

Using Video-Feedback to Support Learning Outcome and Work-life Relevance

Tone Vold, Ole Jørgen Ranglund and Linda Kiønig

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Rena, Norway

tone.vold@inn.no

Ole.ranglund@inn.no

Linda.kionig@inn.no

Abstract: With students having the opportunity of choosing to take part in courses online rather than attend physically, they may lose the personal contact with the lecturers. One way of inducing a personal touch is by providing personalized video-feedback on the students' assignments to maintain or establish a connection with the students. Video-feedback is tested out in blended learning, and thus far, the results have been positive. The students claim that this is a more personal and direct way of obtaining feedback on their work. The students in this research project are students in the study programme of Knowledge Management at the Business School at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences. The courses consist of three full-day seminars per semester, in addition to streaming video of the curriculum. There is also a mandatory assignment that the students need to pass in order to proceed and take their exam. The courses, both in the autumn semester and the spring semester, have been delivered as a hybrid version, meaning that the students have been able to follow the courses, either online or present in a (physical) classroom. The video-feedback on their assignments has been developed from only being feedback on their assignment and issues for improvement, to where in this semester, the focus has been on tying the feedback to the learning objectives of the course. In this paper, the focus has been on the students who have only been able to follow the courses on an online basis. Via in-depth interviews, such as via Zoom with online students, the impact of the video-feedback has been compared for these particular students to the generic students who have also attended in person. Our investigations have revealed that the impact on the online students were positive, as they do find this type of feedback more personal compared to the students who had also been present in the classroom.

Keywords: Online Learning, Blended Learning, Video-Feedback, Learning Objectives, Motivation

1. Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all the lecturing had to be online at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway. After the pandemic, many study programmes returned to classes with physical attendance. In the study programme of Knowledge Management, in which the students are mainly adult students having to balance working full-time and studying part-time. For these students, the question of online lectures arose long before COVID-19 hit. At the end of the pandemic, there seemed to be an expectation of a continued online lecturing situation. The students are generally in a work-life situation, and there are various reasons as to why they ask for online attendance. At the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Norway, many of the courses that were deployed online during the COVID-19 pandemic are now only offered as courses at a campus where the students are to meet in person. According to Vold, Lervik and Holen (2022), most adult students prefer online courses. Bashir et al. (2021) claim that many universities are working on more flexible learning solutions. Hence, in the years after the pandemic, the Knowledge Management study programme has been offered as a hybrid virtual classroom,; both with the opportunity for students to physically attend classes/lectures in person on campus, but also to follow lectures online if for various reasons they have no opportunity to attend in person (Raes, 2022). Overton (2022) refers to hybrid learning as "the standard term which encompasses the similar definitions above of teaching students both face-to-face and online synchronously" (Overton, 2022, p. 332). The study programme at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences has two of the courses offered in streaming video of recorded lectures as a part of the "Flipped Classroom" approach (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Vold, 2014). However, this is not the same as being an active participant in the lectures. In higher education, there are students of all ages, whether full-time or full-time with a part-time job, or full-time workers studying part-time, or in other combinations. In this paper, the majority are "employed adult learners (EAL)" (Nguyen, 2022, p. 302).

In online education, it is important to facilitate the learning in such a way that the needs of the adult students are catered to. Cercone (2008) suggests that one needs to consider the learning styles of the learners, facilitating for an active involvement in the learning process, supporting the learners and aiding in the process of constructivist learning, thereby facilitating for linking new knowledge to their work experiences, and providing opportunities for testing their new knowledge, as well as supporting collaboration and social interaction, thus facilitating for reflection and a learning environment in which they may feel comfortable. In addition, Frey and

Alman (2003) suggest to be clear on expectations, and support the learning with different forms of feedback to the students. According to Wolsey (2008), feedback supports learning, as it establishes a relationship between the learner and the lecturer, and that the quality of this feedback will influence the learners' improvement of their work. This is supported by Hattie and Timperley (2007), when they claim that feedback is strongly supporting academic achievements with the learners.

In order to support the learning for all the students, including online and physically attending seminars, we decided to do a project in which video-feedback would be used as feedback on their mandatory assignments. Hence, all the students received a video file with comments on their assignments.

According to Mathisen (2012), video-feedback is perceived to be "more precise and nuanced than written feedback, and as such gives students a greater amount of inspiration and motivation when completing future academic work" (Mathisen, 2012, p. 111). Mathisen has used screen capture technology in his studies, which means that the student's text is shown, and that there is a "talking head" in the video (Mathisen, 2012). We have a different approach, as it is only a recording where the lecturer is visible, and is talking about the pros and cons with their own assignments. However, there is some learning to take from Mathisen's works. For instance, the results showed that the students felt a proximity to the teacher (Mathisen, 2012), which again is part of establishing a relationship with the learner (Wolsey, 2008).

Lamey (2015) states that video-feedback is aimed at the student, while written feedback is more about the assignment, as it comes across more as coaching and motivating for improvement, rather than focussing on mistakes. This is supported by Evans (2013), stressing the social dimension, even if the feedback is concerning the content of the course. Preferably, video-feedback should embrace communication produced by body language, gestures and voice (Priest, 1998). Ordinary (written) feedback does not contain the non-verbal communication that can be offered through video-feedback (Borup et al., 2014).

However, would the online students be perceived differently than the ones who attended in person? The ones who came to campus got to experience other students, the lecturer in a physical "habitat", and in a "normal" setting. Hence, the online students only "see" the lecturers and the ones who choose to show themselves in the video conferencing tool. Does this affect the way they perceive the video-feedback? And could we support their learning outcome by pointing towards how the content of their assignments could apply to a work-life?

1.1 Context of the study

The students attend a 30 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) study programme in Knowledge Management at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Norway. The study programme runs over two semesters, with two courses of 7.5 ECTS per semester. The courses are held as two-day seminars, with one course the first day and the second course the next day, three times per semester. Approximately 80 to 100 students attend the study programme each year, with all the courses having a minimum of one mandatory assignment. Generally speaking, the students receive a written comment/feedback that should aid them in their process of preparing for their exams.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, these courses have also been online, whereas after the pandemic, the courses were kept as a hybrid version with an option of participating online or physically at the campus in Kongsvinger. Some of the students choose to come at least once a semester to attend seminars at the campus, but for various reasons there are also a few who cannot come to campus. It may be family issues, work issues, funding issues, environmental issues, or a combination of some of these. Even if some of the students are relatively satisfied with the online lectures, from the lecturers' perspective, they are missing out on the social aspect of education. Consequently, we sought to personalize the feedback by providing a video recorded in the video tool in the LMS Canvas.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to focus on the online students' perspectives regarding how they perceive video-feedback. Would we succeed offering the students a more personal follow up, and thus support their learning outcome from the courses? Therefore, the research questions are:

How does personal feedback by video support the student's learning outcome?

How does it contribute to learning motivation, and does it support work-relevance?

In the following, the research methodology will be elaborated, and our findings presented, before the conclusion and suggestions for further research are elaborated.

2. Methodological approach

We treated this as a case study (Yin, 2014), in which we used a survey as our instrument to collect data. The study took place in the end of December 2022 and January 2023 by distributing a survey in the Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas. The survey was designed by the researchers, and used “Nettskjema” as a platform, as this was a web-based survey tool developed at the University of Oslo (see: <https://nettskjema.no/?lang=en>). We gathered feedback using our survey with open- and closed-ended questions (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2010; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2020). Of the approximately 85 students, 37 answered the survey; out of these 37, 19 were online students, with 18 attending seminars in person. It is not possible to trace the names of the respondents.

The survey form has a mix of questions, in which the students are to assess their input according to a Likert scale from 1 to 5, in which 1 is “strongly agree” and 5 is “strongly disagree”, as well as open-ended answers, in which the students were encouraged to provide feedback. The researchers have jointly discussed and interpreted the data (Creswell, 2009), using categories and sub-categories. The replies from the students were somewhat inconclusive, as 11 of 19 students claimed they disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the feedback being perceived as personal. Yet, in the open-ended answers, most of them have comments that seemed to appreciate the personal feedback. The primary emphasis is thus on the open-ended answers.

3. Findings

Our findings can be divided into three major categories: perception of the feedback being personal, motivational and clear on expectations.

3.1 Perception of being personal

Statements like: “Plainly, that it was delivered orally so that one could hear the tone of voice, and which words were stressed. Written feedback is not always so deliberate, and it may be misinterpreted by eager students and taken as more negative than it was intended” (respondent 9 online), and “Personal feedback with concrete feedback with examples from work-life” (respondent 12 online) support the impression of it being perceived as personal.

The feedback from respondent 12 (see above) also suggests that we have met Cercone’s (2008) suggestion of connecting the learning to their work-life. Respondent 9’s feedback (see above) also suggests that that we have achieved a form of proximity to the lecturer (Wolsey, 2008; Mathisen, 2012).

Compared to the ordinary students (attending in person), 12 of 19 online students have left a reply, in which only one has nothing to add, whereas six of the remaining 18 students have left a reply. The replies from the “ordinary” students do not refer so much to the perception of it being personal, with the exception of respondent 12 (in person): “It felt very personal, and I perceived that the lecturer had thoroughly read the assignments, it felt very good! Very positive! I perceived it as better than ordinary written feedback. If I had to choose between video or written, I would choose video.”

3.2 Perception of being motivational

Statements like, “By receiving feedback via video, the body language and the tone of voice will reduce the misinterpretation of the feedback. This in turn allows for more words and explanations, which points out which areas needs more attention” (respondent 8 online), showing that they still perceive it as personal and is perceived as more focussing on the student, and therefore has more potential of being motivational regarding improvements (Lamey, 2015).

3.3 Perceptions of clarity about expectations and work-relevance

Statements like: “Good to know concretely what one has understood and done right; at the same time, it is very useful to get concrete feedback on what is missing and what could have been improved. Useful for preparing for exams and also in the work-life” (respondent 17) also support what Frey and Alman (2003) suggest about being clear about expectations, in this case regarding improvements for the exams.

In order to not only receive their perceptions, we asked the students to give examples of what they had picked up from the feedback, including in open-ended feedback.

Examples of feedback are: “I have to discuss more” (respondent 10 online), “More about how to transfer knowledge from projects to the organization, and how the company has allocated time for reflection” (respondent 17 online), as well as “Clarity on how to develop a reference list” (respondent 19 online).

Only six of the 19 online students, and 11 out of 18 students who met in person, did not reply to what they have perceived as important improvement points. The ones who answered have similar answers to the online students. We found it interesting, to a much higher degree, that the online students chose to answer this question, and that this should be elaborated further.

There may be several explanations as to their obvious contradiction in their answers, such as interpreting the 5 in the Likert scale to be “strongly agree” rather than “strongly disagree”, or that they interpret “personal” differences in the two different answers.

4. Conclusion

We set out to investigate whether video-feedback would be perceived as personal, and if this would support the students’ learning outcomes by contributing to motivation. In the feedback, it would also be pointed out how the lecturers perceived the assignments’ connections to a work-life situation.

The findings show that students seem to prefer video-feedback to ordinary written feedback. It is perceived as more personal and seems to enhance the proximity to the online students, as they refer to how they perceive the tone of voice and our facial expressions. Many of the students claim to be motivated to work on the feedback towards their exams. It also seems to support the work-life relevance, as we have been able to communicate the transferability to their work-life through our feedback.

Our findings are supported by the theory we have used to enlighten our study. Mathisen’s studies claim that it is important to show the students where in the texts they need to improve, but our respondents claim to understand what needs to be improved without being presented the outlines in the text. Hence, it is possible to provide feedback either as we did, in the LMS (Canvas), record in Camtasia, from Zoom, Teams or other suitable media. Our recommendations are to address the students by name, be concrete about improvements and about where they have provided a sufficient or even excellent reply, and how well they have connected their assignment to a work-life situation.

The research did unveil a new issue worth pursuing compared to the “in-person” students, as more of the online students provided feedback, both on how they have perceived the feedback and about what they learned from this. As a result, when developing the survey, it is important to be very clear about what the different numbers in the Likert scale represent, and be consistent throughout the survey form.

4.1 Further research

The blended learning will continue over the next two semesters with new students. Thus, we will pursue further investigations with the new students. We are also planning on contacting the students who finished this spring semester, in order to conduct in-depth interviews, to see whether there are any differences in how online students and students retrospectively attend in-person perceive video-feedback on assignments.

Our finding about the richer response from the online students is also worth further exploring. Is it due to the perceived proximity through video-feedback, and/or that this is the way they are able to communicate this (unlike the students attending in-person who have the physical proximity in the classroom, and therefore have less interest in- or desire to communicate this)?

References

- Bashir, A., Bashir, S., Rana, K., Lambert, P., & Vernallis, V. (2021). ‘Post-COVID-19 adaptations; the shifts towards online learning, hybrid course delivery and the implications for biosciences courses in the higher education setting’, in *Frontiers in Education*. Frontiers, p. 310.
- Bishop, J. L., & Verleger, M. A. (2013). ‘The flipped classroom: A survey of the research’, in *ASEE National Conference Proceedings, Atlanta, GA*, pp. 1–18.
- Borup, J., West, R., Thomas, R. A., & Graham, C. R. (2014). ‘Examining the impact of video-feedback on instructor social presence in blended courses’, *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 15(3), pp. 232–256.

- Cercone, K. (2008). 'Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design', *AACE Review (formerly AACE Journal)*, 16(2), pp. 137–159.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3. ed. Los Angeles, Calif. [u.a.]: Los Angeles, Calif. [u.a.]: Sage.
- Evans, C. (2013). 'Making Sense of Assessment Feedback in Higher Education', *Review of Educational Research*, 83(1), pp. 70–120. doi: 10.3102/0034654312474350.
- Frey, B. A., & Alman, S. W. (2003). 'Applying adult learning theory to the online classroom', *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 17(1), pp. 4–12.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). 'The Power of Feedback', *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), pp. 81–112. doi: 10.3102/003465430298487.
- Johannessen, A., Christoffersen, L., & Tufte, P. A. (2020). *Research methods for the area of business and administration (Translated from Norwegian: Forskningsmetode for økonomisk-administrative fag)*. 4. utgave. Edited by L. Christoffersen and P. A. Tufte. Oslo: Abstrakt forlag.
- Johannessen, A., Tufte, P. A., & Christoffersen, L. (2010). *Introduction to Social Science Methods (Translated from Norwegian: Introduksjon til samfunnsvitenskapelig metode)*. Abstrakt Oslo.
- Lamey, A. (2015). 'Video-Feedback in Philosophy', *Metaphilosophy*, 46(4–5), pp. 691–702. doi: 10.1111/meta.12155.
- Mathisen, P. (2012). 'Video-Feedback in Higher Education – A Contribution to Improving the Quality of Written Feedback', *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 7(2), pp. 97–113. doi: 10.18261/ISSN1891-943X-2012-02-02.
- Nguyen, N. B. C. (2022). 'Improving Online Learning Design for Employed Adult Learners', in *European Conference on e-Learning*, pp. 302–309.
- Overton, S. (2022). 'Engagement challenges in a hybrid classroom: Reflections of a higher education tutor', in *European Conference on e-Learning*, pp. 331–337.
- Priest, S. (1998). 'Merleau-Ponty'. London: Routledge (Arguments of the philosophers).
- Raes, A. (2022). 'Exploring student and teacher experiences in hybrid learning environments: Does presence matter? Postdigital Science and Education, 4 (1), 138–159'.
- Vold, T. (2014). 'How can the concept of "Flipped Classroom" support the development of reflective practitioners in higher education?', in *2014 Information Technology Based Higher Education and Training (ITHET)*. IEEE, pp. 1–3.
- Vold, T., Lervik, M., & Holen, S. (2022). 'Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Education: The Student Perspective', in *European Conference on e-Learning*, pp. 489–497.
- Wolsey, T. D. (2008). 'Efficacy of Instructor Feedback on Written Work in an Online Program', *International Journal on e-Learning*, 7(2), p. 311.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. 5. edition. Los Angeles: Los Angeles: Sage.