

Video Use in CELTA

There are a number of ways in which video can be used effectively in short, preservice teacher training courses such as CELTA. The following outlines a range of examples of video use in this context with reference to the experience of CELTA trainers interviewed for the ViLTE project and to the wider literature on video use in pre-service teacher education. Three areas will be considered; the use of video during input to demonstrate practice, video use in teaching practice as an aid to reflection and finally, the use of video instruction as a preparation to the course or support during the course.

During Input

Using videos as part of input

The use of video in input to illustrate elements of classroom practice has long been seen as a useful practice, but the advent of internet-connected projectors in many classrooms has meant that this is now sufficiently convenient to become much more commonly used. Trainers report that they show classroom management techniques, examples of language presentation, different practice activities, etc and this also has the advantage (especially on short intensive courses) of providing a change of pace. Phil Keenan (interviewed on the ViLTE site) suggests that this can bring ‘extra colour and an extra dynamic to input sessions’ and can be extended to include video which is not directly ELT related, for example, with giving instructions or creating rapport.

Geerts et al (2018) also see advantages of video material to support trainees in acquiring ‘situated knowledge’ in a safe environment. They suggest that situated knowledge is an attribute of an experienced teacher, who will ‘have noticed crucial details’ about the classroom, allowing them to ‘focus on the most important aspects of the educational situation in hand’ (p.65). They go on to note that this knowledge is ‘implicit and embedded in the social context of the classroom’ (p.65) and that instruction that is contextualised in this manner is more effective. Thus, an exposure to the rich context that video allows, coupled with the opportunity to reflect on different aspects of this with peers and a tutor, helps trainees to develop the automatic, sub-conscious routines which will help them to manage the classroom and work with learners. Whilst this is possible with paper based, or narrated case studies, video corresponds more accurately to the actual behaviour of teachers and learners and enables trainees to explore this in a much greater depth, although the extent to which this is exploited will obviously depend on the trainer (Geerts et al 2018).

In addition to giving examples of particular aspects of classroom practice, video also has the potential to open a window onto a range of different contexts, especially when discussing specific areas of language teaching such as young learners, teaching business, teaching advanced or beginner learners, etc. This can also be used to examine alternative methodologies. Masats and Dooley (2011), for example, use video lessons to expose trainees to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), watching a clip of a lesson and then collaborating with peer to construct the lesson plan for this.

A challenge to showing examples of classroom practice is in finding appropriate video material. Whilst there are excellent class lessons recorded professionally and available commercially (e.g. the IH series), these are relatively expensive and for this reason unavailable in many centres. Some centres video lessons taught by their trainers or teachers for use by their trainees, but specialist equipment (e.g. cameras at multiple angles and microphones for learners as well as the teacher) is required to film and edit classroom practice in a manner which gives a professional result.

Many trainers, who are also teaching, use their own practice in videoed format. Whilst this does not escape the limitation of quality, it gives a trainer control over the content that they wish to exemplify. Natalia Ladygina (interviewed on the ViLTE site) uses videos of her own classroom teaching to provide a 'safe space' for her trainees to practise making teaching decisions. Focusing on a particular aspect of practice, for example, giving feedback, she plays an extract of a lesson which includes learner interaction and then provides an opportunity for the trainees to discuss the kind of feedback that would be appropriate to give in this case. This can also be used as the basis for subsequent roleplay, providing a realistic underpinning for this kind of activity.

A question arises about how long video extracts should be. Monica Poulter (interviewed on the ViLTE site) outlines the issue that whilst watching whole classes is potentially time consuming, an element of artificiality is introduced if learner-learner interaction is excised. Context is important, and for trainees watching video lessons as an observation experience (see below), an unedited version may be preferable. However, for input, short clips which exemplify particular aspects, are more effective.

A further issue to consider is whether to only show 'good practice'. There are obvious sensitivity issues surrounding this, as Monica Poulter suggests, and whilst examples of practice that can be critiqued are potentially useful, this can be problematic, especially if the audience is more public. One solution to this is to examine video of classroom practice leading up to critical incidents, stopping the recording at a moment at which teacher decisions have to be made and offering trainees the opportunity to discuss what they would do at this point.

In addition to showcasing classroom practice, video can also be used to add variety to input sessions in other ways. Some trainers report that short videos can be used in the presentation stage of input and this may be welcomed by trainees in what is a very intensive training course. The advantage of this is a change of pace (a chance to sit back, watch and take notes for a short time) and the ability of the trainees to review the video presentation at a later time if it is embedded on the course VLE. Trainers can make these videos themselves using screen cast technology and this requires very little specialist knowledge or equipment. It is, however, time-consuming and many centres use ready-made options such as the free videos in the CELTA Toolkit at www.elt-training.com .

Flipped classroom videos

In addition to using screen cast video presentation within input sessions, some centres expand on this idea and use these in a flipped classroom approach. There is a significant body of research evidence that this can improve learning outcomes (e.g. Lovett et al 2010) and it entails giving trainees short video presentations (5 to 10 minutes long) to watch before the input session, freeing up time with the tutor to provide more practice in class. Input sessions in courses like CELTA act as loop input for language teaching and as such, always tend to include a significant amount of practical application. However, time is short for input and this approach increases the potential for practice. Flipped content works particularly well for sessions such as classroom management techniques, which can then be role-played in the input session or concept checking questions, lesson frameworks and lesson planning, where particular concepts are not intrinsically difficult, but which may be new, and for which having more time to apply the knowledge in a practical manner in the classroom is useful.

The obvious difficulty of this approach is that it necessitates all candidates watching the videos before the input session. Whilst this cannot be guaranteed, my experience is that (if not overdone) most trainees do comply. Scheduling an input session that uses the flipped approach immediately after a lunch or coffee break, giving trainees the opportunity to watch the video in this break if they haven't done so before, can also ensure that all trainees have seen the content. It cannot be denied that this is extra work for trainees and it is important that this is recognised. As such, it is best limited to a small number of sessions (perhaps one or two a week on a full-time course). A further advantage of this method, as with using video in input, is that having the videos available on the course VLE also enables trainees to review the material at their leisure.

Extra input

CELTA, especially as a four-week full-time course, is very intensive and there is little extra time for content beyond the course. However, providing links to developmental video content may be

beneficial for stronger trainees or for trainees to access after the course. Material including videoed lessons, ideas for teaching techniques and developmental talks from a range of ELT professionals are available on YouTube and useful channels include The New School and TESOL Academic.

During Teaching Practice

For lesson observation

Six hours of lesson observation is a mandated part of CELTA. Most centres include watching the tutor teach the teaching practice class as part of this but there is also usually observation of other teachers within the centre. The advantage of this is that trainees see what classes look like 'in the wild' rather than the very polished version that is the norm for demonstration lessons by trainers. However, two hours of the total six can be observations on video and there also are significant advantages to this. Using video material means that a trainer can accurately anticipate the content that the trainees are exposed to and example lesson plans and observation tasks can be given. Perhaps the greatest advantage lies in the ability to dissect the lesson in real-time as it unfolds. A video lesson is watched by the whole group (this is usually not true for practical reasons when trainees watch other teachers in the school) and as such can be a common learning opportunity for all. The video can be stopped at particular points of interest to illustrate and highlight various teaching techniques or episodes within the lesson, allowing discussion and exploration of these within the group. This is more time-consuming than a simple lesson observation but has the potential to be a valuable learning experience and provides the possibility to refer back to these observations in other input sessions or in teaching practice feedback. As an example of how this can be actualised on a CELTA course, three input sessions can be used to fulfil two hours of observation with each session including observation of a 40-minute video-based lesson and lasting 75 minutes.

As with using video in input good quality recordings of lessons are essential. A further limitation is that videoed lessons often excise learner to learner interaction stages, giving an impression of a lesson which is more teacher centred lesson than the reality.

Videoing trainees' lessons

Observing your own teaching on film is not always comfortable, but it is valuable and improvements in technology mean that it is usual for teachers to have the capacity to record video on their phones, making this process convenient and accessible. Trainees can be asked to review their recorded lessons in their own time and to use these for their reflections in future lessons, or for their Lessons from the Classroom assignment.

Challenges to this are that trainees are often reluctant to review their practice and the time requirement to watch the whole lesson may present a barrier. Giving trainees a task to do whilst watching, may be helpful and this could include referring to the comments made on their written feedback sheet for that lesson.

There are clearly ethical issues to consider when taking video of classroom practice. This includes obtaining permission from the language learners in the class as well as care being taken with the video content produced. In addition to convenience, recording trainees on their own phones means that they have sole control and ownership of the film material, avoiding GDPR issues. If video is taken on a device belonging to the trainer, care needs to be taken to ensure that trainees know where this will be stored, what use it will be put to and how long it will be retained. As Phil Keenan notes 'I don't want any risk of anyone's TP turning up on YouTube'.

Including short video clips in online chat

An idea introduced by Marie-Therese Swabey at the CETA conference in 2017 has led to a number of centres working with using online tools such as WhatsApp to enable trainees in a teaching practice group to 'chat' with each other and the tutor whilst observing their peers. This can enable better understanding of the lessons to emerge and in addition to text chat, the conversation may also include images taken of the class and very short video clips. These video extracts will often include instructions, concept checking, critical incidents within the class, etc and will usually be only 10-20 seconds long. They can be viewed after the lesson by the trainee and also used during feedback to illustrate positive aspects to the lesson as well as areas for development. The shorter length of video reduces the barrier to watching and re-watching and can serve as a powerful tool for stimulated recall.

Pre-CELTA

Access to online video preparation courses

CELTA is very intensive and the majority of the course is necessarily devoted to methodology. There is often little time to consider knowledge about language and a lot of this is assumed to be known. Although candidates' knowledge is tested in pre-course tasks, it's common, particularly for native speakers of English, that they are not familiar with the nomenclature of grammar (preposition, transitive verb, present perfect passive etc). Some courses include a significant number of sessions which clarify grammatical terminology and the difficulties that learners have with particular parts of the language, but this can be problematic and if an input session on a particular point of grammar coincides with a trainees lesson of that area, this may be seen to be unjust to others. Online support

for this can be useful and video-based courses such as 'Grammar for Language Teachers' at www.elt-training.com are suggested, provided or even mandated by some centres as a pre-course prerequisite. Reading lists of appropriate books (e.g. Grammar for Language Teachers by Martin Parrott) are also often given, but video-based courses are often perceived as more personal and accessible (Gakonga, 2013).

References

Gakonga, J. (2013). 'Being there?': Comparing synchronous and recorded online instruction for language teachers. In: S. Mann and J. Edge, ed., *Innovations in pre-service education and training for English language teachers*, 1st ed. London: British Council, pp.231-243.

Geerts, W., Steenbeek, H. and Van Geert, P. (2017). Effect of Video-Cases on the Acquisition of Situated Knowledge of Teachers. *International Education Studies*, 11(1), p.64.

Lovett, M., Meyer, O. and Thille, C. (2010). In search of the 'perfect' blend between an instructor and an online course for teaching introductory statistics. In: *The Eighth International Conference on Teaching Statistics*. [online] Voorburg: International Statistic Institute. Available at: <http://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/~iase/publications.php> [Accessed 19 May 2018].

Masats, D. and Dooly, M. (2011). Rethinking the use of video in teacher education: A holistic approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(7), pp.1151-1162.