Show and Tell: Using Videos to Provide Assignment Feedback

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Introduction/Need

Providing quality feedback to learners is a crucial aspect of being an effective teacher (Saaris, 2016) and strongly impacts student achievement (Bellon, Bellon, & Blank, 1991). Feedback helps students develop their competence (Green, 1981), critical thinking skills (Grise-Owens & Crum, 2012), and persistence to complete the task at hand (Hattie, 2012). One-on-one feedback helps develop students' writing skills (Leggette, Jarvis, & Walther, 2015), but it is not always feasible due to time and location restrictions. In an increasingly visual society (Metros, 2008) individuals prioritize visual communication, including images and video. Matusitz (2005) specifically noted that including visual and digital communication enhances what can be expressed verbally or in written form alone. Given the paradigmatic shift from text to visuals, visual communication is an essential part of the 21st century classroom (Hattwig, Bussert, Medaille, & Burgess, 2013). Therefore, providing video feedback aligns with two needs identified by the research base: quality feedback and visual communication. This poster narrative describes the use of videos to provide relevant, timely feedback to encourage student learning.

How it Works

Students submitted their assignments as they normally would to the online learning management system (LMS). The instructor opened each assignment on the screen and spent some time reviewing the submission and making either mental or written notes about the positive aspects and areas of improvement. Then the instructor would launch Screencast-O-Matic to record audio and visual feedback about the assignment using a webcam and screen capture. The program displays a circle where the cursor is pointing so the student knows what area you are referring to as you talk about it. The recording was then stopped and the file saved to the computer. The length of these videos ranged from 4-12 minutes. Each video was uploaded to the LMS so the student could view his or her feedback.

Results to Date/Implications

During the 2017-2018 academic year, this feedback approach was used in a web design course at Texas Tech University; a graduate curriculum design course at Kansas State University; and an agricultural media writing course (two sections) and a photography course at Texas A&M University. At TTU, the instructor recorded individual feedback videos on two assignments for the 21 students in the course. At K-State, the instructor recorded individual feedback videos for two assignments for the 9 students in the course. At TAMU, video feedback was provided for three major writing assignments for 46 students in agricultural media writing (23 in each section) and for 34 students in photography (17 each semester). At TTU and K-State, we collected student opinions of receiving video feedback with a Qualtrics instrument. At TAMU, student responded to a printed questionnaire and group discussion. Although the questionnaires varied slightly for each university, students provided their attitudes and opinions about receiving feedback in this manner. Sixty-seven students provided responses to the questionnaires: 19 students from TTU, 7 from K-State, and 41 from TAMU.

Overwhelmingly, students said video feedback should continue to be provided for certain assignments and the video feedback was very or extremely useful to clarify expectations for the assignment. Using an open-ended question, students were asked to provide what they enjoyed

most about receiving video feedback. The comments demonstrated the transparency and clarity expressed were most beneficial aspects. The following quotes support this:

- "I feel like seeing/hearing you while viewing my assignment helps me understand the point you're getting across much more effectively than me trying to see what you're saying through text."
- "You told me exactly what I needed to do as if we were having a one-on-one meeting."
- "Feedback was easier to understand and left no room for misinterpretation."
- "Sometimes written feedback does not come across accurately so it is hard to tell the part of the assignment or project you are talking about. The video, with facial expressions, voice inflection, and the ability to point and scroll on the screen makes it a lot easier to know what you are actually telling us."
- "I thought it was a lot easier to get an explanation of what you thought of the assignment. I also enjoyed listening to what you had to say versus reading. I think it was easier to interpret."

Future Plans/Advice to Others

Screencast-O-Matic is intuitive and allows for effective feedback on student assignments. This approach to providing feedback will continue to be used in the classes at each campus and expanded to additional courses. The time involved to give this type of feedback is not less than what was used previously, but there is much more clarity in the feedback, which limits the amount of additional explanation needed. It also allows for pointing out specific problem areas or items that are correct to lesson confusion when the student reviews the feedback. It is recommended that the teacher look at the next students work, make notes, and prepare to provide the feedback while the previous students' video is rendering. This allows for the most efficient use of time dedicated to grading student work.

One feature of the program is the capture of the instructor's face as feedback is provided on the assignment. When asked what improvements could be made to this process, several students suggested that the instructor's face did not need to be visible during the feedback video. On the other hand, the curriculum design course was offered completely online and the video feedback allowed the students to see the instructor when they normally do not get that personalized interaction. The program allows the recorder to decide to record their face or not so that decision can be based on the type of course this is utilized in. In the free version, Screencast-o-Matic limits videos to 15 minutes, which should be enough time to give feedback on assignments. If additional time is needed for videos, users can purchase a deluxe or premier edition of the program that has additional features.

Costs/Resources Needed

The instructor needs to have a webcam with built-in microphone (usually less than $100), high speed internet, and a quiet work area to record the feedback videos. Screencast-O-Matic provides education users with free, deluxe, and premier options. A solo deluxe plan for teachers is $1.50/month and the premier plan is $4.00/month. These versions allow for video editing, drawing, importing video, and several other features (Screencast-O-Matic, 2018). The videos can take up a large amount of space so an external hard drive or cloud hosting is recommended to store the videos (hosting is included in the deluxe plan).

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