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# Formative Evaluation of Three LDS Videos on Teaching Improvement

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Formative Evaluation of Three LDS Videos on Teaching Improvement

Danielle Jorgensen Macfarlane

A project submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

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## ABSTRACT

### Formative Evaluation of Three LDS Videos on Teaching Improvement

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The Sunday School General Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints launched a new effort in 2010 to improve gospel learning and teaching by producing a series of short video vignettes illustrating teaching principles. This formative evaluation was conducted during the development process to determine how teachers and leaders in the Church might use these videos and the degree to which they feel the videos might be useful in improving their own teaching. Results show that in general the vignettes were well received. The majority of participants rated the videos as relevant to their needs—noting specific successes in terms of story and style that helped them learn and feel motivated to take action in their own teaching. However, one key difference emerged in the effectiveness of one video as compared to the other two in that participants felt it lacked authenticity. Data analysis also led to conclusions about improving future videos and offered ideas for other resources. Major recommendations include eliminating distracting elements in the presentation of future videos and addressing accessibility barriers that will lead to broader implementation.

Keywords: evaluation, teacher training, teaching improvement, video training

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the titles we attribute to the Savior is that of Teacher. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher. His example provides a foundation and pattern for how we should teach and emphasizes the crucial function that effective teaching plays in His church. Elder Boyd K. Packer (1991) wrote, “The Church moves forward sustained by the power of the teaching that is accomplished” (p. 4). In the spirit of this declaration, The Sunday School general presidency has launched an effort to improve gospel learning and teaching by producing a series of short video vignettes illustrating principles from *Teaching, No Greater Call*. By making the videos available online, the Sunday School presidency hopes to help church members expand their vision of what it means to teach effectively and to inspire gospel learners to act on true principles in their own lives.

To ensure that these video vignettes fulfill their intended purpose, a formative evaluation was conducted. An important aspect of the evaluation was to isolate key components in terms of story and style that are essential to the value of the vignettes as an effective instructional tool in the context of religious education. The results of this evaluation have the potential to positively impact teachers and learners in the Church worldwide by helping to inform the Sunday School presidency and other stakeholders at a critical moment in the development of this project. With rich qualitative data on viewer reaction, creators will be better enabled to produce a series of vignettes that promote thoughtful learning and inspire meaningful application of the principles being illustrated in the videos.

## **Evaluand**

This evaluation focused on three video vignettes that were recently produced by the Church AV department. These videos are available online for training by local Sunday School presidencies, teachers, and Church members on the Sunday School website. This evaluation sought to judge the videos themselves, as opposed to the overall project or any technical aspects of the website.

Each vignette in this study is 2-5 minutes long and begins with the title “Teaching, No Greater Call.” The three videos share a similar purpose, but represent different scenarios and styles. Video #1, “Teaching Helps Save Lives,” consists of highlights from Sunday School President Russell T. Osguthorpe’s talk in the October 2009 General Conference. Background music, B-roll photos, and video segments are included to emphasize key points in that talk and show how dedicated teachers can have an impact in the lives of students.

In Video #2, a former Sunday School teacher, Ann Madsen, shares a story about caring for the youth in her ward by expressing love for each student weekly. This vignette titled “From the Life of Ann Madsen,” has a reverent tone and seeks to inspire teachers to draw upon the Spirit and show true empathy and love for individuals in their classes.

Video #3, “Oatmeal and Sunday School,” shows a young mother describing an experience she had in which a Sunday School teacher in her ward followed a spiritual prompting during a lesson that became a particular strength to her. The video includes

some light humor about how young children can be a challenge for busy parents and emphasizes the need for prayerful preparation on the part of teachers.

### **Key Stakeholders**

The primary clients of this evaluation are Sunday School General President, Russell T. Osguthorpe, his counselors and General Board members, and the Church's Audio Visual department. These individuals will be the main beneficiaries of the evaluation, but because this is a new approach to training on the website, the results may also inform the direction of future video projects for the Sunday School program and directly benefit instructors at the ward and stake level. Although the general membership of the Church, including international members, will not have a direct voice in the evaluation, they do have a stake in it because, as President Packer noted in the same statement quoted previously, "Every member of the Church teaches for virtually his whole lifetime." Therefore, we hope that the evaluation will serve all teachers and leaders in the Church and in the home.

### **Evaluator Background**

I feel a deep passion for gospel teaching because I know from personal experience that when truth is effectively taught, it can inspire learners to life-changing action. During the fall of 2008, I worked with youth in Utah Valley as a student teacher in the Seminary Program of the Church. I also taught Sunday School in my ward for four years and trained youth counselors in principles of effective teaching at Especially For Youth. These experiences, along with the work I completed in the Seminary Pre-service Training courses, made me begin to think specifically about religious teacher-training materials.

In Pre-service, I saw the effective use of video to train teachers on gospel teaching fundamentals, and I considered how exciting it would be for the Church to be able to train teachers on a larger scale with simple and easy-to-access training resources online.

During the past two years, I have worked as a designer and evaluator at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on BYU campus. There I became involved with evaluating and promoting effective teacher resources on the CTL faculty website. I helped to complete an extensive needs analysis, and I learned to make research-based decisions about what content and site functions will help promote better teaching at the university. Russell Osguthorpe directs the CTL and also serves as the Sunday School general president of the Church. When I learned that he was working to use video to update and enhance the Sunday School website, I saw an opportunity to complete a project that would bring my passion for Religious Education and my experience with research-based web design together to benefit the Church and to help me toward my goal of working on Church materials and curriculum.

### **Stakeholder Issues and Concerns**

In order to understand in what ways and the degree to which teachers and leaders in the Church feel the videos might be useful in improving their own teaching, Russell Osguthorpe requested a formative evaluation of the media during the development process. He asked for specific data about viewer reaction and whether or not viewers were able to make connections to their own teaching. These goals prompted me to focus on evaluating the vignettes (i.e., content, style, possible usage, user thoughts and feelings) rather than on usability of the interface or technical aspects of the videos.

This effort is a new approach to Sunday School training, in which stakeholders are not interested in creating a video that is only a “feel good” piece, rather they want to provide strong examples of teaching that will inspire teachers to action in their own callings. The developers are also interested in better understanding the specific educational advantages of using the videos in the context of religious teacher training. One intended purpose for this evaluation was to determine the degree to which these videos could function successfully as educational tools. In addition, we attempted to isolate key components, in terms of story and style, that are essential to the successful implementation of vignettes as an effective instructional tool in the context of religious education.

### **Evaluation Questions**

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine how end users perceive the value of these video vignettes as educational aids in improving their own teaching in the Church. These videos could be used in a variety of training settings and for this evaluation we considered teachers in all auxiliaries of the Church, those who are training teachers, and all auxiliary leaders as possible end users. The formative evaluation focused on the following overall question: In what ways and to what degree do leaders and teachers at the stake and ward level believe these videos can be used to improve teaching? Another important focus was to determine what aspects need to be included in the vignettes to ensure they are valuable training tools. The results of the evaluation are intended for use in improving these and future vignettes to make them as effective as possible.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In looking at relevant research for this evaluation, we chose topics that were important to the stakeholder. These vignettes are not skill-based training videos, but are instead meant to inspire viewers to appreciate more fully the power of teaching and to revitalize their desire to teach effectively. Stephen Denning (2004) drew this distinction in a Harvard Business Review article by noting, “Analysis might excite the mind, but it hardly offers a route to the heart—and that's where we must go to motivate people” (p. 123). In order to know whether the videos will motivate viewers to action, we needed to understand what aspects contribute to that goal and which are not as crucial. We tried to look at what guiding principles should be in force for these videos to be successful in the specific context of religious education. Although there is substantial research in related fields such as Film Study, Technology in Training, or Use of Video in Instruction, a hole exists in educational research on the fundamentals for making this particular kind of motivational video vignette.

A long tradition exists for storytelling in education, along with a large body of literature that speaks to how contextual storytelling can elicit learning. For example, Roger Schank’s (1995) *Tell Me a Story*, is a classic in education, and focuses on how stories relate to memory and understanding. Or as noted by Mooney and Holt (1996), stories have also played a key role in religion through parables and legends. Because our evaluation is essentially story-based, with both an educational and religious purpose, much of this type of literature was applicable to our evaluation.

There have been many platforms used to tell the stories. Mooney and Holt (1996) suggest that television has become the new storyteller and by extension, video and film. And with the dominance of the Internet in today's culture, online video has taken a lead in the transmission of stories. However, it is important to note that although video is the platform for our evaluation, the focus should be on the story and content of the vignettes, rather than simply the method of delivery or the "Media Layer" as labeled by Andrew Gibbons (2000) in "What and How Do Designers Design? A Theory of Design Structure."

Therefore, a fundamental question for this evaluation was, "What are the key aspects of powerful storytelling in teaching?" Jason McDonald (2009), one of the producers of the vignettes, has studied this area extensively and suggests that good instructional stories need to have three main elements: conflict, authenticity, and entertainment. However in this context, those aspects might look different than a traditional interpretation of entertainment and conflict. *Entertaining* might mean that the videos are engaging and include humor or emotional impact, like in the Oatmeal and Sunday School video, which includes a funny anecdote to help keep viewers attention. *Conflict* might be harder to detect, such as in a resolution of feelings or pressures inside the storytellers themselves. The third quality in McDonald's list is authenticity, which according to much of the storytelling literature, could be a particularly important factor in the success or failure of these vignettes (McDonald, 2009). Mooney and Holt (1996) suggest that real people and real stories are crucial, "The strongest mark of a good story

well-told is its sincerity. A story becomes wimpy if it is insincere, unauthentic, untrue to the person who is telling it” (p. 46).

Another metric we chose to look at was what factors make the vignettes memorable enough to have an impact on the actions of the viewers. In his article “Telling Tales” (2004), Denning suggests one possible approach for stories that are intended to spark action. He says they should describe “how a successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation” (p. 127). And yet another approach from Heath and Heath’s book, *Made to Stick* (2007), indicates that in order for ideas to “stick,” they must have several characteristics: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories (pp. 16-18).

In this case, these six characteristics are well-aligned with the stakeholder’s vision for the vignettes. Although Heath and Heath’s (2007) research applies to a variety of situations, particularly in marketing, it would follow that for a teaching aid to be effective it would benefit from having those same qualities.

Throughout the evaluation we compared results of our focus groups to different storytelling frameworks, like those suggested by McDonald, Denning, and Heath and Heath. We knew that if we could attempt to identify which aspects of a good story in a Religious Education are essential, we would have an opportunity to provide some new guidelines about how to create the most effective teaching aid for this specific context.

### **Chapter 3: Evaluation Design**

The video vignettes being evaluated were completed in spring 2010, and the Sunday School general presidency was interested in completing a formative evaluation. The goal was to collect initial feedback from sample viewers to inform future efforts for the project. The evaluation, in some respects, followed the model of design-based research in that we sought to test the viability of the resources within a specific context. This model also relates to the Context section of the CIPP Evaluation model, in which the evaluator will assess the “needs, assets, and problems within a defined environment” (Stufflebeam, 2007, p. 4). We used those methods that answered our evaluation question from a sample of the target audience for the project. In this way, it will be part of a needs assessment within the specific context of Sunday School classrooms in the LDS Church.

The methodology used in this evaluation involved one-hour focus groups, with individual survey questions administered to the participants. The study used members in three LDS stakes gathering their perceptions of how the resource could be used and its value for improving instruction.

#### **Data Collection Methods**

The stakeholders viewed this evaluation as pilot for a possible larger implementation phase. Although the videos might be viewed differently in different geographic and demographic regions, a convenient sample of North American, English-speaking Church members from the Intermountain West was used. It was understood that because we are using a convenient sample, the results of this evaluation may not be

generalizable to the Church at large. However, the sample was believed to be adequate for evaluating this first phase of implementation.

We conducted six one-hour focus group sessions made up of volunteers from three different stakes that were working with the Sunday School presidency on teaching improvement. The groups were held on three different evenings in local church buildings during the summer of 2010. A total of 54 volunteers participated, each was serving as either teachers or leaders in their wards. Among the 34 leaders who attended, we had at least one presidency member of each of the main ward auxiliaries (Sunday School, Priesthood, Relief Society, and Primary) along with many of their counselors. We also had several stake representatives including members of the stake presidency, bishoprics, and several stake Sunday School presidents and their counselors. The largest group represented in this sample was ward Sunday School presidents. Of the 19 participants in the teachers group we had several Sunday School teachers, as well as teachers from the Elders Quorum, Relief Society, and Primary.

The focus groups were conducted using a structured protocol (see Appendix A). We began with a welcome and introduction, and participants were asked to sign an informed consent form. Before participants viewed the vignettes, we distributed a short individual survey that asked about previous training and resources that they had been exposed to since their call.

We then proceeded to show the videos one at a time. After each, we asked participants to write comments about their overall impressions, what they may have learned as they watched, and what specific actions they might take after watching. We

rotated the order the videos were shown in each stake so that we would not bias the results. After the three videos were shown, we used i>clickers to poll the group on several questions that focused on overall likelihood of use, impact, and the relevancy of the videos. The final activity was to break into two groups, teachers and leaders, where a facilitator conducted a follow-up discussion. These discussions were recorded with a digital audio recorder. The groups discussed the results of the earlier polls including the following questions:

- How would you compare the three videos to each other?
- Do you see yourself using these videos in your current calling? If so, how, where, and why would use these videos?
- This group rated the relevancy of these videos as a (insert number 1-5) can anyone comment on that or give an example of what was or wasn't relevant to you?
- If you had to summarize your feelings after watching those videos in one word, what word would you choose? Why?
- If the Sunday School were to make more vignettes, what suggestions would you have?

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

After the focus groups were held, several methods were used to analyze the qualitative data that we received. For the written survey data, a student assistant from the CTL at BYU coded the data to provide an additional layer of objectivity. She created a set of codes and added frequency counts to each so that we could identify common themes in the responses.

The second set of data came from the i>clicker responses and the follow-up discussion groups. The i>clicker responses were disaggregated by group. The complete results are presented in Appendix B. The discussion in each breakout group was transcribed and summarized by question. Categories or themes were established based on frequency and strength of the patterns identified.

Once the data was organized and categorized, I performed a peer review of the data patterns with my three committee members to verify my interpretation of the data. Notable percentages, charts, and quotes follow in the next chapter.

### **Evaluation Criteria and Standards**

The realm of Religious Education includes special emotional parameters that may not be present in other academic evaluations. We feel that we learn by the Spirit, and therefore it is essential that these video vignettes have an emotional impact for viewers. However, on this particular project, it was also crucial to the stakeholders and developers that the videos have an impact beyond the emotional reaction. They want teachers to envision themselves taking action in their own practice as a teacher or leader. Therefore, we presented the videos to real users to judge, first of all, whether or not they might use the videos, and then whether or not their perceptions denote some kind of potential impact on their teaching practice.

## Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents evaluation results for each of the three video vignettes. Data used to summarize participant responses comes from a combination of three sources: written survey comments, i>clicker responses, and discussion group comments. Quotes come from written survey responses.

### Overall Impressions and Video Analysis

Each of the videos was evaluated by 54 participants during the hour long focus groups. In general, the vignettes were well received. A total of 75% of participants rated the videos as a 4 or 5 out of 5 in terms of relevancy to their current needs and experiences as a gospel teacher (See Appendix B.) The following summaries provide a general impression of each video with suggestions for how it might be improved.

**Video #1 Teaching Helps Save Lives.** Most participants felt that the video included great points and taught important teaching principles. They loved seeing clips from General Conference and commented that hearing the words of prophets was especially powerful. A Relief Society teacher said, “It is interesting as I have been preparing my lesson for next Sunday to watch this...This will really help me to better prepare.” However, one strong theme for this video was that many felt there was too much info in such a short video and it was overwhelming to take in. One Elders Quorum counselor commented, “The clip went through so much so fast that I didn't have time to think about specific actions.” Several said they would need to watch it over and over to take in all the information and suggested visual bullet points would help them organize the material.

**Video #2 From the Life of Ann Madsen.** The majority of participants (i.e., 57% of the leaders and 53% of the teachers) across the three groups chose this video as the most valuable (see Appendix B). Overall, most participants said it was inspiring, touching, and powerful because it included an authentic, personal experience presented in first person. A stake Primary president said after watching the video, “I want to express love and concern for the individual. I want to also have people anticipate that I will be gracious and loving and charitable. Wow. That was a real testimony.” In particular, participants said that the story by Ann Madsen was an applied example of a key gospel principle, which helped them apply it to their own calling. There were very few negative comments about this vignette. Overall the Ann Madsen piece was a favorite in all groups.

**Video #3 Oatmeal and Sunday School.** Several participants in each group felt that the message of this video was muddled because of distracting elements in the presentation. Frequently mentioned issues were that the piece jumped between characters too much and that the shaky camera style was distracting. More importantly, when asked about their overall impressions of the video, 22 out of 54 participants commented negatively about the acting and body language of the actors. The overall feeling was that they expected and wanted it to be more like the Ann Madsen piece. Comments such as “the actors were not authentic,” “the woman was closed and seemed insincere,” and “I didn't enjoy this video as much as the others because it felt scripted,” pervaded the responses. There was a great message about simple promptings helping others, but it didn't come across to me as truly genuine.” However, several participants noted that the

video still taught a message, such as this bishopric member who said, “This started as a simple story, very real and normal. It went to the very heart of what I believe "teaching by the Spirit" is all about...”

### **Relevancy of Video Content**

Teachers and leaders tended to rate the three videos as being very relevant (see Appendix B). They noted that all three invited the Spirit and taught important principles from *Teaching, No Greater Call*. A few mentioned that it was hard to directly relate to the situations in the stories because they teach a different age group than portrayed in the videos. They suggested the need for age-specific resources such as for Primary. Several said they were excited about having new, quality media resources for this generation of teachers and learners.

**What participants learned.** During the written survey portion, participants were asked the following question, “Did you learn anything as you watched [this video]? If so, what?” Table 1 shows examples of the top three themes for each video, labeled as “Codes,” along with the count and response examples for each code. Overall, many participants said that they learned general key teaching principles from the videos, such as expressing love or being prepared. It is also interesting to note that many participants stated that all three videos seemed to be focused on the role of the Spirit for teachers.

Table 1  
*Summary of What Participants Learned*

Code	Count	Response Examples
<i>Video 1 “Teaching Helps Save Lives”</i>		
Follow Spiritual promptings	8	Putting down the manual when inspiration comes; Letting the Spirit teach; Seek inspiration;
Reminder (didn’t learn anything new)	6	I was more reminded than taught new ideas; A good reminder; I did not learn anything new
3 points of teaching pattern	4	Helped me remember points of the talk; Reviewed the three points;
<i>Video 2 “From the Life of Ann Madsen”</i>		
Follow Spiritual promptings	18	I learned the importance of following spiritual promptings; Follow spiritual impressions; Always obey promptings even if they are awkward
Express love to those I teach	18	Illustrates power of expressing love; Be more specific in expressing love; Love is very important
Teaching changes lives	4	The impact of a teacher; Bless the lives of those I teach; We have a great impact on those we teach
<i>Video 3 “Oatmeal and Sunday School”</i>		
Be prepared	16	Following the Spirit requires preparation; Sincere preparation brings revelation; I feel greater motivation to prepare with more effort
Follow Spiritual promptings	12	Emphasized following the Spirit; We need to follow promptings of the Spirit; Importance of heeding Spiritual promptings
Nothing	4	Having a hard time picking out a specific thing I learned; Nothing comes to mind; Don’t feel like I learned anything new

**What participants will do.** Participants were also asked about any actions they feel motivated to take after watching the videos (see Appendix A). A summary of the top three themes from this question are included in Table 2, and it seems from the similarities to Table 1 that what participants learned may influence their motivations to act. We see repeated themes such as following the Spirit and the importance of preparation.

Table 2  
*Summary of What Participants Will Do*

Code	Count	Response Examples
<i>Video 1 “Teaching Helps Save Lives”</i>		
Better prepare	12	Prepare better for my next lesson; Prepare more effectively, Prepare better as a teacher so that I can “close the manual and open hearts;” Better prepare material, especially through prayer
Teach by Spirit	11	Make room for the Spirit in my lessons; If prompted, don’t worry about moving away from what is in the book; Teach in the right way (by the Spirit); Put the manual down and go by the Spirit
Issue invitations to act	6	I feel inspired to help people commit to act; Figure out how to invite in a comfortable way; Remember to invite to action; Challenge them to put the lesson into practice
<i>Video 2 “From the Life of Ann Madsen”</i>		
Express love to those you teach	20	“Make members of the Quorum feel appreciated; I need to testify of Heavenly Father’s love for them; Writing notes to those I work with; Figure out how to demonstrate love in my own way; I want my teaching to reflect love
Follow Spiritual promptings	5	Pay more attention to what the Spirit is telling me; Don’t be afraid to follow promptings; Take time to ponder and listen for promptings, then follow through; Be more expressive in my personal interactions in the Bishopric
Focus on the individual	4	Look at my class as individual people; Focus on individuals and their needs; Take one-on-one time to work with others;
<i>Video 3 “Oatmeal and Sunday School”</i>		
Follow Spiritual promptings	14	Allow time for unprepared promptings; Motivated to listen to the Spirit as I teach; Teach what the Spirit asks; Be more open and willing to follow promptings
Better prepare	11	Prepare as best as possible; Make sure I prepare for lessons; Fast, pray, and study as I prepare; Work harder to listen while preparing;
None	7	I didn’t feel moved to action by this video; “None;” None but to laugh at the kids in the video

One important theme to note in both Tables 1 and 2 was that some participants indicated that they learned nothing or nothing new, or that they didn't feel motivated to act based on what they saw in Video 3, Oatmeal and Sunday School.

### **Likelihood of Use**

We understood from stakeholders that these particular videos were intended to be used as resources for training Sunday School teachers, not as media clips to be shown during a Sunday School lesson. Therefore, we were not surprised to find that a difference emerged in how likely the leader and teacher groups were to access and use these videos on their own. Teachers were much more likely to say they were undecided, unlikely or very unlikely to use the videos in their calling (see Table 3).

Table 3

#### *Likelihood of Use*

Response	Leaders	Teachers
Very Likely	37%	32%
Likely	46%	26%
Undecided	9%	21%
Unlikely	0%	11%
Very Unlikely	9%	11%

Response distributions were significantly different  $\chi^2(4) = 29.9, p < .001$ , Cramér's  $V = .33$

Follow-up discussion verified these perspectives from leaders and teachers. Most leaders said they were very excited about using these videos or others like them in a teacher training meeting. One leader expressed a common sentiment saying, "I feel

strongly that I should use them in training.” Many leaders said that they feel that the *Teaching, No Greater Call* resource is underutilized by teachers, so these videos provide practical, visual, accessible approaches of key teaching principles.

Teachers agreed that they would like to see the videos used in teacher training meetings, which would be initiated by their leaders, and that the main use they could see for accessing the videos personally was for inspiration about improving their own teaching. Teachers noted that the existence of any video resources like these needs to be specifically listed in a manual that they already use. One teacher indicated, “It’s hard to see myself going looking for them.” Therefore, several participants suggested including links in an online version of *Teaching, No Greater Call* or other teaching handbook that would direct them to the videos.

There was also a slight discrepancy in the likelihood of use by leaders who were specifically supervising teachers and those who lead other auxiliaries. The following quotes illustrated this difference—“I am less likely to visit the site as an Elder's Quorum leader because we don't focus on teaching,” and “As a member of the Relief Society Presidency, I would use them to show how to bring more action into Visiting Teaching.”

### **Barriers to Accessibility**

One key theme that emerged from the data overall was that many leaders and teachers were concerned about technical details—how to logistically use the videos. A few were very discouraged by technology barriers in their buildings, especially older members who were not as familiar with internet media. One such participant said, “I thought they were wonderful and I would love to use them, but I don't know how.”

Members who were not familiar with downloading content from the internet asked for them to be sent out on DVD or put in the library.

One stake presidency member who joined a discussion group made an insightful comment about how the Church needs to think about its distribution model with these videos. The main challenge is equipment access and how to facilitate the widest and easiest use for members. While the internet is available in church buildings, access to the internet is often restricted, access to laptops and video adapters needed to project video are often not easily accessible or are simply unavailable.

Many also mentioned not knowing the videos were available or where to find them online. Some made the comparison to Mormon Messages and said that they love watching for new messages to come out as they are easily visible on the Church homepage and that they are very inspired by them. Several participants were eager to have these new teaching videos as visible as possible on the Church homepage and the Sunday School website suggesting that clear links should be visible on auxiliary homepages.

### **Ideas for Other Resources**

Participants were asked the question “What kinds of resources would most help you improve your teaching?” Table 4 summarizes the categories of materials that were asked for and other topics for videos they would like to see. Teachers and leaders have made several suggestions for enhanced online resources, in addition to more videos like the three they watched during the focus group. Participants were particularly interested in Church-produced media being hyperlinked into the online manuals that teachers use

on a regular basis. One strong theme from the teacher group was that teachers wanted to see more demonstration, success stories, and examples of teaching in their training and resources.

Table 4

*Ideas for Other Resources*

Category	Responses
Interactive Manuals	Official Church media correlated with lessons (hyperlinks in online manuals to media resources to use in training and classes); Easy access to video and audio clips; Cross reference current general conference addresses with manuals
Teaching How-To's	Videos of actual classes with ideas on teaching, Resources on teaching how-to's and methods, Videos of good and bad examples of teaching; Regular teaching tips in a feed online; More regular and organized Teacher Improvement courses
Feedback	Personal feedback on their lessons; Ideas on self-evaluation or getting feedback from students and other teachers
Topics for Other Videos	Making commitments and follow-ups work in a weekly church setting; Break up principles from <i>Teaching, No Greater Call</i> into separate videos; How to use questions effectively; Teachers seeking out less active individuals; How to deal with hard teaching situations, (i.e. Class is dead quiet)

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

The original evaluation criteria for determining whether these videos met the intended purpose was if the pattern of reaction suggested that the videos were more than just “feel good” pieces. Criteria for judging the project as a success included whether we obtained positive comments about what viewers had specifically learned or what they were inspired to do after viewing the video vignettes. In this regard, the project was successful but not completely.

### **Value of the Vignettes for Improving Teaching**

The underlying question that prompted this evaluation was that stakeholders wanted to know simply “Was it worth it?”—was the overall effort going to make any impact for members of the Church. Based on the results presented in the previous section, there are several indications that the effort was valuable to teachers and leaders who attended and will likely have a similar positive impact on other members who view the videos. Many members commented specifically about connections they had made to their own recent teaching responsibilities.

This evaluation focused on finding evidence that seeing the videos would have some real impact on teaching. Speaking to the metric above about hearing positive comments about specific learning or motivation to act, one participant made the following comment that summarizes the sentiments of many in the groups, “after watching the videos they all made me feel like, ‘I want to teach better.’” Many leaders also directly stated that they can envision using these videos and others like them in Teacher Improvement classes in their ward. Additionally, the top theme from the

learning and action questions (see Tables 1 and 2) was to “follow Spiritual promptings,” which is indeed a valuable principle for teacher training in the Church.

### **Guiding Principles for Successful Videos**

The results of this evaluation offer several insights about key components in terms of story and style that can inform the success of future videos. Overall, participants suggested that it’s very important that stories are authentic and personal, for example, one participant said, “I felt impressions more quickly as they were shared from the person as they were speaking themselves.” This theme is supported in the literature referenced previously, through several storytelling frameworks that isolate authenticity as a key component (see Mooney & Holt (1996); McDonald, 2009). Participants clearly prefer concrete, successful examples of teaching from real members, one member said, “Let people tell their story in an authentic, spiritual way.”

Findings also show that videos in this context are most useful when they have elements that prompt emotional feeling. In Religious Education in particular, emotional connection is preparatory to action. In describing the Ann Madsen video, participants used emotional words to describe their positive reaction, such as “touched,” “inspired,” and “moved.” Positive participant comments from all groups also fit into categories defined by Heath and Heath’s (2007) such as simplicity, concreteness, credibility, and emotions, which are all critical for making information and experiences stick.

### **Ways to Increase Video Usage**

Beyond the videos being used by leaders in training situations, the results also point to an opportunity to provide further helps for teachers. As noted in the previous

chapter, teachers have asked for more methods/skills-based training videos in addition to these types of motivational vignettes. President Osguthorpe recently noted that his team is considering creating new video clips showing methods, which could be more useful to teachers who are working individually to improve their own teaching. The results from this evaluation support this action and suggest that adding additional video series could fill an important need for teachers and could increase usage by both the teacher and leader populations in the Church.

### **Suggestions for Improvement from Participants**

Data analysis from the three focus groups led to the following major recommendations for improving the evaluand.

**Eliminate distracters in presentation.** One of the strongest themes throughout the data was that participants feel that presentation is very important when trying to make the principles come across with power. From the previous results we can infer that the power of the Oatmeal and Sunday School video to promote learning and action was diminished in comparison to the other two videos, due to distracting elements—particularly the acting. Therefore, one primary recommendation for future videos is to follow the guiding principle mentioned in the previous section to use authentic storytellers and real-life testimony whenever possible. It could also be a great practice to carefully audience test videos in both storyboard and video draft format to screen for distractions in the style and editing of the video that would detract from an otherwise powerful message.

**Address accessibility barriers.** The other major recommendation based on the evaluation data is to look beyond the creation of the videos themselves, to the issue of how members will actually implement the videos in their callings. Two main barriers include (1) making the videos easier to find and (2) removing barriers that inhibit use.

Participants suggested the videos were not currently visible or easy to find suggesting they might be marketed on YouTube, the Church homepage, or by including links in online manuals and materials they use frequently. Other suggestions included providing training on how to use the videos with onscreen questions that prompt discussion/application and having informative titles and tags that could be indexed by topic and searched.

With regards to the issue of access being a barrier, members do not typically have access to the internet and equipment they would need to use these resources in their church buildings. Comments from members such as “I am not likely to show these videos because of the equipment issue,” show that conducting more research about the best way to help members easily access the technology needed to use these video resources will be key.

### **Opportunities for Further Research**

As the world-wide membership of the Church continues to grow, the need for cross-culturally relevant resources and media also increases. There is an opportunity to further expand this study by exploring which findings might be affected by cultural differences, versus those findings less likely to be affected by culture (i.e., universal principles). In addition, evaluation of context and cultural differences should be

considered. President Russell Osguthorpe, for example, recently encountered one instance of this issue when presenting a Spanish version of the Ann Madsen video in several branches in South America. He noted that the video was as well received by Latino audiences as the original version was with our participants from the Wasatch Front. However, it seems probable that the two main findings of the study—the need for authenticity in presentation and overcoming technology access barriers—could possibly look very different in other demographic areas of the U.S. as well as in other countries. Conducting reviews of similar resources with a more diverse demographic could further validate and expand results that have real value to Church leaders going forward.

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## Appendix A

### Focus Group Protocol for LDS Teaching Video Vignettes

1. Welcome and instructions. Distribute and sign consent forms (IRB disclosure).
2. Show videos one at a time and distribute survey consisting of the following two sets of questions:

Before the videos:

- a. What is your current church calling?
- b. Describe any training you have had since your call.
- c. What kinds of resources would most help you improve your teaching?

After each video:

- d. What were your overall impressions as you watched the video?
- e. Did you learn anything as you watched it? If so, what?
- f. What specific actions, if any, do you feel motivated to take after watching?

3. Use i>clickers to poll the group on the following questions:
  - a. Which of the three videos did you find most valuable to you in your calling?
  - b. How likely are you to visit the Sunday School website to access these videos and others like them?
  - c. How likely are you to share these videos, either personally or in a training situation?

- d. Please rate how relevant these videos are to your current needs and experiences as a gospel teacher (5 being the highest.)
4. Break into two groups, teachers and leaders. A facilitator conducts a follow-up discussion with groups, while being recorded with a digital audio recorder.

Follow-up to i>clicker Questions:

- a. How would you compare the three videos to each other?
- b. Do you see yourself using these videos in your current calling? If so, how, where, and why would use these videos?
- c. Would you share these videos in any way? If so, how, where, and why would you share these videos?
- d. This group rated the relevancy of these videos as a (#) can anyone comment on that or give an example of what was or wasn't relevant to you?

Final General Discussion Questions:

- e. If you had to summarize your feelings after watching those videos in one word, what word would you choose? Why?
- f. What was dead on? What was just right about these videos?
- g. What just didn't work or could be improved?
- h. If the Sunday School were to make more vignettes, what suggestions would you have?

## Appendix B

### i>clicker Response Charts

Note: The following percentages represent a total of 35 leaders and 19 teachers who participated.

Table B1

Question #1: Which of the three videos did you find most valuable to you in your calling?

Response	Leaders	Teachers
Teaching Helps Save Lives	17%	37%
From the Life of Ann Madsen	57%	53%
Oatmeal and Sunday School	6%	5%
They are all equal	20%	5%
Unsure	0%	0%

Table B2

Question #2: How likely are you to visit the Sunday School website to access these videos and others like them?

Response	Leaders	Teachers
Very Likely	37%	32%
Likely	46%	26%
Undecided	9%	21%
Unlikely	0%	11%
Very Unlikely	9%	11%

Table B3

Question #3: How likely are you to share these videos, either personally or in a training situation?

Response	Leaders	Teachers
Very Likely	29%	11%
Likely	54%	47%
Undecided	9%	32%
Unlikely	6%	11%
Very Unlikely	3%	0%

Table B4

Question #4: Please rate how relevant these videos are to your current needs and experiences as a gospel teacher (5 being the highest)?

Response	Leaders	Teachers
5	34%	47%
4	37%	32%
3	20%	11%
2	6%	11%
1	3%	0%