USING VIDEOS TO TRANSFORM YOUR CLASSROOM

By Megan Rees

http://meganreescurriculum.weebly.com

http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Mrs-Funny-Business

Introduction:

Last year I began recording my lessons on video. It has totally changed the way I teach and the way I write my lessons. Although I presented on this subject last year, I felt it would be worthwhile to present again, after another year of using it in the classroom. Recording videos may take some time in the beginning, but in the long run it can save you SO much time in getting kids caught up, re-teaching concepts, and assigning makeup work. I also found that my student's depth of knowledge is much better. Despite the new test in Computer Tech, I still had a much higher passing rate both semesters, which I felt was largely in part to my video lessons. All of my lessons, by the way, are available for free to Utah teachers on my website, http://meganreescurriculum.weebly.com/utah-teacher-portal.html. Password is Utah. The lessons on this site are my old versions. If you would like the new versions and would also like to have the actual video file, you can find them at http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Mrs-Funny-Business.
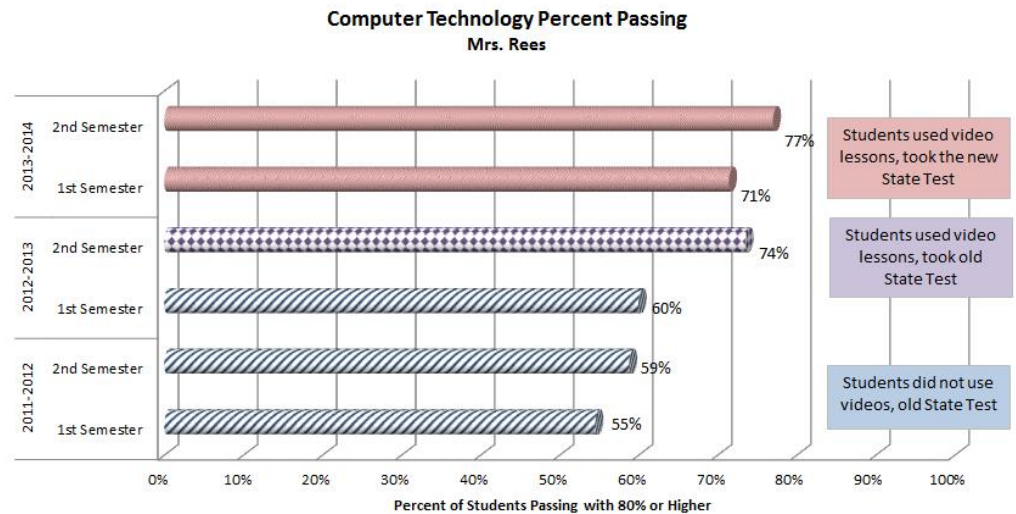
Why should I do this?

- **Time Saver** - Although it may seem time consuming to have to go and record your lessons, it saves you tons of time in the long run. You no longer have to re-teach it to every kid who was absent, and you can send it home as homework much easier. If you use a more in-depth program, you can easily open old videos and make quick changes to update them, without having to redo the entire video.
- **Transparency**—I find this is a great tool for parents. They can see that I have a functioning website. They can actually observe me teaching and know exactly what I'm covering and if I'm a good instructor. I actually added a signature on my email that says, "Assignments and step by step instructions available at http://mrsreesrocks.weebly.com"
- **Communication** - When you have your work available and functional on a website, and you inform parents that it is there, it can really cover you if parents later complain about late work. It also makes your life much easier when students come in with the age old question, "What did I miss?" Direct them to the video and they can work on their own. In this world where education is becoming more and more of an online, computer based process, gaining the skill of following a video is most useful for students.

How is it used in my classroom?

1. **For Missing Work** - I recorded all my Word, Excel and Power Point assignments in CTE Intro in step by step videos. These videos are then put on my website, and also saved in out Student Common file. If students are absent, I can tell them they can do it at home by going to my website and downloading the instructions, starter files and then watch the videos. They can also come to my room before or after school or during our Wapiti Time and even then I set them up with the video. If they have questions I help them, of course, but most kids can figure it out with the video. I have headphones they can borrow so they don't bother anyone else.
2. **Re-teaching** - I taught my kids how to do it myself, but then if they have questions, they can hurry and watch the video again. This is very helpful in something like power point. We have "wapiti time" for students who are behind—they come in needing to make up different assignments and it can be time consuming for me to get them all going. But with videos, all I have to do is direct them to the video and they can, for the most part, work on their own.
3. **Substitutes** - Sometimes you just have to be absent on a day when you have to teach a computer application. This way, the sub can play the video, stopping every few minutes for the kids to follow the directions, and then start it again. This is not, of course, as effective as if you taught it yourself, but at least you don't lose a day and the kids still get it pretty well. You could also have the kids just do it independently at their desks on their own with headphones. Sometimes if I know I'm going to have a sub, I will record a specific video for that day that the sub can play. This makes it a lot easier, because I KNOW they are getting the instructions from me!

4. **Turn your class into an Online course** – I have been using videos this way in Computer Tech for three semesters now. I don't think 7th graders could handle it to the same extent, nor does it fit well with the purpose of CTE Intro. But for Computer Tech it was wonderful! I used it to teach Word and Excel, and recorded a video they watch on their own at the start of each lesson, that shows them HOW to do certain features, but does NOT take them through the actual assignment step by step. After watching the video, they then pull up the directions and do the assignment—requiring them to retain and remember and re-apply what they learned from the video. The kids can go at their own pace, moving on to the next lesson as they finish the one before it. In this way, you don't hold back the quicker kids, and the slower kids can go slower and not be penalized for it.

5. **It's more effective** –
When students learn this way (particularly older students) their depth of knowledge is much greater. Since I switched to video in my Computer Tech classes, my passing rates have gotten much higher. In the chart you can see the percentage of students who passed the State Exam with 80% or higher. Although there are many factors that might contribute to higher scores, I know that the video method has been integral in raising my student's ability to actually USE the program.

Computer Technology Percent Passing
Mrs. Rees

2013-2014	2nd Semester	77%	Students used video lessons, took the new State Test
	1st Semester	71%	
2012-2013	2nd Semester	74%	Students used video lessons, took old State Test
	1st Semester	60%	
2011-2012	2nd Semester	59%	Students did not use videos, old State Test
	1st Semester	55%	

Percent of Students Passing with 80% or Higher

What do I need?

- **Video software** – There are probably a million programs for recording your computer, but the one that I started with is called *Snagit*. You can get a 30-day trial to try it out. This is a very simple and affordable program that will record your screen. BUT—it doesn't allow you to edit AT ALL and limits you as to file types you can save in. I found it frustrating and limiting, so I got *Camtasia*, which is made by Techsmith as well. It's a $300 program, but you can get a 30-day trial to try it out, and you can also get a teacher discount on it. It has been worth EVERY PENNY. It's easy to use, gives you editing capabilities like cutting and combining clips and adding callouts, and you can save in any format or directly to Youtube. If you would like to use your iPad, there are apps like iFile and Screen Recorder that you can use, but I have never used them myself. Eduplace is also free and will post your videos on their site. NOTE: If you want control of the file, file type, and editing capabilities, you will have to purchase a program. Free programs do not allow this most of the time, which is why I purchased Camtasia.
- **Microphone** – If using a desktop, you must get a microphone, but they aren't very expensive. You can get a microphone or for more money, a headset. These can range from $10 to $100+. I use a very cheap microphone and it works just great! Most laptops have a microphone built in.
- **Headphones , Classroom Set** – (Optional) – Last year I used my Grant money to purchase 40 sets of simple headphones—cost about $500. I keep them in a crate in my room. Then the kids can use them whenever they need to. Totally worth the investment!
- **Website with Video capabilities** (optional) – For me, putting my files on my website was one of my main concerns. I wanted my students to have access to them outside of school. If this is your goal, you need decide how you can make this happen. You could just post them on Youtube straight from Camtasia, but I wanted more control than that. I already had a free Weebly account, so I paid the $50 yearly subscription fee so that I would be a premium member and could post my videos easily. You can use many other avenues as well, such as a Wordpress site or a blog. What I love about Weebly is that my fee covers 10 websites—so I also have sites for school videos and our ballroom team where I can also post videos.

About Camtasia
I really enjoy using Camtasia for several reasons:
- Easy to learn
- You can add things like callouts, highlight text, circles, etc.
- You can zoom in to certain parts of your screen
- You can add the sound later—record your voice to video you already made
- Editing is easy and quick
- It has a plug-in for PowerPoint that makes it very easy to record PowerPoint presentations with voice.

What Mrs. Rees' students are saying about her video methods:

"I liked how I could go back and watch the video again if I forgot how to do something. I also liked how we got to see how Mrs. Rees did the assignment and showed us exactly where to click and how to do things. It was a great example."

"It is a very good way to teach, it helped me by showing how to perform a task and how I could do it at my own time, it was also nice to know that I could miss a day and not totally be behind on my work."

"I think this is one of the best ways, because you are speaking to us AND showing what to do not only telling us like if you were teaching all the class together face to face. I think it was a bit easier doing it this way as well."

"Using videos for teaching concepts worked wonderfully for me, because I could go back, and review the content again if I needed, or I could run it simultaneously while doing the work."

"That was one of my favorite things from this class, it was good way of explaining a lot of information in an easy way!"

"I found it very useful to rewatch. It was probably what saved my grade, I owe those instruction videos."

"I liked how we were taught, and if we got it we could do it at our own pace, or we could consult the teacher or videos if we had questions."

"It allowed me to better learn and remember the material because you could see, hear, and do all the assignments. You could go at your own pace and refer back if you forgot a section or had to come back another day."

"The video lessons were great and very efficient! I was able to concentrate more and work independently, rather than waiting (or falling behind) in class."

"I liked them because I could go back and watch it again if I didn't understand something, where, if we did the assignments as a class, the rest of the class would have to wait for me."

"It was a smart and interactive way to learn."

"The video method is probably one of the best ways to be taught. The reason why is because when you need help you can go back and watch it happen."

"I liked learning through the videos because I could learn about what I was supposed to do, but then still learned through trial and error."

"I liked the video teaching, because I could always go back and reference it if I needed or forgot something. The videos were always very clear and easy to understand. They really helped while doing the assignment."

"I really like it because if you're sick or absent you can get caught up easily. Another good thing is you can work at your own pace whilst figuring things out on your own."

Mrs. Rees used videos to teach Office

I didn't like it 2%
I hated it 0%
It was ok 9%
I Loved it 28%
I liked it 61%