

Why Grade When They Can Reflect?

Teaching Ideas



The instructional video project was so fun! I'm very proud of how my video looks. I love how the voice over that I did didn't have any sounds that I didn't want. (the room was VERY LOUD). I had to record over and over to get it the way I wanted. I also love the way the music went so it didn't stand out. I just wanted it to be background music.

If I could change anything from my video, I would change the lighting. In some parts, it's too bright and it looks orange, and in the other parts, it's too dark. I would also change the clip where I finished my bracelet because it wasn't clear and it was hard to understand what I was doing. Maybe next time I'll add my face. I was just kind of shy but noticed how cool it was to see people's faces in it.

We've just come to the end of an inquiry project in which my students created instructional videos for the internet using the painfully simple to some, but beautifully limiting in my view (a

subject for another blog post in the near future), [iMovie on our iPad devices](#). It was one of the most rewarding learning experiences I've ever been involved in as a teacher. When you see a collection of seventy-five students take

creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and reflection to this level, it reminds me of how our schools can do great, magical things.

But, I've run into a problem that recurs for me like hives.

Have you ever tried doing movie projects with students and found it to be immensely unsatisfying? Have you noticed how common it is for students to lose their initial excitement when they realize how arduous and minutiae-filled the process of movie making is? Have you experienced that anti-climax at 'the end' when few movies turn out as initially envisioned, due in

large part to all the technical aspects of filmmaking? Ya, I've experienced that too.

But that's not my problem.

My dilemma is that I don't know how I should grade/evaluate them?

When process is king, then there's only rich learning, regardless of the perceived value of the 'product'.

Actually, no, that's not the issue. The real problem I'm having is that I just don't know *why* I should.

You see, my students have been keeping project journals on their blogs, writing reflections before, during, and after the process. I had them do this to put the emphasis on the process, rather than the final result. This is one of the ways you can get around the lack of resiliency you often see in our schools, such as the problem with movie-making I described above. When everything's about the result, then you're basically setting yourself up for doom. When

Royan Lee

Royan Lee is a teacher leader in the York Region District School Board, Ontario, Canada. Royan's current professional preoccupations include contemporary literacy and assessment practice, social media in the classroom, and passion based learning. This is an excerpt from his blog: <http://spicylearning.wordpress.com>

process is king, then there's only rich learning, regardless of the perceived value of the 'product'.

The blog reflections have been wonderful. Moreover, the fact that they are open for one another to read and provide feedback on has taken the reflection into an epic, collaborative sphere. Sometimes I feel like a metaphorical flash mob is breaking out in my learning environment.

Here are just a few more snippets from their reflections:

As you all know, within the past few weeks, I have been working on my instructional video project. After 4 or so weeks, it is finally finished! Although I think I did well, and am proud of myself, there are still SO MANY things I can do to improve my project for next time! First of all, the editing. I do like how it turned out, but I could have done better. The music I put in was too loud. I rushed the credits and titles, so they're a bit boring. I love what Flower did in her video with the coloured credits. The acting I did could have been so much better. I didn't know it would be so weird to be in front of the camera. I wouldn't be as nervous next time. Well, I don't know if I can make myself NOT nervous, but I can hide it better next time. I spoke like I was shy, so that is also something I should improve for next time. Then again, there's a lot of stuff I did well! I did like how well organized and prepared I was. I like the way my video actually accomplishes the

goal of instructing someone on the basics of guitar. I also did a great job of working with my partner and sometimes I'm not so good at that. It was the best project ever.

This week while filming I learned a lot. When watching other people filming, I would actually be quite jealous of some of them, how they handled themselves and the charisma they seemed to have around the camera. But while filming, I felt proud of myself as I tried to copy the things I'd seen. The experience was a first for me and it was amazingly fun but hard too. I didn't expect to have so many retakes, mistakes, and slips of the tongue. Mixing up our lines was very common. I also didn't expect it to take as long as it did. I really wish I could do over some of the "one chance" shots that we just had to settle for, but they were good never the less. Me and my partner ran into a couple of problems, and one was the lighting. We were filming in a space with windows everywhere, and our first few shots were taken after 5 PM so we had to use the lights, but the next day we had to cooperate with the natural light that gave us way more light than the first shots. All in all I love filming, editing with iMovie is an absolutely wonderful experience, and I hope I will get the chance to do this again.

What I learned from watching and participating in the filming

** To always listen to your partners*

ideas (make compromises)

** You have to divide the script so both partners have a chance to speak*

What I didn't expect

** How many times we had to re-do some of the shots*

** How difficult it was to be relaxed, and natural in front of the camera*

What I wish I could do over?

** To make numerous scenes that were good so out of all of them, we could choose which one was the best. (More choices than one)*

What was great

** getting to hear your partners ideas which made the video overall amazing!*

** editing, and seeing the final product of the video (seeing what an amazing job we did)*

What was difficult

** all the weird unpredictable stuff that happens, like the popcorn falling on the floor*

Things I would improve for my next video:

-I'll make the lighting better

-I'll film in landscape not portrait!!!

-I'll choose better colors so that you can tell what pieces goes where more clearly

-Say the instructions at the right time so that I'm saying the part

that I'm doing, so it all matches up
-Get rid of background noises
-Not let my hair get in the video
-Not let my hand block the ball

Thing I did well:

-I talked loud and the background music wasn't covering up my voice
-I showed the instructions well
-I did it slowly

-I overcame my fear of doing a movie

After watching people film their instructional videos, I learned that we all have similarities yet differences too. We each have a different way of making our videos special. For example some of us

use humour others just be themselves but in some way we stand out from each other. We also all saw how everyone had different skills and strengths. I didn't know

I learned that school projects don't just have to be something we do because a teacher told us to, but because it's fun. I also did not expect that I could do everything

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all that stuff about the kids in Grade 7. Some kids are shy but they still made great videos. Although we all made mistakes. I really enjoyed watching others film their videos, and filming my own because it is something I've never experienced before and I cannot wait to begin something new again.

so fluently and that really helped my self esteem.

I could go on, but do you see my quandary? How can a grade do justice to this learning? Won't it only do harm? 🍷

