Activity 15.3: Analysis of Videotaped Episodes*

Background and Purpose: Videotaping and analyzing teaching is an excellent way to learn and understand teaching practices. It can also be used for assessment purposes given that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) requires candidates to submit videotapes of their teaching as part of their certification process. This exercise is aimed at helping you practice particular teaching strategies in a format that is very similar to ones used by the National Board.

Directions: Videotape a lesson for which you have planned carefully and have identified the particular teaching strategy(ies) you are going to use. In some instances the lesson will include more than one strategy (e.g., presentation and cooperative learning; concept teaching and discussion; direct instruction and role-playing). Below are practical and technical tasks you should attend to followed by ideas about how to analyze your videotape.*

Before you videotape – The following tasks need attention:

- Permissions: Obtain permission for all students and adults who may appear on the videotape even for practice. Most schools have guidelines for securing these permissions.

- Equipment: Use the best videotaping equipment and tapes available. For small groups carry a hand-held microphone while circulating.

Technical tasks requiring attention

- Video: The quality of your video is important. Only practice can yield good quality. You might consider these practices: use a tripod; be sure chalkboard writing is legible if it is essential to your video; point the camera at the speaker wherever possible; set the zoom lens to its widest setting if the camera will be moved during taping; increase the amount of light; and avoid shooting into bright light.

- Audio: Audio quality can be most troublesome, and it is extremely important. You might consider these practices: keep the microphone close to the action; use an external PZM microphone; eliminate noises that may interfere with taping; have the camera person wear headphones; and be sure to secure all cables.

- Whole-class videotaping: The following recommendations are for whole class activities such as demonstrations or discussions. Consider camera placement; set the lens to a wide angle; avoid trying to follow a conversation back and forth between different people; and place the microphone with masking tape up high on a wall so it faces toward the majority of speakers.

- Small group videotaping: These videotapes are intended to focus on student interaction in collaborative learning and your facilitation of such learning as you move around the room. It is intended to capture a particular kind of classroom structure, one in which you interact with many small groups as they pursue independent work. Consider camera placement to
show as many participants as possible; zoom in if the group is looking at or referring to an item; and place the microphone closest to the group with whom you are interacting.

Analyzing Your Teaching After Videotaping

- Watch your videotapes carefully – at least three times. Initially, watch with the “sound turned off” so you can observe for nonverbal behavior. Next, watch the full episode with the “sound on” to get the overall picture. Then, watch it again.

- Select several tapes that are continuous and unedited.

- Answer the following analysis questions in clear and straightforward language.

Suggested Questions to Guide Analysis. The following questions will be useful in focusing your attention on aspects of teaching that are evident in National Board Standards.

1. What is the extent of classroom involvement (e.g., are the same students doing all the talking)?

2. Are the students engaged in the lesson? How can you tell? What do students’ facial expressions and body language tell you about your instructions?

3. What kinds of questions do you ask? Can all questions be answered with a single word? How long do you wait to form responses? Do you ask students to explain and/or defend a particular answer or approach? Do you ask students to compare or evaluate alternative interpretations or strategies?

4. Were there any opportunities for students to ask questions? How would you categorize the students’ questions (e.g., did they indicate confusion and a need for clarification or understanding or extension)?

5. What roles (e.g., presenter, inquirer, facilitator, discussion leader, etc.) did you play in the videotape? Was each role appropriate for the situation?

6. What kinds of tasks did you ask students to do? Did you capitalize on their previous knowledge and experiences?

7. What instructional opportunities did you take advantage of? Why?

8. What instructional opportunities did you not take advantage of? Why?

9. What evidence did you see of the students taking intellectual risks? Does the class look safe as an environment for getting something wrong? Do students talk to each other as well as to you?

10. Did you push students to take risks, to speculate, to offer conjectures about possible
approaches, strategies, and interpretations?

11. Were the learning goals for the lesson appropriate? Were they achieved? Did you adjust the lesson so every student could achieve your goals? What is the evidence for your answers, both in the videotape and from other sources?

12. Explain how your design and execution of this lesson affected the achievement of your instructional goals.

**Analysis and Reflection:** Based on your observation and analysis of your video, list two specific areas in your practice that the videos made you want to improve. Reflect on how you might go about doing this.

*These ideas and procedures are adapted from “Tips Across Certificate Areas” provided by the National Board and by the faculty at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (see Isenberg, J. P. (2003).*