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DreamIT: Value of Video Analysis in Strengthening Professional Practice

The new New York State teacher certification requirement includes having student teachers submit a videotape of teaching practice along with written commentary. This type of assessment can be an opportunity for a pre-service teacher to demonstrate his/her understanding of teaching and student learning in an experiential and personal way. [I will find data to support this claim. Any recommendations welcomed.] One goal of the new requirements is to help pre-service teachers shape their planning and implementation around student engagement and learning outcomes. Instead of a pre-service teacher focusing on the delivery of curriculum stating, "Yeah, I got through the material," the new analysis reframes the focus to, "Did I have an impact on student learning?"

Unlike other states rolling out these new performance assessments for teacher certification over time, New York State gave colleges only one year to prepare before implementation. Our pilot program with 8 students in spring of 2013, will lead towards another pilot of 100+ students in fall, 2013, and then we might have between 250 – 400 students needing to officially meet the requirements in spring, 2014. Although my colleagues might not refer to it this way, I see that administrators, faculty, and staff in the School of Education are working in all circles of the TPACK framework, burning the mid-night oil to best support and guide our students.

About the technical stuff: Unfortunately, in our urban area, faculty, students and K-12 schools are trying to tackle the "technical issues" of required permission slips, the hardware (video equipment, editing software, storage of large files, etc.). How can students (and faculty) not be overwhelmed by the technical factors and focus on the pedagogical benefits of reflecting on practice using video? Granted, many of our students are increasingly tech-savvy, but many are not. And for such a high-stakes assessment, there is a palpable anxiety at our college about the resources that will be needed.

I am currently in the process of designing an edTPA website, full of resources, tech-based user guides and contacts for support. I hope to minimize the "technological" stress being generated by these new requirements. In my role at the college, I must offer support first in all of the above. With this in mind, I stand "squarely" in the T = technology circle. [Yup, square in a circle.] But of much more interest to me is once these practical matters are addressed and not approached with trepidation, we will have a greater opportunity to recognize the pedagogical benefits of using videotaping to reflect on professional practice. Pre-service teachers should understand that videotaping student teaching is not about the technical process (knowing how to do it), but about the opportunities for reflection about professional practice and a way to support/improve

professional identity. Change does not come quickly or easily at our college, so this is a hefty goal.

I am going to be more driven by my backwards by design statement:

Reflection ON action – strengthens reflection IN action.

Although many of the technology skills will be related to videotaping, the “understandings” I hope to support/guide and work with colleagues on are to understand video analysis as a learning opportunity through scaffolding experiences. Can we leverage video to improve practice of pre-service teachers?

- Through viewing/evaluating other people teaching (via videos)
- Through viewing/evaluating self teaching (video)

I will keep in mind some of Willingham’s (2009) Chapter 9 statements:

- “Your best bet for improving your teaching is to practice teaching” (pg.191)
- “It’s hard to think about how things are going when you’re in the middle of trying to make them go well!” (pg. 193)
- “First, spend time observing. Don’t start by critiquing. What do you notice about your students that you didn’t already know? What did you notice about yourself?” (pg. 197)
- Watch other teachers teaching first. It is important to gain practice in constructive observation and commenting. This should start with nonthreatening situations (pg. 197)

The framing questions might include:



How does video analysis (reflective commentary about teaching) improve teaching skill?



How can the rigorous new requirements be understood not only as an end (getting certification), but also as an opportunity to improve practice?



How does video analysis improve professional identity? [Might be too big???
Can this help pre-service teachers identify with their “domain?”]

I hope to create an online mini-course or self-standing series of lessons (using camtasia/screencasting) that would be accessible to students. It is unclear at this time if the mini-course or series of lessons would be required or embedded within a course or stand-alone and optional.

Lots of stakeholders are engaged with this topic, so navigating the rocky waters and strategic planning lies ahead.