



Shavington  
Primary School



**CASE STUDY**

A quest for better lesson observation  
and teacher development



**Dissatisfied with traditional classroom observations, executive headteacher Dan Thomas at Shavington Primary School was looking for innovative new lesson observation techniques to revitalise teachers' professional development, as they were considered threatening and intrusive.**

**The Crewe-based school found that the unique features of ONVU Learning's Lessonvu technology offered a non-threatening, non-judgmental mechanism that identified classroom needs, provided bespoke and highly-informed staff professional development and in turn, improved learning outcomes for students.**

All schools understand the need to carry out lesson observations based on the Ofsted inspection framework, but Dan recognised the additional need for an effective, sustainable system for review that was not threatening nor time-consuming.

One newly qualified teaching (NQT) mentor, Rachael Rivers was ideally placed to champion this need for continued professional development (CPD) throughout the school. However, as many headteachers experience, her initial reaction to driving the change was "I don't want that!"

The goal was to implement a system that didn't just give negative feedback but one that helped the teachers to self-coach, giving them the ability to be reflective of themselves and their impact on students. Dan found that the problem with most systems was that when they were switched on for a lesson observation, the teacher and children were too aware of the technology; it was unrealistic to hope that it wasn't going to be obtrusive as part of the lesson.

## Background

Shavington Primary, a mixed school with 212 places for children aged four to 11, is in the top six Northwest primary schools for progress in academic results.

Due to its level of excellence, the school was preparing to become a teaching school as part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), so the executive headteacher wanted to initiate a project to enhance teachers' professional development

## DISCUSSION

During his search, Dan evaluated ONVU Learning's Lessonvu system. The solution, designed for classroom use, combines advanced pedagogical theory and 360° video technology, providing the necessary answer to the school's needs.

The most appealing feature of the Lessonvu solutions is that it is switched on 24/7. Teachers and students become unaware of its presence in the classroom and therefore, in turn, it doesn't affect the natural learning environment.

The system consists of one 360° camera, mounted unobtrusively onto the ceiling of the classroom, and a wall-mounted, high definition microphone. The video and audio is then recorded on the local Lessonvu Gateway Unit. The video camera provides the necessary high-quality image detail and the scope to navigate around and see all aspects of the classroom, panning and zooming as needed, to see the reactions of individual students to different parts of the lesson. The sound and video is then made accessible securely on the teacher's PC so that they can review the captured lessons.

ONVU Learning has years of experience of working in schools and therefore the solution is designed with schools' unique needs in mind. It is not a case of fitting a generic technology into a learning environment; Lessonvu is designed for schools and the experienced team are able to offer invaluable advice and consultancy.

The ONVU Learning team and Dan spent time discussing the methodology of use, and slowly Rachael recognised the value to her as an educator and a professional. She added, "The idea of taking on more observation and putting out more hoops to jump through would turn anyone off. But that's not what Lessonvu does. The reality is I have control of the footage, it's stored securely and only used for CPD within the set mentoring methodology, improving my performance."

In a significant pedagogical shift from the norm of timed set recordings, leading to 'performances' from the teacher and the students, the camera continuously records 360° video, and enables live and retrospective viewing. Teachers are able to revisit the time slots of interest and then make them available to a remote coach.

There were no technical challenges in establishing and running the project.

The Lessonvu solution has all of the necessary components to make it as standalone as possible and only requires a few simple settings from the school's own IT support to get working. Technically, it has needed very little maintenance, and the installation itself took only 30 minutes in the classroom.

The Lessonvu system uses a proprietary studio microphone setup, which captures room-level sounds such as a teacher speaking or student asking a question at very good quality. As there are a number of things to consider when placing a localised microphone in lessons, the ONVU Learning team knows the best location for the microphone to improve the audio pickup. For circumstances where one-to-one communication between the teacher and learner is below room level, a Bluetooth microphone worn by the teacher is offered, which improves situations where such detail is required.

## CONCLUSION

Comparing the solution with traditional methods of lesson observation, Lessonvu is saving teachers' time, and removes the need to miss classes/hire-in cover to perform observations. Observations can be reviewed and scheduled out of the class day, reducing class cover expenses. But crucially, using the methodology in real life, the children and teachers behave naturally, no one is putting on a performance, so trusted outcomes are created.

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Rachel Rivers, Teacher

ONVU Learning, the education division of the ONVU Technologies group, is built upon extensive educational knowledge and first hand teaching experience, combined with specialised 360-degree and wide angle video technology.

Partnering with schools, governments and education advisors across the world, ONVU Learning works to design, refine and align multiple technologies to the evolving needs of teachers.

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