



A Clearer View of the Classroom



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What comes to mind when you think about video and recordings for self-reflection and professional learning?

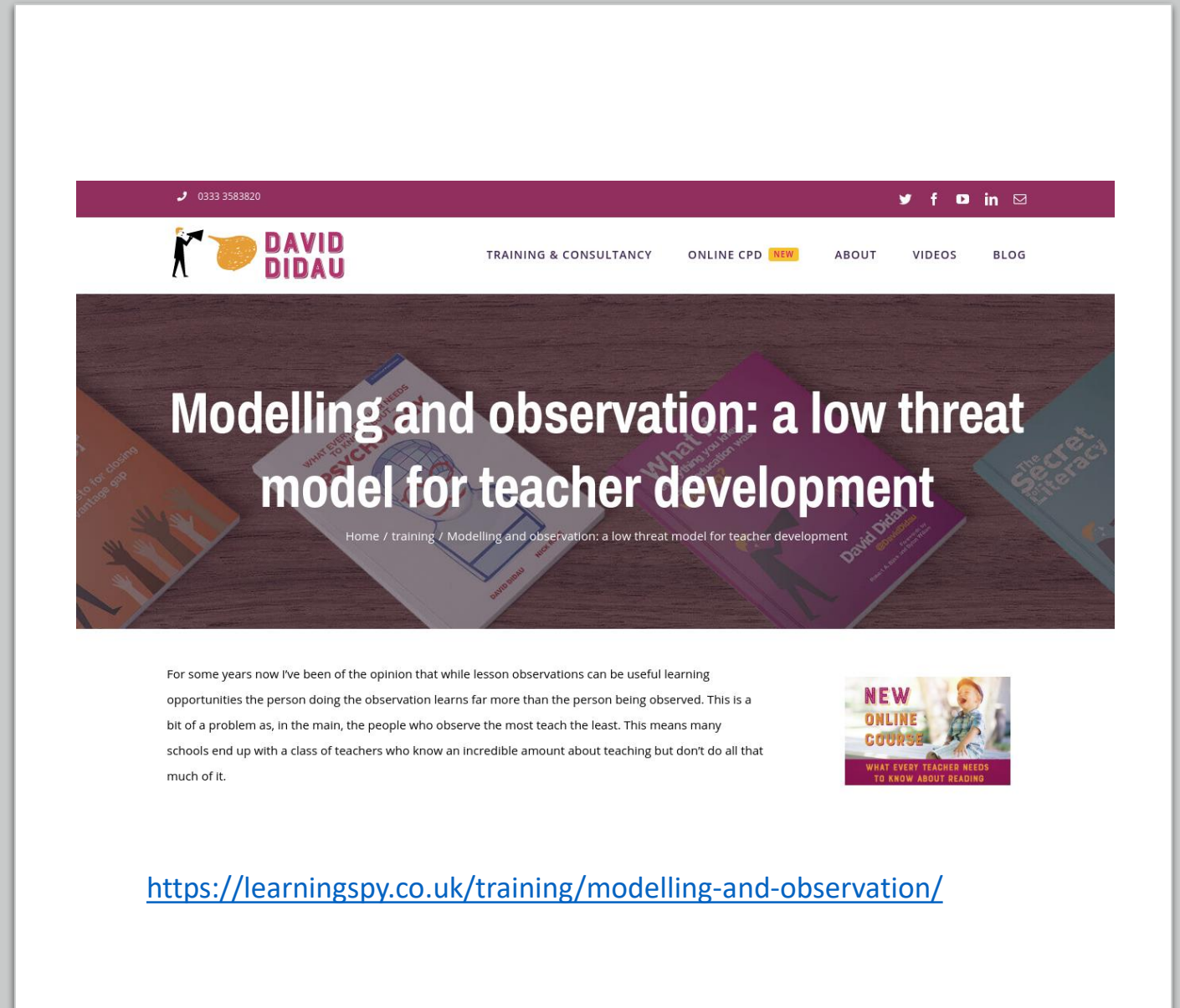
My 'video for professional learning' journey:

- 2018: In-Service Pilot
- 2019: Findings shared at AP Conference
- 2020: SUNCETT MA Short Course Research
- 2021: Advanced Teacher Status Project

Recordings act as a concrete authentic artefact that capture real-time activity. This enables the teacher to trust the content produced:

- **"You actually see how it went rather than how you think it went."**
- **"You can't hide behind anything. It's the truth."**

But video is limited by the view that is captured.



The screenshot shows a website for David Didau, a training and consultancy service. The header is purple with a white phone icon and the number 0333 3583820 on the left, and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Email on the right. Below the header is the David Didau logo, which features a stylized figure pointing to a yellow circle. The main navigation menu includes links for TRAINING & CONSULTANCY, ONLINE CPD (with a 'NEW' badge), ABOUT, VIDEOS, and BLOG. The main content area has a dark background with several book covers. The central text reads "Modelling and observation: a low threat model for teacher development". Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Home / training / Modelling and observation: a low threat model for teacher development. A paragraph of text follows: "For some years now I've been of the opinion that while lesson observations can be useful learning opportunities the person doing the observation learns far more than the person being observed. This is a bit of a problem as, in the main, the people who observe the most teach the least. This means many schools end up with a class of teachers who know an incredible amount about teaching but don't do all that much of it." To the right of this text is a small promotional image for a "NEW ONLINE COURSE" titled "WHAT EVERY TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT READING" featuring a young boy reading. At the bottom of the page is a blue hyperlink: <https://learningspy.co.uk/training/modelling-and-observation/>

"It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves."

Lawrence Stenhouse (1975, p.143)

Professional Standards:

- **Reflect on what works best in your T&L to meet the diverse needs of learners**
- **Evaluate and challenge your practice, values and beliefs**

A Clearer View of the Classroom:

<https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf3306>



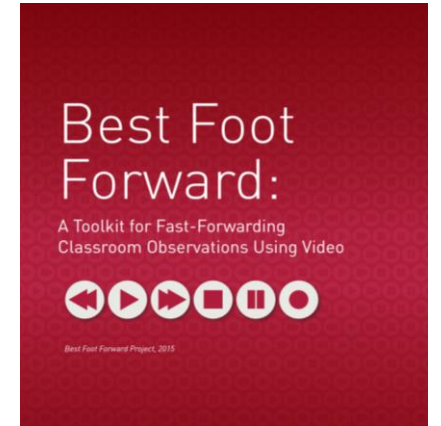
<https://www.suncett.org/>

Privacy and trust are important

"I was anxious initially about sharing it with other people."

Helping you to self-reflect steps

- My development goal is ...
 1. Evidence
 2. Why is this evidence important?
Contemplate the root causes and think context.
 3. Broader teaching principles
 4. Next steps



<https://cepr.harvard.edu/video-observation-toolkit>

Work through this 4-stage guide to develop your self-reflection skills



Helping you to self-reflect

What do I need?

1. At least two video clips (over 15 minutes) of your classroom practice
2. "Video Self-Reflection" instructions: use these to guide you to develop your self-reflection skills
3. The self-reflection form (to be uploaded in CPD file)

Content has been adapted from the 'Best Foot Forward Project',
Harvard College. <https://cepr.harvard.edu/video-observation-toolkit/>
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Initial self-reflections can elicit an emotional response as teachers become distracted by superfluous detail.

- "I just thought oh no, that looks really awful, but then I thought afterwards, that's apparently what I look like when people look at me. Apparently, that's what they see so why worry about it."
- "You've got to get past yourself before you can actually focus on the important bits."

First Video



1. Watch your first video clip (teacher and student)
2. Jot down what you notice
3. Now put your notes **aside**

My notes ...

Effective noticing is hard



When we watch ourselves, we can get distracted with detail that isn't important to improving practice. For instance ...

It is easy to be distracted by **irrelevant details** (e.g. details not related to learning):

'Does my head really look like that from behind?'

Our responses can be **emotional or reactive**:

"That was embarrassing! 'I was missing half my students'

We **focus mostly on ourselves**, instead of our students:

"I like how I ask questions'

Go back to your first video notes. Did you ...

- Describe an irrelevant detail?
- Use emotional or reactive language?
- Describe your actions more than your students' actions?

Teachers' initial self-reflections may identify superficial surface details rather than critical aspects of practice.

What should I be doing?



First, establish and record a goal for viewing e.g. identify development points then ...

Stage 1:

Focus on evidence, rather than irrelevant or reactive details

Stage 2:

Focus on evidence that is important & use context to reason about classroom interactions

Stage 3:

Make connections to effective teaching principles and ideas

Stage 4:

Plan future teaching, learning and assessment activities.

Establish and record a goal for viewing

Why?

Having a goal will put you in the director's seat. What footage do you need to capture for yourself?

Purposeful watching will help you filter out extraneous, irrelevant details.

Ideas for goal development

Focus on struggling students or small groups or challenging content.

Use observation to diagnose your own development areas.

Write down some ideas for video self-reflection: what goals do you want to work on?

"Without knowing what you're looking for, I'd be critiquing every element of my teaching."

step 1: Filter out irrelevant and reactive detail

1. Piece of evidence

~~"I say 'um' and 'like' too much. It's distracting.~~
(This is a distracting detail, not a piece of evidence strongly linked to student learning.)

~~"I didn't handle that student well".~~
(Focus your evidence on what happened, not whether you thought it went well or not).

Keep:

A third of the students raised their hands to answer my question.
(This is concrete evidence which you could use to reflect on your practice).

step 2: Focus on important evidence and context

Ask yourself: What kind of evidence is important?

- What do teachers do in their interactions with students that influence student learning?
- What do students do that demonstrates whether they are learning or are distracted from learning?
- Use context to **reason** about classroom interactions.

This evidence is important because I need to know whether the remaining two-thirds are not following the content, or whether they do not feel comfortable taking part in the class, or are they coasting because I haven't asked anyone in particular? Also, I gave about 5 seconds for students to answer. Is this long enough for them to think of the answer?

Step 3: Make connections to broader teaching principles

Dylan Wiliam says, 'Invite the students to not raise their hands because only the most able will do so and the less confident students will avoid involvement and become increasingly disengaged'.

Also, according to Bradley Lightbody, teachers should ask a question and then wait a 'minimum of three seconds' before asking for a response. If they need at least three seconds before I speak to them, do they need much longer to answer? If so, how long? 10 + seconds?

Professional vision:

Using theoretical knowledge to interpret significant features in a classroom is part of professional vision. (Sherin, 2007; Seidel et al. 2011)

Any framework or tool that supports professional learning is only as beneficial as the user is proficient (Schon, 1987).

Collegial collaboration:

"I think it is a healthy way of working rather than me going away and looking at it alone and not picking up on things."

"I wasn't capable of evaluating myself to the fullest. It was all about what was really bad."

"I'm much better having someone to bounce [ideas off]."



Collegial collaboration:

- Teachers said they would share the video with someone who "understood the challenges of the area of teaching", someone you "trust and respect", "is a good tutor" and "who will be honest with you."
- "You'll look back at the video with a preconceived idea in your mind. You see different things through collaborative reflections. If you watch it with someone else, they can say, hang on a minute."

Peer honesty:

- "I don't know whether they'd [peers] be honest enough. It's very difficult to comment on people's teaching because it can be quite a sensitive thing."
- "Everybody wants to do it without offending anybody."

Hierarchical influence:

"[they] saw no problem with that..." And "[they] thought everything seemed to run smoothly and everything was fine, but I was thinking what I could do better."

Step 4: Think about how you plan to make a change

Consideration of evidence is meaningless if it is not connected to planning and practice for the future.

Use more 'nominee' questions. Allow at least 3 seconds (probably 5) after asking my question before asking the student/s for a response. This way, they're all thinking of the answer.

I'd like to try to give them longer to think of an answer as well: maybe 10-15 seconds and see what the impact is.

Online, I could ask the question and get all the students to write their answers in the Chat but only share their answer when I say so. This way, I'll know whether they've understood or not.



Watching oneself in action may not be sufficient enough to develop the critical reflection skills needed for professional learning. However, multiple viewings may enable 'noticing' to take place.



Build trust, reduce feelings of fear and vulnerability:

- To avoid fear and vulnerability being experienced by teachers, offer video capture as a no-strings attached and voluntary tool. In this way, as it is not a tool used for performance management, trust is encouraged.



Devise a long-term programme of video professional learning:

- Multi-year programmes may be more fruitful than short-term video programmes.
- There will be variation between the needs of novice and expert, experienced and less experienced teachers, so consider scaffolding support.
- Video may provide unwanted challenge to teachers who have to think hard about their learning.





Developing noticing skills in preparation for video reflection:

Sharing veteran videos with thinking voice to demonstrate the 'observer' thought process including **accounts of misjudgement** could help to develop the questioning required by teachers.

Professional learning should be focused and organised around the teacher's own practice.



Those in positions of power may risk sharing points of view that may limit a teacher's thinking about their practice as well as invite fear of judgement.

Establish non-hierarchical collegial networks to help the teacher develop their thinking around their practice: increasing their confidence to act as an observer of their own content, with an increasingly developed skill for noticing and knowledge-based reasoning.



The data from my study suggests that teachers are able to distance themselves from the teacher in the video and refer to themselves as 'outsiders'.

References

- Best Foot Forward Toolkit: <https://cepr.harvard.edu/video-observation-toolkit>
- David Didau: <https://learningspy.co.uk/training/modelling-and-observation/>
- Guskey, T. R. (2000). Evaluating professional development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Schon, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Seidel, T., Stürmer, K., Blomberg, G., Kobarg, M., and Schwindt, K. (2011). Teacher learning from analysis of videotaped classroom situations: Does it make a difference whether teachers observe their own teaching or that of others? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 259–267.
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- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.

Resources

- 'A Clearer View of the Classroom' by Sarabjit Borrill: <https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf3306>
- <https://touchconsulting.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Video-Capture-for-Self-Reflection-A-clearer-view-of-the-classroom.pdf>
- <https://touchconsulting.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/A-Clearer-view-of-the-Classroom-Sarabjit-Borrill.pdf>