

No: FE33
Title: Using Digital Video In The Role Play Of An A Level Business Studies Board Of Director's Meeting
Author: Angela Bhandari, Sandwell College

Background

I teach in Further Education in the A level section teaching AS and A2 Accounts as well as AS and A2 Business Studies. As is common across Further Education, attendance and retention rates are an ongoing consistent problem within the section. Finding ways to help students develop confidence in their studies are important in addressing these issues.

I have been involved in Test Bed activities under the role of Test Bed Team Leader and Test Bed Lead Practitioner for the A level section.

The role play has been used for the last three years in term three for A2 Business Studies. Without filming it and any use of ICT, the role play has been extremely useful, as it brings in many aspects of the syllabus and allows further discussion on a variety of subjects, such as stakeholder theory, pressure groups etc.

From this, an idea was developed to see if filming of the role play would impact on a student's learning experiences.

The role play (Appendix A) is such that each student is given a role such as Finance Director, Trade Union leader etc and has 15 minutes to read up on their briefing and objectives set for the meeting. They are then brought together for the Board meeting with each student having their own individual agenda and aims to achieve in the meeting.

Progress

Prior to filming there were a few students who did not want to be filmed. Every year there is resistance by some to the role play, so there was some anticipation that filming might incur a similar reaction or even more distrust of the game.

Reassurances that the playback would be for the group only, and encouragement and assurances of confidentiality, allowed the filming to take place. However two students asked to be in the role of observer rather than participate (due to reservations about being in the role play and being filmed?).

After filming, the role play was burnt onto a DVD and each student was given a copy to watch at their leisure. With the DVD a questionnaire was handed out (Appendix B), asking for their comments on the role play. Once these were returned a further questionnaire (Appendix C) was given to obtain more specific information. A few discussions were also held in a group and on a one-to-one basis for further information.

An attempt to play a copy to the whole group did not materialise due to technical hitches within the classroom (still being rectified). This was disappointing as I had the intention of playing back the DVD and stopping it at various points to discuss certain topics in perhaps more detail e.g. the finances within the role play, what could have been said and discussed, where the dynamics of the role play changed etc.

Findings

1. A common agreement was that filming influenced a student's performance. As one student put it "Being on film made you get into character wanting to be error free", and "made me want to act better and be more in the role and want to perform better".

2. Most students stated that it made them act in a more professional manner "not wanting to be filmed fooling around". One student noted the fact that we actually ran out of film (60 minutes) and when this happened students were less formal/serious about the role play.
3. The questionnaire also revealed that filming led to confidence building – play back enabled students to see their strengths and weaknesses and learn from any errors seen.

"I gained knowledge of where I went wrong – sometimes I contradicted myself which I know not to let happen again". "Helped me pick up points where I can improve next".
4. Role play is such that they have to think quickly and have certain information that they have to bring into the meeting. Being under pressure it is easy to be submerged in your own role play, not seeing the overall picture of a board room meeting. Thus, with replay, the bigger picture can be seen as well as their own individual strengths and weaknesses. "I learnt from other people – how well they argued their case "
5. Having said this, two students stated they fast forwarded the role play and only watched their own part to see how they fared!! My impression was not entirely correct in that I thought they would all learn from each other upon playback. This seemed similar to presentations where people learn their own topics inside out but do not absorb other people's presentations as much.
6. Some stated that they learned from other students. In particular one student was viewed as impressive. There is a friendly rivalry within the group anyway and perhaps the filming seemed to encourage that competitive spirit. "Now want to thoroughly rip Jazz in the next role play with lots of points and terms!!"
7. Some were disappointed in their performance, but felt they could see their mistakes clearly and areas for improvement during playback. "Could have been more assertive" "Did not put points across clearly". Some were surprised as to how they came across "felt weird watching myself" "learn from my mistakes – in my case – body language" "could definitely improve presentational skills" These quotes could perhaps be interpreted as acknowledging the need to build up analytical skills as well as communication skills – both vital for A2 Business Studies exams.
8. Most students stated that they enjoyed the experience, and marks for the role play were higher with filming than without.
9. Some however felt the filming had no impact on them at all. "I knew what I was doing right or wrong anyway so playback did not help". However the same students still felt that being filmed regardless of playback was useful, as it formalised the role play and improved the quality of discussion. "playing to the camera".
10. Over time many students stated that they actually forgot the camera was there as time went on during the board meeting. This I feel was a positive factor for the more inhibited students who were not keen on being filmed. As stated, two students requested to observe – perhaps for confidence reasons – yet at the end of the role play allowed themselves to be filmed giving feedback. This seemed possible due to the fact that by the end of

the session the camera was more "normal" and less a "big issue" in the eyes of the students. I am hoping they will participate in the next one.

11. One student commented " I feel the filming was very effective as it is like a preparation for where I want to be in the future – in a board meeting". The filming certainly formalised the procedure and gave them a feel of a work environment.
12. Overall I feel motivation increased with all the students. All of them said it was an enjoyable lesson and seemed very enthused. Moreover offers have come forward already by students to film their next topic that they would normally do as a presentation. I was very pleased with the filming – I think it worked well because of the dynamics of the class, many of whom enjoy a debate and having the focus on them.

Recommendations

1. Many students were very disappointed that they had no notice of the filming. Next time they have requested one week's notice with roles being given out a week earlier to allow them to prepare.
2. They were keen to dress more formally (suits and ties) to make it more realistic and for a board room in the college to be booked. Again filming has formalised the situation.
3. A tripod was recommended for next time and improved sound.
4. A major request was for students to use the camera to film a topic and play it back as opposed to just doing a presentation on PowerPoint. Students do a number of presentations during the year for this subject and perhaps filming would be more interesting for the topics given.
5. One of the observers was keen on this from the viewpoint that "it is better to film a topic rather than have all eyes on you in the presentation". So this could potentially help those who do not like presentations, as the filming could incorporate many visuals and not just one presenter standing in front of the rest of the class.
6. Another student (one with erratic attendance!!) commented "film presentations may help when a student misses a lesson – they can get the DVD and watch lessons instead of looking at powerpoint presentations clueless!".

RESEARCH PROJECT**ALL ANSWERS ARE ANONYMOUS & CONFIDENTIAL**

Carew's Clothing Ltd boardroom meeting role play was video recorded to see whether this had any effect on your learning experience.

To research this I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:-

1. Did the recording of the meeting influence the way you carried out the actual role play?
2. Did you like or dislike being filmed? Did it affect your performance?
3. As we do more role plays next term, would you prefer to be filmed or not?
4. How did you feel when watching the final version that was played back?
5. Did you learn anything new from the recording? If so please give details.
6. Would you do anything differently in the role play now you have viewed the playback?
7. How could the teaching and learning environment be enhanced further in the future?
8. The energy levels seemed very high – did the filming make a difference or was it just the role play which was enjoyable
9. Having viewed your own personal DVD at home, did you gain anything at home. Is it something you would re-watch or not?
10. How could the camera be used to greater effect in a teaching and learning environment?
11. What were the limitations of the filming?
12. Do you think the filming will help you at all for your actual exams?
13. As a learning experience could you rate the role play with the filming and also without the filming out of 10?
14. Do you have any other comments?
15. Last question!!

Please could you indicate which number closely reflects your feelings most closely in the session
BE HONEST!!

CONCENTRATING	3	2	1	THINKING ABOUT OTHER THINGS
RELAXED	3	2	1	ANXIOUS
ENERGETIC	3	2	1	TIRED
HAPPY WITH BEING HERE	3	2	1	WISHING TO BE SOMEWHERE ELSE
EXCITED	3	2	1	BORED
PLEASED WITH MY WORK	3	2	1	DISAPPOINTED WITH MY WORK
ACTIVE	3	2	1	PASSIVE
CHEERFUL	3	2	1	IRRITABLE
TIME PASSES QUICKLY	3	2	1	TIME PASSES SLOWLY

RESEARCH PROJECT

ALL ANSWERS ARE ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL

Carew's Clothing Ltd boardroom meeting role play was filmed and played back to see whether this had any effect on your learning experience.

To research this I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:-

1. Could you specify the most helpful part?
2. Could you specify the least helpful part?
3. Can you think of any reasons why some students may have had problems with the filming
4. If you were the teacher, how would you have changed things in that lesson?
5. Would you do anything differently in the role play now you have viewed the playback?