



# ASTON UNIVERSITY ENGINEERING ACADEMY

A teacher that felt the presence of an observer or camera in the classroom had compromised his ability to capture normal practice. However, by using footage from the discreet 360-degree Lessonvu camera, subsequent dialogue with an external coach made the process personal, hugely meaningful and effective for both him and his students.



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# CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



*Jim Bryant from AUEA*



## OVERVIEW

Jim Bryant's previous experience of reviewing video was that there was a tendency for it to reinforce existing perspectives of students and what constitutes effective teaching. He also felt that the presence of an observer or camera in the classroom had compromised his ability to capture normal practice. However, by using footage from the discreet 360-degree Lessonvu camera, subsequent dialogue with an external coach made the process personal, hugely meaningful and effective for both him and his students.

📍 **ASTON UNIVERSITY  
ENGINEERING ACADEMY, UK**

### ! OBJECTIVE

Support an experienced teacher with remote video-based coaching

### 💬 SOLUTION

Remote video coaching with ONVU Learning's Lessonvu System.

### ✅ OUTCOME

Teachers expressed their positive experience of concurrently using 360-degree video and the Lessonvu solution.



# SELF-REFLECTION AND GUIDED COACHING

## BACKGROUND

In July 2018, Aston University Engineering Academy (AUEA), in Birmingham, became the first school in the UK to install state-of-the-art cameras in all its classrooms. Mr Jim Bryant, one of AUEA's most experienced teachers, volunteered to work with Dr Sean Warren, ONVU Learning's Teacher Development Lead, using ONVU Learning's [Lessonvu System](#) and Align Methodology to review and reflect on his lessons. Why did he volunteer?

**“All my learning was coming from my management responsibilities, and I'd forgotten that I needed to continue to learn in the classroom. If my role dictates that I am to work with colleagues on their teaching, I need to ensure that first and foremost, I was reflective of my own practice. In that respect, the project got me out of the rut.”**

**Jim Bryant from AUEA**

## FOCUSSING OBSERVATION ON THE STUDENTS:

Jim had used camera-based observation systems before, but any impact was superficial. Unless there is a methodology framing what you are planning to achieve with the camera, it is often easy to focus



on the obvious, i.e. focussing on students that are not paying attention or being disruptive in the classroom. There needs to be a degree of professional detachment – a process which allows teachers “to become comfortable with being uncomfortable”.

Working with Dr Warren on lessons recorded with the Lessonvu system, Jim was able to explore any aspect of a lesson retrospectively. Following one lesson it was agreed that Dr Warren would watch a random student in order to try to appreciate something of the learner's unique experience within that lesson. The arbitrary selection minimised the temptation for the teacher to subconsciously gravitate towards a student if they had been identified in advance. Stimulated by a detailed study of footage, the colleagues engaged in professional dialogue.



# SELF-REFLECTION AND GUIDED COACHING

## STUDENT BUY-IN:

The dialogue with Dr Warren, brought a fresh perspective on familiar aspects. Jim gained a greater appreciation of the importance of determining students' relative starting points in order to pitch the appropriate level of challenge. An on-going challenge is for the teacher to enable students 'to recognise how they can work at their best'. "To do that I need to understand more about their experience of being a learner in my lessons". Data from Align Methodology provided Jim with the insights to strategically invest his time and energy into an approach, and then be curious of the impact.

## WHOLE CLASS IMPACT:

Jim presented an assortment of digital extracts and associated mark schemes as evidence that progress was widespread among the participants of the ONVU Learning project. He recalls an example from a student who disliked poetry but saw progress, moving from a Level 2 (out of 5) to a Level 3-4 in six weeks.

Showing you where to look, but not telling you what to see

"When Sean suggested strategies to me, they have always been at the end of a feedback session, and that (for me) is great. He frames strategies as possibilities and during the analysis, I have learnt that



he puts ideas into brackets so as not to interrupt the flow."

A process of non-judgemental dialogue, review and reflection led Jim to experience deep professional learning. These moments provided him with new insights about his attitude and the perspectives he held. Addressing previously held presumptions has impacted on his approach to working with colleagues. He is now more mindful to patiently draw out an understanding of their unique context, rather than immediately present 'solutions' based on his own experience of the students.

"I've learnt more about my teaching from reviewing 15 minutes of footage using [Lessonvu](#) and being coached by Sean than I have done in the previous 12 years."



Capturing the learning behaviour and when the students are mostly engaging or not with learning, that's the absolute utopia of where lesson observation should be.

**DAN LOCKE-WHEATON**

PRINCIPAL, ASTON UNIVERSITY ENGINEERING ACADEMY



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## LESSON OBSERVATION

**HOW TO PREPARE  
FOR AND MAKE THE  
MOST OF LESSON  
OBSERVATIONS -  
WHETHER YOU ARE  
OBSERVING OR BEING  
OBSERVED.**

In this Lesson Observation series, we share our research, experience and thoughts on how best practice in lesson observation can drive a school forward, change the culture and improve teaching and learning.



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