

Videotaping and Analyzing Your Class

Watching a videotape of yourself teaching can be an extremely valuable assessment tool. Videotaping allows you to view and listen to the class from your learner's perspective. By analyzing a videotape of the dynamics in your classroom, you will gain valuable insights into your teaching by identifying techniques that work and those that can be refined.

Faculty members at all levels and in all disciplines have benefited from observing videotapes of themselves in the classroom. *The Center for Teaching Excellence's* Presentation Room, TLC 326, is equipped with video cameras and is available to faculty for videotaping. The following guidelines have been developed to help you with the process.

General Information

- ❑ Call the CTE at 483-1680 to reserve TLC 326 for videotaping after the onset of the semester. It is a good idea to leave yourself approximately 30 minutes to prepare the room before the class starts. You may also consider reserving the room a few days in advance of your videotaping in order to familiarize yourself with the equipment. (Please note that the last week in each semester this room is reserved for "*Get the grades out week*", when TLC 326 is open to faculty as a quiet place to grade papers, etc.)
 - ❑ Invite your class to meet in TLC 326, where the videotaping will take place. Be sure to let your students know in advance that the class will be videotaped. Explain why you wish to have the class videotaped. You will need to bring a blank VHS tape with you.
 - ❑ Select a typical class. Choose a class in which you are teaching as you normally do, using the overhead projector, handouts, etc. (See the green document titled *Using the Equipment in the Presentation Room (TLC 326)* to learn of the room's capabilities.)
 - ❑ There are 4 cameras in TLC 326, each offering a different view of the presentation room. Consider taping your students as well as yourself. Taping your students will allow you to see student responses and reactions to your teaching.
 - ❑ You may feel uncomfortable or awkward at the beginning of the taping. This should dissipate as the class progresses. Focus on your teaching. Keep in mind that you will be the only one to view this videotaping unless you choose otherwise.
 - ❑ The green documents, *Using the Equipment in the Presentation Room (TLC 326)* and *Recording Your Presentation*, contain specific instructions to help you.
-

Suggestions for Viewing the Videotape

The following guidelines have been compiled from resources in the CTE. They are designed as suggestions that can help you determine the best way to use a videotape of your teaching for assessment. You can refer to these resources directly by checking out Tools for Teaching, Barbara Gross Davis, 1993 Jossey-Bass, Inc. and Assessing Faculty Work, Larry A. Braskamp/John C. Ory, 1994, Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Begin with the following:

- Step 1 Plan to view the videotape on the same or next day so that you can readily recall what you were thinking and feeling during class. Watch the tape once or twice to get used to seeing yourself on tape. Most people tend to notice their voice, appearance, gestures, and mannerisms – “*Do I really sound like that?*” Understand that these details are exaggerated on tape and are far less noticeable and distracting in real life. Spend your time concentrating on effective teaching.
- Step 2 Once you’ve adjusted to seeing yourself on tape, set aside sufficient time to analyze it. A rule of thumb may be to spend two hours for every one-hour of class time. Focus on your strengths as well as those aspects needing improvement. At first consider answering the following general questions:
- What are the specific things I did well?
 - What are the specific things I could have done better?
 - What did students seem to enjoy most?
 - What did students seem to enjoy least?
 - What three things would I change next time I teach this session?

Next time you view the tape, focus on selected aspects of your performance, such as one or more of the following:

- A) Create a checklist of items you would like to analyze relevant to your teaching style. A list of possible questions to ask yourself is available in the orange document titled ***Checklist for Focusing Your Analysis***.
- B) Consider charting the frequencies and types of classroom interactions. You can do this with a technique called Contracted “BIAS” (Brown’s Interaction Analysis System). This technique allows you to examine how much time was devoted to both your comments students’ comments. Begin by making three columns on a piece of paper, labeling them Instructor Talk, Student Talk, and Silence. (See the cream document titled ***Videotape Assessment Worksheet***)

As you watch a segment of the videotape, stop every five seconds and make a check mark in one of the three columns. Totaling the number of check marks in each column will show you the breakdown of class time. For more detail, record a *Q*, for question, each time you or a student asks a question.

- C) It can also be very helpful to write down specific comments as they arise during the class. Useful types of comments to consider are:

- Instructor questions
- Student responses to instructor questions
- Student questions
- Instructor responses to student questions
- Instructor responses to student statements
- Instructor reward and praise statements
- Instructor criticism

For example, if you are concerned about your use of questions, view the videotape and write down all the questions you asked. This will give you the opportunity to explore the following issues:

- How many questions actually requested a response from students?
- What level of thinking was required in the responses?
- How many questions called for a personal opinion?
- How many questions required yes/no or short answers?
- Did you allow sufficient time between questions for students to respond?

If you discover that you are asking too many questions or not pausing to give students enough time to answer, you will have the opportunity to improve your questioning skills.

- D) You might want to consider viewing the videotape with a trusted colleague. You can return the favor if they desire.

In conclusion

Videotaping is an ideal observation method because it provides a record of the actual transactions and work activities, and is potentially one of the most powerful forms of self-assessment. Whichever techniques you choose when analyzing your videotape, remember *Have Fun!*