



Focus on Teaching: Using Video for High-Impact Instruction

Knight, Jim
Corwin Press, 2014

Book Review

Tags: student learning | teaching with video | technology and teaching

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Whether you are a teacher, administrator, or coach seeking to improve your own or other's instructional skills, Jim Knight's book provides a useful step-by-step guide for doing so through the use of video. With easy-to-follow checklists and examples, the author explains the rationale for each decision in the process and offers options for working within various physical, spatial, and logistical constraints.

While more extensive background to other professional development practices for teachers are cited throughout, this manual stands on its own in terms of the physical and social steps necessary for teachers, administrators, and coaches to work together in using video effectively to improve instruction. After laying out the reasons video-recording of instruction can be so effective, Knight methodically and precisely sets forth systematic plans necessary for a coach or teacher to get started. From an individual improvement focus, he then moves to show how teams of teachers can work together and how administrators can facilitate similar processes.

Knight constantly focuses on the importance of creating a psychologically safe environment for the use of video. He defines autonomy and accountability and explains how these concepts can work together instead of representing opposite ends of the instructional responsibility spectrum. While always in the forefront of an instructor's mind when working with students, the same principles of agreement about values, measurable and attainable goals, timely feedback, and constructive communication remain vital in the context of professional development and effective learning environments.

Chapter 6 begins with a principal expressing his angst over "teacher evaluations," a task he

views as necessary but onerous. The author suggests that the use of video can parallel assessment strategies utilized by a college dean. Again, the author's systematic presentation of the details involved in using video for high impact instructional learning makes the process feasible.

The main criticism of the book may be that its methodical approach becomes slightly tedious and repetitive. By chapter 5 the reader feels they have already reviewed the general content four times with slightly different applications depending upon the theme of each chapter. While some new and beneficial information pertinent to the context of the chapter is shared, some educators will find the conceptual redundancy wearisome.

Insofar as the book is easy-to-read and a valuable step-by-step guide to using current technology to facilitate better individual instruction and collegial discussion of teaching, it could be valuable for teachers of theology and religion at the post-secondary level, even though the book seems geared for the K-12 audience. The (reproducible) resources provided in the book are valuable for teaching and could be used by instructors at any educational level.

https://wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/book_reviews/focus-on-teaching-using-video-for-high-impact-instruction/