

Action! Teacher Video: Position Paper

Prepared for Teachers TV
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Mediated Teacher Generated Content for CPD

Action! Teacher Video gives teachers ownership of Teachers TV programmes by supporting their own video production. In the project, teachers conduct a reflective research activity about their practice that they record on video, often in collaboration with colleagues and pupils. The process is supported financially by offering supply cover and modest expenses and is mediated by educational consultants and technical experts.

Following the teacher's own production, the school screens the completed 'Teacher Video' and the 'Teacher Producer' discusses the issues raised with a group of colleagues and members of the wider school community. This is professionally filmed together with some interviews and contextual footage and put together with the Teacher Video in a 15 minute Teachers TV programme.

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

CASP (Critical Advisory Support Partnership for CPD), 2007

Cornucopia Productions has developed this entirely new format for Teachers TV and tested a number of assumptions about the availability of equipment in schools, the willingness of teachers to engage in the activity and the quality of outcomes – both technically and in terms of CPD. To date some 40 Teacher Videos have been commissioned and produced by teachers with almost no 'drop-outs'.

The project has now proved that teachers have the necessary equipment and with only limited support can produce videos with many unique attributes. In the hands of a teacher or pupil the camera provides an opportunistic, unmediated, authentic and often surprising perspective. Then through the editing process the teacher can reflect on the process, tell their own story and offer longitudinal assessment of learning. Indeed, far from detracting from the viewing experience, the technical limitations make the videos more believable and inspiring to professional colleagues.

A further impressive measure of success is that all the participating teachers have continued to work with video and many have contributed a second Teacher Video to the project. This goes against the theory that teachers will not

engage in new initiatives willingly and shows there is a growing community of committed Teacher Producers that can be harnessed to drive future phases of the project. It suggests that a sustainable project can be established based on peer networking and support via the web. Meanwhile the scope of the project is extending across subject areas and topics to reach all types of school in the UK and beyond with the possibility of international Teacher Video exchange. This introduces the prospect of teachers from the UK and abroad learning from each other via their own authored CPD content on video.

Key Features of Action! Teacher Video:

- ✓ **Teacher-generated CPD resources**
- ✓ **Action Research model**
- ✓ **Peer Review and Analysis**
- ✓ **Training and support in new ICT skills**
- ✓ **Inclusive of wider workforce and pupils**
- ✓ **Meshing with Performance Management and the New Professionalism**
- ✓ **Developing peer-to-peer networking**
- ✓ **Sustainable and cost effective**
- ✓ **Innovative and visionary**
- ✓ **Enabling global exchange of practice**

Research and Feedback from Participating Teachers and Professional Audience

As part of the original brief, research was conducted by UCE School of Education in Birmingham. This looked at synergies with action research methodologies and subsequently UCE offered accreditation towards their Action Research module at Masters level.

Open-ended discovery, reflective professional enquiry, dialogue about practice with colleagues, together with mutual observation and joint planning are an integral part of an effective professional learning community in which Action! Teacher Video has an important part to play.

Professor Roger Woods, UCE, Birmingham

Since the pilot programmes were broadcast on Teachers TV in Spring 2006, the professional interest in this concept has grown. The beneficiaries in terms of CPD are seen as both the participating Teacher Producer and the wider professional audience.

The most recent research conducted by Dr Simon Sandberg of Ergo Consulting, though still inevitably based on a small sample, provides surprisingly clear evidence of the long-term impact on participating teachers' practice and the working of colleagues within and without the school:

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.

Teacher Producer feedback after 6-12 months

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.

Teacher Producer feedback after 6-12 months

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.

Teacher Producer feedback after 6-12 months

The evidence of feedback from viewers suggests both a high degree of interest in the content of Teacher Videos and interest in using video as a tool for CPD:

I like the idea of teachers using video, on teachers' TV. This kind of experimentation is cutting edge! The video material felt very authentic and it was good to see teachers analysing issues around teaching and learning in the focused way provided by use of video.

Audience comment

I thought this video was inspirational. I would like to know more about the school. Where it is situated. Who decides on the overall feel of the curriculum. So many more questions I would like to ask the head.

Audience comment

The further development of the project aims to support a continuing dialogue around teacher produced content – a process modelled in the discussion segment of the programmes themselves:

Alex, when I started watching I nearly switched off and then realised the many skills the children started to develop.. The very important interpersonal skills and how you got these kids to feel good about what they were doing, their communication skills, that peer education thing going on, hey Alex, brilliant job.

Audience comment (Deidre)

Deidre, Many thanks for your comments. I was particularly proud of the interaction of the pupils and the massive improvement of their communication skills. I'm really pleased this is so apparent in the film.

Alex's reply on the web (Teacher Producer of 'Chemical Puppets')

The chemical puppets idea is AWESOME and I have just suggested it to my head of science who is an awesome teacher and loves trying new things to engage the kids. Thank you so much! Thanks again for great idea!

Audience comment

Action! Teacher Video Next Phase

The intention during the next stage in the project is to build an autonomous professional learning community based on the video recording and exchange model established by the Action! Teacher Video project but increasingly based on the web. Key features of this development will be:

- Teachers able to upload and exchange videos and share practice with schools and higher education institutions in the UK and around the world
- News, mediated bulletin boards, comments, ratings and professional chat around the teacher produced content and use of video
- Training and mentoring for teachers who need support in developing their research project and recording it on video
- Members' access to areas where they can get hold of copyright free music and graphics to include in their own productions and download production tools including editing software
- Route to obtain funding for the school to release teachers and enable them to make their videos including grants for equipment and further training
- Forum for the continuing development of the project with experienced Teacher Producers represented on a virtual editorial board
- Opportunity for accreditation towards GTC and Higher Education awards

The website will be home to a growing community of teachers, teacher-educators and CPD providers that will exchange ideas and develop practice through video recording and reflection. It will also deliver compelling user generated content of school-based innovation to Teachers TV and enable the channel to celebrate how teachers are increasingly taking responsibility for their own learning.

Hargreaves is perhaps the most well known and influential of those writers arguing for new modes of distributed leadership and learning. In a series of pamphlets he offers a critique of command and control bureaucracies, argues for new ways of empowering teachers to both work up evidenced-based best practice and for disseminating such hard-won experience through ICT-enabled nodal networks, with the process being supported but not led by external researchers from HEIs. Hargreaves insists that teachers must be empowered to take control of their own learning and learning networks and that this must be an integral part of any new teacher professionalism.

Sandberg, 2007, Academic Review of Action! Teacher Video