

## **Editing Myself: Using video production and editing to help pupils reflect on their classroom behaviour.**

### **Aim**

To increase pupils' awareness of their behaviour in the classroom; pupils to identify, understand and change their behaviour. To understand how video and digital editing enhance pupils' ability to objectively reflect on their classroom behaviour and learning.

### **Background**

I work as the Teacher in Charge of a Learning Support Unit (LSU) in a secondary school in East London. The LSU is funded by Excellence in Cities and targets 'disaffected' secondary age pupils. More specifically LSU's have been set up, within the social inclusion agenda, to reduce exclusions and increase attendance of marginalized groups of pupils. Practice within LSU's is emerging but the emphasis should be on pupils undertaking as much of the curriculum within the mainstream classroom and avoiding the slide toward 'sin-bins'. The LSU I am in charge of takes referrals for a variety of reasons, most pupils attending for particular lessons. The pupils relevant here are those referred to me with a view to them attending 'Positive Behaviour and Achievement Groups'

Most of the work undertaken with pupils in the LSU can be broadly described as stemming from the Cognitive/Behavioural approach. We are not concerned with deep psychological processes or administering complex reward systems for specific behaviour. We hope to provide an environment where pupils can feel proud of their achievements and where they build more positive attitudes to their learning. Cognitive approaches attempt to make pupils more aware of their own behaviour and then to work to ensure their attitudes, expectations, attributes are helping them learn rather than hindering them. Critical to changing pupils attitudes is working with pupils in a group; pupils are most influenced by peer evaluation and pupils ability to reflect on peer behaviour is often a forerunner to positively reflecting on their own.

### **The Process**

Six year 8 pupils were referred to me by the SENCO and Head of Year. The criteria for the referral was that pupils were significantly underachieving and frequently involved in difficult to manage classroom behaviour. Pupils were also chosen on the basis that teachers felt the pupils found it particularly difficult to recognise their difficult behaviour, were often very argumentative and infrequently expressed remorse. The pupils selected were not the most disruptive pupils in the year group and were all potentially high achievers. The group attended session for one hour a week, for one term.

Firstly all pupils were interviewed individually. The purpose of the interview was to assess the pupils' attitudes towards their own learning and behaviour; this was done using

a self-awareness questionnaire. The other purpose was to explain the aims of the group. Pupils were asked a series of questions which seek to ascertain the pupils' beliefs about both their academic performance and whether their behaviour helps them learn. The questions also seek to determine whether the pupil believes the route to improving both their behaviour and achievements lies with them or external factors such as the teacher. I conducted similar interviews at the end of the project to enable me to measure changes in pupils' attitudes. These will be discussed later. I told them that the purpose of attending the sessions was to help them improve their work in class. I also told them that they would be learning how to produce a video and that they would be learning how to do digital editing. Pupils were particularly interested by the idea of classes being secretly filmed.

The first two sessions with pupils were spent doing a number of exercises and games that encouraged collaboration and then reflecting on performance. The video production process was also discussed and plans were made about how to produce the video. In essence the aim was to produce a video that secretly captured difficult and challenging behaviour in the classroom and then analyse the behaviour: a documentary about classroom behaviour. Pupils were introduced to the idea of 'The Psychologist' and were given two sessions on basic psychological analysis of behaviour. They were taught four conceptual models for challenging behaviour; Behavioural, Cognitive, Psychodynamic and Environmental. They were told that it was not so much a science and that to understand behaviour one might need to employ ideas from more than one of the models. Some discussion and role-play were used to consider non-verbal language, and this was aided by the popularity of the TV programme Big Brother that features psychologists analysing contestants behaviour, in particular their body language.

The next two sessions were spent learning how to operate and use a digital camera and learning the rudiments of Adobe Premier 6 digital editing. During this phase of the project, unknown to the pupils in the group, I secretly filmed them and other pupils in selected lessons. Teachers were aware of the camera but pupils were not. I then selected clips from the hours of footage and showed it to the pupils in the group. I did not comment or analyse the behaviour at all at this stage. They were a little surprised at seeing themselves; two of them were a little put out but were still highly motivated to attend sessions.

The next stage of the project took place in the Waltham Forest Media Resources Unit(WFMRU) using Adobe during a full morning session lasting three hours. The whole group watched a large monitor, and one pupil took it in turns to play the clips. The whole session was assisted by the WFMRU teacher.

This part of the process was the most difficult and potentially the most threatening for particular pupils who had been 'caught' behaving in an anti-social or disruptive fashion. We had to select the incidents captured by secret filming. This was done as a whole group and was a source of considerable dispute. Pupils in the group felt that peer conflict was the most interesting theme, especially when violent. I was more interested in the behaviour displayed by some of the members of the group, it included inappropriate

questioning of the teacher, peer disruption/intimidation, frequent disobeying teacher instruction, not attending to set task. When I indicated that these behaviours were of interest and should be selected for the final edit the pupils concerned were adamant that these clips were not of interest. Two pupils became very irate about what they described as their unfair treatment, they also intimidated other members of the group who felt the clips should, at least, be considered for the final edit. I spoke with the two pupils alone but they were adamant that clips showing them in an unfavourable light were not included. I spoke with the whole group and left it open, feeling that my lack of insistence would probably mean the clips would not feature in the final edit. At this stage I felt that a critical first stage had been reached with the two pupils and that I would have to return to them at a later date; this will be discussed later.

At this stage the issue of the audience for the video was raised by the two pupils. This had already been touched on: the pupils in the group had indicated earlier that they felt the video would be aimed at pupils in the school and in particular at pupils whose behaviour was featured in the video. The two pupils didn't want anyone to see the video and became suspicious that I was going to use the video as evidence of misdemeanours to be showed to teachers and parents. At this stage I left it very open, explaining that I would speak to them before showing it to anyone outside the group.

When all the clips had been selected the group reviewed the selection. At this stage a theme emerged that the group were interested in. It appeared from the clips selected that there was a difference in boys and girls off-task behaviour. In general girls' off-task behaviour was unobtrusive, did not disturb either the teacher or peers. Girls would talk among themselves, pass notes to each other or brush their hair. In contrast boys off-task behaviour attracted negative attention of peers and teacher. Boys would throw paper, name call and wander the room disturbing peers. Although these differences are very clichéd they were borne out well by two of the classes filmed. This issue generated much discussion between the boys and girls in the group.

The group was then split into two groups. One group was assisted by the WFMRU teacher and started to use Adobe to edit the clips of classroom behaviour. I helped the other group record 'psychological' analysis of the behaviour they had selected. After about an hour the groups swapped over. After three hours of intensive work in the studio the video was about three minutes long. I was able to secure another two hours use of the studio and teacher and the video was completed. Observing the pupils edit I was impressed with the speed at which they became literate in the language of Adobe and the precision which they brought to trimming clips once selected. They did become over elaborate when doing the titles but in general used the time well. The final edit did not include any of the clips initially selected that involved the two pupils. I did not challenge this decision but would return to it later.

After the final editing session I had individual interviews with each pupil. I revisited the initial self-awareness questionnaire and talked about other aspects of the process. I gave special attention and extra time to the two pupils who had been upset by the presence of self-incriminating clips from the secret filming.

All pupils except one showed a greater readiness to accept that they could achieve more in class, recognising that they had greater potential for progress than at the beginning of the project. The one pupil who did not accept this was one of the pupils who had been upset by his potential inclusion in the video; he will be discussed later. All pupils except one showed a shift in perception about the degree to which their behaviour affected their achievement. Most pupils said they did not feel their behaviour had any effect on their learning at the start of the project, and all pupils said they felt it did have an effect when asked at the end of the project. Four of the six pupils showed a significant shift in what cognitive psychologists describe as the 'locus of control', a pupil's perception of the cause of events. When asked about classroom achievements four pupils demonstrated a shift from external factors such as the teacher, luck or peers to internal factors such as hard work, being good at the subject or enjoying the subject. This is usually regarded as a positive shift because a pupil has control over these factors and can therefore affect positive change.

The one boy mentioned above who did not show any changes in perceptions about the effect of his behaviour on his learning is worth some discussion. The footage showed him taking a girl's bag and planting someone else's possessions in it to implicate the girl in a theft, intimidating other pupils and not attempting set work. He watched the footage and then refused to accept that he had done what had just been shown. He said he was getting the bag for someone else, that his friends had asked him over to speak to them and that he had in fact completed work. He remained adamant that he had not behaved in a way that hindered his own or his peers learning. It was only when talking with this pupil on a one to one basis after the video had been made did he begin to concede that his behaviour did not help him achieve in his lessons. He was mainly very defensive and never recognised that his behaviour was a source of frustration to the teacher and his peers. It was important during these sessions with this pupil to ensure he was told about the positive contributions he had made to the group's work and his potential to achieve.

## **Conclusion**

I believe that the video project gave pupils an excellent opportunity to become more self-aware of their own behaviour and the effects it has on learning in the classroom. You could argue it would be hard for a pupil not to show a shift in attitudes when they have been 'caught' on camera. They may have just answered in the way they feel I wanted them to answer, this factor could be lessened if pupils were interviewed by a person outside the project. Other factors such as school reports could be used to assess the impact of the project but these can only provide useful information over a longer time span.

The digital editing gave us the opportunity to produce a video within severe time constraints. It was the video production process that kept the pupils motivated. Pupils asked to reflect on their own behaviour are often reluctant and can distort the reality of their own actions. The video project gave us a unique opportunity for pupils to hold a mirror up to themselves and reflect on their behaviour and think about the consequences.

