Production of Video “Close-up Picture” Stories by Preservice Students

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Abstract

College students in Japan produced video “close-up picture” stories in their preservice education program. Using a Video Close-up System developed by Oda, each group of 3-5 persons created a narrative for a picture story show. The students wrote a scenario and drew several pictures in order to produce the video work. Then they recorded the pictures with voice and sound using the ViCS. Through the video production process, they learned a lot of things as they shared their works and collaborated in the groups.

1. What is Video Close-up System (ViCS?)

In Japanese schools video cameras have been used mainly for recording school events and learning activities for about 25 years. Sometimes preservice students can use videos like mirrors to see their own learning activities. In addition, we have focused on the use of video cameras with which the students can create their videos collaboratively and show their products to each other.

Oda (1982) developed a Video Close-up System (ViCS) for college and K-12 students as well as for teachers. The ViCS consists of a video camera, a video cassette recorder (VCR), a close-up photography stand with light, and a microphone (Fig. 1).

The setting procedure is as follows.
1) The video camera is fixed at the top of the photography stand.
2) The close-up lens is attached with the video camera.
3) The VCR is connected with the video camera and the microphone.

The students can produce video works with the ViCS as follows.
1) To place pictures, photographs, charts, etc. on the stage of the close-up photography stand.
2) To set the VCR the state of stand-by to record.
3) To adjust the zoom and the focus of the camera.
4) To press the recording (stand-by) button of the VCR.
5) To record voice and sound together with the picture.
6) To press the stand-by (recording) button
7) To repeat 4-6.

2. Characteristics of the ViCS

The video cameras are usually used to record on video tapes what moves while they are looking into the finder. But with the ViCS set-up, we deny the conventional way of using video cameras. In the way we propose, the video cameras are fixed and we utilize superficial data, mainly pictures the learners drew. This forces new ways of thinking about motion and storytelling.
The ViCS has the following characteristics.
1) We can carry the ViCS to any places and use it in the general classrooms of K-12 schools and colleges.
2) Video recording operation is very easy for even elementary students to produce video works.
3) Students can utilize their hand-drawn pictures and printed materials to make a presentation or to produce video works.
4) A small sized picture can be used. For example they can show a postage stamp on TV.
5) They can produce a video work for a short time.

Nowadays, video cameras have been becoming smaller and lighter. So each video camera has a small liquid crystal display monitor, a tape recorder, a microphone, and a light. Therefore, if a video camera and a close-up photography stand are available, students can use the ViCS quite easily.

3. Production of Video Picture-Story Shows using the ViCS

The ViCS equipment was not developed in order for teachers to produce some videos for teaching. It was developed in order that students might summarize the products they have studied and announce the results in the classroom and to the parents and other people.

Our recent development work with the ViCS has focused on the method with which the students produce a video picture-story show using the system.

The flow of producing a video picture-story show is as follows.
1) The students make a group of 3-5.
2) They think and talk about the theme and contents of the video picture-story show in the group.
3) Each group creates a scenario (Figure 2), draws pictures, and colors them (Figure 3, Photo.1). Every student shares each role.
4) After creating the scenario and the pictures, each group records the pictures with voice and sound using the ViCS.
5) The students view all the video picture-story shows.
6) They assess their video shows and reflect their works and learning.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2** A scenario written by the students.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3** A picture colored by the students.

![Photo 1](image)

**Photo 1** The students draw a picture.

![Photo 2](image)

**Photo 2** The students record the pictures with voice and sound using the ViCS.

In our college classes the college students who want to be teachers have used the ViCS and produced video close-up picture stories for about 25 years. And we have also introduced the method to the in-service teachers in our Mie Prefecture.

In Susono's two "Educational Technology 2005" classes at Kogakkan University, the students produced 47 video shows. At recording time 5 ViCS sets were prepared. The students’ number and the time for producing the shows are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours for Preparing</td>
<td>2 h</td>
<td>2 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Discussion

(1) Using PowerPoint? or Producing Video Works?

When the students use an image scanner and a presentation software like PowerPoint, they may be able to make a similar slide show with pictures and sound that are similar to the video close-up picture-story shows in our practice. Clearly, to produce video works is low-technology, but we point out that it has some benefits for the students.

One of them is that there are many students who feel warmth for hand-drawn and hand-colored pictures, hand-written characters or letters, and analog-recorded voices.

Second, producing video works provides more opportunities for students to collaborate than using PowerPoint. If the students use computers, their works will be more individualized.

Moreover the video close-up system is useful in common classrooms. At Japanese colleges, the class size may be over 100 students. However we can use the ViCS even in large lecture sections.

(2) Collaborative Learning through video production

It is important for students to do group work and produce video works collaboratively.

At the first stage of producing video picture-stories, each group has to discuss the theme of the work and decide what and how to create the story and show. Next, they need to share in the preparation of works for recording on the close-up video table. For example they have to write a scenario and to draw and color some pictures. Some of them have to be actors/actresses or narrators. They need a video operator at the recording. Since the recording time is restricted and fairly short, for example 15 minutes, they need to rehearse before recording. Thus collaboration in the group is very important.

Our survey after a typical video production shows that 96% of the preservice students thought that "I was able to learn many things collaboratively through video production". Moreover, in these classes the students had learned the learning theories, and 83% of them answered "Yes" or "Rather Yes" to the question "Did I understand the meaning of the theory social constructivism after the video production?".

(3) Video production in preservice education

Oda and Susono continued the production of video picture-stories for college students in preservice education. The future teachers learned the following things by producing video works.

1) how to use video cameras in the classroom
2) how to construct a video work with story using still pictures
3) to collaborate in the group
4) how to summarize the learning products and show them to many people
5) to learn from the video works which the classmates produced
6) what and how to introduce the method of video picture-story shows to K-12 students

According to a post-activity survey of the college students, 85% of them answered "Yes" or "Rather Yes" to the question "Can elementary students produce video picture-story shows?" And 98% of them answered "Yes" or "Rather Yes" in case of junior and high students.

Since many K-12 schools in Japan lack the equipment for the ViCS, there are only a few schools that can produce video works. However, more and more teachers and future teachers are getting interested in the ViCS and understand the usefulness of video picture story method.
References