ENGAGING WITH VIDEO FEEDBACK AS HIGH LEVERAGE PRACTICE

Kimberly S. Reinhardt
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4339-4973

Abstract

This paper focused on the use of video feedback as a part of the core high leverage practices, which are the acts central to teaching, to impact learning outcomes across virtual and face-to-face instructional environments. The need to provide timely, high-quality feedback to students is greater than ever in online learning. Traditional dysfunctional or autopsy feedback, which is provided after an assignment is finished, often leaves students wondering how well they are doing throughout the process of learning. Often, this feedback is not even read by our students since it offers no formative value. A review of the quality factors essential for the use of impactful feedback is followed by a discussion of the practical uses for implementation in the classroom.

Keywords: *Video feedback, formative feedback, high-leverage practices*

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Introduction

As we collectively move into the next era of teaching and learning, educators move forward understanding the ways in which our traditional teaching failed our students and with new knowledge of the ways we can reach our students across distance. The disruption of our education system due to the COVID-19 pandemic moved our traditional teaching practices to virtual teaching overnight. As we emerge with new understandings of inequity and justice, we must continue to do better for our students. This paper focused on the use of video feedback as a part of the core high leverage practices, which are the acts central to teaching, to impact learning outcomes across virtual and face-to-face instructional environments. A review of the quality factors essential for the use of impactful feedback is followed by a discussion of the practical uses for implementation in the classroom.

The need to provide timely, high-quality feedback to students is greater than ever in online learning. Traditional dysfunctional or autopsy feedback, which is provided after an assignment is finished, often leaves students wondering how well they are doing throughout the process of learning. Often, this feedback is not even read by our students since it offers no formative value. "Teacher feedback drives the pedagogical process in which feedback interaction provides the framework for directing students' requirements and intended learning outcomes and setting learning climate and social emotional support" (Istenič, 2021, p. 113). Feedback is a driving factor of student success. In its best form it is developmental; it is relevant and useful, and it creates a classroom climate that values engagement in the process of knowledge creation.

Alternatives to text feedback include audio feedback, screen recording with audio, video only feedback and screen casting with video embedded. In this paper, the terms screencasting and video feedback will be used interchangeably to refer to the use of screen recording with an embedded video.

The mode of media used to provide feedback mediates communication with students, which can impact the internalization of comments shared. Borup (2015) found that "instructors using video provided more general and specific praise and more general correction than instructors using text and instructors using text provided more specific corrections" (p. 172). The formative value of video versus text allows instructors to deliver feedback that is more positive and personal. The conversational nature of video feedback contains more praise and affective support which builds relationships with students (Borup, 2015).

According to Borup (2015), there are three quality elements for video feedback. The first is the content provided. Video feedback provides cues that students naturally interpret, like body language and tone of voice. Second is the timing and efficiency of feedback. In a developmental process, the frequency and timing of feedback influences its usefulness and application. Third is the delivery and affective support that video comments provide. With the addition of cues, video feedback can prevent misinterpretation and confusion. Further, its specific and personal nature builds a relationship and trust between the professor and the student. Personalized communication can transform education for students who have historically underserved and undervalued classrooms.

The use of video feedback to engage our students throughout the learning process develops a dynamic space for collaboration before evaluation. As empowered learners, they feed "visible, valued, and in control of their learning" (Teaching Works, 2019).

> Good feedback is specific, focused, and not overwhelming in scope, and supports students' positive perceptions of their own capability. Giving skillful feedback requires the teacher to make strategic choices about the frequency, method, and content of feedback and to communicate in ways that are understandable by students. (Teaching Works 2019)

In video comments, students see and hear our meaning. The value of providing high-quality feedback lies within the students' interpretation of our comments, which can be lost in text-based "autopsy" feedback.

Feedback supports learning by focusing students' attention on specific aspects of their work and supporting their ongoing learning. Valuable feedback is specific, focused, and not overwhelming in scope, and supports students' positive perceptions of their own capability. "Personalized learning requiring feedback and different points of the learning process that utilize a range of feedback functions and forms and, most of all, employs contextualization and a situated approach" (Istenič, 2021, p113). Giving skillful feedback requires the teacher to make strategic choices about the frequency, method, and content of feedback and to communicate in ways that are understandable by students. When feedback is situated as a part of the learning process, it provides students with the space to internalize and act upon their new understandings.

Literature

Meaning is made through context, interactions, and relationships (Freire, 1979). Therefore, the purpose of feedback should extend beyond just providing comments for students and strive to have a positive impact on student growth (Mahoney et al., 2019). In other words, feedback should advance students' skills and critical thinking. It should be a "process that involves the student and is forward looking and action-oriented" (Mahoney et al., 2019, p177). Affirming students' capacity and supporting their learning not only helps them improve their work or thinking in a particular moment but supports ownership of their learning and their identity as knowledge creators. The development of a positive

academic identity is fostered through mutual understanding of the way we interpret our situational context. The development of self-efficacy is dependent upon successful navigation of this context.

Building relationships and use of students' names are a form of justice (Mahoney et al., 2019). This type of personalized action creates a sense that students are valued as individuals. Video feedback improves social presence and strengthens relationships (Ryan, 2021). Students appreciate clarity and ease of understanding as a key strategy. Equitable provision of feedback requires that teachers understand and intentionally work against normalized patterns by which Black, Latinx and Native American children receive significantly less feedback than their peers. Often the feedback is perceived as negative, based on teachers' misunderstandings of student's thinking, or is non-academic. According to Ryan et al. (2019), "effective feedback involves learners receiving and making sense of the information about their performance and using that information to enhance their future performance" (p. 1509). The measure of feedback lies less in what the teacher says than in the way a student interprets the feedback. Screencasting involves more use of names and more relationship building comments and is more like a conversation because it is more elaborate (Borup, 2015). The more natural and conversational delivery of video feedback adds a humanistic facet that does not exist in text-based comments.

Video feedback can bolster socioemotional outcomes because of the rich conversational cues that are not available in text. (Ryan, 2021). According to Mahoney et al. (2019),
> high value feedback requires us to take into account the cognitive, structural, and social affective dimensions required for feedback dialogue … the highly personalized nature of the video feedback allows markers to more overtly address students as individuals, transforming feedback into a communication which can help students feel recognized and valued rather than simply a name on a list (p.163).

In their study, Borup (2015), found that of the 22 students, 16 found that the visual and vocal cues in the video reduced the likelihood of misunderstanding" (p. 177). Video feedback provided students with more encouragement and less focus on simply correcting their mistakes. Videos allow nuances of plain language to come through.

Feedback as a high leverage practice

High leverage practices are considered the core of teaching and learning across all educational contexts (Loewenburg Ball & Forzani, 2009; McDonald et al., 2013). As a system, HLPs (High Leverage Practices) focus on the funds of knowledge that students bring to our classrooms, and when a student is recognized for their own individual experiences as a valued member of the learning environment, they are more likely to be successful. The practice of providing feedback helps students to see their strengths and focus on areas for improvement and it enables teachers to partner with and empower learners (Teaching Works, 2019). Student centered feedback is dependent upon the student's ability to make sense of the feedback with the opportunity to use the information to improve their outcome. Skillful feedback, whether offered publicly or privately, positions learners as visible, valued, and in control of their learning. It demonstrates respect for students' ideas and work by taking them seriously (Teaching Works 2019).

Classroom feedback is often focused on the learning outcome rather than the development of critical thinking. Feedback that is focused on corrective measures can be useful but can have a detrimental effect if students find it discouraging (Baadte 2015). Text feedback is not always helpful in moving a

student's thinking forward. Since video feedback focuses on the process and can be accessed repeatedly, it encourages proficiency in the process.

The value of video feedback lies within its content. Video feedback enhances teacher candidates' abilities to perceive analyze and interpret teaching and learning (Baadte 2015). Students are found to utilize video feedback better; they are more engaged and often return to the feedback throughout the revision. (Mahoney et al. 2019). Ryan & Henderson (2019) posit that face-to-face feedback is often arduous and time consuming. When a teacher has a heavy load of students, timing may not allow for the affordance of face-to-face meetings. This is reflected in the use of stock feedback for large classes. Rubrics can provide specific feedback, but the personalization is lost to the more generic feedback in a rubric. According to Ryan & Henderson (2019) video feedback is perceived to be more detailed and useful. When asked to rate the usability, detailed content, and personalization of video feedback against text feedback, 75% of students agree that this feedback maintains those qualities.

A key element that video feedback provides is in the delivery. Text based feedback is focused on corrections, which if delivered as the final and only feedback, is not useful for development (Borup 2015). Corrective feedback also lacks general and specific praise which can create a sense of success and highlight growth. When using text-based feedback it is also difficult to communicate difficult and complicated concepts or processes (Borup 2015; Mahoney et al. 2019). Feedback that addresses this type of information can be conveyed more easily and directly with screen casting. Digitally recorded feedback bridges the gap between text-based and face to face feedback by providing a personalized detailed assessment without the labor of face-to-face meetings. Borup (2015) found that in comparison with text-based feedback, video feedback has higher word counts, more supportive comments, and non-verbal cues that prevent misinterpretation. Mahoney et al., (2019) note that video feedback has greater detail, contains double or more words, elaborates on points with specific detail and offers more positive aspects for students' work. According to Mahoney et al., (2019) video feedback "fundamentally shifts the focus of the feedback from surface level mechanics of writing to the more substantive, global aspects of student performance." Personalized feedback is not only praise or criticism but instead is specific to the task and intended to improve the students' outcome. Feedback should detail action steps for students.

The use of video feedback for online and face-to-face learning

Context

The application of video feedback proved to be a useful tool. In the spring 2020 semester, face-to-face learning moved to digital learning and educators across the world sought to make connections with students through online meeting platforms. While text feedback was still possible, the use of video feedback created connections with students. Connection at a time when isolation was forced upon the globe to reduce the spread of COVID-19 was an asset in the classroom. The following section will describe two ways that screencasting applications were a high leverage practice to improve self-efficacy when a field-based experience course was moved to a virtual setting.

Directions for assignments

In a face-to-face classroom we can interact with our students. As a best practice, we offer directions in both written and verbal formats, and we allow our students to ask questions necessary to accomplish the course tasks. With this option gone in the spring of 2020, students needed alternatives to

ensure they understood assignments. Using screencasting, directions were offered in a text format, but also supplemented with a screencast video. The video allowed the instructor to show the assignment and review the criteria, but also to offer a tour of resources including the how to navigate the learning management system, how to click on links to find materials and how to use shortcuts to make the use of technology easier. This allowed the students to focus on the task, not trying to figure out how to start. Further, by recording and sharing a screencast video, students processed the content at their own pace. If they had questions about the directions, they were assured they were on track by returning the screencast to review the precise instruction for the assignment.

In the field-based experience course, the benchmark assignments included designing instructional activities. In this course the students used an Instructional Design Protocol (Reinhardt, 2019) that focused on strategies and instructional sequencing. It was embedded with links to resources and materials that assist in planning. All these elements were covered in the course content, but once students were planning on their own, they often became overwhelmed and lost confidence. The accompanying screencast provided a scaffold for students to rely on as they learned to develop instructional activities.

Formative feedback while planning

As a key benchmark for success in the field-based course, the high-stakes nature of the Instructional Design Protocol (IDP) necessitated on-going feedback during its development. Students moved forward at different paces and with diverse needs as they planned. On-going face-to-face feedback was typically used to support students during the process. As the field-based experience moved to a virtual setting, the management of individual feedback for the complex tasks involved in learning to plan for teaching were not met through text feedback. The use of video feedback was a targeted way to offer development feedback that was specific yet encouraging.

Like the use of screencasting for directions, the formative feedback offered during the planning process allowed students to hear the feedback and to see precisely where in IDP they needed to address concerns. As an initial round of feedback, each IDP is reviewed during a screencast. Comments on the places a student did well were highlighted, and areas of concern were identified. Most applications such as Word and Docs allow for collaboration with comments, and once the screencast was complete, the link was inserted into a document comment. This allowed the student to target the content to consider for revision and respond to the instructor's feedback with their own questions or comments. The use of comments within a document that included screencasts was further extended by asking students to tag the instructor in any reply comments. This created a feedback loop that was direct and personalized for students. They responded whenever they were working on their IDP, and the professor was directed to the exact question within the document.

Conclusion

Screencasting software had a positive outcome for students. As a high leverage practice, it offered direct and personalized feedback. Student names are more readily used, the feedback covers more elaborate topics, and it is formative. Encouraging critical awareness of one's own knowledge creation, students can build on their own strengths with confidence they have been heard and seen by their professor. Students remained focused on the task using multiple means for representing directions and were scaffolded and supported throughout the process of instructional design. The ability to focus on

complex tasks in personalized ways improved student self-efficacy and built self-confidence. The process of learning was supported as a developmental process rather than a corrective process.

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