Student in the Director’s Chair: Enhancing Student Learning and Engagement with Video Production

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“I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” Albert Einstein

Abstract
As the digital video technology continues to become more assessable in terms of cost and ease of use, it has led to new developments in the pedagogical use of digital video. This article discusses the use of instructional digital video as a pedagogy in which students demonstrate their conceptual understanding of the course content and further develop their reflection. It also explores the endless possibilities that are available with the incorporation of digital videos as an alternative assessment tool. The article concludes that the rigorous conceptual development relating to curriculum outcomes should be the priority learning outcome when designing a digital video assignment. Thus, students need to avoid paying too much attention to the filming and movie making related aspects.

Key words: Instructional digital video, alternative assessments, engaging learning

INTRODUCTION
The incorporation of instructional digital video as an assessment tool is common in many institutions of higher education around the world. The increasing efficiency of bandwidth and ease of use of recently developed video editing software has led to the growing popularity with new developments in the pedagogical use of digital video (Schuck and Kearney, 2004). During the production of instructional digital videos, students were assigned roles as background researcher, script writer, videographer, editors, and directors. In this active learning process, students are experiencing meaning and relevant problem solving activities. Teamwork, collaboration and cooperation among the team members became the important factors for the successful completion of the project (Neo and Neo, 2009).

Research shows that the use of student video production as part of the assessment has the potential to motivate student learning in deep and meaningful ways, providing
opportunities for them to reflect on their experiences and construct their own learning (Media Commons, 2007b). As creation of an instructional video is an interactive, immersive, and student-centred learning process, it definitely helps students to build a variety of skills, including critical viewing skills, language and communication skills, collaborative learning skills, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving skills while developing greater understanding of the given subject content area (Media Commons, 2007b). This echoes the propositions of studies by Swain, Sharpe and Dawson (2003) and Neo and Neo (2009) which found that the process of generating and editing video related to a curriculum context encourages deeper level thinking by students about the subject matter, as well as helps them experience a higher level of motivation and self-esteem.

OBJECTIVES
The following objectives served as the framework for the interpretation and discussion in this article:
1. To discover the potential values of incorporating student-generated digital videos in the assessment components.
2. To discuss the pedagogic approaches that could be used in designing digital video assignment in a course.

STUDENT-GENERATED DIGITAL VIDEOS
The use of student-generated digital videos as an alternative assessment method makes the learning process more interesting, enjoyable, and exciting for the students and, at the same time, increases the depth of their learning (Media Commons, 2007a). When incorporating a video component into the assessment or classroom activities, it enhances, enriches and engages student’s learning in deep and meaningful ways, as well as promotes peer-learning and peer-assessment. It also creates opportunities for students to review their personal performance for reflection and self-evaluation, and contributes to the online learning society through sharing of the instructional video worldwide.

To engage students effectively in their learning process and to create an interesting, exciting and enjoyable learning environment, electronic-based learning objects could be used in the class by adding a video component to an assignment. The video based assessment component has been proven to be both motivating and able to provide authentic learning experiences for students (Rodrigues, Pearce and Livett, 2001). Curiosity of the students is stimulated while exploring the various video editing tools widely available in the Internet. In addition, to produce a good quality instructional video, students need to rehearse and view their filming numerous times prior to final production to ensure their intended audiences understand the main message of the video. It provides the opportunities for the students to learn how to put themselves as the receiver in order to assess their own videos. This helps to avoid confusion among the audience and makes the students learn the act of communicating effectively through the visual medium. This method also allows the students to evaluate their own learning, consequently learning from the evaluation process. Besides, in the digital video based assignment, students are
Incorporating **video** component into the **assignment**.

**Students include own** generated digital videos in their **e-portfolio** or video-based learning blogs.

**Curiosity** of the student is **stimulated** while exploring the video editing tool. Producing video encourages **deeper level thinking** by students about the subject matter.

**The videos give clear** **expectations** for future students about the requirements of the assessments. It serves as the **benchmark** for future cohorts.

**Students review their personal** video production for **reflection** and **self-evaluation**.

**Students view their peer’s video** production online and provide comments. **Peer assessments** and **peer review** in turn provide more opportunities for interaction and feedback. **Students establish** **collaborative relationships** with the online learning community.

**Figure 1.** Endless possibilities that are available with the incorporation of digital videos as an alternative assessment tool.
given the freedom to make mistakes, the freedom to use their own creative and confident ways to express their understanding of the curriculum and to improve the delivery of the content at a comfortable pace.

In addition to greater understanding of the content, acquiring technological-related knowledge and improving their communication skills, in uploading their video production to the web for peers and public viewing in turn provides students with opportunities for interaction and feedback from a wider audience. Students are able to share ideas, provide constructive comments as well as establish collaborative relationships with the online learning community. Furthermore, the awareness of their peers as the target audience of the video assignment also plays an important role in motivating students, encouraging them to use their own humour in presenting the content and generally enhance the authentic nature of their learning experiences (Schuck and Kearney, 2004).

With student-generated digital videos, the learning process will also be extended to the subsequent semesters and intakes. These videos could be easily used as the benchmark for future cohorts to help the students understand the expectations and requirements of the assessment. At the same time, as students create the ‘story’ of the instructional videos based on their own learning over time, this ‘reflective’ digital video clip could also be linked to the development of students e-portfolio. This e-portfolio serves as the learning evidence for students to demonstrate their ability to systematically explain a concept to the public.

**Designing Digital Video Assignment**

**Step 1:** Identify an assessment component in the course where the use of digital video would increase student learning and understanding. For instance, in the subject of Management Information Systems, students are given opportunities to explain the Internet security and database concepts in video form instead of physical presentation; in a computer application related subject, students will be able to demonstrate a computer skill learned in class using screen capture video rather than assessing their knowledge through the written assignment; or in the marketing subject, students should be able to discuss the various advertising and promotion strategies through the lens of the camera to replace the written tests.

**Step 2:** All students must be equipped with the fundamental skills of using movie maker and screen capture software. Workshops on capturing and editing digital media need to be organised for students who have no prior experience in making an instructional video.

**Step 3:** As video creation is a time-consuming process, the duration of the video assignment expected from students should not exceed 5 minutes. Also, it would be more appropriate to arrange a group of three in this form of assessment instead of asking for individual work. Each member is expected to spend about
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10 hours from background research, video capturing to the final production of the video.

Step 4: Determine the medium for students to submit the video production. Students are to upload the video onto the Internet and email the video link to the instructor. It saves the students the hassle of printing the papers, or physically looking for instructors to submit their work. Furthermore, instructors do not need to keep any physical copy of their students’ assignments and the link to the video allows the instructors to view and assess the assignments anytime anywhere with the Internet connection.

Step 5: Students are reminded that the instructor is not the only audience to view their video production. To promote peer learning as well as to increase the excitement of the assessment, marks are allocated for comments and rating from all their peers as well as the ‘online learning communities.’

Step 6: This video assignment should contribute between 10%-15% of the overall course marks. A grading system for the assessment needs to be established to clearly spell out the expectation and requirements of the assessment. An example of the marking scheme on how to grade the students’ video production is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Advanced (4-5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3-4)</th>
<th>Developing (0-3)</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall design &amp; content</td>
<td>The content is well thought out and the sequencing makes sense. The overall video is exceptionally designed for easy viewing.</td>
<td>The video is well designed for easy viewing. The content shows a clear overall plan and communicates a general theme.</td>
<td>The design of the movie makes it hard to view the movie and follow the information.</td>
<td>5 * 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard Planning</td>
<td>The storyboard shows careful planning and rigorous conceptual development related to curriculum outcomes.</td>
<td>The storyboard shows a great deal of conceptual development related to curriculum outcomes. Most video segments match the storyboard.</td>
<td>The storyboard has been used to guide the overall video production but does not correspond clearly with curriculum outcomes.</td>
<td>5 * 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia Effects</td>
<td>Music and/or imported sound enhances the viewers’ experience of the movie and relates to the content.</td>
<td>Music/sound is appropriate and enhances the movie. However, music does not match with the</td>
<td>Music is used but distracts the viewer. It doesn’t fade in and out and conflicts with the sound of the</td>
<td>5 * 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
This article outlines the possible benefits of incorporating student-generated digital videos as an alternative assessment tool. There is clear evidence that this alternative assessment method strongly enhances student engagement and autonomy (Schuck and Kearney, 2004). In addition, students also clearly developed various skills such as movie making skills, communication and presentation skills, higher order thinking skills and teamwork skills.

However, it is crucial that conceptual development relating to the curriculum should be the priority learning outcome when designing a digital video assignment. Students should avoid paying too much attention to the filming and movie making related aspects, while neglecting the rigorous conceptual development related to curriculum outcomes. Thus,
when planning the assessment that involves instructional digital video, the marking scheme needs to be carefully designed to align with the intended learning outcomes of the course.

REFERENCES


