

# Video-Based Self-Observation as a Component of Developmental Teacher Evaluation

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## Abstract

In this paper, we explore the benefits to teacher evaluation when video-based self-observation is done by teachers as a vehicle for individual, reflective practice. We explore how it was applied systematically at the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA) bi-national center in Lima, Peru among hundreds of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in two institution-wide initiatives that have relied on self-observation through video professional development. In these cases, we provide a descriptive framework for each initiative as well as information on what was ultimately achieved by teachers, supervisors and the institution as a whole. We conclude with recommendations for implementing video-based self-evaluation.

## Keywords

Video, teacher evaluation, supervision, professional development, Peru

*[Video] gave me a lot of information because when we teach we have to take into consideration many aspects. It's not only what you say or the way you say it, but also if the students that are in that classroom are involved in this learning process. I think that when we observe a video we can see things that were not important to us before. As a consequence the next time that we do an activity we will pay attention not only to our actions but also the effect that we are having on our students. (Excerpt from Teacher's Feedback)*

## Introduction

While teachers' skills are routinely evaluated, the ultimate aim of evaluation is to promote their ability to create an environment that is conducive to learning. Supporting teachers' work are the supervisors, coaches, mentors and administrators who, rather than simply evaluating their performance, wish to provide teachers with the means to develop professionally so they can succeed at fulfilling their complex, highly demanding roles.

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Unfortunately, because the line between formative and summative teacher evaluation is often blurred (Danielson & McGreal, 2000), supervisors may engage in practices that are more evaluative than developmental in nature. This comes at the expense of efforts towards formative supervision that could be much more effective in promoting teacher learning.

In this article, we report how self-observation through video was utilized as a professional development component of formative teacher evaluation. Video-based self-observation has shown positive results in pre-service teacher education (Kong, Shroff & Hung, 2009) as well as in the ongoing learning of experienced teachers (Sherin & van Es, 2005). However, it has not been studied in large-scale implementation as a feature of supervision, nor have the institutional benefits of such implementation been reported. In this paper we describe how self-observation through video has been used successfully with hundreds of teachers at a large bi-national center for English language instruction in Lima, Peru, the *Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano* (ICPNA). We describe the reflective processes in which ICPNA teachers engaged for self-evaluation as well as how video-based self-observation has the potential to foster more collaborative interactions with peers and mentor supervisors. In addition to describing the benefits of video-based self-observation for teachers, we also contend that when self-observation through video is done systematically among an entire faculty, with the support of administrators and other key stakeholders, it has the potential to bring about positive transformational change at the institutional level. We describe one particular program-wide initiative in which self-observation played a central role, focusing on: (1) how video-based self-observation impacted the supervision process; (2) ways in which video-based self-observation was

connected to improved classroom instruction; and (3) the potential impact of implementing video-based self-observation on institutional practices. We conclude with recommendations and future directions for the role of video-based self-observation in formative evaluation.

## **Formative Evaluation as Professional Development**

When done effectively and consistently over time, engaging teachers in formative evaluation alongside professional development initiatives should ultimately lead to improved instruction and, as a consequence, improved student learning (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008). Specifically, formative evaluation can provide insights on the degree to which a teacher's repertoire of skills, strategies and techniques are successful at promoting student learning in the classroom. Formative evaluations can also help gauge a teacher's level of preparedness, confidence and motivation, all equally important variables to consider. As teacher evaluation establishes patterns of practice and records of student response, supervisors and administrators can determine if improvement is taking place, to what degree, and the amount of time it is taking, as well as to identify specific needs on the part of the teacher. Ultimately, professional development and formative teacher evaluation allow administrators to determine whether the members of their faculty are in the process of becoming the kind of professional the institution wishes to have as part of its faculty. Similarly, with appropriate and timely feedback, teachers are better able to decide whether their professional pursuits are line with their personal goals and expectations.

## **Self-Evaluation as a Component of Formative Evaluation**

When teachers and teacher candidates encounter external evaluation of their

performance, they unfortunately begin to experience evaluation as political enactment of “control-oriented routines” (Towndrow & Tan, 2009, p. 285) rather than as a vehicle for professional development. Inviting teacher candidates to be evaluators of their own performance could encourage teachers to be active agents in the process (Cheung, 2009; Cranton, 2001). The use of self-assessment tools in the field of education has been found to be useful in guiding teachers to think about their own standards for quality teaching, helping them to set goals for development, improve their ability to communicate with peers in the profession, and enhance the influence of external agents to bring about change (Ross & Bruce, 2007). When teachers’ awareness is heightened as to what takes place in the classroom, and they come to understand why it is happening, they are in a better position to articulate their needs and to determine the actions that are most likely to lead to improvement in their instructional practice (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Edge, 2011).

Support for self-evaluation in learning is based on theories of self-regulation as well as metacognition (Zimmerman, Mount & Goff, 2008). Because engaging candidates in the metacognitive task of stepping back to appraise their own performance stimulates self-monitoring (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Winne & Hadwin, 1998), self-evaluation encourages a more active and self-reliant role in one’s own learning (Wiggins, 1998). Heightened self-awareness, leading to ever greater self-regulation, has been shown to yield benefits including a greater awareness of the evaluation process and scoring criteria, an increased understanding of the instructional content, and improved performance (Davies, 2002; Fallows & Chandramohan, 2001).

Teachers who engage in self- and peer-evaluation within a collaborative culture that fosters trust, openness and support will more

likely find the motivation to develop professionally (Hargreaves & Dawe, 2011). They may be more amenable to the idea of working to improve their practice than under more traditional approaches to teacher evaluation. Furthermore, when professional development initiatives are closely tied to clearly articulated processes for self-evaluation, it can foster self-reliance for ongoing learning. Ultimately, tangible support for new teachers can be decisive in their decision to stay in the field or not (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Rockoff, 2008).

### **The Role of Video in Self-Observation**

Self-observation through video is well-suited for ongoing teacher evaluation and professional development because the process can provide administrators insights and information related to a teacher’s performance, level of progress, needs, degree of professionalism, and motivation to continue with her or his development towards becoming a teaching professional. More importantly, not only does it assist administrators with their work as guarantors of quality learning, but it provides teachers – the intended main beneficiaries – with a practical means to learn from themselves and their peers. The end result can be more powerful because they become aware of the benefits and results through personal experience.

Video records of teaching have been used successfully to support reflection in pre- and in-service teacher development programs worldwide (Kong, Shroff & Hung, 2009; Rosaen, Lundeberg, Cooper, Fritzen & Terpstra, 2008; Sherin & van Es, 2005; Welsch & Devlin, 2007). For example, a study involving peer video-recording and group discussion of student teachers’ own classroom performance in local schools conducted in Ireland showed that these activities exposed

pre-service teachers to a range of diverse teaching methodologies and led them to a deeper level of reflection (Harford & MacRuairc, 2008). In a related study by Kong (2010), student teachers in Hong Kong captured videos of their practice teaching through a web-enabled system and conducted self-reflections along four dimensions: curriculum planning and evaluation, pupils and pupil-teacher interactions, discipline and classroom management, and professional knowledge. In this case, a form containing specific items to observe in each dimension and levels of achievement was provided to guide students in their reflections. The researcher found that student teachers generated more and deeper reflective notes after watching clips of their own teaching. More recently, Eröz-Tuğ̃a (2013) reported that pre-service English language teachers in Turkey not only gained insight into their own strengths and weaknesses after watching video records, but displayed conscious efforts to make improvements. The author noted the value of repeated viewing of videos and the importance of clarifying the expectations and the assessment criteria for teaching performance.

By harnessing the power of review to “notice, revisit, and investigate,” teachers arrived at a more fine-grained understanding of their performance than with memory-based recall (Rosaen et al., 2008, p. 356). Furthermore, when teachers have an opportunity to watch and analyze video of their own rather than other’s teaching, they may experience greater motivation and engagement in the activity, further enriching the reflective process.

In the following section, we report on the use of video to support self-observation done by teachers as a vehicle for individual, reflective practice. We provide an overview of how it was applied systematically at ICPNA among hundreds of English as foreign language

(EFL) teachers, with reference to a particular institution-wide initiative that relied on self-observation through video for its success.

## **Implementation of Video-Based Self-Observation**

### **Educational Context**

Founded in 1938, the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA) is a binational center that promotes the cultural exchange between Peru and United States, by teaching the English and Spanish languages, the development of libraries, and the diffusion of the artistic and cultural expressions of both countries. With tens of thousands of student enrollments each month, it is committed to excellence in the teaching and learning of English. To ensure the academic study program’s success, it dedicates an enormous amount of time, effort, and resources to *IMMERSE*, its professional development and training program for novice and in-service teachers. Over time, video-based self-observation has become a pillar for reflective practice and action-on-reflection within the program.

### **Introducing Video-Based Self-Observation**

At the ICPNA, self-observation through video was first instituted as an experiment in 2001 at one of its five large branches: *Lima Centro* (downtown area). Initially a novelty among teachers, since they had never participated in such an initiative before, it became highly successful. In the early 2000’s, the branch had close to 100 full-time EFL teachers, and participation in the initiative reached 100% thanks to the drive of the academic supervisor entrusted with the project as well as the motivation the part of the teacher participants. It evolved into an institution-wide initiative in 2005, when it became a key component of a fledgling professional development program. Today, it is a requirement of novice teachers during their first year, carried out on a monthly basis.

Novice teachers are encouraged to alternate the classes in which they are video recorded so as to have a broader perspective on their instructional practice. The camera can be placed in the room to be left recording on its own or the teacher can request the support of a cameraperson for more focused footage. For teachers in their second year, it is no longer required, but remains as an important alternative for professional development among the many that make up the Institute’s “Professional Development Menu”. Despite its optional nature at this point, however, many teachers keep it as a favorite path to their own growth as ELT professionals.

Since its very beginnings, teachers have never been made to share their videos unless

they wanted to. In the case of novice teachers, they are provided with a self-assessment instrument that serves to promote self-evaluation and reflection. However, mentor teachers and mentor supervisors are always

available to provide feedback and advice in relation to the class depicted in the video should the novice teacher decide to share the contents. With teachers who have begun their second year at ICPNA, sharing takes place more often among teachers who also do peer observation but who cannot find the time in their schedules to visit another person’s class. When conflicts in their schedules prevent teachers from going to each others’ classes, they are encouraged to share videos that are normally recorded for self-observation purposes. They are highly commended when they choose to share their videos on their own accord, outside of more formal, institutionalized initiatives.

The self-observation checklist shown in Figure 1 is introduced to novice teachers gradually as they work their first months at the Institute. The form has four sections: instructional practices, critical incidents, key decisions, and the action plan.

ICPNA: Self-Assessment Checklist				
Teaching Practice		Strong	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1	Classroom Management (i.e. grouping, pacing, etc.)			
2	Promotes Student Language Production			
3	Praise and Positive Reinforcement			
4	Use of the Board for Examples & Explanations			
5	Student Talk Time vs. Teacher Talk Time			
6	T’s Level of English			
7	Explanations: Clear, Supported & Participatory (S’s)			
8	Error correction Techniques			
9	Instructions: Verbal + Modeling + Comprehension Check			
10	Student Engagement: Voluntary Participation / On-Task Time			
-	OPEN ITEM			
-	OPEN ITEM			
Critical Incidents		Why was it important?		
1				
2				
Key Decisions		How did it have an impact on the outcome of the lesson?		
1				
2				
3				
Action Plan:				

Figure 1. Self-Assessment Checklist for self-observation through video

Novice teachers are encouraged to work with the sections one at a time. During the second month, for example, they may work with instructional practices first, then with critical incidents in the third month, and key decisions in the fourth. Once they have engaged in self-reflection and assessment with all of the sections, they are free to choose whether they wish to use only one, two or all of the sections of the form at any one time. After their first year, all teachers are encouraged to continue using the form whenever they engage in self-observation. It is also important to note that in the end, there must always be an action plan based on their findings.

### **Institutional Initiative using Video-Based Self-Observation**

At ICPNA, self-observation through video has not only helped hundreds of EFL teachers grow professionally on their own, it has also served a higher purpose at the program and institutional level by contributing directly to organizational change. In this section, we will refer to the 2007 “Teacher Talk Time” (TTT) Reduction Campaign. In this professional development initiative, self-observation through video provided teachers and administrators with an ideal means to gauge results progressively and make adjustments in regard to the measures being taken to support these projects.

The decision to initiate a campaign to reduce TTT in ICPNA’s classrooms came as a result of an extensive evaluation of the academic study program, faculty, and other aspects that could influence the teaching and learning process at the Institute. There was a need to increase *student-talk-time* (STT) significantly and reduce excessive, non-productive *teacher-talk-time* (TTT) as much as possible. The project proceeded through the following stages:

1. Development of the campaign and setting of a timeline for implementation.

2. Development of instruments, protocols, performance metrics, support systems, and criteria for outcomes.

3. Introduction of the campaign to teachers, and collection of their input on the process; training on STT vs. excessive TTT, TTT reduction strategies, self-assessment techniques through self-observation; development of goal statements and action plans on the part of the teachers.

4. Self-observations done by teachers at all of the branches. Formative post-observation discussion sessions with mentor supervisors and action plan adjustments.

5. First assessment of outcomes and follow-up action plans.

6. Final round of self-observations and assessments.

7. Culmination of campaign. Follow-up teacher training and professional development initiatives.

In step 3, for example, the campaign was launched with an in-service Teacher Development (TD) session that presented the rationale for the campaign and the action plan to be followed by each of the stakeholders, most particularly the teachers. The session was presented as follows:

- *Introduction:* What are TTT and STT? Why is STT good for the program? How is the difference productive and what is excessive TTT?

- *Demo Videos:* Demonstration of two classes: one showing excessive TTT and another one that prioritizes STT.

- *General Campaign Strategy:* Presentation of the TTT-Reduction campaign strategy and timeline.

- *Self-Assessment Stage:* Description of strategies, protocols, instruments, and desired outcomes. Practice with using the STT-TTT self-assessment checklist.

- *Comprehension Check Activities:* Activities to make certain that teachers understand the overall message and their role in the process.

The TD session was crucial in getting the program off to an auspicious beginning. Teachers were able to understand why the campaign was being initiated, their roles in the process, how they could self-assess to make certain they were making progress, and what the desired outcomes were. At the same time, they were informed as to how they were

expected to work collaboratively with their mentor supervisors in order to maximize their chances of reaching the ultimate goal. Table 1 displays the instrument that was provided to teachers and used as a self-assessment checklist for STT-TTT that could be utilized during video-playback.

#	Behaviors Conducive to Increasing STT	Observed	Behaviors Conducive to Increasing TTT	Observed
1.	The teacher's explanations are concise and opportune.		The teacher gives long and unnecessary instructions or explanations.	
2.	The teacher elicits from students when presenting new language.		The teacher does not elicit from students enough when presenting new language.	
3.	The teacher encourages students to ask questions.		The teacher asks questions when there is an opportunity for students to do so.	
4.	The teacher offers students opportunities to summarize and/or paraphrase.		The teacher summarizes and/or paraphrases when there is an opportunity for students to do so.	
5.	The teacher only expresses opinions and facts that are relevant to the lesson.		The teacher gives opinions about facts and ideas that are not relevant to the lesson.	
6.	The teacher encourages students to add information to their classmates' responses.		The teacher adds additional information to students' responses when it is not conducive to more STT.	
7.	The teacher encourages students to answer her/his questions as well as their classmates'.		The teacher poses questions and then answers them her/himself.	
8.	The teacher has students do the wrap-up.		The teacher does not involve students in the wrap-up.	
9.	The teacher provides students with enough wait-time and prep/thinking time.		The teacher does not provide enough wait or prep/thinking time to students.	
10.	The teacher refrains from unnecessarily repeating what she/he or the students have said.		The teacher repeats unnecessarily what she/he or the students have said.	

Table 1. Targeted Self-Assessment Tool for Video Review

This checklist was used by all of the teachers at the ICPNA regardless of whether their prior performance had been acceptable or not. Although the most obvious goal for the campaign was to provide teachers with the means to self-assess and to reduce excessive TTT, an indirect outcome that was sought just as eagerly was to accustom teachers to the process of reflective teaching and action-on-reflection, which is deciding to follow-up with an self-inspired activity or initiative that ultimately leads to improved instructional practice (Edge, 2011).

As a requirement, the entire faculty of more than 400 full-time teachers was required to participate in this campaign. After carrying out the self-observation and self-assessment processes, they were asked to develop an action in relation to a particular point they could improve. Table 2 provides an excerpt from a teacher's action plan used during the TTT campaign.

The sample action plan (Table 2) illustrates how a teacher identified a particular area in which excessive TTT was made evident in her teaching. She developed a

solution alternative, a plan of action to pursue throughout the time allotted to the initiative, criteria for success, and dates for review and completion. In the end, this teacher was able to resolve the issue and make her questioning techniques much more student centered. At the program level, administrators tracked each teacher's results with targeted observation logs. This log was one of many documents used to track STT and TTT promoting behaviors as seen in the self-observation videos. Teachers would work with their mentor supervisors in order to highlight their repertoire of strategies and techniques that are conducive to increased STT and to identify typical situations in which they may be more likely to engage in excessive, unproductive TTT. Over time, the aim was to reduce the tally under TTT and increase the number of notches under STT.

As a whole, the TTT-reduction campaign was successful. Eighty-nine per cent of the teachers who participated in it were able to identify at least one area related to excessive TTT in which they could improve.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Resources</b>
I answer my own questions.	During each month, I will make sure I don't answer my own questions by providing my students with more wait time (8 – 10 seconds) and singling out a minimum of two students to respond with each T-S interaction cycle.	The behavior must be observed at least twice during each class session.	Three times a week, I will reflect to what extent I have achieved my objective. I will verify progress by watching my own videos. This will be tried in one of the three courses I am currently teaching. I will ask my students if they feel they have more opportunities to respond to my questions.	Notebook, pen, video camera, self-assessment checklist, student feedback form

Table 2. Sample Action Plan Used in Conjunction with Video Review

Of this group, 94% were able to meet their desired goals within the timeframe allotted to the program. The others were able to achieve their target goals by the end of the year, just a few months later. In the end, self-observation through video was the primary catalyst for promoting self-examination, self-assessment, and self-reflection, all of which eventually led to improving instructional effectiveness and student learning.

### **Teacher and Administrator Perceptions: The Value of Self-Observation**

A survey was conducted among 247 teachers and 27 academic supervisors in order to ascertain the perceived value of self-observation in relation to their professional development goals. A number of questions were asked regarding their experience in the field, years of employment at ICPNA, use of self-observation, what caused anxiety among teachers when engaging in self-observation, and the benefits afforded. In terms of experience, 27.9% (69) had 1 – 3 years, 18.6% (46) had 4 – 6 years, 16.1% (40) had 7 – 10 years, and 37.2% (92) had 11 years experience. ICPNA supervisors were a very experienced group: No supervisors had fewer than 4 years of experience, 7.4% (2) had 4 – 6 years, 7.4% (2) had 7 – 10 years, and 85.2% (23) had 11 or more years.

Teachers were asked to provide their impressions of how video-based self-observation impacted their practices in general, as well as in relation to the TTT campaign. Most frequently mentioned was that they believed they came to see aspects of their teaching they were unaware of, when reviewing their lesson on video (203, or 82.2%), which helped them in seeing their teaching strengths as well as identifying areas they wished to improve upon (218, or 88.3%).

The two main benefits identified by teachers were reflecting on their teaching (198 or 80.2%) and identifying their strengths and weaknesses (216, or 87.5%). Close behind were the opportunity to observe their

students' behavior (141, or 57.1%) and aiding them in making instructional decisions in planning (163, or 65.6%). Teachers felt that video review of their lessons aided them in improving a particular instructional strategy (104, or 42.1%) and student production in the lesson (49, or 19.8%). Less frequently cited was helping to improve student motivation (16, or 6.5%). Here are some statements from teachers about how they benefitted:

*In order to be a successful educator, it is important to reflect upon one's teaching. This may include videotaping classes, being observed by a colleague/supervisor, asking for help with a problem or finding new ways to teach a topic. Being a reflective teacher is something I have tried to be as a student teacher and plan to continue working on. Overall, being a reflective teacher does not require a large amount of time, just extra thought. I hope that I am able to take more time to reflect upon my teaching as I gain experience, because my students and I can only benefit from this.*

*When you watch a video, you have a better chance to see what's really going on with your whole class, something you might not be able to do in the classroom. At a given moment in a video, you can tell, for example, what students are using English and what students are not. This is an area in which self-observation through video has helped me a lot.*

*I consider videotaping as a very useful source of feedback that has helped me realize how efficient my instructions are when these are followed by quick activation (less than a minute) of student elaboration on a task. For example, I might have said, "Get into groups of three and make a list of any differences and similarities you find*

*between an English speaking country and ours. You have ten minutes to complete it". After that I may ask another student to paraphrase my instructions, acknowledge his or her input and get to work. As students gather and start working on the task with lively and confident discussions, I walk around to monitor and provide help as needed...Self-observation has also helped me to know if I met the aims established for my teaching and if the techniques I used worked as planned when I see how well my students perform in class and what things do I need to improve on, such as less teacher talking time and increase students participation and elaboration of target language. Additionally, it has taught me to work on my body language which expresses a lot of meaning and purpose to my teaching.*

*I realized that I assumed students would produce by just telling them what they needed to do. But watching myself and my students I realized that I have to guide them through it. This was the first thing I realized after I watched my first video when I just started teaching.*

*There are many ways it has helped me in many areas. I think something important is that by watching myself teach, I was able not only to experience being a student in my own class, but also to observe other students' reactions to my teaching. I think this has helped me to focus the activities more towards the students and to consider their needs and learning styles.*

### ***Sharing Videos with Peers and Supervisors.***

Of the total, 65.2% (161) said they generally did not opt to share their videos with others. Yet, it should be noted 23.9% (59) shared their videos with their fellow teachers and 12.5% (31) with supervisors. Of the total that did share their material, 98.9% found the feedback they got was either very helpful or somewhat helpful. It is hoped that over time this figure will increase since it does reflect to some degree the openness of teachers within the professional community of which they became a part. Here are some impressions from teachers regarding the feedback they received from their colleagues after sharing their videos:

*If sharing with peers, it can help you both to learn and have different ideas for future classes and activities. I just been here for three months, but so far it's been a guide and record of what to keep doing and what to modify*

*Even though I did it with a trusted colleague, I was afraid of the feedback I would get. But our discussion was actually very positive and different from what I expected. It helped me focus on aspects of my teaching I hadn't noticed before, even when doing self-observation.*

When teachers decide to share their videos, they are taking a risk. They are exposing themselves to the scrutiny and possible judgment of others, leaving their comfort zone, in the hope that the decision will lead to a tangible return. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to believe they will benefit from the initiative.

Sharing of videos with supervisors was less common but close to 18% of those who did so considered their mentor supervisors as the most important source of feedback. About 21.5% (53) of teachers expressed anxiety that

the video might be used for formal evaluation and appraisal purposes. There was a pronounced concern about the presence of the camera in the classroom and the possibility that it would affect the students negatively 65.2% (161). Teachers were concerned that the presence of a video camera would influence students, resulting in conclusions that may not actually be representative of their teaching. At the same time, ultimately 68% (168) found the data from their self-evaluations as the most helpful; this could take the form of simply watching the video and identifying helpful segments, using the self-assessment checklist, or the teachers' own ways to measure their performance.

## Recommendations

### Promoting Video-Based Self-Observation

The experience gained from implementing video-based self-observation at ICPNA suggests that teachers can gather and analyze data about their lessons in order to better understand what they do and why, thus leading the way toward critical self-examination, planning in relation to what needs to be done as a result, and pursuing consequent action(s) until they meet their own expectations for improvement or change (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Nevertheless, getting teachers within a professional community to benefit from reflective practice through video-based self-observation may not be possible unless a conscious decision is made at the institutional level to promote it within a well-defined professional development framework. Yet, once "buy-in" is achieved among the faculty, self-observation can be implemented progressively. It can begin with a first group or cohort of highly motivated teachers who are known for their

willingness to participate in such initiatives serving as models for the rest of the faculty. Monetary compensation should never be the sole incentive to participate but rather recognition of others in the community of teachers and, most importantly, fulfillment of one's own goals for development. What is essential is for teachers to become fully aware of what self-observation can do for them. Most will have no idea as to how they teach until they see themselves on video. If the first experience with self-observation is positive and gratifying, it is fair to assume that they will do it again and hopefully include it within their repertoire of regular reflective teaching practices, which is why supervisors should provide all the support that may be needed for teachers to succeed from the very beginning. Again, it should be used as a formative measure towards self-improvement and never for summative evaluation purposes. In summary, video-based self-observation could be tried by following these steps:

#### Individuals

- Ask peers about their experiences.
- Set main goals and objectives for professional development.
- Establish focus for self-observation.
- Create self-assessment instrument that suits your needs.
- Video record your class.
- Watch several times, alternating whole lesson and segments until focus has been addressed.
- Carry out self-assessment
- Develop action plan and/or confirm good practice(s).
- Follow up and assess final outcomes.

#### Groups / Institutions

- Read literature.
- Acquire equipment.

- Establish rationale for using self-observation within professional development framework.
- Consult teachers on what they know about self-observation and how it could help them.
- Create self-assessment instruments that suit your teachers' needs.
- Establish implementation process, support systems, goals, and deadlines.
- Train supervisors on how to approach and support teachers.
- Introduce self-observation to teachers and explain how it can be used and how they can benefit.
- Follow up and assess outcomes on a continuous basis.

### **Sharing Videos of Teaching with Peers**

When it is not possible for teachers to observe each other's classes in person when engaging in peer observation or peer coaching, sharing videos originally recorded for self-observation purposes becomes an option worth considering. With appropriate concern about privacy, videos can be exchanged while maintaining a strict adherence to the basic tenets of successful self-observation and peer observation: confidentiality of content; flexibility to choose what content or lesson to share; an opportunity to learn from someone else in a mutually beneficial exchange; focus of feedback or analysis to be decided by the observed party; omission of any explicit or implicit judgment; and having a medium through which reflection and subsequent action can take place (Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007; Willerman, McNeely, & Koffman, 1991). In general, videos could be exchanged as follows:

- Inform teachers about the benefits of sharing their videos, whether it is done as a means of complementing peer observation practices when scheduling difficulties for in-class observation arise or simply as a way to minimize "teacher isolation" and strengthen

the bonds offered by the community of professionals to which they belong.

- Offer information to teachers as to how sharing could take place and reassure them that the content will not be used for any purposes they do not authorize.
- Confirm that teachers wish to share their videos on their own accord.
- Offer support and guidance on how peer observation through videos should be carried out in order for both parties to benefit.
- Remind teachers that they can also share their videos with a supervisor for formative assessment and follow-up.
- Appraise level of teacher satisfaction with this alternative and adjust support and guidance accordingly.

### **Use of Videos with Mentor Supervisors**

In more traditional organizational settings, academic supervisors are perhaps viewed by teachers with certain mistrust because their role may be mainly evaluative or judgmental in nature, thus having direct implications for the kinds of interactions they may have. We argue that self-observation through video can favor the development of a more horizontal relationship between teacher and supervisor. This should result in a climate of trust and support, which is generally accepted as essential to cultivating a positive attitude on the part of teachers towards their professional development (Kayaoglu, 2012; Bailey, 2006; Pajak, 2003). Certainly, it can do much to build serve the interests of improved instruction in the classroom.

In order to lay the foundation for a helping relationship between teacher and supervisor that differs from other less productive, strictly evaluative scenarios, a formative role must be assigned to the supervisor. Rather than limiting the work of academic supervisors to quality assurance, teacher appraisal, and evaluative class observation, they must also set aside a

significant amount of time – ideally at least 40% - 50% - to formative class observation and other initiatives oriented towards professional development. When teachers find that the main goal of the academic supervisor sitting in front of them is their own learning and professional growth, an attitude which is often supported by immediacy behaviors and clearly teacher-centered discourse, the very nature of their relationship is likely to change and so is the teacher's motivation (Vasquez & Reppen, 2007; Chamberlin, 2000). Thus the academic supervisor can become a *mentor* supervisor, a designation that is actually used at ICPNA to distinguish roles among staff members. In addition to formative class observations in which the academic supervisor physically goes to the classroom, there is also the possibility having teachers share their self-observation videos with their mentor supervisors or even discussing “unseen observations”, as described before. In either case, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Teachers should agree with their mentor on a focus prior to observation of the video.
- The mentor supervisor should reaffirm the formative nature of the viewing and subsequent post-observation conference.
- The teacher should communicate her/his expectations to the mentor supervisor in terms of the nature of any forthcoming interactions and all desired outcomes.
- The teacher should be encouraged to reflect on the entire video or selected segment again. The mentor supervisor's questions should encourage the teacher to arrive at new understandings and conclusions in addition to what may have resulted from the self-observation process.
- The video should be returned to the teacher once the process has concluded.

Needless to say, no copies should be made of the video without the teacher's knowledge and consent.

Certainly, what is proposed above also applies to having novice teachers share their videos with their mentor teachers. The dynamics, communication protocols, and expected outcomes should be very similar.

## Conclusion

In spite of the recognition that genuine reform can only be enacted at the classroom level by teachers exercising their professional judgment, instructional quality assurance and enhancement efforts have focused more on teacher evaluation of a summative (and often punitive) nature as if it were the only recourse available while formative teacher development practices seem to have taken a backseat. Rather than achieve the ultimate goal of improving instruction, a working environment that prioritizes evaluation rather than development will most likely have the opposite effect, placing more pressure on teachers and making it difficult for them to take the necessary risks to improve their practice. Certainly, performance appraisals are necessary, but there should be a healthy balance that allows teachers to work on and become aware of their progress.

However, self-observation must first be a highly personal, reflective endeavor if it is to lead to enhancing the quality of instruction, and higher levels of student achievement. Mandating that teachers share their videos with peers or, even worse, an institutional authority, such as a supervisor, could be highly distressing and counterproductive overall. We contend that voluntary sharing is a valid, logical next step to individualized reflection if it is a result of a conscious choice the teacher is in full control to make and if it

is done with a clearly formative purpose in mind. Within authentic, safe, professional learning communities, video-based self-observation may serve as a lever for bringing teachers and their supervisors together in a mutually beneficial relationship that can best serve the interests of their institution.

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