

An Innovative Approach to Providing Student Feedback

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Introduction

Psychological and educational research demonstrate that feedback facilitates student learning (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Characteristics of feedback linked to positive outcomes demonstrate that effective feedback focuses on features of the task, emphasizes learning goals, and adheres to well-defined assessment criteria (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Furthermore, effective feedback identifies students' strengths and weaknesses (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) and provides specific guidance for improvement (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012). The creation of a positive classroom environment in which constructive criticism is the norm can be a difficult endeavor. Through one-on-one and personal interactions with students, teachers can build rapport and social presence that helps establish a supportive learning environment (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001), and adheres to course rigor and high student expectations. The limited face-to-face and personal interactions commonly seen in online learning and blended classrooms (Thomas, West, & Borup, 2017), as well as large enrollment courses (Solis & Turner, 2016), create challenges for instructors to establish high social presence, build student rapport, and offer feedback in a detailed and personalized manner. Video feedback has emerged as one strategy to assist in the personalization of feedback (Borup, West, Thomas, & Graham, 2014). However, some instructors have identified that creating video feedback can be time consuming and nerve-wracking (Gould & Day, 2013). In addition, limited literature on video feedback in post-secondary agricultural learning environments exists. In this innovative idea submission, we describe the free online platform, © Screencast-O-Matic (n.d.), as an efficient, easy to use, and free online platform to provide students detailed and personalized video feedback.

How it Works

To use Screencast-O-Matic, educators simply need to visit the website to create a free user account. Once the account has been created, users are prompted to download the screen recorder before viewing a user-friendly tutorial. When using Screencast-O-Matic, users will have the ability to not only record themselves giving feedback, but also to capture what is on their screen, like a rubric, a video, a written assignment, etc. The program allows users to record their screen, record from their webcam, or record both simultaneously. While recording the feedback, the user can pause their recording and start the recording again at any time. The video can be saved as a file on the computer, a YouTube video, or as an upload to the Screencast-O-Matic account. The audio feedback can be shared with students through email, YouTube, e-learning platforms, etc., which allows students to receive personalized feedback from the educator no matter where they are located. Educators can use this program as an innovative approach to providing student feedback by verbally explaining areas of improvement for the assignment and points assigned on the rubric. This allows learners to receive feedback in multiple modes to address different learning styles. The video feedback also allows learners to hear the tone of their instructor and facilitates the personal presence and rapport between educator and learner.

Implications & Results to Date

Instructors at the University of Florida provided feedback using the Screencast-O-Matic program to students in one online writing course and one mass enrollment speech course with individual laboratory sections. Instructors shared audio feedback for students' assignments created in Screencast-O-Matic using the university's e-learning platform. Students were able to view the

feedback and use it to reflect on their assignment. Instructors and students identified a number of beneficial aspects of the Screencast-O-Matic video feedback. The instructors believed providing students video feedback saved them time because they were able to verbally express their feedback opposed to writing it. The instructor of the online course was able to provide students with more in-depth feedback from a distance, which was a benefit for both the instructor and the student. Feedback using the Screencast-O-Matic program built rapport between the students and instructors by providing a social presence in an online format. The rapport was appreciated by both the instructor and the student. Students reported they enjoyed the personal one-on-one feedback, which was longer and more detailed than the feedback they had received in past courses. Students were provided with more in-depth examples of areas where they could improve and what they did well for the assignment compared to feedback on past assignments. Despite seeing multiple benefits to using Screencast-O-Matic, the instructors identified a few potential challenges to using the program. Instructors must have the proper recording atmosphere and technology to execute this feedback style. This could potentially be a problem for instructors who are not provided with recording technology or do not have a quiet place to record the feedback for students. Students also have to make the time to watch the video in order to receive their feedback. Additionally, not all student learning modalities may benefit from the Screencast-O-Matic feedback style.

Future Plans & Advice to Others

Screencast-O-Matic is a free and easy-to-use resource available to educators. While the program has currently been used to provide feedback for speeches in a mass enrollment class and writing for an online class, these are only a few of the possible uses of this program. Screencast-O-Matic can provide opportunities to increase instructors' social presence in online and in-person settings for agricultural educators, agricultural communicators, and Extension educators alike. Teacher educators can provide real-time feedback on videos of student teachers in the classroom when they are hundreds of miles away. Agricultural communicators can deliver in-depth, constructive criticism of students' design and videography, which can be difficult to accomplish through writing. Additionally, Extension educators can use the program in adult distance education programs. Regardless of the purpose, Screencast-O-Matic is a helpful tool to facilitate learning in any digital learning environment. However, educators should provide a short, written introduction to the learners that introduces them to the purpose of the video feedback and describes what they should be doing while watching (e.g. taking notes). As educators use the program, they should also be mindful to keep feedback to less than 10 minutes to avoid learner fatigue. Organizing thoughts and running through feedback prior to recording the videos can help to create succinct and effective video feedback the first few times. Finally, sufficient time should be set aside to allow the educator to share and upload the videos.

Costs & Resources

Resources needed to provide video feedback via Screencast-O-Matic are a computer, internet access, a webcam, and Javascript. Screencast-O-Matic has free and pro program options. The free program allows users to record for 15 minutes, save the video files, and post videos online. However, the free program does keep a watermark on all videos. For \$18/year or \$36/3 year, users can create longer videos, draw on videos, edit videos, and create captions with voice-to-text capabilities without a watermark.

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