

Moving Outside the Classroom: An Experiential Exercise Involving Video Clips

Marian W. Boscia
King's College
MarianBoscia@kings.edu

Lisa T. Stickney
University of Baltimore
Lstickney@ubalt.edu

ABSTRACT

Today's students have grown up in a visual world. To them, watching shared video clips from sites such as YouTube, Google Video, Metacafe, or Hulu is as natural as eating or drinking. This students' seemingly natural preference for video of can be used to bridge the gap between course concepts and their understanding of them. This paper describes an experiential exercise that does just that. Groups of students are required to find, identify and describe relevant concepts in a brief video clip. Each group will complete both a written summary and an oral presentation of their video.

INTRODUCTION

Marc Prensky, author of *Digital Game-Based Learning* (McGraw-Hill, 2001), alerted educators to a fundamental change in the way in which the current generation of students process information. These members of the "fast-twitch" generation grew up playing fast-paced video games, watching television programs that displayed as many as 100 images a minute, and going to see ultra-fast speed movies on big screens. As he pointed out, "Their developing minds learned to adapt to speed and thrive on it." (Prensky, 1998, pg. 1.) Fortunately, ABSEL members have embraced new technologies that can attract students, such as those of user-centered Web 2.0. Tools available in the classroom have shifted from Web 1.0 person web pages and Britannica online to blogs, YouTube, wikis, podcasts, and RSS feeds of Web 2.0 (Duffy, 2008).

This paper describes an experiential exercise that uses video as a pedagogical tool designed to engage students by attracting their attention and encouraging their participation. As Naish (2009) points out, people associate video with entertainments, such as television and the cinema. If people are attracted to video as a medium for delivering learning material, they may pay attention to the video and learn from it. Videos can be an excellent tool for communicating how something should or should not be done. Thus, including video in course content can improve the effectiveness of

classroom communication, particularly when it is combined with text, audio, and graphics (Hirumi, 2002).

USES OF VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

Heimann & Pittenger (2000) described many of the educational benefits resulting from using video clips in the classroom. Benefits cited by these ABSEL researchers included increased understanding of material presented, higher student enjoyment, and increased student responsiveness, all of which result in enhanced learning. Heimann & Pittenger also described how video can enrich communication by presenting both verbal and non-verbal messages in a dynamic context. Examples are given in the paper of how communication is affected by voice dynamics (tone, volume, pitch and speech rate), silence, cross-cultural communication.

To serve as a method of establishing the setting for a business simulation or experiential exercise, Blanchette & Brown (1993) suggested the use of video as part of a "library" of information on foreign and domestic markets designed to help students better understand the setting of a role-play exercise and their specific roles. Schreier (1990) presented guidelines for selecting and using full-length movies in a management course. Hunt (2001) used television as a means to apply basic management concepts and highlight nuances in management theory. In contrast, Abrahamson and Halatin (1995) used student-generated videos, instead of commercially produced film, to present management situations. In preparation for a role-playing exercise in accounting, Bruton & Bradley (1993) used short videos showing an auditor ineffective interview of a client's employees. Students analyzed the auditor's performance in the video in as they prepared to assume the auditor's role of seeking information from a client. Further, videotaping the role-plays can make it possible for students to evaluate their own effectiveness (Vik, 1995). All of these experiential exercises use videos to help reinforce course material.

Videos can take students beyond the classroom by providing a visual link between concepts covered in the classroom and the implementation of these concepts in a real-world setting (Jennings, 1996). For example, in order to

give students a way of linking audit theory to practice, Bruton & Bradley (1993) showed videos in an auditing course, prepared by major CPA firms, of important elements of an audit. These videos gave students a comprehensive view of an audit from the initiation of the audit engagement to its final wrap up. Bruton & Bradley reported that the videos also gave students an understanding of why they were being taught certain concepts. Video can also be used to expand classroom discussions to include viewpoints from alternative cultures. For instance, Moore & Betters-Reed (2005) used a video case, Jet-A-Way Inc., as a way of providing an experience that focused on diversity and entrepreneurial leadership.

One important goal of many projects assigned in business courses is to give students an opportunity to collaborate in a meaningful way (Potosky, 2008). An opportunity for such collaboration involves a Video Clip exercise assigned to groups in one author's Management and Organizational Behavior course. Students, working in groups are required to find a brief video clip and explain course concepts depicted in the clip both in a written summary and an oral presentation in front of the class. Depth in the interpretation is strongly encouraged, and students are told not to search on a course topic. Searching on a construct is likely to produce a video of people discussing that concept, not an example of it. A copy of the complete assignment is attached in the Appendix A.

This assignment provides students with an opportunity to utilize a number of skills important to achieving learning objective. These include oral and written presentation skills, group skills, critical thinking, and the ability to integrate across business disciplines (AACSB International Accreditation Coordinating Committee and AACSB International Accreditation Quality Committee, 2007). In addition to practicing learning skills, the assignment forces students to think about course concepts in a non-academic setting and in doing so, and demonstrate an understanding of them fulfilling content-specific learning objectives. On the whole, feedback from students on this assignment has been overwhelmingly positive. They enjoy searching for watching and discussing the videos. Typical comments include words like "cool," "fun," and "popcorn." More importantly, students often say they're surprised at how many concepts can be found in a single short clip.

Legally, this assignment should not pose any problems with respect to copyright laws. The use of public access video clips is well within the scope of those laws, and the use of a clip from a student-owned or rented DVD should be covered by the fair use for education copyright exception. However, each instructor should verify this with his or her institution.

THE EXERCISE

Appendix A contains an example of this exercise adapted for an undergraduate or graduate Management or Organizational Behavior course. This video clip exercise

begins with assigning students to groups of three to five members. Each group will be responsible for selecting a video clip from an online video sharing service, such as YouTube or Metacafe. (See Appendix B for a more comprehensive list.) The clip must demonstrate a principle or concept relevant to the course. For example, the clip could show a creative method of displaying product features for an advertising course, poor employee interview techniques for a human resources course, or a method of money laundering for an auditing course. The clip should be appropriate for classroom presentation, i.e. no nudity or objectionable language, and last no longer than three to five minutes.

Group members are required to provide a description of the concept portrayed in the clip either before or after showing the clip in class. Once the video has been shown, the group should be prepared explain how the concept was depicted in the clip. This explanation should include a critical evaluation of the clip's content. Other class members should be prepared to add to this discussion by volunteering their own interpretation for the clip.

In addition to the class presentation, each group will submit a written summary of their video assignment. This summary should include a brief description of the clip and how it was obtained. Groups should either provide a file containing the clip or a hyperlink to it. (There are numerous free software applications that allow video clips to be saved in file form, such as KeepVid, Fraps, or YouTube Downloader.) The description should also provide a definition of the concept portrayed and its relevance to the course. Next, each group should provide a summary or their class discussion of how the concept was depicted in the clip. The instructor may also request that students comment on the effectiveness of the video and how well it presented the concept.

CONCLUSION

In sum, this exercise helps bridge the gap between course material and student understanding in a manner that the students find both natural and enjoyable. Although used of a group basis, the exercise can be used on an individual basis, and on either basis it provides the opportunity for students to utilize numerous skills and demonstrate an understanding of course concepts outside of the classroom. This exercise has been used effectively in both face-to-face and online courses.

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APPENDIX A MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR VIDEO CLIP ASSIGNMENT

Overview: This assignment requires the student to recognize course concepts in the mass media. This assignment consists of a brief class presentation and a one page summary presented to the instructor. The ideal assignment will identify one or two management or OB principles depicted in a video or audio clip from a movie, TV program or advertisement, or in a radio advertisement.

The Assignment: Each group will explain the clip and show it to the class, and submit a written summary of the concept and the clip.

For the *class presentation*, the following is required:

1. A brief description of the concept portrayed and an explanation of how it is depicted in the clip. The oral description may either precede or follow the airing of the clip.
2. Airing a 2 – 3 minute video or audio clip that depicts the OB concept described.
3. The entire class presentation (explanation & airing) may not exceed 5 minutes.

The written *group summary* must include the following:

1. A brief description of the clip.
2. In your own words, a definition of the OB concept portrayed (no quotes or references, please).
3. An explanation of how the concept is depicted in the clip.
4. Either a hyperlink to the clip or a wave file must be attached to the assignment. If you provide a hyperlink, please be sure there is no password associated with it.

The group summary may not exceed one standard page in length. Grading will be based on content, grammar and style.

N.B. Video clips from the TV program, *The Office* (either the US or UK version) or the movie, *Office Space* may not be used.

APPENDIX B

POPULAR VIDEO SHARING WEBSITES

The following are a list of websites that provide access to shared video clips. Caution should be used in selecting sites allowable for this exercise. Although most sites do not allow adult-only material, there is no common standard for determining inappropriate content. Also, some sites may be far easier to access than others.

Video content providers:

- aniBOOM.com - short animations and cartoons
- Blip.tv - Web syndication of commercial content
- Crackle.com - content from Sony Pictures Entertainment
- Dailymotion - French video sharing service
- EngageMedia - social justice and environmental content from Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific
- ExpoTV.com - video product reviews
- Funnyordie.com - comedy video website
- Hulu.com - offers free online video clips from popular TV shows and movies. This site sponsored by NBC Universal, Fox Entertainment Group, ABC, Inc., and Providence Equity Partners.
- Liveleak - emphasises on current events, politics and reality-based footage
- Metacafe - specializes in short-form original entertainment
- Ourmedia - archive of video or audio clips which do not violate copyright laws and do not include pornography
- TroopTube - online video site from the U.S. military
- Twango - amateur video content organized into channels
- Veoh - distributed content from major media companies including CBS, ABC, The WB, Viacom's MTV Networks, ESPN, FEARNet, Billboard, Ford Models, US Weekly, TV Guide.
- YouTube - movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, and amateur video content
- Vzaar - online video hosting service to ecommerce merchants, such as EBay sellers

Video-sharing social media network sites:

- Buzznet.com
- Facebook
- Myspace
- Flickr.com
- Gawkk.com
- MyVideo
- OneWorldTV.com
- Tangle.com
- Vimeo.com
- Zoopy.com

Internet search engines for video content:

- Blinkx.com
- Google Video
- Truveo.com
- Yahoo! Video