

Using video to illustrate effective (and non-effective) participation in WhatsApp communities of practice

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In this clip we outline the use of video to illustrate how teachers can more effectively engage in an online community of practice, referring to the use of WhatsApp groups. These groups are part of a wider intervention called 'Tejas' which aims to build the capacity of the state academic authority and develop the teaching skills and knowledge of primary school teachers across nine districts of the state of Maharashtra in India. In total there are 750 WhatsApp groups running in conjunction with Teacher Activity Groups across the state.

The video we discuss was developed following observations that teachers participating in the groups needed some further guidance as to how to most effectively engage in these communities of practice. The project team identified three key issues.

1. Posting of irrelevant and off-topic posts
2. Sharing a lot of data-heavy files, often without a clear purpose
3. Not engaging in meaningful discussions – there was a lack of depth to many of the comments / responses posted.

Therefore, the team decided to create a short video, creatively using humour to show what the problem was and how group participants might change their behaviour. This involved:

- Careful consideration of the issues described above and how best to represent these using video
- Writing and agreeing a script (with several iterations)
- Several rehearsals
- Editing the video with music / animated titles

The video was then shared via the WhatsApp groups and in training sessions conducted with co-ordinators responsible for moderating the discussion in the group.

Feedback on the video was very positive and there was a noticeable change in behaviour by participating teachers. In particular, there were fewer irrelevant posts and teachers reminded each other of the 'rules' when others shared content that was not deemed suitable for the forum.

We use video in our teacher education projects in India in a variety of other ways that you might also want to explore.

- **Classroom films** showing teachers in real classrooms demonstrating learner-centred methodology: www.britishcouncil.in/teach
- **Animations** to introduce new concepts such as our model of Teacher Activity groups: <https://www.britishcouncil.in/tejas>
- **Short clips typically shown through our social media channels** discussing key aspects of English language teaching: see our Facebook group '[Teach English in India](#)'.