



Enhancing Students' Understanding of Formative Assessment through Video-feedback on an Undergraduate Sports Rehabilitation Programme

Case Study

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Abstract

This case study reports on using a structured video-feedback process to engage undergraduate sports rehabilitation students with visual and practical understanding of how to improve their work during formative assessment activities. The case study further provides recommendations for future practice.

Keywords

Video-feedback, formative assessment, student learning experience

Introduction

During the summer of 2009 academic staff within the London Sport Institute (LSI) at Middlesex University produced a series of short video clips to help students understand how to improve their coursework submission. The idea to produce a series of video footage was developed from student feedback and module evaluations. 80% of 2nd year undergraduate sports rehabilitation students struggle to understand how to improve their work to achieve better grades. Members of staff reported that despite copious notes and efforts to explain to students in writing, areas for improvement and development, only a small minority of these students were able to use written feedback to make remedial changes to their original submissions. The majority of students failed to understand the feedback and thought that writing more would result in a better grade.

Sports rehabilitation as a professional area or work and study relies on visual instruction coupled with hands-on clinical practice to assist students with the learning of often complex skills and client management techniques. The LSI academic staff considered engaging students by relating feedback to the student learning experiences and the rapidly developing impact of social networking on learning and education.

By developing a video-feedback series, it was envisaged by the academic staff, that students would relate to **seeing** how to improve as opposed to being **told** how to improve coursework submissions. This assumption was later confirmed in the comments from the group following the use of video-feedback.

Middlesex University has a professional video and film crew who work with academic staff to develop projects and ideas for future educational developments. Through the LSI business enterprise manager, funds were secured for the production of the series. It was important to carefully script and develop the videos as learning aids and not simply entertainment value. Using student module evaluation it was evident that students required greater understanding and induction into how assessment is used to enhance learning and that it is not simply a by-product of learning. Students required a better explanation of grading grids and assessment criteria, reference and citation within the text, support structures such as: mentors, academic learning assistance and learning resource guidelines, to reform their work and improve their summative grades. The series was built around these student concerns and provided personalised feedback to students. The video clips were edited with key texts and information superimposed over the video content. Final video clips were numbered, and the series known as the IMPROVE, was published on the University's intranet, for both staff and student usage.

Method

Forty 2nd year undergraduate sports rehabilitation students were used in the initial pilot of the video-feedback project. These students, as part of their pathology module, are required to submit a draft 2,500 word essay on a musculoskeletal pathology one month prior to final summative submission.

The pathology module was chosen simply because it is a core clinical module and contains a coursework assessment. It was during this formative draft stage that video-feedback was used to direct areas for improvement. Staff provided comments on the draft submissions together with video clip numbering. For example, if a student had failed to understand the grading criteria, the feedback would reflect a video number which would relate to an explanation and interpretation of using the criteria in the planning of the coursework. There were a total of 10 x 2 minute videos used for the formative feedback. The video format was designed to be used on phone and e-technology applications, regularly accessed by students. Before students received the video feedback, they all received a full induction into how the feedback is to be used to direct changes and improve submissions. Students were further required to complete a questionnaire on how they used the feedback to improve their coursework, as well as providing comments around the value and usefulness of the new video-feedback initiative. These questionnaires were submitted together with the final summative coursework for the module.

Results

80% of students reported active use of the video-feedback to improve their summative submissions; 75% achieved higher grades on final grading. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students to discuss how they used the feedback to improve, coupled with an analysis of the comments recorded on the reflective questionnaires. Students felt that the videos were short and informative and provided a personalised account of how to improve the work. One student reported "it was like having your tutor in your home while revising the work - this helped me to focus on what was required". A second student commented on the e-technology and the accessibility and transferability of the feedback to a host of social networking sites and phone applications. The majority of students found the video-feedback and professional presentation of the series to be an invaluable learning tool which enhanced their understanding of assessment and directed them towards success on the coursework.

Recommendations

Despite the initial success with the video-feedback project, the project was not devoid of issues and difficulties. It took staff 2-3 weeks to plan and prepare video footage. It was important to ensure that the videos were clear and provided sufficient information to allow students to consider where to find information to improve their work. The production of the short series was costly, despite the use of an in-house video crew. Not all students accessed or used the video-feedback to help them improve and there were still comments about the nature of some videos being confusing and directive as opposed to remedial and guiding.

What we have learned from this experience is that video-feedback is useful but needs to be planned, monitored, and managed effectively. Students need to be inducted into the feedback process and be clear about how to improve. Adding a video, text and audio component into the feedback process provides a more personalised approach to both giving and receiving feedback. Whilst

we opted for a professional presentation, the same feedback could have been achieved using less expensive equipment. The goal was not about expensive equipment but quality feedback mechanisms. The same outcome could be achieved by using video input in PowerPoint and developing a series of current slides which students and staff could access.

By taking the time to know our learners and appreciating their unique learning styles while accommodating their experiences in the video-feedback messages, we have helped to make them more receptive to feedback comments.

Future developments

From the success of the initial pilot, we have now developed the video-feedback to include all students on sports programmes. The project is active and on-going with new video-feedback features being added during the academic year. Students are now inducted into the feedback process early in the academic year with regular updates and refreshers at critical times during the academic cycle such as before coursework submission or summative assessments. The video-feedback project has allowed staff greater freedom in expressing feedback as a learning process and not simply as a product of learning, and has afforded students with an opportunity to use feedback to develop their academic abilities, learner autonomy, and graduate skills for employment. We are currently engaged with pedagogic research into different feedback mechanisms, and will use the findings from this project to consider future research initiatives.

Further Information

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