

teach^{engage} 21st-century learners technology

This PAGE One column features technology-in-the-classroom advice from tech-savvy Georgia educators.

Technology in the Classroom: Simple 'Paperslide' Videos Are an Easy Way to Reinforce Learning

By Lodge McCammon, PhD

In 2007, I won \$15,000 in a video contest. Crazy, right? And I did it using an inexpensive camcorder, creating a product that required very little editing, had poor lighting and was quite shaky ... but it was still worth \$15,000! How in the world was that possible? Well, the message in the video was clever and clearly stated. In fact, the message was so strong that the video quality didn't seem to matter to the judges at all. Fascinating, right? Winning that contest made me want to explore how this type of low-barrier video creation could be leveraged in the classroom.

Now, what would you do if someone handed you a check for \$15k? Yeah, I thought about a lot of those things as well.

However, at the time, I was pursuing my PhD at North Carolina State University and working for an education think tank called The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation. So, instead of finally getting that motorcycle or paying some tuition, I used the money to buy a carload of Flip Video cameras and drove around North Carolina giving them to teachers.

Do you remember Flip Video cameras? They were these really cool \$80 pocket-sized devices that were extremely easy to use. Of course, they are obsolete these days because of the HD video capabilities of every smartphone. But back in 2008, they were classroom gold.

So I visited schools across North Carolina, handing out Flip cameras and

showing teachers how to create what I called 1-take videos to enhance their learning environments. My mantra was: "Hit record, present your material, hit stop — and your video is done." Any teacher or student can use this practical style of video creation to capture, share and reflect on meaningful classroom content. These 1-take videos are powerful because the focus stays on the content, not on time-consuming and expensive aspects such as the video quality, lighting or editing.

What was the result of dropping off all these cameras? Well, hundreds of teachers and students started creating and sharing 1-take videos! The teachers used the cameras to capture their lessons, and

Simple ... To Complex



students used them to tell stories about the content.

One particular strategy I coined called “paperslide videos” caught on quickly. Paperslide videos are as simple as they sound. Students write a script about a topic and create on scraps of paper images that correspond with the text. Then, with a video camera pointed down at a flat surface, the students hit record and read the script while sliding corresponding images into and out of the shot. They then hit stop, and their 1-take video is complete. The videos are charming in their simplicity — especially the effect of seeing a hand pushing images in and out of view. More importantly, with paperslide videos, students own their learning by generating artifacts that capture their voice and creative ideas. Plus, it makes learning exciting! Students get really engaged in the process of creating these easy-to-make videos.

Today, teachers across the world are challenging their students to use the paperslide strategy to rapidly create and share meaningful classroom content,

publishing video artifacts of student learning on a variety of sites like YouTube and Twitter. (Search #paperslide to find a variety of classroom examples.)

Paperslide video projects build critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills. While collaborating to write the script and create the images, students are analyzing and teaching each other the content. When students are practicing and recording their paperslide presentations, they are reviewing the information. When the class is watching and discussing the videos, they are evaluating and reflecting on their presentations. When students revisit their published videos on YouTube (or wherever they may be shared), they are essentially teaching themselves. Based on what we know from research, if you want students to remember something, just point a video camera in their direction

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and challenge them to teach.

Looking for an engaging and unforgettable lesson? Consider using the simple 1-take paperslide video strategy tomorrow!

Lodge McCammon holds a Ph.D. in curriculum development from North Carolina State University, and he has taught high school civics and economics. As an international education consultant and trainer, he helps fellow educators implement innovative classroom strategies that engage students in learning. ■

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