

# A moving image empowers the imagination

**Look! Learn! Reflect! Go!**



I listened carefully to the group of Year 7s in the sports hall at The Wye Valley School - a designated sports college. They had just performed a sequence of rolls, jumps, individual balance, partner balance and group balance and were now clustered round a laptop and small camera. Fascinated, they watched what they had just done. One boy leaned forward and stopped the recording. "Look at me, there, I am the only one with my right arm straight at that point." Later they all joined in talking, reviewing and reflecting on all they had done. Praise, respect and criticism in equal measure. "Now, when we do it again at the end of the lesson we know what to change."

Five or so years ago no one could think of ways for PE teachers to enhance their work with ICT. Now PE teachers can be at the forefront with ICT tools that out perform those available to most of their colleagues.

"How do I improve?" is the hardest question that any teacher in any subject can be asked by a student. Often the answer is vague. The PE teacher can say with simplicity: "Look at what you have just done on the trampoline; now compare it with this expert demonstration and tell me what the differences are." Intellectual clarity allied to physical rigour!

The MotionCoach visual analysis software at Wye Valley uses digital video graphics to deliver instant visual feedback without disrupting the flow of a teaching session. This software, installed on a PC or laptop and connected to a DV camera, revolutionizes sport training because its use can be unobtrusive. The hardest thing with ICT in any subject is to incorporate it easily and tellingly into teaching.

Gary Smith, Director of Sport and PE at Wye Valley, gives an example: "Students can do a vault, walk round to the laptop and immediately see what they did frame by frame and, if necessary, compare it with someone who was more successful. That is the software at its simplest but we use it from Year 7 to A Level."



How ICT literate do the teachers have to be to learn and use the software? Simon Purrier at Wye Valley pointed out that: "We had an afternoon and in that time I learnt enough to use it at a basic level with my classes."

The impact of ICT in any subject will be determined by how easy it is to access during the course of a busy day. At Wye Valley each PE teacher has had training and has a laptop and a camera, the Canon MVX250i, for intensive work, The laptops are also used for registration so for all staff they are always ready: an integral part of the day.

Particularly impressive use of the software is at Arbour Vale, Special School, Slough. Tracey Clarke, Director of Sport, came in from a mainstream grammar school and was determined to offer her students tools that were just as good as those enjoyed by the pupils in the grammar school. “Quality Canon digital video cameras and MotionCoach can improve pupils' games at all levels of ability,” Tracy believes. It caters for the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Children can see where they were in a skill and compare it with where they are now. See it side by side. No searching through video tapes. Real progression!”

The new, exciting and unique part of MotionCoach’s offering is the way it can be financed. Some visual analysis software is notoriously expensive. Although it can be purchased with eLCs, MotionCoach are suggesting a scheme, MotionCoach Flex, whereby students will be able to have their own access to the software on their own computer for the period of the course that they are taking. The school or college will contract with MotionCoach to buy a certain number of licences per course duration. This will be approximately £5.85 per licence per term for a six-term course. The school can absorb that cost or pass it on to the student. Students will have the complete program and will be able to access, through a portal, a gallery of clips appropriate to their GCSE or A Level course.

A particularly valuable feature for teachers is the facility for creating “worksheets” that contain not just moving images but annotations of those images and an audio commentary that can be used by students both for study and revision.

Dave Pearce Director of Specialism, Sele School of Sport & Performing Arts is a MotionCoach user. MotionCoach is used across a range of departments. There have been benefits in Dance, Drama and PE where students are able to watch themselves and others perform. “I particularly enjoy asking students to try to capture images of key teamwork concepts such as co-operation, passion, enthusiasm, confidence and support. These images not only reinforce what we are trying to achieve but develop self-esteem and pride in the students we work with.”

Tracey Clarke probably sums it all up. “MotionCoach does exactly what teachers want it to do.”

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