

**Educational Feedback Formats:  
Student Perceptions in an Undergraduate Honors Research Course**

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### **Introduction**

Educational feedback is multifaceted in university-level classes and strategies that can positively influence student performance need to be better understood (Hosek, Houser, & Richmond, 2017; West & Turner, 2016). Previous research indicates that assessment is essential to student performance and interest (McCarthy, 2015), and that timely feedback of sound quality is needed for success (Crook et al., 2012). Additionally, constructive feedback may create stronger relationships between students and instructors (Crook et al., 2012). Video-based feedback has been present for over two decades as a mode of assessment for universities, yet research investigating the value of video-based assessment feedback is lacking (Henderson & Phillips, 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Immediacy theory has been used to illustrate that the more immediate the response from the instructor, and the clearer the feedback, the more effective the learning is for the student (Hosek et al., 2017; Bolkan, Goodboy, & Myers, 2017). Nonverbal immediacy has also been shown to convey deeper meaning through the use of facial expression in video and nonverbal sounds via audio in an online teaching environment (Dixson, Greenwell, Rogers-Stacy, Weister, & Lauer, 2017). Within this particular study, immediacy was manipulated by randomly assigning students to receive either written feedback or video recorded feedback on their assignments.

### **Purpose & Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to describe student preferences with regard to format of instructor feedback. In order to meet this purpose, the following objectives guided the study: 1) determine perceptions of teacher immediacy among students who receive written feedback and those who receive video recorded feedback; and 2) determine the differences in perceptions of teacher immediacy between students in these two feedback groups. This study addressed Priority Area 4 of the American Association of Agricultural Education's National Research Agenda, focusing on meaningful, engaged learning in all environments (Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016).

### **Methodology**

This study was conducted with a census sample of classroom students enrolled at [University] in Honors Proposal Development in the spring of 2018 for a group of 29 students (five males and 22 females) which met three times a week for an hour. At the beginning of the semester, students were randomly assigned to either a "written" or to a "video" feedback group. Over the course of the semester, the students were graded on their assignments either online through Kaltura Media™ with video feedback or through written feedback on the Blackboard™ website. At the terminus of the semester, students were asked to voluntarily complete the verbal section of Gorham's (1988) immediacy scale.

## Results

Students were asked to participate in a survey with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Nineteen students were present to take the survey on the last day of class, resulting in a response rate of 70.4%. Any score that displayed a difference in means by at least 0.5 points (10%) was included in Table 1. The results indicated that the group receiving video-based feedback rated all but five measures higher than the written-feedback group. The top three responses yielding the greatest difference between video and written feedback (Questions 17, 12, and 15) indicated that humor, a conversational approach, and more interactions regarding experiences, examples, and questions were conveyed more fully through video feedback. However, students receiving written feedback perceived the instructor's feedback as more enthusiastic than those receiving video feedback.

**Table 1.** *Survey Response Scores*

<b>Question Number and Text</b>	<b>m (W)*</b>	<b>m (V)*</b>	<b>m(V)-m(W)</b>
17. In feedback for my class assignments my TA has initiated conversations with me before, after, or outside of class.	2.8	3.56	0.76
12. In feedback for my class assignment my TA uses personal examples or talks about experiences she has had.	2.8	3.44	0.64
15. In feedback for my class assignments my TA uses humor.	2.7	3.22	0.52
8. My TA displays enthusiasm in her feedback.	4.3	3.78	-0.52

\* A negative score indicates a preference for written feedback (W), a positive score indicates a preference for video feedback (V).

## Conclusions and Implications

Overall, students receiving video feedback perceived higher teacher immediacy than did the students receiving written feedback. However, those receiving written feedback perceived higher enthusiasm from their instructor on their assignment feedback, suggesting that perhaps instructor personality may be influential in shaping students' perceptions of immediacy, and specific personality traits may lend certain instructors to appear more enthusiastic in their written word than when verbally giving feedback. Further investigation is needed, as these personality traits, possibly including introversion and extraversion, were not a focus of the study. Additionally, more research, perhaps replication with different courses and instructors, would be beneficial in confirming results for studies similar to this by comparing video to written feedback. As video feedback can be time consuming, "multimodal blends" of feedback are recommended for classroom instructors with time constraints (Mathisen, 2012). Knowing, and implementing, the type of feedback which creates a positive influence on student learning may give student learners more direction and inspiration and create enhanced student to teacher interactions (Fukkink, Trienekens, & Kramer, 2011).

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