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A How-To Guide for Student Generated Video

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Introduction

The type of assessment used by the instructor is a major consideration that must be taken into account when designing a third level course. Boud posits that “assessment methods and requirements probably have a greater influence on how and what students learn than any other single factor. This influence may well be of greater importance than the impact of teaching materials” (as cited in Harvey, 2018, slide 4). This can be understood if one frames assessment not only as assessment of learning but also as assessment for learning. In this new framework, in addition to measuring students’ knowledge of the material, assessment can be thought of as a tool used for providing feedback, for defining academic standards, and for directing student learning (Harris, 2005). Gibbs reminds us that ‘assessment frames learning, creates learning activity and orients all aspects of learning behaviour’ (as cited in DIT, 2008, p.8).

There is currently a movement calling for a shift away from traditional high-stakes assessment towards alternative assessment practices based on the increasingly diverse student population, constructivist learning theory, and the need for more authentic evaluations of student performance (Anderson, 1998). Within this trend, it is important to consider that “technology is also becoming a medium for learning and work...[and] as working and learning begin to require technology competence of almost everyone, assessing these skills will become routine” (Bennett, 2010, p.80). A quick survey of the literature suggests that the use of student-generated videos as assessment tools can be one way to incorporate technology into the classroom when taking a blended learning approach. Bravo, Amante, Simo, Enache, and Fernandez (2011) explain that video as a teaching tool increases student motivation, and Kay (2012) suggests that video learning improves attitudes and learning behaviors, and increases learning performance. This is supported by Jenkins and Dillons (As cited in Orús et al. 2016), who believe that generating videos is a move from passive to active learning. Mayer (2002) also suggests that video assessments increase students’ attention and memory, as it is easier to recall something when they have seen it, rather than just hearing it.

This project aimed to generate a how to guide for the creation of video assignments within a specific module. We intend this guide to serve as a resource for lectures to aid the students when using this innovative assessment method. After careful consideration, we determined that a poster/infographic would be most suitable to aid the students with best practice guidelines. The graphic nature of the resource makes it easy to follow and student-centred, especially when compared to existing resources which tend to be text-based and more difficult to follow. In addition, it is our hope that our guide can encourage uniformity, be reusable, and provide a clear process that students can follow when taking on video assessments.

To ensure the creation of an excellent and easy to use tool for both lecturers and students, we distilled from the literature a list of guidelines that can be used across disciplines. In order to future-proof our resource, it was also decided that the strategies listed on the infographic would be generic, with a QR code that links to a webpage where a more complete list of current resources are identified, together with appropriate links provided. This page was created as a WordPress site, but ideally it would be migrated to an institutional domain where it could be kept up to date with the most current resources by a designated person (this person could be a member of the institution's AV team or a member of the current research group). The webpage also incorporates our literature review to serve as a framework for the use of this assignment, and graduate attributes that directly link to video-creation in the classroom. Finally, the poster is also available as an interactive PDF that incorporates links to certain key resources into the various headings.

Literature Review

Blended learning, defined as “the combination of traditional face-to-face and technology-mediated instruction” (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison 2013, p.4) has been shown to be effective because it is rooted in the idea of learning as a continuous process (Singh, 2003). Among its benefits are improved student learning and increased student satisfaction (Heterick & Twigg as cited in Garrison and Kanuka, 2004). While at its simplest, blended learning is considered as a thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences (Porter, Graham, Spring, & Welch, 2014). Garrison and Kanuka (2004) believe that “blended learning inherently is about rethinking and redesigning the teaching and learning relationship....We must seriously reflect on how to design and deliver higher education” (p.99). Therefore, the introduction of blended learning into the classroom gives the instructor the opportunity to design a novel approach that encourages the holistic development of the learners.

While some literature considers blended learning as a mixture of offline and online delivery (Allen, Seaman, & Garret, 2007), Singh (2003) proposes that there can be many approaches to blending, including blending self-paced and collaborative learning. Collaborative learning, also known as peer learning, can help students to take responsibility for their own learning and also to deepen their understanding of specific course content (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). A strategy for the incorporation of technology in a collaborative learning environment is the creation of an assignment in which groups of students are asked to create videos on threshold concepts or other topics of interest. These videos, when accurate, can then be made available in a common repository that the students can access to use as study/reference material.

The ubiquity of the use of digital video content is evident in higher education curriculum design and its presence in the third level classroom is undeniable (Hibbert, 2014). A quick survey of the literature shows that the main applications of videos in the blended classroom are as support material to enhance learning and student engagement (Berk, 2009; Marazban, 2015) or as part of flipped-classroom approaches (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Fung, 2017). In addition, student-generated videos have been used as an alternative to lab reports (Erdmann & March, 2014) as the required output for fieldwork (Fuller & France, 2016), as a component

of their continuous assessment (Greene & Crespi, 2012), or as instructional tools (Box et al., 2017; Gillette, Winterrowd & Gallardo-Williams, 2017; Jordan et al., 2015).

The use of student-generated videos can be understood within the framework of digital storytelling, in which “the art of telling stories with a variety of digital multimedia” (Robin, 2006) can be tailored to serve as an instructional tool to enhance the learning experience while also providing “education on literacy, technology, and leadership” (Storycenter, n.d.). Robin (2008) argues that “the greatest benefit in the classroom may be found when students are given the task of creating their own digital stories.” In addition, the generation of video as a formative or a summative assignment fits perfectly with the need for authentic assessment described by Longcroft (2017). Authentic assessment “require(s) students to work with others and to engage with issues, problems or challenges that take them beyond the safe confines of the classroom or campus” (Longcroft, 2017, blog). Greene and Crespi (2012) report that student generated videos resulted in “deeper learning; more engaging learning; more active learning; experiential learning; more personal involvement – students must take ownership of their ability to acquire knowledge; and, a more entertaining and engaging experience” (p.281). Furthermore, the use of video as an assessment point can be transformed into “a powerful tool that can be mapped against and contribute to the development of a range of key graduate attributes via the signature pedagogy of fieldwork” (Fuller & France, 2016, p. 13). Digital literacy could be considered an essential attribute for any third level graduate, and is explicitly incorporated into many college/university/institute’s descriptions of the ideal graduate (Fuller & France, 2016), including DIT’s list of Graduate Attributes (DIT, n.d.).

The omnipresence of digital video brings a constant need to question students’ and educators digital competencies and how best to harness the potential of this pedagogical tool. Whilst Siemens, Gašević, and Dawson (2015) refer to the emergence of a fourth generation of education technology that pertains to “distributed and digitally shaped technologies: adaptive learning, distributed infrastructures, and competency models” (p. 204), distilled down to “control, integration, ownership, and structure” (p. 204) of these digital tools, pedagogues need to be aware of how visually digitally literate third-level students are. As the specific area of interest of this project relates to students as creators of digital video content, let us attempt to examine how ready and digitally competent students are in the current third level context.

Orús et al. (2016) presented a project in which students could voluntarily participate in the creation of videos - on completion these videos were uploaded to a Youtube channel. Students worked in groups to create videos that explained a theoretical concept of marketing. Analysis of the project showed that the students participating in the project acquired higher levels of cross-curricular competencies, such as presentation and information and communication technology skills, and achieved better academic performance (i.e. a better mark in the course) compared to non-participants. This study reinforces the usefulness of student made videos for developing not only course specific knowledge but also developing social and practical skills.

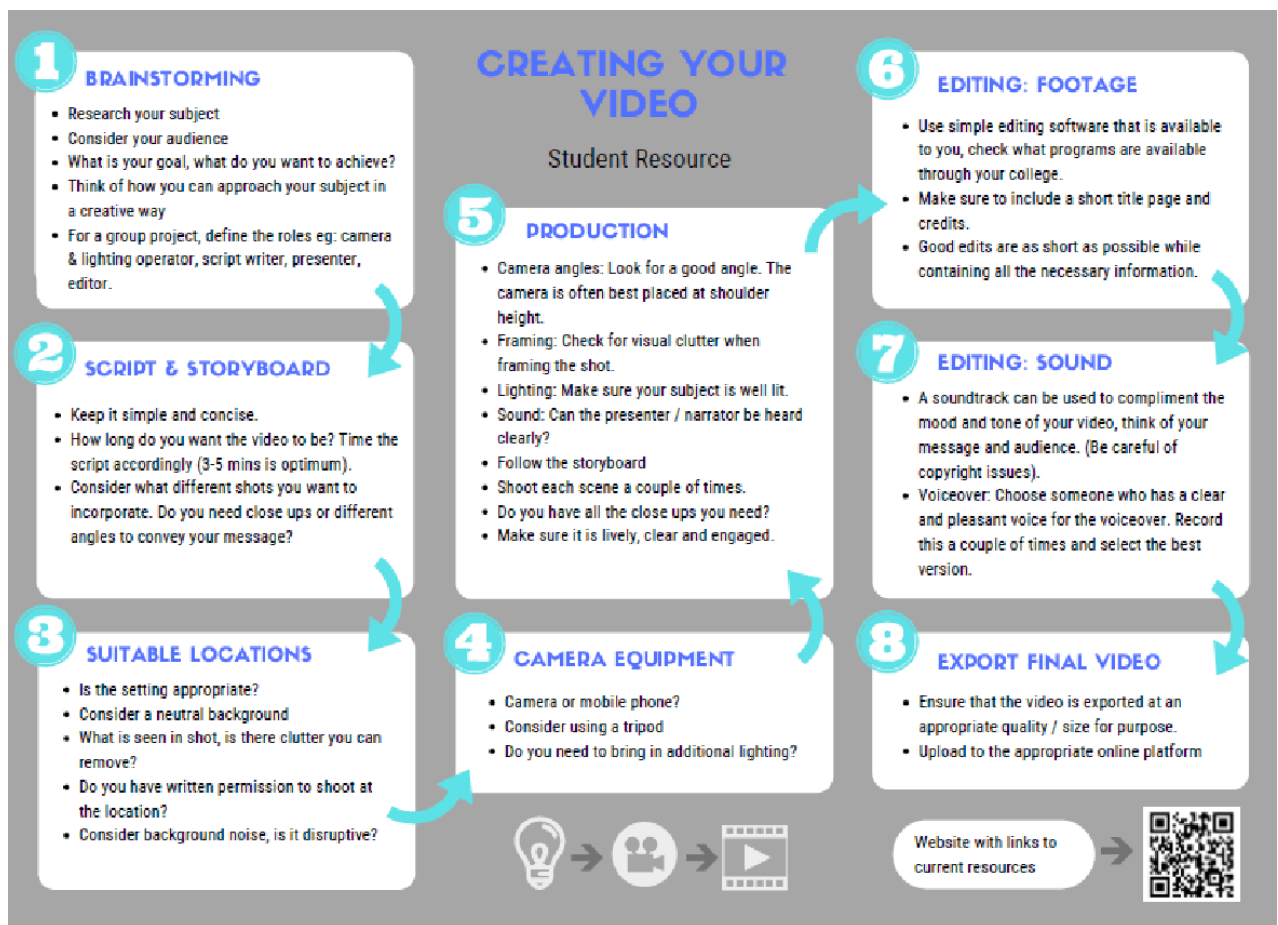
Loftus, Tiernan, and Cherian (2014) addressed how Irish and Indian third level students perceived themselves as creators of digital video content and how ready they were to

produce digital video content within the context of a French language module. The specific pedagogical challenges they faced when required to produce digital video content as a form of assessment was also analysed. The results of this paper showed that whilst both cohorts of students were comfortable with creating digital video content, they were not as comfortable with the dissemination of said content. Of relevance to our line of enquiry was the finding relating to students' comfort level with the creation of digital video content being assessed by their lecturers, specifically "so long as staff are on hand to provide advice and guidance, both groups seem comfortable in making the transition to using digital video tools in academic settings" (p. 580). Students were open to this form of assessment being formally embedded once the issue of privacy was addressed by lecturers adopting this form of assessment (p. 580). In addition, students also requested that guidelines be provided around peer feedback and comments, essentially confronting the peer element of videos being accessible for viewing by their peers. The technological challenges of producing video content was not problematic for students but having to include personal experiences was an issue, with students being more comfortable relying on "information they had sourced from lectures or sourced elsewhere in journals or on the internet" (p. 580). This would suggest that any reflective component of digital video content would need to be addressed by educators.

On the other hand, both Greene and Crespi (2012) and Fuller and France (2016) found bimodal responses in student satisfaction surveys after the completion of generation of video assignments for assessment purposes. While both reported student satisfaction and the perception of the assignment as a unique educational opportunity, they also reported that some students did have a lack of technical know-how, such as familiarity with editing software, and could benefit from coaching on video production. Both groups of authors also suggest facilitating the familiarization of the students with video creation and editing, whether by addressing it directly during the lecture or by allowing for the time for students to experiment before dedicating themselves to their assignment.

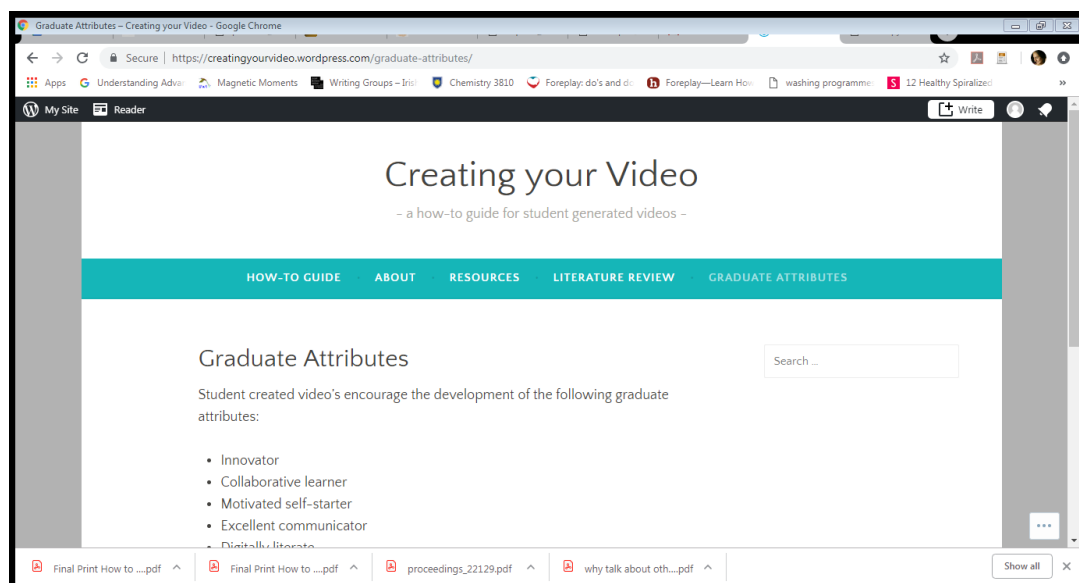
Singh (2003) clearly identifies the need for "making different types of resources (offline and online) available for learners" (p. 53) when blending or incorporating technology into the classroom. Therefore, we have created a resource that lecturers can give to students in order to provide guidance when creating video as part of an assignment. This resource intends to be comprehensive and help students not only with technical aspects, but also with other essential skills such as time management, group management and collaborative work, and content creation.

The Poster



The Webpage:

url: <https://creatingyourvideo.wordpress.com/>



Conclusion

A blended learning approach has proven successful within education in recent years, marrying face-to-face and mediated technology amongst assessment. Furthermore, digital literacy is now considered to be an essential graduate attribute by most colleges and universities, who aim to have it ingrained in their ideal graduate.

It is evident from the literature review that there is support for the use of videos as part of different assessment strategies within education, be they formative or summative. Video assessments are linked to students taking more responsibility for their own education and learning, and to their gaining a deeper understanding into the specific course content or the module in question. This in turn results in a more entertaining and engaging experience for them.

Although it is widely suggested that the modern student has all the skills to create videos and is fully digitally literate, the literature supports the need for guidelines to be established for students, as many do not have the technical know how to make a video for assessment. Our research also identified the need for a resource to assist students in the creation of videos. Our focus group welcomed our primary research for such a guide, and supported its usefulness for assisting lecturers with this unique form of assessment. It is our hope that our artefact/poster will not only assist colleagues and fellow lecturers, but also students and the wider education audience.

Finally, there are abundant opportunities for further research or projects within the area of video as formative assessment. For example, the poster/ artefact could be tailored for different schools, for technical or creative instruction, or for the specific needs of DIT students. Our group also spoke about creating a similar resource to guide the lecturer in designing the assignment and writing the brief, together a rubric for marking the video output. This would support accountability and academic rigor for the institution as well as both internal and external examiners.

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