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## ***Filming for professional learning: Collaborations in innovation***

Anne Cloonan  
*Deakin University*

### **Abstract**

It is not unusual for academics to bemoan the reticence of teachers in adopting innovative tools and pedagogies, never more so than in the area of new technologies and multimodal literacies in classrooms. Typically, educational bureaucracies seek to dictate change in new technologies through a diffusion-adoption model of professional learning where ‘inservicing’ or ‘professional development’ of teachers is used to influence them to implement curriculum innovations. Typically a set of resources are developed for this purpose and teachers engage with workshop leaders as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active knowledge constructors. This paper explores an alternative form of engagement in which teachers are co-opted as collaborators and documenters of educational change. Its innovation is to use filming of teacher interviews and classroom practice – in this case to extend the teachers’ repertoires.

This article will discuss the film-infused model of professional learning which was developed within the context of a research project on literacy teachers’ engagement with multimodality, but has potential for wider application. The research context will be outlined and four elements of a film-infused professional learning model will be discussed in detail. The effects of this model on the resource development and professional learning will then be addressed.

### ***Filming for professional learning: Collaborations in innovation***

*If we wanted a film on, say, guided reading, we'd grab an 'expert', bring them into the studio and tape their expert view of what guided reading should be. Then we'd hunt around for a couple of teachers who were 'good' at guided reading. We'd give them the script from the experts, interview them and film them in their classroom with students. We'd cut the film together with some titles and graphics, bring in a narrator to read our 'voice of God' script, and send it out to regions and schools. A set of discussion points would be available on the web. The film would be viewed by leading teachers at regional workshops and in professional learning teams in schools. Innovation was thus diffused. (Anne Cloonan, 2009)*

Educational innovations of all kinds are reliant on teachers changing their practices. The scenario above captures typical processes used in developing materials and diffusing professional development in an effort to influence teachers to change their practices. Innovations are most often instigated by academics in universities and/or by the educational bureaucracy and filtered down to teachers in hierarchical ways. The processes used in the development of associated materials are critical to their authenticity and power.

In the scenario above, the materials developed would most likely lack contextual detail of the school, classroom, teacher and students. Like a single visit to a classroom, a one-off grab of film lacks depth of engagement with the experience of the teacher in becoming 'good' at an innovative teaching practice. What struggles were involved? What issues had to be addressed in a specific context? What prompted the teacher to embark on and persist with the innovation? How did the students react, at first? Over time? What learnings were involved – for both teacher and students? On reflection, how might the teacher do things differently?

This article draws on a study which explored teacher engagement in innovation through filming, the innovation in this case being the expansion of early years literacy teaching to incorporate multimodality. The context of the study was the Victorian government literacy section in 2003 where I worked as a policy and project officer. Approaches to literacy at the time were print-based only. Habitual teacher professional learning practices were underpinned by 'train-the-trainer' processes, a diffusion-adoption approach (McDonald, 1988), which positioned teachers as policy implementers in hierarchical relationships with policy makers and researchers (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Within a broader context of curriculum change, the study from which this article is drawn sought to change these habitual practices by engaging teachers as agentive, knowledge producing professionals. A key design element in achieving this was the use of film driven teacher professional learning. Filming was selected as a focus for change because of the relative newness and unfamiliarity of the theories of new literacies and multimodality. The hierarchical patterns described in the scenario above could not be applied due to lack of available early years teachers with the required expertise.

### **The Early Years Literacy Strategy and prevailing approaches to filming**

During 2003 the Victorian government school sector initiated numerous calls for reform of major aspects of schooling to meet the needs of rapidly changing social, economic and technological conditions. Within this broad curriculum context, I was involved in reviewing the Early Years Literacy strategy, which had been developed in the late 1990s to support the literacy teaching and learning of students in the early years of schooling (ages approximately 5-10 years).

The Early Years Literacy strategy was designed to support a statewide focus on raising literacy levels in the Victorian government primary school sector (approximately 1200 schools). Literacy was defined as reading and writing. A curriculum review in Victorian state education (Kosky, 2003) created an opportunity context for renewed policy directions which acknowledged literacy as multimodal (combinations of linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes of meaning). My role included development of filmic resources to be used to support teacher learning in the area of multimodality and multiliteracies (New London Group, 2000).

Films to support professional learning were key teacher support materials within the Early Years strategy's multilayered professional development and conferences strategy. Since 1997, the Early Years literacy team had worked in a collaborative way with the Schools Television production team to produce programs which could be available both through the satellite television narrowcast facility and on video for use in regional training programs and teacher school-based, professional learning teams.

In the development of films to support teacher learning, a division of roles between the Schools Television team members and the Early Years Branch members had been negotiated but this increasingly went unquestioned. Staff from the Early Years Branch

with a background in education, were responsible for the identification of issues and for finding the ‘talent’ to be filmed, including ‘expert talking heads’ and teachers.

The programs were highly structured and formulaic in nature, with innovation generally only in the area of special effects. The films presented ‘talking head experts’ discussing the theory and teachers showing and discussing ‘best practice’ around an issue. The interview questions and suggested responses had been prepared by the education officers and sent to the teachers before filming. Experts were also sent the questions but without suggested responses. Generally the experts were interviewed in the in-house studio while the teachers were interviewed in their classrooms. The act of interviewing was performed by a member of the production team with a technical, rather than an educational background.

The editing process was a collaborative effort between the education officers and the film editor, a specialist rather than an educationalist. However, due to the time consuming nature of this task and very short timelines, the editor was often left to make final shot selections without educational input.

### **Developing film-driven professional learning**

The design of my study deliberately interrupted the prevailing discourses of film production and engagement of teachers. The study investigated characteristics of teacher professional learning which engaged teachers as active and critical participants in investigating professional learning and multiliteracies pedagogies.

I secured funding for a series of films in which viewers were promised on a poster that they could ‘see the theory in practice demonstrated by Victorian teachers’ (Department of Education and Training, 2003). Unlike earlier models of filming where it was possible to find innovations being enacted in Victorian primary schools, in order to ‘see the theory in practice’ fresh approaches to professional learning and filming were required.

Four early years teachers agreed to collaborate in a series of interventions designed to develop classroom based multiliteracies pedagogical understandings and practices. The teachers, drawn from two Victorian government schools—one in inner-urban Melbourne, the other from a small regional town. Both schools had a high proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The four teachers collectively had

teaching responsibilities for students from Years Prep to 4 (aged 5-10 years) and had classroom teaching experience ranging between eight and twenty-five years. Professor Mary Kalantzis and Dr Bill Cope, developers of multiliteracies theory (New London Group, 2000), also agreed to share their expertise in workshops and in filmed interviews.

The design was participatory action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) where teachers formed a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) which sought to expand their literacy practices through a spiral of recursive cycles of critical planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Data collection was conducted over an eight month period, involved sixty-two lessons and the production of four films.

### **A four part model of film-driven professional learning**

Principles of effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995) were incorporated into the action research cycle:

- engaging teachers in the tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection connected with teachers work with students;
- grounding learning in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation driven by teachers' concerns;
- involving teachers in sharing knowledge in communities of practice in a sustained, ongoing, intensive manner supported by modelling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.

The professional learning model included the 'usual' interventions of engagement with expert input (in this case with the innovation of the theory of multiliteracies); as well as project-focussed workshopping through distributed collegiate mentoring and reflective action planning for classroom applications. An innovation was to also include a four part model of film-driven interventions:

- staged filming of classroom applications;
- staged filming of teacher interviews including descriptive reflection on classroom applications and professional knowledge;

- collaborative viewing of film artefacts (classroom applications; teacher descriptive reflection on classroom applications); and
- collaborative reflection on observed film artefacts.

The expert input presented the argument that contemporary literacy pedagogy needs to engage diverse learners' in ways through which they experience belonging and transformation in their multiliterate capacities. Becoming 'multiliterate' involves developing proficiency in multiple modes of meaning including linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal designs. Multiliterate capacities are supported through the integration of four pedagogies - situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (New London Group, 2000).

Filming presented a particular saliency when considered in relation to the overall goal of the project, to expand teachers' literacy repertoires to include multimodal practices and understandings. Multimodal filming techniques were incorporated into a participatory action research design as a means of immersing teachers in the types of practices often resisted in literacy pedagogy.

The following table shows the alignment of the staged filming of classroom applications, teacher interviews, the collaborative viewing of film artefacts and subsequent reflection with the stages of action research.

Table 1: Professional learning interventions and action research cycle

Professional learning interventions	Action-research stages
Expert input: multiliteracies schemas Project-focussed workshopping through distributed collegiate mentoring Reflective action planning for classroom applications	Planning
Staged filming of classroom applications Staged filming of teacher interviews including descriptive reflection on classroom applications and professional knowledge	Acting
Collaborative viewing of film artefacts (classroom applications; teacher descriptive reflection on classroom applications)	Observing
Collaborative reflection on observed film artefacts	Reflecting

I will discuss each of the film-driven interventions in the four part model of in the following sections.

### ***Staged filming of classroom applications***

The goal was to develop four films which were to be screened via the Schools Television network, the Department of Education's narrowcast satellite television network, which had distribution to over 2200 Victorian government, Catholic and independent schools. The screening schedule for the four films was as follows:

- *Considering Multiliteracies*, screening date 20 May, 2003.
- *Exploring Multiliteracies*, screening date 17 June, 2003.
- *Moving into Multiliteracies*, screening date 14 October, 2003.
- *Multiliteracies in Action*, screening date 21 October, 2003.

This schedule required classroom filming to be undertaken over one or two days prior to each screening. A resolute schedule of dates including classroom filming was agreed early in the study.

Staged exploration of classroom experiments was selected to maximise the engagement of teachers as knowledge producers affecting change rather than as policy implementers. This design allowed for three different classroom responses in meeting locally contextualised needs (two of the teachers team-taught a combined class of students). The teachers demonstrated flexibility in designing sequences of lessons to meet the perceived learning needs of their students.

For the filming, case study teacher 'Rachel' (all teacher names are pseudonyms) focused on multimodality in narratives, the telling, presenting, deconstructing or representing of stories through gestural, visual, linguistic and audio modes of meaning. Initial filming showed Rachel's lessons with her schools entrants focused on gestural meaning-making, including exploration of peer and personal expressions and gestures; mirrored reflections and expressions, gestures and stances in the process of being filmed. Through modelled and shared reading and writing and language experience literacy lessons included a focus on expressions in images from magazines and on game cards; and expressions, gestures and stances in photographs of children, including sorting cut outs of isolated facial features and body parts; viewing gestural representation of characters in animation; and viewing a film of students for gestural meaning.



In later filming Rachel's lessons expanded to focus on audio meaning resources. Foci included exploration of a range of musical resources and speech, music and sound effects in interplay with visual animation. Further lessons focused on musical resources in interplay with visuals when constructing a video. Linguistic meaning was deployed to respond to the audio and visual resources in an animation and to reflect on gestural representation in film.

Case study teachers Kim and Meredith, who taught at the same school as Rachel, initially concentrated on deployment of an integrated inquiry approach focused on Humanities outcomes pursued through deployment of the linguistic mode. Written questions and answers; an oral and written brainstorm; oral definitions of celebrations and oral and written classification of celebrations highlighted the linguistic mode.

As filming continued (and the teachers collaboratively viewed and reflected on film segments – see below) Kim and Meredith expanded their teaching foci to address the meaning-making resources of the visual and linguistic modes of meaning in greeting cards and their interrelationships. Lessons addressing visual and linguistic meaning-making designs included a brainstorm of symbols, slogans and jingles; and exploring and analysing features of greeting cards; and designing greeting cards. For later filming, Kim and Meredith incorporated the analysing and production of video and audio within a new integrated topic of 'Entertainment'.

The third case study, Pip, initially centred teaching around the researching of personal; profiles and 'passions' and the creation of a class webpage. For the first film Pip focused on the analysis of the interplay of linguistic and visual related meaning with lessons including writing personal details, writing about a 'passion', researching information on the internet, developing a concept map showing knowledge of websites; listening and responding to stories on a website; and comparing websites and books.

As filming progressed, the emphasis was expanded to include students' production of texts through publishing personal profiles and passion projects onto a class webpage and making an oral presentation to the class. Visual, linguistic audio interplay was addressed in the context of publishing personal profiles in 'PowerPoint' and a class newspaper.

As these three cases show, the filming classroom enactments which resulted from teacher engagement with theory linked directly to teachers work with students within the tasks of teaching, assessment and observation (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). They are examples of how teachers can, ‘to create as well as consume professional knowledge through self-directed inquiry and research into their own practice’ (Grisham, 2000) thus avoiding the ‘devolution drain’ experienced by teachers as a result of change management approaches to professional learning (Comber et al., 2004).

They also show the complexity of teachers’ work with students as it develops over time through sequences of crafted lessons which build student understandings, a complexity which cannot be captured in a ‘one-off’.

### ***Staged filming of teacher interviews***

Semi-structured interviews, filmed and audio-taped (Burns, 2000; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) were conducted between the researcher and individual teachers. Filmed interviews were conducted four times with the case study teachers (three times in the case of Kim and Meredith) and occurred in the teachers’ classrooms. These interviews focused on the teachers’ staged implementation as a result of engagement with multiliteracies theory. The interviews included background personal professional knowledge; contextual descriptions; general reflections on developing teacher understandings of multiliteracies theory; outlines of classroom applications at strategic points within the participatory action-research cycle; and descriptions of student responses to these implementations. Samples of questions in each of these categories are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Samples of interview questions

<b>Background Information</b>	Name; School; Grade; Qualifications; Experience What is the profile of your school? class? Teaching team? How is literacy learning organised? How are choices made about what to teach and how to teach? What are your learners’ needs and expectations? (e.g. diversity in the classroom, specific and general goals, specific and general needs)
<b>Understandings of multimodality</b>	What was the catalyst for you joining this project? <i>What captured your imagination? What hooked you in?</i> What did you know about multimodality at the beginning of the project? What did you expect when you agreed to be in this project? What was your approach to literacy teaching prior to project?

	<p>What planning tools were you using before the interventions/project?</p> <p>What impact was your previous approach having on students?</p> <p>How has your approach to literacy teaching changed as a result of your involvement in the project?</p>
<p><b>Classroom implementation of multimodality/changes in practice</b></p>	<p>How did you 'begin with multimodality'? <i>What did you do? How did you decide? Why did you do that? What did you find? Where did you go from there?</i> (first interview)</p> <p>Can you tell me about your classroom use of multimodality?</p> <p>What do you think about the notion of emphasising different modes?</p> <p>Have you looked at all the modes of meaning? What plans do you have?</p> <p>How do you emphasise linguistic (visual, audio, gestural, spatial) modes?</p>
<p><b>Impact on teachers/teacher learning</b></p>	<p>What would you say has been the impact of the project on you as a teacher?</p> <p>What have you found useful?</p> <p>What have you found least helpful for your professional enhancement?</p> <p>How are you approaching assessment?</p> <p>What advice would you give someone just starting out?</p> <p>What are your future plans?</p>

The interview questions were strongly contextualised in teachers' classroom issues and practices. The interviews included background personal professional knowledge; interests and strengths; school community and teaching contexts and roles; contextual descriptions; approaches to literacy teaching and learning; motivations for joining the research project; knowledge of multiliteracies; ongoing reflections on developing teacher understandings of multiliteracies theory; outlines of classroom applications at strategic points within the participatory action-research cycle; and descriptions of student responses to these implementations.

Counter to the habitual filming practices, the building up of a rich picture of the teachers aimed to show 'teachers as embodied subjects with personal histories and dynamic professional identities' (Comber et al., 2004, p. 3).

For example, it is through interviews that viewers of the film find that case study teacher Rachel had a strong interest and expertise in literacy teaching having completed a Masters in Education and amassed over twenty-five years teaching experience. Rachel was acting Assistant Principal, with responsibility for student welfare, parent liaison and teacher professional learning. She was also coordinator of English in Years Prep-6. Rachel's teaching of the Prep class (5 year old students in their first year of schooling) is during the daily dedicated literacy time, a class she taught three mornings a week from 9am to 12noon.

The viewer hears of her difficulties in beginning to enact her learning with a young group of students, and how she settled on a starting point,

It was worrying me...what can you do? I imagined what you can do in a grade 3/4 or a 5/6, the depth...but then I thought no, I think the Prep year is quite an exciting time for laying all that groundwork... the thing they know most about is themselves, so we worked on themselves and their own facial expressions and we played lots of games using facial expressions and getting to know the language of feelings (Rachel, March 2003).

But while she had a starting point, Rachel was uncomfortable with what she saw as limited innovation in her implementation during filming. She ruminated on how she could expand her literacy practices beyond, linguistic, visual and gestural representations and was excited about a breakthrough in incorporating the audio mode, as evident in the second film,

I kept saying, 'What I'm doing is just natural. I am not doing anything. I'm a fraud because I am not doing anything new'. Then I actually got the brainwave of bringing in the audio. And then I felt 'yes I have taken my learning and their learning another step' (Rachel, May 2003).

There is honesty and authenticity evident as Rachel grapples with the innovation and articulates the issues she has. The breakthroughs are 'bottom up' breakthroughs, quite unlike the 'top down' scenario in the quote at the beginning of this paper as Rachel engages directly with theory and creates responses in her classroom.

In the last film, the viewer hears of Rachel's surprise as this experienced teacher reflects on her initial expectations of the young students' multimodal capacities and her renewed respect for them,

I've read stories a million times and never really thought of using the pictures to predict at that level, like predicting use of colour, predicting expressions, perspective and using that as an entry into the book. I'd never have thought at this stage of Prep teaching that I'd be talking about 'close-ups' and 'angles' ... what's really blown me away is that this age group children are more able to take this on board than some of the children I work with in other areas of the school. I've worked with a literacy support group in [Years] 3 and 4 and I've tried to use the same ideas and it's harder for them to take on board. They've got to actually unlearn to focus on the alphabetic literacy and learn that it's fine to use all those other areas that are there to support them in the meaning, so all those other modes.... The Preps' language and understandings is much deeper or they're much more willing to use that (Rachel, October, 2003).

Teacher interviews inject the teacher voice into films. Teachers' considerations in establishing starting points for operationalising their learnings in classrooms were

many, including the needs and resources of the respective schools, different student stages, experiences and learning needs as well as teacher strengths and interests. Teacher commentary, gained through teacher interviews, illustrates teachers' purposes in joining the project, including personal and professional interests, meeting student and teacher learning needs, building capacity, and the excitement and challenge of an educational innovation. The staged nature of the interviews, collected over the life of the research show the admitted superficial knowledge of multiliteracies articulated in the first film replaced by confidence as skilled practitioners who have done the hard work of learning, implementing and theorising. The teachers became professional spokespeople and experts, commenting on their classroom practices and learnings for the film audience.

### ***Collaborative viewing of and reflection on film artefacts***

Following each filming session (classroom applications and teacher interviews) I made a 'rough cut' of the film. This 'cut' of each program was screened to the group of case study teachers prior to screening, creating an opportunity for feedback. The teachers, a community of learners, would collaboratively view and provide feedback on the 'cut' of each film, engaging teachers in ongoing reflective examination of their practice. The film artefacts provided a reference point for collaborative viewing, debriefing and ongoing planning, acting and reflection involving a retrospective exploration of events, practices and thought patterns (Schön, 1983). This gave rise to negotiations since at some points teachers were not satisfied with the representation screened.

Take the instance when the Years 1 and 2 teachers – Kim and Meredith - viewed the segment which depicted their classroom applications in the first film in the series. Kim and Meredith had agreed to be filmed in their classroom but due to their perception of the exposing nature of the filming medium, had negotiated with another teacher (Rachel) to undertake the interview. After viewing themselves, accompanied by segments from Rachel's interview, Kim and Meredith passionately clarified and extended the commentary, impressing on the group the finer details of their teaching purposes and the ways of extending students' responses they felt were missing from the commentary in the edited film.

... but it was throughout the four or five weeks of the integrated unit that we were doing it, the pictures or the cards became more complex as well. At first we had just the birthday cake, but when it got to the one that was the love heart—it was an engagement card—but when we made our list we realised that a love heart can be found on an anniversary card, a valentines day card, a wedding card... it takes a lot of work, because it's a birthday card and you might say 'what is it?'; 'it's a birthday card; 'how do you know?; 'I just know it' and it takes a lot of prior work for them to feel that they can say 'I think it's a birthday card BECAUSE...there's eight candles and I think it might be for a girl because the candles are pink, and she might be eight years old because there are eight candles' (Kim and Meredith, April, 2003).

This quote gives a flavour of the objections Kim and Meredith had to the way their work had been portrayed. Kim and Meredith's objections concerned condensation of the detail of teaching and lack of detail on the emphases of lessons and the outcomes being pursued. The recall stimulated by the viewing of film artefacts of their classroom practice enabled them to collectively 'relive an original situation with vividness and accuracy' (Bloom, 1953, p. 161), enabling collaborative scrutiny of the classroom applications and the reflective commentary by team members.

As a result of Kim and Meredith's dissatisfaction with the filmed artefacts, they undertook a new professional role; that of professional spokespeople providing commentary on their teaching applications in future films in the series. This was enabled by reflection and tolerance of dissonance. This is a hallmark of a teachers' inquiry community, a community which regards 'dissonance and questioning as signs of teachers' learning rather than their failing' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 22).

Undertaking the role of professional spokespeople involved Kim and Meredith in overcoming considerable discomfort associated with the scrutiny involved in the revealing process of filming. Passivity, through delegating responsibility for the role to another teacher, had resulted in a filmic artefact of their practices which they saw as an inadequate representation. Undertaking the role of professional spokespeople involved taking responsibility for future commentary and involved a greater commitment and accountability to the project. This is a significant professional shift for those working in environments where,

[t]eachers have not been encouraged to work together on voluntary, self-initiated projects or speak out with authority about instructional, curricular, and policy issues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, p. 9)

The data shows that Kim and Meredith's renewed commitment to the project involved an opening up of the discursive space around their engagement with and application of the multiliteracies theory. Collaborative viewing and reflection on film artefacts provided a stimulus for the learning community's reflective comment and examination of data, which in turn prompted further planning for implementation through recursive cycles.

### ***Impact of filming on teacher learning and resource development***

The resolute and highly coordinated nature of the film schedule, with its pre-determined deadlines, provided a strong stimulus for teachers to undertake multiliteracies-informed classroom enactments and to describe these enactments and reflect on their learning. The intended distribution of the films resulted in the creation of permanent records of grounded classroom designs, or illustrative teaching texts available for review by those involved, and for a broad audience.

Classroom filming within a participatory action-research design resulted in diverse teaching responses including multimodal narratives; a study of greeting cards within a broader topic of celebrations and festivals and research of a personal interest using multimodal sources in the development of a class webpage. Unscripted accompanying teacher interviews provided a rich contextual picture, a sense of journey replete with the struggles, dead-ends, discoveries and triumphs that characterise learning. This diverse knowledge production stands in contrast to habitual teacher professional learning and film production processes that emphasised 'risk management and managerialism' (Comber, Kamler, Hood, Moreau and Painter, 2004, p. 82-3).

Collaborative viewing of film enabled teachers to instigate collaborative cross-school discussion, a bridge to counterpoint professional isolation resulting from individual teaching spaces—isolation which is a major factor affecting the role of teacher and teacher professionalism and which presents difficulty in developing shared knowledge and standards of practice (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Collaborative analysis of practice-based documentary data (film segments) contributed to teachers'

professionalism, an interdependent collegiality between interschool team members with a positive impact on the professional learning and quality of teaching.

Seeing themselves in the medium of film promoted strong teacher engagement with the project and resulted in a developing sense of maturity that became more evident as the series was progressively developed over four episodes. The role of the films also impacted on the students involved and the communities from which they were drawn, with the 'star' quality, the publicity and broad interest resulting in increased engagement, heightened performance and developing a sense of confidence.

The films have powerfully impacted on the broader education community; they were transmitted to over 2200 Victorian schools, with repeat screenings as a result of viewer demand. Copies have been screened in all Victorian educational regions and have been deployed by numerous Australian state bureaucracies. The films have been drawn on as resources at national and international conferences and continue to be used in universities across Australia and in teacher professional learning programs. The series of films is held in high peer esteem, evidenced by its receipt of the 2004 'Australian Teachers of Media' award for 'Best Educational Resource', ahead of numerous commercial and state and national government-developed resources.

## **Conclusion**

The task of developing a film resource to support a classroom innovation prompted a reconceptualisation of the nature, impact and authenticity of such resources and of the processes used in their development. As a literacy project officer I was involved in heightened levels of what had previously been deemed as 'technical aspects of film making' - scripting, shooting, and editing. These so called 'technical' aspects of making educational policy films, usually overlooked in ways similar to the overlooking of modes of meaning other than the linguistic, in fact are meaning-making aspects. Rather than, hearing the 'voice of God' narration style presenting education departmental policy objectives, or scripted teacher voices, viewers of such films deserve to see veracity in teacher-student interactions and teacher-theorist, teacher-teacher and teacher-project officer reflections through authentic illustrative examples.

In innovating in the areas of film development, opportunities for film-driven professional learning were revealed. Engaging teacher participants in the four part



film driven learning model challenged the customary hierarchical and authoritative direction of flows of knowledge from bureaucracy to consultant, from consultant to teacher and from theorist to teacher. This somewhat radical approach to government departmental film-making, encouraged teachers to be authentic rather than scripted and managed in teaching episodes and in voicing their reflections. Tackling the topic of teacher professional learning as a series filmed over time, rather than a ‘one-off’ magic bullet, offers a sense of a journey of possibilities, rather than an exemplary solution.

Teacher dialogue in professional learning situations is often divorced from the context of the main focus of their work with students. Practices such as discussing student work samples, sharing planning and assessment documents and describing their classroom environment and practices are limited in their capacity to illustrate the complexity of practices. Authentic filmed segments have the capacity to show practices more fully.

Filming has particular saliency in the context of research exploring teacher engagement with multimodality. A focus on multimodal artefacts and linking with a community of teachers beyond one’s own school resonates with the affordances the new technologies are offering students in classrooms. The technologies offer different entry points to learning and different ways of interacting with others while learning.

However I would argue that the model presented here has broad applicability to professional learning for educational innovation. Given the increasing availability of social software, flip cameras sites such as ‘Teacher Tube’ and high speed bandwidth, new possibilities are available for anyone to be a film maker and share their films with others. Interviewing, shooting film, editing and distribution are roles increasingly available directly to teachers. Teachers engaging collaboratively with images and sounds of themselves in the filmic medium over sustained periods have opportunities to evaluate and reflect upon their teaching experiences in new ways, in new relationships, in pursuit of new learning goals.

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