Systematic Observation of Student Teaching Episodes

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Introduction
Our question was simple. What can we do to best prepare preservice teachers for the rigor of their first year of teaching. We believe that good teaching behaviors are quantifiable, transferable, and masterable. Good teaching behaviors can be observed and measured, they can be learned by observation and practice, and they can, with practice, become a natural part of a person’s teaching presence. Our response was to focus on developing a Pedagogy Lab: a high-tech facility for video viewing, editing, and recording designed for student use in documenting their own teaching episodes. This short paper reports on the system implemented within the Pedagogy Lab including the hardware selected, student process developed, and lessons learned in the course of the first year of the Pedagogy Lab.

The Pedagogy Lab
The Pedagogy Lab is a technology lab designed to facilitate student learning in identifying, learning, practicing, and mastering specific teaching behaviors. To do this, we have created a facility to that allows students to observe and document teaching behaviors using real world examples as well as requiring students to record, edit, and assess examples of their own teaching episodes.

Key Features of Pedagogy Lab
Key features for our Pedagogy Lab include digital video viewing station, digital video editing stations, and digital video authoring stations. Each of these stations fits within one or more of the activities that are in our good teaching cycle.

Viewing Stations
The digital video viewing station allows students to focus on viewing example or their own videos of teaching and quickly documenting specific teacher behaviors. This includes a custom computer program designed to assist students in systematically recording, coding and reporting observed teacher behaviors.

Editing Stations
The digital editing stations use Apple’s iMovie for the clipping, titling and output to quicktime for students as they identify and document specific teaching behaviors from their own teaching opportunities. Our custom computer program for recording, coding and reporting observed teaching behaviors will allow students to improve their self assessment of their teacher behaviors.

Authoring Station
The authoring station utilizes Apple’s iDVD, students will create final products that document their skills in the teaching environment. DVD output allows students to create feature rich long videos of their teaching performance.

Process
1) Classroom instruction on systematic observation focuses on teaching students to identify specific teaching behaviors.
2) Students review and practice their systematic observation skills by observing non-specific lessons which students will code using the systematic observation computer program within the pedagogy lab.
3) Students record and review their own teaching episodes within the Pedagogy lab utilizing the systematic observation system to identify their own abilities and deficiencies.
4) Make and implement a plan for improvements, further teaching and lab time to assess improvements on specific behaviors.
5) Students may create final products that contain exemplar episodes of their own teaching.

Presentation Outline
If accepted, we will share the development of our systematic observation system, example video episodes, and lessons learned in the first year of our implementation schedule. We will also bring a complete student presentation documenting one student’s journey from classroom instruction to completed final product.