

Video-Based Feedback in the ISW – an Invitation

Doug Kerr, June 2020

The purpose of this invitation is to encourage you to experiment with – and expand – your use of video-based feedback when you are facilitating an ISW, FDW, or TDW. This is an opportunity to expand, reinforce, and reset the use of video-based feedback in the lesson cycle – one of the original core elements of the ISW.

Here are two reasons why you might want to try a new approach for the use of video:

1. First, we are the largest international volunteer work team ever to engage in rethinking the design and delivery of the ISW, and...
2. We are living, working, and connecting in an age when each of us makes daily use of a powerful, portable mobile communication device that also happens to be (amongst other things) a sophisticated video recorder.

Our mobile phone is seen as an essential part of our daily lives, not as a ‘foreign object’ that is complicated and difficult to use – as cameras, tripods, reel-to-reel recorders, and projectors once were. And therein lies our opportunity.

Current Practice in Giving and Receiving Feedback

There are almost as many variations of this process as there are ISW Facilitators. Many of us have developed our own little processes that work well for us and our participants. The process described below is meant to represent generically the key elements most of us include in our practice.

1. One of the participants conducts a 10-minute (+/-) lesson as the Instructor.
2. The remaining participants engage in the lesson as Learners.
3. The Facilitator video-records the lesson instructed by the Instructor.
4. When the lesson has ended, the Facilitator asks the Learners to reflect on the lesson just instructed, and to record their observations and suggestions on a feedback worksheet.
5. The Facilitator consults with the Instructor and invites the Instructor to identify areas of performance about which they would like feedback.
6. The Facilitator then facilitates a feedback session in which the Learners offer verbal feedback to the Instructor.
7. The Facilitator wraps up the feedback session, provides the recording of the lesson to the Instructor (either at that time or at the end of the day), and encourages them to review it in the evening.

8. In the evening the Instructor observes their own performance without the pressure of the moment in the workshop itself – and (a) without input from their fellow-participants, and (b) the observations, suggestions, guidance, and support of the ISW Facilitator.

There is no question the instructor of the lesson derives insight out of watching their own performance on their own in the evening. It makes good sense to continue this practice!

Suggested Future Option for Giving and Receiving Feedback

1. One of the participants conducts a 10-minute (+/-) lesson as the Instructor.
2. The remaining participants engage in the lesson as Learners.
3. The Facilitator video-records the lesson instructed by the Instructor, all the while noting elements of the lesson that they might wish to highlight during the feedback session and jotting brief, point-form notes regarding the event and its positive impact on learning.
4. As the lesson is coming to an end, the Facilitator scans their notes and highlights elements they might want to share with the group.
5. The Facilitator checks in briefly with the Instructor, then distributes feedback forms and invites the Learners **and the Instructor** to record their observations and suggestions/ideas.*

**This is a departure from current practice in many ISW settings. I have found that it can be enlightening for the Instructor to compare their own written observations with those of the other participants. In my experience, we tend to be our own harshest critics.*

6. While the participants are writing feedback on the feedback form, the Facilitator connects the camera to the projector (or screen directly, depending on available technology) so the first video 'clip' is ready to go.
7. The Facilitator facilitates the feedback session. They might start the feedback session with a question, an observation, a video clip, or an invitation. We encourage the Facilitator to use at least one or two short segments of recorded video in the feedback session after every mini-lesson.**

***The segment doesn't have to be long. Typically they are 20 to 40 seconds, highlighting something the Instructor said or did that worked or that enhanced the learning outcome(s). It serves to encourage the Instructor to experiment, to try something more challenging each day.*

8. It also broadens and deepens the thinking of the other participants around the circle and encourages each of them to push farther, probe deeper each day.
9. Immediately following the feedback session, the Facilitator downloads the video recording to the Instructor's mobile phone or tablet, or to a memory stick.

Suggested Trainer/Facilitator Preparation

To get more comfortable using your phone as a recording and playback device, practice recording and playback with other family members and/or friends.

When you use your own phone – it's the one you're most familiar with – you can practice video-recording with it on your own time and your own dime.

Record an interaction and practice noting timing of segments you might wish to replay.

Practice locating the video clip you want to use, connecting your phone to the projector, and projecting onto the classroom screen the clip you want to play. Practice transferring the entire recording over to another's phone.

A word of encouragement: If in the past you have tried to use video-feedback *in situ* and found it challenging, we encourage you to give it a try once again. Book an hour with one of your tech support persons and ask them to walk you through each of the key procedures.

Perhaps once a semester, get a small group of fellow-ISW practitioners (your ISW *community of practice*?) together for a half-day or evening practice session, coaching, and supporting each other's use of their own video-recording devices when facilitating an ISW. This can be especially helpful in the week or two leading up to facilitating an ISW.

Playing back the 'clip' you want the whole group to see doesn't need to be fancy. Many (most? all?) of us are accustomed to sharing a photo or video clip with a half-dozen or so of our friends gathered around a hand-held phone.

Within the ISW we just add one more little wrinkle, projecting to a screen. That is all we have to do to reinforce, stimulate, and encourage not only the Instructor but the whole group of their peers.

Appreciative Video-based Feedback

Practice appreciative observation. Frame the questions you could ask to stimulate ideas, promote reinforcement, and/or generalize the learning to everyone within the group. Develop and use short video clips or post online (e.g., ISW padlets), to highlight particular moments (positive, generative) in a lesson and/or feedback session in order to model the facilitation of appreciative feedback (verbal, written, video).