

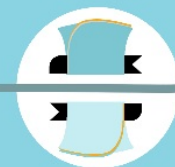
Collegial learning in a video club

Learning from, in and for practice

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What is the video club about?

A video club is a (school-based) Professional Development program, for collaborative learning at the workplace, with the help of collegial dialogs on video recordings of own classroom practices. The program is based on four major pillars. Firstly, teachers work on their own professional learning goals. Secondly, they do this by studying their own practice, using videotaped lessons for feedback. Thirdly, they discuss their videotapes in small groups of three persons, using a protocol for their dialogue and with well-defined reciprocal roles for each participant. Lastly, teachers need to be coached in conducting their roles.

What you should know in case you wish to work with this tool?

Working with the video club means that you coach the teachers for their role in the video club and that you engage in the program over a longer time. As a whole, the program lasts at least three to four months and sometimes overlaps almost a full school Year. Teachers need to invest time and effort in the program, so spreading out the program gives better opportunities to align their efforts with their daily work. In the program, 3-6 plenary training and sharing sessions need to be planned. In these sessions, all participating teachers of the various small videoclub subgroups take part.

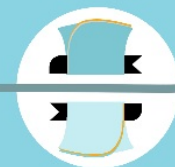
These plenary sessions enhance:

- Start and goalsetting
- Training of peer coach role and communication skills
- Coaching of inquiry-stance
- Presentation and celebrating results

In between the plenary sessions, teachers work in small videoclubs, **triads**, groups of three teachers.

There is **no hierarchy** in the triad-groups, all teachers are peers to each other. To ensure this, a protocol is made for the triads with the following design principles:

- each teacher owns individual learning goal and is a learner in its own right
- reciprocal peer coaching mainly focusing on in-depth questioning



- well defined roles (learner-peercoach-observer)
- sharing and opening own practice to each other
- multidisciplinary triads to introduce new perspectives and to avoid undermining influences of school politics in subject departments

Within their triad, all participating teachers are studying **their own learning goal**. At the same time, by opening up their individual practices and by reflecting together, they also learn from each other and from each other's practices.

Applying this method requires a **safe learning environment** for all participants (no hierarchy, no assessment, no judgement)

Which target group is addressed?

The target group is teachers.

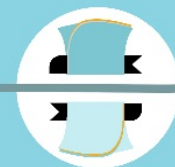
The participating teachers can teach any subject and there is no special requirement for teaching experience, both beginning and experienced teachers are welcome to participate.

How much time does the method require?

The whole process of learning how to coach your peer and to inquire in own practice (plenary sessions) and the actual peer coaching itself (videoclub in triads) takes at least three to four months and preferably a whole school year.

What is needed for preparation?

- In order to work with a videoclub, you need **at least 3 teachers** to participate (or a multiplier of three persons, e.g. 6, 9, 12, 15 ...). Each threesome will form a triad and work together.
- Each participating teacher needs **time** to come to plenary meetings and to triad meetings, and - if possible - to visit each other's classroom and videotape themselves .
- **Equipment** to video-tape lessons
- An experienced trainer / school coach who is responsible for the plenary sessions in which the participating teachers are trained in peer-coaching skills and designing small supplementary inquiries in own classroom



What should be the setting?

The setting should be a school with a professional learning culture (or at least 3 teachers who are willing to participate) and a wish to encourage professional development of teaching staff. The program fits in with a vision of teachers as autonomous professionals taking control and responsibility for their profession and their own practice.

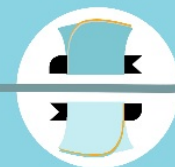
What will you get when using the tool?

Research (Schildwacht, 2012) showed that teachers in this kind of programs worked on various learning goals, such as learning of new teaching strategies, classroom management, and responding to differences between students. At the end of the program almost all participants reported that they approximately reached their own learning goal. The program also had other outcomes. Teachers learned coaching and communication skills, they learned to reflect more on own automatisms in classroom, they noticed new aspects in their classroom practice, they got new ideas, and they became more open-minded towards collaboration with their colleagues.

The focus on teacher practice is important in changing education – and not merely for changing teachers' ideas. While theory learning was least appreciated, feedback by means of video recordings and feedback embedded in peer coaching was appreciated as a great contribution, provided that peer coaching is done in an open, non-judgmental way, so that teachers feel stimulated to develop ownership. Inquiry is important for teachers' focus on outcomes in classrooms. Peer coaching and inquiry are professional learning strategies that need to be learned. The collaborative setting of the program seems essential in doing so.

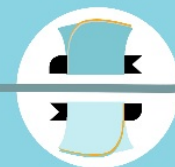
NOTE

1. The principles should not be used independently, because they work in a complementary way.
2. Video feedback helped teachers to refresh their memories, to notice things, to study classroom practice, gain new insights, clarify own learning goals, create opportunities for feedback from colleagues, share classroom practice and escape from the public loneliness of the profession, to gain self-confidence, generate new ideas from the observation of peers, and share their



work with others outside the school. It was also discovered that video feedback might have an important additional value. Emotional aspects of learning (concerning identity, motivation, and tolerance of uncertainty) seem to play an important role in the professional development of teachers (Bolhuis, 2001). Coaching dialogues that also incorporated reflection on feelings helped the participants to gain a better understanding of what was really happening, and helped with finding solutions. In contrast, the teachers showed no positive attitude towards learning through studying theoretical knowledge. This shows again that in professional development it is important to connect with the concerns and preferred learning strategies of the professional.

3. To identify own learning needs is not as simple as it sounds. It needs time to investigate and look more closely. Peer coach dialogues focusing on various dimension of 'the Elevator' can help.
4. The program has been built on design principles that strengthen the teacher as an active participant in own professional development. Teachers who refuse to become an active participant do not benefit themselves, but also create a problem for their peers in their triads. Not only are their peers unable to support the reluctant teacher, but it also affects the working climate in a triad.
5. Rushing can be counterproductive. Highly effective reflections and inquiries should analyze classroom practice and pursue 'what could be' and not merely focus on 'what works' and the impact of a particular technique. Dialogues on and inquiry into 'what' and 'why' and 'ideals' are as central to reflective practice as the question of 'how'. Collaborative reflective practice involves a repeating, virtually never-ending process of asking questions, looking carefully at the data from practice, altering practice based on insights and ideas emerging from the data, asking new questions, and so on. Peer coaching aimed at open-ended questioning – asking after the 'when', 'why', or 'how' of teachers understanding – can enhance teacher inquiries. Important is a school focus on professional development as a continuous process which needs ample time and energy.



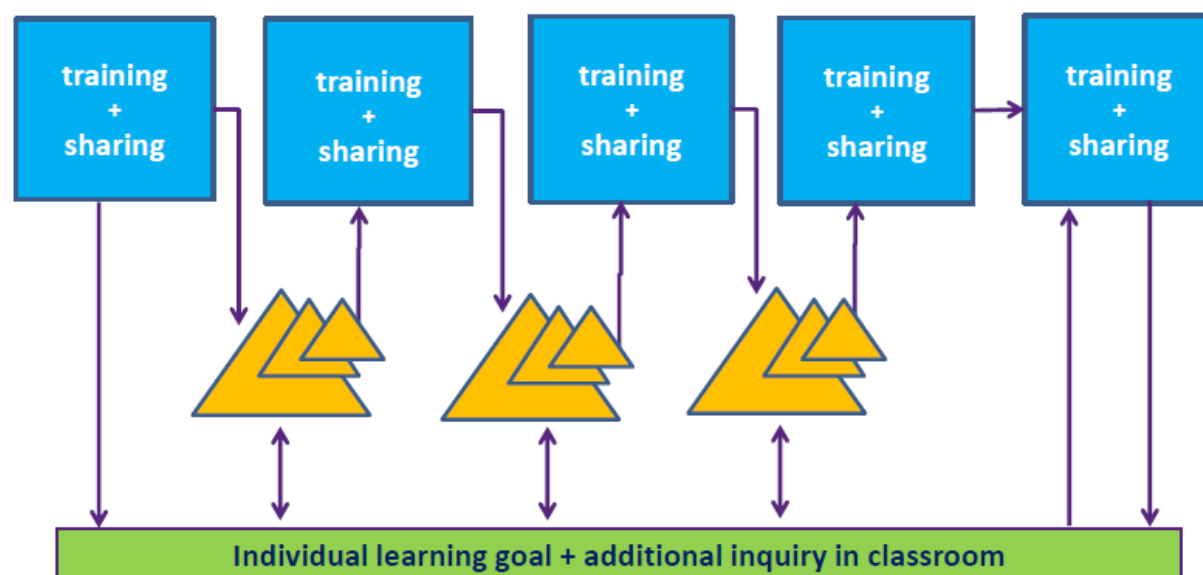
Videoclub: how does it work?


Principles underlying the method

Based on a literature review on effective professional development programs for teachers, six underlying design principles were formulated for the video club. These principles are:

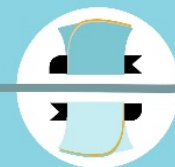
1. Collaborative learning at the workplace in the form of peer coaching
2. Focus on own practice with the help of videofeedback and professional dialogues
3. Structures to deepen and broaden reflection e.g. peer coaching in triads with reciprocal well defined roles
4. Ownership of learning goals with each individual teacher
5. Inquiry stance and focus on results in classroom and with students
6. Training for peer coach role and for inquiry-as-a-stance

The program itself





The program itself consists of 3 to 6 **plenary sessions** (blue squares ) in which the participating teachers are trained and supported in:

- peer coaching and in-depth questioning to stimulate reflection;
- identifying their own learning needs;



- developing supplementary inquiries into their own practice.

The peer-coaching skills focus on a learner centred coaching style, in which in-depth open-ended questioning is elaborated. The conversation is focused on behaviour and results, but also on feelings, motives, assumptions and ideals.

In between the plenary sessions, the **triads** (yellow triangle ) meet each other. In a triad session, three teachers are peer-coaching each other in reflection dialogues. Each teacher has his or her own learning goal (green line ). Teachers video tape a lesson and these video recordings are the input for the conversation in their meeting. In the triad, reciprocal peer coaching takes place, using well defined roles. In each conversation, one teacher is the 'learner', one teacher is the 'peer coach' and one teacher is the 'observer / facilitator'. The video recording and the learning goal of the 'learner' is the starting point of the peer-coach conversation. The 'coach' is using open-ended conversation techniques to help the learner to study and reflect on own classroom practice. The main task of the 'observer / facilitator' is to observe the conversation process and to help the coach to ask open ended questions. In each session, all three teachers take turns in being the 'learner', 'coach' and 'observer'. These reciprocal roles and opening up own classroom practice to each other are very important to enhance equality between the three group members.

Outline of the program

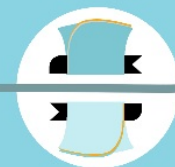
Plenary start up

- Focus on introducing the program;
- building on trust and a professional learning culture;
- training in LSD skills (Listening, Summarizing, in-Depth questioning)
- starting helping each other in triads to analyse own learning needs.

(in between two meetings: videoclub meeting in triad group)

Plenary meeting 2 and 3

- training of various skills (making concrete; using video feedback; using 'The Elevator' for analysing various dimensions)
- analysing video recordings of own peer coach dialogs for learning of peer coach role
- focusing and setting of own learning goal.



(in between two meetings: videoclub meeting in triad group)

Plenary meeting 4 and 5

- Coaching of designing supplementary inquiries into own classroom (fitted to own learning goal)
- Coaching of analysing collected data of their small size inquiries in own classroom and making up own learning reports.

(note: It concerns small inquiries in own classroom: see e.g. Linpilcare: Protocol 033 'Easy ways to collect data during your work' and protocol 035 'My inquiry brief' on the website:

<http://linpilcare.eu/index.php/intellectual-outputs/tools/complete-toolkit>)

(in between two meetings: videoclub meeting in triad group)

Plenary meeting 6

- Presenting own learning process and outcomes to each other
- Celebrating and the closing of the professional development program

Conversation techniques in peer-coaching

In the plenary meetings (■), teachers are trained in conversation skills. In the triads (▲), they apply the in-depth questioning, in order to deepen and broaden reflections in their peer-coach dialogues.

Examples of in-depth questions are:

- What did you expect? (*assumptions*)
- What does the video feedback shows you? (*actual classroom practice*)
- What do you know of other perspectives? (*student-perspective? theoretical notions?*)
- What do you believe in? (*beliefs*)
- Who are you, or who do you want to become as a teacher? (*professional identity*)
- How do these aspects relate to each other?



Another tool that is used in the peer-coaching is the model of the 'elevator'. This model consists of several layers that each address a different perspective. The teachers are trained to apply these techniques when they are peer-coaching each other.

Interactive sense making through discussing

- observed reality (video) ↔ own assumptions and experienced reality
- aspects of 'The Elevator'



Technical-instrumental

Ego-perspectives

acting – feeling – wanting - thinking

Student-perspectives

acting – feeling – wanting - thinking

Moral and political notions

Subjective educational theory

Professional identity:

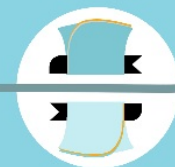
- Self-image
- Self-esteem
- Task perception
- Job motivation
- Future perspectives

Figure 1: 'The elevator', dimensions for reflection (Schildwacht, 2015)

(For more tools to stimulate reflective dialogs see e.g.: protocol 003 'Reflective questions and metacognition' en protocol 030 'What are clarifying and probing questions' on the website: <http://linpilcare.eu/index.php/intellectual-outputs/tools/complete-toolkit>)

Inquiry into own practice

Teachers are encouraged to work on their learning goal through supplementary inquiries into their own practice. What do you see in your classroom, what 'evidence' do you have? As a result of the peer-coach dialogues, they might test a different approach with their students and gather information of the effects of this approach. Or they study their classroom further by questionnaires and interviews with their students. Or they analyse students results looking for patterns.



Presentation at the end of the trajectory

At the end of the trajectory, a plenary session is organised in which the participants present their learning outcomes to each other. Sometimes, also other colleagues and/or school management are invited.

Important issues in the design of this professional development tool

Why is the use of video recordings so important?

The first reason is that video recordings capture reality in an authentic and relevant way:

- Rich feedback on own practice
- Stimulated recall of own practice
- Bursting through the public loneliness of the profession and creating rich opportunities to learn in a professional community
- A vivid secondhand experience for other teachers by engaging and immersing them
- Sharing and building of a common language and shared ideas about teaching and learning between teachers in the school
- Collegial dialogues combined with analysis of videos is motivating and compelling

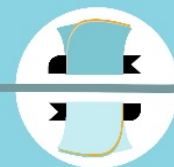
The second reason is that video recordings offer opportunities to examine situations from a distance

- Analyzing teaching systematically relieved of the need to act
- Possibilities to pause or replay scenes and to reflect on situations from different perspectives
- Complex situations can be studied in manageable sized chunks
- It enables a theory-based analysis of complex situations
- Possibilities for developing competencies in a systematic way

Peer coaching needs to be learned

From previous research (Schildwacht, 2012), we know that peer coaching is much harder to perform than expected. It needs to be learned!

The role of the peer coach is focused on LSD (listening, summarize, in-depth questioning). The Role of observer/facilitator in triad is very helpful for keeping the dialogue focused and professional and also for learning the role of peer coach.



From our experience, we learned that acquired (conversation) skills were very much appreciated, also for use in other professional situations.

Last but not least: **A safe learning environment is crucial.** This can be reached by applying a structured form of peer coaching. Beware of pitfalls: if you skip the triad structure, you risk to reduce the conversation to 'just a talk'. If you do fall short of commitment and time, you risk that conclusions becomes superficial and deep learning shuts down.

It is very important to pay attention to enhancing structures to create **equality**:

- Individual teacher is owner of learning goal
- Exchanging well defined roles
- Everyone is a learner
- Exchange of results, however no form of assessment at the end
- School leaders and experts in the school as participants who starts showing own vulnerability ('our practice is also not perfect and we too need to learn').