

FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

## Video as a Tool in Teacher Learning

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The use of video as a tool to aid reflection in teacher practice is certainly not novel. Its use as a means to provide feedback—feedback that often surprises and reveals—has long been recognized across all fields of study that focus on the development of both observable yet sometimes elusive skills. From sports to psychology, to medicine and nursing, and in education, video records provide the chance for “actors” to step back and view and review their own work directly, without reliance on either memory-based recall or via the interpretations of their observers. We believe herein lies its potential: for empowerment and growth and for insights made by the viewer, rather than as a means for external evaluation. Teachers in particular have largely experienced observation as something to which they are subjected, a required act of compliance associated with high stakes and high stress, thus tending to fear and avoid it. Such situations do not provide authentic opportunities for genuine professional growth. Delivering the power to self-observe directly into teachers’ hands is essential to the reversal of these orientations to observation. Video is the essential tool in this process.

Indeed, video records of teaching have been used very successfully to support reflection in pre- and in-service teacher development (e.g., [Baecher & McCormack, 2015](#); [Rosaen, Lundeberg, Cooper, Fritzen, & Terpstra, 2008](#); [Sherin & van Es, 2005](#); [Tripp & Rich, 2012](#); [Welsch & Devlin, 2007](#)). These and many other studies have shown ways in which skilled facilitators enable teachers to reap the full benefits of video review. Our aim in bringing together this special topic issue of *The New Educator* is to further advance the practices of video-based professional learning by sharing cutting-edge approaches to video review in a wider range of contexts than has been previously shared in the literature. As the healthy response to the call for papers for this special issue revealed, so many of us in a range of educational settings are currently using video in a variety of ways. For this special issue, we selected six studies that represent a continuum of these settings, from early fieldwork preservice contexts to professional learning communities of experienced teachers and from student teachers’ use of video to its use with teacher educators. These articles represent a constellation of interests in which educators are being thoughtful and creative in

their exploration of video to promote evidence-based reflection embedded in local contexts and with respect to local classroom ecologies.

The first article featured, “Developing Expertise: Using Video to Hone Teacher Candidates’ Classroom Observation Skills” written by Kristen Cuthrell, Sharilyn C. Steadman, Joy Stapleton, and Elizabeth Hodge, describes the use of video review in beginning fieldwork experiences—a much earlier stage than usually reported. Adapting the concept of “grand rounds” from the medical profession, the authors share how they designed a fieldwork observation process that allowed their teacher candidates to engage in reviewing the same core video series that enabled their faculty to have a much clearer sense of what they were “seeing” than what usually occurs in fieldwork observations. This model provides teacher candidates with structured opportunities to grow observation skills that are crucial in determining what constitutes quality instruction. In sum, the approach provides teacher education with ways to radically change how early fieldwork observations are conducted.

In the next article, “Using Video-Stimulated Recall to Enhance Preservice-Teacher Reflection,” Jason L. Endacott provides insight into two underexplored areas in research on video review to date: application in the secondary social studies context and the use of a widely used US teacher evaluation framework to guide teacher candidates’ reflective inquiry. Using a detailed protocol, the author “switches the tables,” requiring teacher candidates themselves—rather than teacher educators—to guide conversation about their recorded teaching. By allowing teacher candidates to pause the recording and to share what they were thinking about instruction at that very moment in that specific context, as well as their current thoughts, the author cultivates a metacognitive approach with a view to deepening professional reflection.

Another novel focus is presented in “Reflecting on Talk: A Mentor Teacher’s Gradual Release in Co-Planning” by Stacey Pylman, in which the author shows how a student teacher navigates the challenges of coplanning and coteaching with her cooperating teacher. While collaborative planning and teaching are increasingly common formats in US classrooms, there is very little work on observation or video review of these arrangements, which often incubate in the student teacher–cooperating teacher dyad. In this narrative, the author analyzes video recordings of professional conversations about planning instruction to discern ways in which a seasoned and an apprentice practitioner engage with one another. This situation enables the mentor teacher to experience a deep level of awareness about the important practice of developing and constantly adjusting best ways to “pass the baton” in our profession.

The next article, “Using Video to Enhance Reflective Practice: Student Teachers’ Dialogic Examination of Their Own Teaching” by Jackie Sydnor continues the exploration of conversation analysis, this time between the teacher candidate and the university supervisor. The author posits the need

for novice teachers to be explicitly taught different modes of reflection, including the complex relationships among reflecting “on action,” “in action,” and “for action.” In this example of action research, Sydnor employs a qualitative analysis of student teachers that documents ways in which they experience a shift from initially focusing on themselves and their idiosyncrasies to student actions and, ultimately—and more productively—on the mechanics of teaching and classroom management through student engagement and techniques for promoting discussion. Ultimately, video is utilized to help student teachers hone astute self-observation skills in order to cultivate a disposition of being a professional who is reflective for action.

Shifting from preservice teachers to in-service teachers, Anne Estapa, Rachel J. Pinnow, and Kathryn B. Chval’s article “Video as a Professional Development Tool to Support Novice Teachers as They Learn to Teach English Language Learners” provides us with a hitherto unseen glimpse into classroom video analysis, this time from the point of view of the students. By using video cameras mounted to student’s baseball caps over a two-year period, the authors document ways in which teachers notice the following: (a) a specific ELL; (b) the whole class; (c) herself as a teacher; and (d) a non-ELL student. By analyzing ongoing video recordings from the perspective of a child in one’s classroom, along with conversation facilitated by a seasoned teacher educator, novice teachers focused on in-the-moment professional instances that helped develop professional judgment and made pedagogical changes to better interact with, and more effectively teach, ELLs.

The final article in the issue, “Using Video for Teacher-Educator Professional Development” by Jessica W. Tunney and Elizabeth A. van Es, completes the circle by offering us a view into the understandings of teacher educators engaging with both mentor teachers and their “shared” student teachers. Centering video as a core component in creating a shared vision for robust instruction in schools, the authors collaborated with mentor teachers to be joint architects of a structured observation tool to be used with student teachers. By using video recordings of teaching to center conversations on prioritizing what are the best ways to support student teachers in becoming effective instructional practitioners, professionals were able to span what is often seen as a divide between the vision of university teacher-preparation programs and the expertise of mentor teachers in the field.

As can be seen in all of these six contributions, the authors display a deep reverence for teachers and the craft of teaching. What also unites them is their recognition of how important the skills of observation, analysis, and subsequent actions are to improve professional practice. By making the familiar unfamiliar, video provides the viewer with opportunities to step back, to slow down, and to see teaching practices anew. As a result, a multiplicity of viewpoints emerges, and educators appreciate yet again the

grand complexities that exist in the day-to-day, often taken-for-granted structures in, and dynamics of, teaching and learning.

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This special issue of *The New Educator* —“Video as a Tool in Teacher Learning” —explores the enormous potential of multi-media to support teacher learning, reflection, and analysis. We are enormously grateful to the guest editors—Laura Baecher and David Connor—for putting together such a rich compilation to launch us into the new year.

—Beverly Falk  
*Editor-in-Chief*