



Video Eureka Moments

Watching yourself teach is something the vast majority of teachers have never done before. The prospect can be terrifying for some, but ultimately intriguing for all. Watching yourself teach a lesson opens up a window on an almost parallel world that is recognisable, but strangely different.

For a start, we sound quite different to how we hear ourselves 'live'. And there are other, even more alarming differences revealed by the positioning of the camera. When we see our lesson from the back of the class rather than the front, the perspective is quite different. This perspective, the student's perspective, actively challenges many of the deeply held perceptions we might have about ourselves as teachers and what really goes on in our classrooms.

This process has brought countless moments of epiphany. These insights can be so powerful that they've permanently transformed the teaching habits of many teachers we've worked with. The experience also provokes a more inquisitive attitude as teachers begin to question more of their other assumptions about what really happens in their classroom: 'If I haven't noticed that my explanations were poor, what other blind spots might I have?'

As R. D. Laing so beautifully put it: 'The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice, there is little we can do to change; until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds'.

Watching ourselves teach helps us to notice what we've been failing to notice. We can only change what we're aware of. And as we become more aware we can also see what we're doing well in addition to what we can improve. For many teachers, noticing how engaged a class are during their experimental lesson and the quality and depth of student-student dialogue, has been a joy to both them and to us. Especially given that they were delightfully redundant at the front of the room when they got their students into flow. These experiences have spurred them on to continue with their modified approach to teaching.

Taken from Chapter 6, page 154 of Engaging Learners