases that one approach would be 'better' than another. We need many more reception and impact studies to guide us here.
- 3.20 While it may be unusual to suggest to a TV channel that presumably lives or dies by its ratings and by its viewers' feedback, it is probably worth reminding ourselves that there exist positive externalities and benefits, distinct from such concerns understandable as they may be.
- 3.21 To conclude this section, we can say that while we have read a great many accounts (not all by some stretch cited here) describing the potentialities of new technologies for education, and implicitly or more explicitly for the design and the delivery of CPD, we can agree with Mason that comparatively little hard evidence has emerged from these studies (Mason 2002). That said, there are nonetheless reasonably good grounds for believing that there exists significant potential (1) to make teacher- produced digital videos which have the capability to achieve high leverage and impact by

reaching teachers through the Teachers' TV channel and the web-site and (2) for growing a network of teachers interested in producing, or at the very least viewing and reflecting on such programmes in more traditional and local settings.

- 3.22 However it is our contention, as already argued above, that if these gains are to be realised, and we are to be more confident than we are presently, about the scale of such benefits, we need a project infrastructure which is at least partly supported by academic research and evaluation.

4.0 Building academic support into the Action! Teacher Video project infrastructure

- 4.1 We appear to have reached an interesting juncture in the Action! Teacher Video Project. There appears to be significant interest in this strain of programmes presumably because the project has (1) made some interesting programmes, (2) is situated within an interlinked series of debates that have potentially very large implications for the future of schooling and by implication CPD, (3) has generated a great deal of teacher enthusiasm, especially amongst direct participants and the relevant wider school communities³ (as for example at Hook), and (4) as a partial consequence has more recently attracted the interest of a burgeoning group of academics drawn from higher education institutions involved in initial teacher training and CPD. Some of these academics have long standing interests in CPD while others are more interested in the potentialities of new technologies and the wider implications for teaching and learning.

Teacher-Producer and Academic Partnerships

- 4.2 What we think is now required is a move away from the loose approach taken to commissioning programmes to date (what we earlier described as a weakness rooted in ceding too much autonomy to teacher-producers) and a stiffening of the intellectual backbone of the project. If there could be a formalisation of the role of key academics within the project the project could move to a new phase where academic support and steer would be more readily available to aspiring film-makers at an early stage and where relevant academics could continue to provide research

³ There is also some admittedly small number of supporting and supportive comments from other teachers in the comment section on the Teachers' TV web-site.

support and mentoring as appropriate through the life of the film project (from helping to frame the research question and situate the teacher-issue within an existing research problematic, to offering advice about action research and action research methodologies, through to framing findings in ways that add cumulatively to the store of knowledge, and building what we earlier termed conceptual or 'deep' learning).

- 4.3 Some of those already in contact with the project believe there could be advantages and efficiencies in making links with existing networks of schools that are presently considering undertaking action research projects⁴. Here some of the academic ground work may already have been undertaken and there may well be good potential for using teacher-generated video as part of this process. We say this because of the correspondence and fit between the ethnographic 'naturalistic' element of teacher-authored videos and the ethnographically-informed reflexive work involved in action research⁵. There has been a suggestion made that academics based in regions could support projects in their regional patch, although naturally there is no great reason given the wider readily accessible technologies why academics from further afield with a special interest or expertise should not be called upon. Indeed teacher-producers could stream rough cuts or 'scenes' to academic mentors for comment and discussion.

Evaluation/Accreditation/Dissemination

- 4.4 To date in this and in the preceding section we have written mainly about the ways in which academics can support the film-making/action research process. There are at least three further roles we have not to date really touched upon. One concerns the need for there to be an evaluation of the finished product. Academics seem well-placed to decide whether the film does offer a real contribution to the store of knowledge, and by offering some validation can thus reassure potential viewers (be they TV audiences or teachers at an INSET day etc.) that the film will likely be of some value to them. Hargreaves in his work already discussed makes great play of the difficulties teachers must face in making

⁴ At a recent meeting we attended it was mentioned that "every teacher in Wales now has to undertake an action research project". We have not had time to follow this up and cite it only to demonstrate that there could be a rich seam to mine here.

⁵ We could spend much time amplifying this point but this will doubtless prove uninteresting and unrewarding for most readers.

sense of the almost bewildering series of programmes, books, events, web sites and other material available to them. Some 'validation' (of a not necessarily formal kind) from ordinarily reliable and well-respected sources would be a good start.

- 4.5 Second and linked to this point academics can offer accreditation to those teacher-producers who might at some point be interested in studying for a formal qualification. Although we should of course be making CPD available to the great majority of teachers who might for all kinds of good reason not want to undertake a formal course with accreditation there will undoubtedly be some teachers who will be motivated to use film as a means towards achieving accreditation and recognition.
- 4.6 Third, academics may be well placed to help publicise and disseminate completed films. Our small group of teacher-producers appear now to be successfully viral-marketing their films. However academics have well-established means of disseminating knowledge and of networking – all of which could be of immense significance to this project.

Academic Responses and the Future

- 4.7 We include responses from two such academic who we met with for the first time recently, as an indication of the potential interest there may be in an expanded project.

This is a very exciting project which provides creative opportunities for teachers to direct and sustain their own learning and development in the context of personal and institutional needs. The project engages participants in analysis and reflection, action planning and evaluation, and collaborative learning. There is a clear emphasis upon peer support, acknowledgement of individual teachers' starting points, and structures for professional dialogue and the dissemination of practice. There is potential for participants to engage in sustained and continuous development and to work at a range of levels, including Masters. There is also the potential to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to develop approaches to assessment at Masters level by combining the advantages of new technologies with academic rigour and the generation of knowledge

(Helen Mitchell⁶ of Christ Church College, University of Canterbury, member of CASP (Critical Advisory Support Partnership for CPD))

⁶ Helen is a member of the National Reference Group for teachers' professional development, which involves all national stakeholders, as is a forum for agreeing national priorities and ensuring consistent messages about CPD.

- 4.8 It does look as if there is much that an expanded project, well supported by academics, could achieve. However the mere existence of potential is of course no guarantee that large scale benefits will be realised. It will be important in any future developments to evaluate closely and for all the stakeholders to learn lessons in a timely way and if possible to generate 'deep learning' as to the future of teacher-generated video and CPD.

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