

THE IMPACT OF USING VIDEO CAMERAS IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Introduction

Nowadays we can see the latest technology such as smart phones, tape recorders, video cameras, TVs, VCRs, and CD players at homes or in schools. Back to the year of 2008, every student was able to possess a mobile phone with limited functions. Yet, it is not hard to find that every student has a smartphone with utilized functions including video camera one, which makes video recording become smaller, lighter, cheaper, and easier to use. They make it possible for both teachers and students to make their own educational videos and, perhaps more importantly, to record and view student performances in English. In short, students can see what they look like and sound like to other people when they speak English by watching themselves. Therefore, teachers can use video cameras to help students become better speakers in English.

Although Hofer and Swan (2005) note that research literature on the subject of student created videos is limited and should be explored at a college level, student made videos are proven to be affective in fields such accounting (Henry & Cheryl, 2012), nursing (Skiba, 2007). Ryan (2002) describes a high level of student motivation, Hoffenberg and Handler (2001) comment on motivation and student enjoyment, Kearney and Schuck (2003) describe how videos support authentic learning, Schuck and Kearney (2004) add that videos encourage student engagement and New (2006) and Parker (2002) report how videos support student creativity. Burn et al. (2001) explain how student videos accommodate students with different learning styles and abilities. Students become so totally committed to their movie projects, making careful decisions, working together to

iron out conflicts, and writing with their audience foremost in their minds. It is equally satisfying to know that we are accomplishing so many learning goals at once: learning content, developing writing skills, expressing creativity, and mastering technology tools. (Tammy & Diane, 2004).

The fact is that although students have learned English for long period of time, the majority of them cannot communicate confidently in English with both Vietnamese who speak English and foreigners. Some learned for one year, some five years and some learned for more than ten years but they cannot speak. They are so shy; nervous and non-fluent. But the job requires them to be able to use English communicatively. Otherwise, they will not be offered a job or cannot be promoted. Besides, they are too nervous in an English meeting or presentation.

This paper introduces the benefits of using video cameras in the English language classrooms. It suggests a few activities that can be recorded to enhance the speaking teaching and learning and offers helpful suggestions for using the camera.

Literature Review

The benefits of video recordings

Video recording has been proved to be helpful in developing reflection among student teachers, particularly related to teacher's personality, teaching procedures, management of the class, use of teaching aids, and command of English. Pi-Ying in his study showed that video recording appeared to have positive impact on student teachers' perceptions and performances. From the study, Pi-Ying concluded that video recording can enhance student teachers in gaining confidence, independence, reflection, and the personal practical knowledge of teaching.

Katchen (1991) examined using a video camera in the classroom as a teaching tool. The author said that language teachers can use video cameras to record student dialogues and role plays, reviewing the videos with students to critique language usage and grammar. The recording of humorous or student-created skits can heighten student interest in such

activities. The reason is because the re-recording of dialogues and skits allows students to compare their most recent performance with earlier renditions.

With the same effect, Rachel and Peter (2010) concluded that the outcomes of the video intervention are seen positive and substantial by the majority of participants in his study.

Overall, the use of video cameras in the EFL classroom allows students to analyze their own speaking activities, observe their own body language, and become more self-critical of their abilities. Teachers can also use exceptional performance as examples for future classes. Students can also use the camera for rehearsal. They record and then watch to see how they can improve the performance. We record students speaking so that we can view to listen together, talk about what can be improved and the ways to improve it. When we record again, we can see if indeed there was improvement.

Video recording activities

Johanna (1991) suggested two activities including role plays and oral presentations.

The first activity is role plays. Students can role play from beginning to advance in almost all conversations. Video recording role plays have plenty of advantages. First of all, the students enjoy themselves as they are often funny to bring much joy. Students like seeing themselves on TV even if they are shy sometimes. Along with the fun, teachers can also point out errors with English. Teachers can watch the videos many times to point out grammar or vocabulary errors or concentrate on pronunciation mistakes. If you watch the videos with the student, sometimes the students themselves notice their own mistakes.

The second activity suggested by the author is oral presentations. The ability to speak in public is given high value by Vietnamese since students were not taught how to speak in public at high schools. Therefore, when they go to college, they expect to learn such skills to get ready for future work. English majors are required to take a course in oral presentation. While the students are not called upon after graduation to give after dinner speeches, they may indeed have to use English in their future professions to detail a procedure, investigate the cause of a problem, or put forth a solution. Ability to express

and explain their ideas is a necessary skill for our students to acquire, a skill that can be enhanced by the use of a video camera.

Amongst the two activities mentioned above, recording speeches is easier than recording role plays because students are usually standing in one place, behind a table or with something in hand while they speak, although they may write on the board and move among the audience. Students can also see how fluent they are through their recorded presentations.

Steps for conducting recording videos

Proper preparation can bring best benefits from any tools. Meanwhile, a little practice with your video camera and attention to a few details will be beneficial too. Below are some useful pointers.

The first thing is preparing equipment to get to know your video camera. Most teachers are expected to be able to use the video camera. But teachers can have someone to show them if they are new teachers or this is their first time of using it. Teachers can use a tripod put at the corner of the classroom or have someone to help. Before you use it, check the camera to see that it is in working order, especially if it is used by other people. If the camera uses batteries, then make sure they are charged.

The second thing is planning to see if your classroom is appropriate for video recording; finding appropriate places for the students to sit; to perform. Check if there is enough light; less noise.

The third part is explaining procedures or any regulations to the students. Steps should be told clearly and what if students come late. Then it is time for recording.

The next step is viewing the video. Besides, you may want to make an evaluation form for yourself emphasizing the important areas you are grading. You can give the students a copy so they can see how you graded them and why. You can make self-evaluation sheets for students when they watch their own speeches; if you require students to turn in

their self-evaluation sheets, then you have to check on whether they actually went to view their speeches, and you can see how critical they are of themselves.

Final is evaluating the activity. Sometime before the end of the semester, get students' reactions to the activity and ask for their suggestions on how to improve it. Sometimes students have some very good ideas.

Suggestions and recommendations for video recording

Firstly, give students a chance to get used to you before you start recording them. The teacher, their classmates, and the type of activity before you introduce that intrusive camera. Some students may not know what is expected of them the first time around, but they will learn from their classmates.

It is also suggested to tell students when they will be recorded. They will have good preparation in order not to let other people see their bad job. Students can be extremely creative and may put in a lot of effort in creating their role plays. The first reward comes from an appreciative audience, their fellow students. The second reward comes from watching themselves on TV.

For role plays, it is probably best to watch right after students perform, while the students are still full of excitement. This means you will need a room that has a TV or a PC with a projector.

For oral presentations, the teacher can give students a grading sheet which can mention the areas you think are important, and you can give students a self-evaluation sheet for when they watch their video on their own later on. And, above all, remember to mention the good points of the speech. No matter how bad a speech is, there must be something good about it. Teachers need to encourage and give students something to build on and an area to work on improving for the next time.

It is not a good idea to watch all the students' speeches in, especially if your class is large and if the speeches are longer and more serious. Both students and teacher will be bored

watching the same twenty speeches again. Students want to see their won and maybe that of their best friend. Students sometimes come in small groups to watch their speeches with me; that way they can make suggestions to each other. Small group meetings give teacher and students a chance to get to know each other better; students are more likely to voice their feelings about public speaking or anything else.

Do not just record once and forget it. Record at least one more time with that group, perhaps near the end of the course, so the students can see if they have made progress, and tell them they have.

If all facilities are equipped, you can record more often and have students view their speeches on their own, keeping their own record of their progress. Students may also work in pairs, critiquing each other. They seem to prepare more and better when they know they will be recorded. Generally, students say that they like seeing their recorded speeches. Students are interested, they can see their problems, and they can see their improvement; these are good reasons for using a video camera in the public speaking class.

Conclusions

It is clear that we can gain a lot from recording students speaking in English. First, quite honestly, students see how bad they are. Students can learn to become more self-critical. They can evaluate themselves to have a better performance in the future. We can also observe body language and the use of visuals. Students have to think of the most feasible, creative ways of showing what they mean, particularly when explaining a process. If you are not interested in research, you can use your videos in teaching especially when you introduce an assignment to students, some may not quite know what you are asking of them. This is especially true for oral presentations. Students will quickly what to do and can compare themselves with previous year students. It is a good motivation for those trying to reach the target. Furthermore, our student's life will be in a world of music videos and VCRs. Students are interested; they like seeing themselves on TV, even if the result is not so great. By seeing their performance in English, students have a basis for

improving it. For teachers, after using video camera the first time in your class and see the results, you yourself will think of more ways to put the video camera to use to improve your students' speaking skills.

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