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Due, Brian Lystgaard; Trærup, Johan; Lange, Simon Bierring

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Learning during workshop meetings based on video clips

Brian L. Due, Johan Trærup, Simon B. Lange
University of Copenhagen

This paper aims to show how watching video recordings of participant's own practice during workshop meetings provide a unique basis for learning about and improving interactional practices. It is our contention that one of the most effective learning tools is to watch yourself or others perform tasks that one can relate to. The result can be learning about new and better forms of communication, process management, leadership or lack of it, about decision-making processes, about the influence of material structures on the situation, the importance of actions and everything else that takes place in interactions. Video Learning aims to facilitate learning during workshop meetings and, if possible, change the practice of practitioners who take part in the workshops.

The method is based on what can be referred to as EMCA multimodal interaction analysis (Due, 2017). The name implies that the methodological and theoretical origin is ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA), and that multimodal interactional resources are examined in the analyses. Both EM and CA are theoretical and methodological disciplines that focus on people's social and situated multimodal practices, which, in short, means that an analyst pays attention to language, body and objects in tangible and physical situations. What EMCA analyses have in common is that they select and describe specific phenomena or collections of phenomena through detailed micro analyses of empirical material (called "data"). In the version that constitutes the basis for Video Learning, data consists of carefully prepared transcriptions of video recorded interaction. The transcriptions are inspired by Gail Jefferson's transcription system developed for conversation data (Jefferson 2004) as well as transcription practices for video material (see e.g. Broth & Keevallik, 2014; McIlvenny, 2014; Stefani & Mondada, 2014).

Using video ethnographic material for feedback and learning during workshops

Using video recordings in a didactic and pedagogical context is not new. In the 80s, practitioners discovered the documentary and thus also the pedagogical persuasive format of the video material. To present a video recording at a meeting has almost "objective status". One can show a clip and say, "This was what actually happened" or "What do you think is happening here?" Seeing oneself or others on video has huge learning potential, which was quickly picked up in learning environments. Just like video ethnographic studies of classroom interaction were part of the earliest video ethnography (Mehan, 1979), the pedagogical and didactic usage of video recordings of teachers during interactions was implemented early on as well (Kpanja, 2001; Rosaen, Lundeberg, Cooper, Fritzen, & Terpstra, 2008; Fukkink, Tienekeins, & Kramer, 2011; Davidsen & Vanderlinde, 2014). In pedagogical contexts, the concept of Marte Meo was invented already at the beginning of the 1980s by the Dutch Maria Aarts (Mjeldheim, 1992). Video recordings used in the health care sector (Alnes, Kirkevold, & Skovdahl, 2011; Clayton et al., 2013) and in doctor/nurse-patient communication (Caris-Verhallen, Kerkstra, Bensing, & Grypdonck, 2000; Kurtz, Silverman, & Draper, 2005; Zick, Granieri, & Makoul, 2007), as well as in design and innovation (Buur &
Soendergaard, 2000), PR and media training (Steven Meisel, 1998) and coaches working with athletes (Weinberg & Gould, 2014).

In addition to the above-mentioned approaches where video material is used for learning and improving practices, it should also be noted that the concept of using insights from EMCA interaction analyses as basis for communication consulting/mediation is not new. Video and audio data has been used in EMCA for communicating results back to different practitioners at meetings (Perkins, Whitworth, & Lesser, 1997; Lock, Wilkinson, & Bryan, 2008; Antaki, Richardson, Stokoe, & Willott, 2015; Wilkinson, 2014). A very special and well known method among these is CARM (Stokoe 2011) – which, however, does not specifically use video or relates to meeting situations.

**Learning theory and the role of situated practice**
As a video-based learning method, Video Learning is based on situated learning theory, which assumes that learning usually occurs through practice-oriented acquisition of knowledge in situ, e.g. during meetings. It is extremely complex to ensure that the desired change is long-lasting, and learning theories are working with different models without being able to pinpoint the solution. However, most learning theories conclude that the more practice-oriented learning is and the greater the participants are involved, the better the actual chance of learning will be and the more it can potentially lead to the desired behavioural change. The specific learning theories relating to this perspective includes situated learning, which stipulate that learning to a great extent occurs socially and is situated in the physical and social context in which participants find themselves (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000). It is not the same as claiming that learning is not a cognitive activity but rather just an emphasis on how learning is more than just cognition. This makes it relevant to study the situated practice of learning during workshop meetings, where participants are enabled to learn based on their own reflections about the practice showed to them on video.

**Video-based workshop reflection**
The basic concept in Video Learning is:
1. Video record social and interactional practice
2. Analyse the details in the displayed multimodal practices and select 5-10 video clips
3. Arrange the workshop meeting and prepare the clips and the facilitation of it
4. Do the workshop and secure learning through the situated practice during watching the clips and reflecting on them.

Below we will present two examples. The first clip illustrates an authentic and frequent work situation that we had recorded on video. The second shows how the participants responded to the video recordings when presented for them at a workshop. The examples are from a large-scale project for an optical chain. The work situation in question is thus an optometrist interacting with a client during an eye test. The key point in this context is, however, not the work setting, but the situated learning environment during the workshop meeting (ex 2).
Example 1: Example from an eye test shown to the workshop participants. Data from the daily practice of opticians was collected via video.

The situation is from the beginning of an eye test. Here, the optician examines how well the customer can see with her current contact lenses to get an indication of whether her sight has changed and whether she needs lenses with a different optical power. She therefore asks the customer to look at a letter chart, which is placed on the wall opposite her (lines 1-3). The optician's turn-at-talk is formulated as a question but the customer does not respond promptly. Instead, first there is a 1-second pause (line 4), and the customer’s response is preaced by "alt:så:::" (eng. "we:::"), pronounced with falling intonation and sound prolongation. Both the pause and the preface are well-known ways in which speakers can anticipate that their answer to a question will be dispreferred (Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). By doing this, the customer indicates that the optician should not expect her to read all lines on the letter chart without difficulty, which would have been the preferred response to her question. At the same time, the customer also anticipates her difficulty to see the letters via her facial expressions and body movements. By leaning back, lifting the chin slightly upward and raising her eyebrows (line 4), the customer performs communicative work that shows the optician that she is having difficulty with the task.

Even though the customer has anticipated her own difficulty to read the letters both verbally and via bodily actions, the optician asks a new question with clear and strong preference for an affirmative answer in line 6 ("kan du se ^den overste linje (. ) det er jo hvad jeg [t- regner med] / “can you see ^the upper line? (. ) that is what i [t- count on”). In consequence, the customer responds with the only response she can actually make: an affirmative answer. In the analysis process, we defined this example as interesting, because it gives rise to a discussion on how questions should be asked during an eye test, and how an optician should respond if the customer cannot read the letters one could expect.
Using video recordings as basis for situated learning during meetings
We arranged a meeting workshop for the employees. During the workshop, we showed the clips to the participants. In this case, we will only focus on the participant’s response to the specific example, showed above. The lines below are the opticians' immediate comments after watching the clip twice.

Example 2: Workshop participants’ response to seeing video clips of others

As the example shows, participants concentrate on the same question (“kan du se den øverste linje? (.) det er jo hvad jeg regner med” / “can you see the upper line? (.) that is what i t- count on”) (l. 6), which we initially defined as analytically interesting. As the participants' responses show, most of them agree that the question is inappropriately phrased. Lis, Maria and Lene agree with Anne's formulation (l. 1) and Lis’ words afterwards (l. 6 and 9) seem to serve as an argument supporting the same view.

The participants display alignment during their evaluation of the practice showed to them on the video clip, and during the articulation and verbal and embody affiliation, they show each other the "appropriate" stance in this kind of situation. The details of everyday practices are usually not reflected upon by employees, and when they seldom talk about best and worst practice, it is almost always in more generalized terms like "say hello to the customer and be kind". During the meeting workshop, participants do not only learn about new things, but they align and mutually construct agreement on important everyday details, like e.g. how to ask a specific kind of question. This social and situated learning is accomplished during a moment-by-moment interactional practice based on the video recordings and the facilitators guiding questions. The learning potential is not related to a cognitive complex new task, but is about getting on the same "right" page with regards to best practice in the shop, and this is achieved during the meeting workshop. In that sense, meeting workshops are
very fruitful arenas for learning about interactional best practice based on co-constructed and socializing alignment, implicitly focusing on routines, norms and values in the team as the participants socially displays evaluations, interpretations and assessments of the actions showed in the video clips. The video-based meeting workshop is thus a local community of practice, where learning is facilitated as a social process - but particularly tied to the actual and detailed challenges in everyday work life as displayed through the clips.

Whereas many learning methods assume a separation between knowing and doing, treating knowledge as an integral, self-sufficient substance, theoretically independent of the situations in which it is learned and used, the video-based workshop format has proven to be an terrific case for harvesting the value of co-produced knowledge, demonstrating that learning and cognition are fundamentally situated (cf. Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). The video-based workshops are thus excellent arenas for situating learning and building professional skills and membership of a community of practice through social co-participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). And this is primarily the case because participants are so close to the actual everyday activity in which the learning is applied, thereby making the transfer of knowledge easy. Whereas the best learning environment is to be in the particular social and physical environment, the second best is to be there virtually through the video recordings of the naturally occurring everyday practices.

**Step 1: Framing the workshop**
A Video Learning workshop last typically two hours where employees watch several carefully chosen clips. These clips should be selected based on the learning opportunities. Typically, it will be possible to look at six to ten clips, depending on their duration and whether other activities is incorporated. The facilitator starts by explaining the workshop format and analysis to the participants. One of the facilitator competencies highlighted in other studies is the imperative that the facilitator should specifically address the efforts to ensure psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006; Edmondson & Roloff, 2009). Psychological safety is a term that refers to whether people feel comfortable enough with the situation that they also dare to interact normally without fear of being ridiculed or criticised. The effects of low psychological safety or no psychological safety whatsoever will typically manifest themselves in social interaction by the participants doing a lot of work in order not to lose face (Goffman, 1955; Due, 2015). A facilitator should avoid pushing the participants to the point where it will be necessary to re-establish the good mood.

The initial framing of the workshop and the invitations to participants to collaborate actively as well as the clarification of the workshop procedure is thus important. It is also important that the facilitator explains how EMCA multimodal analyses and transcriptions work without using terms that are too technical. For example, it is possible to explain how the interaction is arranged in sequences and how meaning is created through multimodal actions. Judging from our experience with this type of workshops, participants usually find it easy to understand the simplest CA annotation.

**Step 2: Conduct a workshop by playing clips and reflecting upon them**
After the initial framing, the researcher plays the video clips one by one and gives the participants an opportunity to discuss what they think about when watching the video clip, and what they think is
happening – or should happen – after a certain played sequence. A central part of the workshop format is that the researcher not only shows a clip and lets the participants reflect on it, but also shows clips stopping them at carefully selected places and then asks the participants to guess what, in their opinion, is happening and what they think should happen next. For example, a clip can be stopped after a question or an instruction, and the participants can then be asked what they believe is happening now. This format often serves to surprise the participants and they think it is fun to see that something other than what is expected is happening. The typical response from participants after a stop is that they laugh because something "inappropriate" happens, e.g. there is a long pause or a response turns out "wrong". During the workshop meeting, this process of going through the carefully chosen clips enables situated learning because participants can reflect upon the best and worst practice and do the interpretation themselves. Instead of having an instructor or teacher telling the participants what they should learn, e.g. to ask questions in certain ways (ex 1 and 2), the participants reach this learning point through interactional and collaboratively co-constructed social processes during the workshop meeting.

Step 3: Closing, learning and thoughts about implementation

After the group has thoroughly reviewed the clips, the facilitator finally compiles the discussions and asks the participants to assess which realisations have been most important to them. These can be translated into common focus areas, e.g. "10 commandments for our interaction". The point is to ensure that it is also possible to implement the findings that have emerged through the workshop at a later time and to optimally transform them into new practices. In this context, it may be relevant to employ a more systematic use of multimodal resources for the further development of solutions. The basic point is that participants not only relate reflectively and linguistically to learning based on the presented video clips, but that they also bring other modalities into play as resources both to create understanding and to ensure learning in situ. Combining the video ethnographic material with exercises in which employees must creatively design solutions to tackle the challenges they have personally identified increases the chance of achieving a long-lasting implementation (Norman, 1993). At the same time, exercises contribute to activating the participants and create a variation during the workshop. Timewise, these types of exercises will take place after the first video-based part of the workshop. First, the participants generate findings based on their own interpretations of video clips and then translate these findings into steps on which they can act in their everyday lives.

During a workshop with the optician chain employees, we asked them, for example, to formulate their views on how best to receive customers when they walk into a store. The participants had previously seen two different clips of customers coming into the store without getting their needs met. After that, we asked the participants to turn to their neighbour and together formulate three points on what a good reception of a customer looks like, which they had to write down on a sheet of paper. The point was to create variation in the workshop and, in part, to get employees to formulate their own possible solution to the challenges they had previously recognised and put in words. This very simple exercise was therefore instrumental to getting employees to formulate an interactional strategy using the specific clips they had watched before as basis for pointing out what they thought would be appropriate behaviour in the future.
Being a facilitator
The role of process facilitation (Schein, 1978) is important throughout the entire process and the objective is first and foremost to facilitate the employees’ learning on the basis of a common discussion of their own interactional practices. The facilitator brings his own analytical assessments in play, after the participants have interpreted and discussed each clip and perhaps come to new realisations. However, it can be difficult to know when and how the facilitator should open or close the conversation in the course of the workshop, given that the objective is to ensure optimal learning (Ravn, 2011; Due, 2014).

It is generally important to open up and make room for conversations about possible conflict-ridden "deep" topics such as power, identity, roles and relationships, and not simply remain on the communicative surface where, for example, pauses, speaker selections and choices of words are discussed in isolation. It is here that the facilitator is particularly important when it comes to asking the right questions and contributing with the right feedback that can move the conversation forward to the points of greatest learning potential for the participants. A pause or a question is not interesting in itself as an isolated linguistic phenomenon, but as an activity with a functional meaning in social interaction. What is important to the facilitator is to get participants to reflect on what function their actions have and then outline improvement proposals. Typical themes are leadership, decisions, generation of ideas, closing and opening of topics, participants' own facilitation or lack of it, affiliation/disaffiliation, cooperation, power asymmetry, use of knowledge and of objects and technology.

Using other broader organisational theoretical approaches as basis, it has also been pointed out that the facilitator should be an open, embracing and controlling person who is very sensitive to the people involved (McFadzean, 2002; Ravn, 2011; Jensen, Laustsen, Søiberg, & Thomsen, 2011). But what this means on interactional micro level is still inadequately discussed. What can be probably ascertained is that the good facilitator opens up the right conversations and shuts off the wrong ones. What is "right" and "wrong" should be assessed in each individual case, and it can thus probably be concluded that an important facilitator skill in a video-based learning process is to be context-sensitive, and this requires great awareness of the interactional details. As we see it, the good facilitator is characterised by the following:

- Creates a clear objective for the workshop by framing and balancing of expectations;
- Selects and presents the right clips with the greatest learning potential for participants;
- Facilitates the participants’ interpretation of the clips along the way by asking open questions and knowing the power of pause;
- Using other remedies and exercises that can implement pointers and learning from video interpretation into specific initiatives that can help participants in their everyday lives.
Conclusion and perspective
In this paper, we have addressed the case of learning during situated workshop meetings. Meetings are arenas for all sorts of dynamics between participants and may be examined based on a range of methods and theoretical frameworks. In this paper, we have highlighted the value of using video ethnography and EMCA multimodal interaction analysis. Almost every kind of workplace activity can be video recorded, carefully analyzed and clips turned into a well-designed workshop package. In this paper, we showed how the situated learning potential is huge during meetings, when participants are shown video clips of their own or colleagues everyday practice. Further studies could specifically focus on the role of the facilitator as he/she facilitates the learning process during the meetings.

References


Meeting design and meeting practice. Thematic Session 3 at the Gothenburg Meeting Science Symposium. Maj, 2017


