

Audiovisual Student Feedback (ASF) in Higher Education: Teaching and Power

Antonio Martínez-Arboleda

University of Leeds – Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (LITE)

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT, Leeds (UK)

sllama@leeds.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article presents some key research outcomes of a project carried out during 2018 on student feedback through screen-capture tools, also known as Audiovisual Student Feedback (ASF). It also examines the educational potential of ASF from the perspective of the lecturer against the backdrop of the Marketisation of Higher Education, the crisis of Writing as a mode and recent conceptual debates in the field of assessment and feedback. It then proposes a new set of categories to enable the reader to have a comprehensive understanding of the affordances of ASF and discusses five case studies of lecturers who have trialled it. It concludes with some reflections on both problematic and promising aspects of ASF as well as advice to software developers, institutions and lecturers.

KEYWORDS

Audiovisual Feedback Screencast Assessment Grading Grades Learning Critical Digital Marketisation Universities Higher Education Teaching

1 INTRODUCTION

This article builds on the work initiated in 2018 as part of my University of Leeds LITE Teaching Enhancement Project on audiovisual student feedback and connects, in particular, with the paper given in The Seventh International Conference on E-Learning and E-Technologies in Education (ICEEE2018) in Poland, in September of that year, entitled “Student Feedback through Desktop Capture: Creative Screen-casting” [1]. It aims to give overarching consideration to some of the questions raised in the Poland paper. Naturally, there will be some references to that work in this article and summaries of relevant content when appropriate, but the reader should expect new reflections based upon primary research carried out after that paper and also from the vantage

point gained following the academic engagement generated during the time of my project.

For the purpose of this article we will define ASF (Audiovisual Student Feedback) as a video recording produced with a screen-casting software (Screenpresso, Screencast-O-Matic or Mediasite Desktop Capture), in which the lecturer talks through the work of the student, as shown on the screen of the lecturer’s device, highlighting or pointing to parts of the work. The lecturer can also show any kind of additional content, including relevant learning resources, corrections or mark-sheets. It typically includes only the voice of the lecturer and the contents of the screen. ASF is very different to audio only feedback, although it shares some of its traits and advantages. In this article, the possibility of recording also the lecturer’s image, in the form of a talking head, has been purposefully excluded, although technically it is possible and there might be instances in which it could be a desirable option.

One of the strongest conclusions in my ICEEE2018 paper, following my review of the literature of ASF, my initial primary data and experience at that point in time was that ASF is superior to written feedback in many ways: it enables better cognitive engagement with the student’s work, it determines the content of the feedback and it is generally better appreciated by the students, who find it personal and warm. Crucially, ASF is a blank canvass that requires and encourages educational creativity, empowerment and professional critical reflection. In that paper, I also advanced an ad-hoc set of categories of ASF in order to illustrate and discuss the multiple possibilities of use of this new method. In this article I will present a further enriched categorisation based on my research and propose a clear direction of travel for the use of screen-casting software.

We inhabit a time in history characterised by stark thresholds and fast transitions: structural changes in public and private providers of Higher Education, a reconceptualisation of education as just another service that is consumed and new multimodalities propped up by the digital revolution. All this has a direct effect on how we conceive and deliver student assessment and feedback and, inevitably, presents challenges and opportunities for lecturers and learning support staff.

2 THE MARKETISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Marketisation of Higher Education (HE) is a phenomenon of global dimensions with different national flavours in each country [2]. This process, comprehensively described for the UK by numerous authors, has driven universities to intensify their efforts to compete for reputation and recruitment in a “market” where students pay raising tuition fees.

One of the less explored consequences of the UK Marketisation is the reinforcement of the *persona* of the University as the entity or subject with whom the student enters into a contractual relationship for the provision of educational services. The institution has gained considerable weight in the multi-party network of political, professional and personal interdependencies between lecturers students, authorities or external agents such employers, for instance, that education entails. This intensification of the student-institution direct bond has led to the emergence of an increasingly less implicit principle in its relationship with the student: the “equality”, also called “consistency”, of educational provision regardless of the subject studied: all students at one given university deserve the same opportunities, the same “experience”, as their peers.

There exists, however, key aspects of student education that are still dominated by subject specific cultures and bodies, for example, assessment and feedback, over which the University as an institution cannot exert full top-down authority. Nevertheless, it still intervenes, for instance, by enshrining institution-wide

student rights, which also deal with assessment and feedback, in well publicised codes or charts and by providing assessment and feedback software at institutional levels.

For Nixon, Scullion and Hearn [3] an additional consequence of the marketization of Higher Education is the whole redefinition of students’ consciousness as experiencers of education. For these authors, the foregrounding of latent student emotions toward their studies and their lecturers caused by their new status as assertive consumers provokes an increase in their expectations in terms of individualization, personalised attention and academic grades, all of which is detrimental to the educational value of learning itself. Munro [4] explains how learning personalisation has been portrayed as an organising principle of Marketization and an inevitable consequence of the repositioning of the student as consumer. Interestingly, she also reveals the role played by digital technologies in the advancement of the Marketisation of UK HE.

Despite more than justified criticism about the perverse effects of Marketisation, universities continue to be places of excellence and rigor which are vital for the development of society, but now more than ever they are *centrally managed* endeavours. However, in this challenging scenario, it is pertinent to ask ourselves these three questions:

- Can ASF reinforce the personalised and formative, non-transactional, aspects of assessment and feedback?
- Is ASF an opportunity for grass-roots innovation that lecturers should embrace to improve student education whilst asserting their irreplaceable role in it?
- What type of intervention and support should be expected from institutions?

3 MULTIMODALITY AND POWER

Our professional practice in assessment and feedback encapsulates tensions and dialogues between the old and the new in this crossroads of history, on top of the ones generated by Marketisation. Our modes expression (written, oral, graphic, etc.) are also in transit through an interesting junction. To sum it up, writing is

giving way to other modes. Its dominance is eroding. The advancement of technologies for mass visual and audio creation, reproduction and dissemination has provided a boost to music, voice, photography and all sorts of film products. It has also ushered in new forms of communication, often blending writing with other media. Mankind changed radically the way knowledge is constructed, and the very essence of knowledge itself, through reading and writing. Audiovisual and digital production and consumption will also contribute to the shaping of our consciousness and capabilities [5].

The crisis of writing as a mode, or at least its growing pains as it tries to accommodate itself in the emerging new multimodal mix of the 21st Century, reaches extreme levels when we look at the use of traditional written feedback in Higher Education. In the age of artificial intelligence we still find many lecturers writing little notes in the margins of student essays and correcting words with a pen in between lines. The nature and depth of their engagement with the student work is clearly determined by the medium. The fact that highly educated professionals still provide written feedback in this way shows the importance of communication conventions as part of our professional identity in our relations with others.

At these times of change, I believe there is an underlying tension between the constraints of the written medium and the educational drive of the lecturers. The contrast between smartly presented, often collaborative, online content and handwritten glosses struggling for paper space is too stark. Audiovisual production, all of a sudden, presents itself as a new terrain where lecturers can unleash their professional creativity and self-expression.

One of the best-known tenets of the Critical Discourse Analysis school of thought is that language is both a space where struggles for power reside and a political tool in itself. Through communication we also construct our position in relationships. The multimodal (writing, oral, image) designer, has a strong capacity of agency, according to Kress, one of the founding parents of studies on multimodality [6]. In this vein, ASF provides an opportunity for

the lecturer to assert her professional persona and educational values. Producing audiovisual feedback may open the door to alleviating some of the professional, political and technological tensions described so far.

4 THE CRISIS OF TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS

Since this article will focus on one method of feedback provision, ASF, and feedback is inevitably associated with assessment, I feel it pertinent to establish some preliminary clarifications and proposals for reconceptualisation of key terms. This is particularly necessary for a better understanding of the transformative potential of ASF. The current conceptual framework built around the terms “Assessment”, “Student Feedback”, “Summative” and “Formative” by the Assessment for Learning school of thought will not be able to provide scaffolding for any in-depth analysis of ASF practice.

4.1 Assessment and feedback

The Oxford Dictionary (online) gives only one definition of “assessment”: “the action of assessing someone or something”. In my view, we should use the term “assessment” only in this way, i.e. to refer to the process, formal or informal, whereby the lecturer revises and evaluates one or more student activities or tasks. In turn, “feedback” should be regarded as the ready-for-student-consumption outcome of that evaluation, comprising any statements, linguistic or otherwise, for instance, iconic or numerical, produced by a lecturer whereby correction, advice or evaluation on one or more student learning activities is provided.

4.2 Formative and Summative

The terms “formative” and “summative” deserve some discussion. On the one hand, when we look for the word “summative” in online search engines, we discover that it is primarily used as an adjective of “assessment”, yet its generic meaning derives from “adding”, from the word “summa”, “addition” in Latin. Current usage of “summative” can have two main senses: a) one that refers to a stylistic property of a statement or

text, meaning summarising, summing up and/or concluding; and b) another sense more specifically associated to the type of feedback that qualifies ‘the status of the student, or [...] their future potential’ [7].

“Formative” and “summative” are problematic adjectives for two reasons. Firstly, both formative and summative are inextricably intertwined. For Taras [8], who defends the centrality of summative assessment (as in feedback) no coherent formative advice can be given without a pre-existing summative understanding of the work of the student. The appraisal of the gap between the actual performance of the student and standard pursued is a precondition and the justification of formative feedback. Moreover, she points out that summative assessment in itself has formative value, which is something difficult to disagree with. Secondly, and crucially for our discussion about ASF, the debate about these two types of assessment (for us, feedback), whether formative or summative, is rooted in the assumption that any feedback is a finished judgement, a piece of information, probably written, where the formative aspect of the feedback to the student is based on an overall summative appraisal of the work of the student. Accordingly, reaching a summative judgement would come prior to the production of the formative advice. Clearly, this traditional summative-formative sequence does not bed well with Live ASF, the feedback provided relatively spontaneously as the lecturer records the comments as she encounters and reads the work of the student. In this case, formative feedback flows effectively without the lecturer having reached an overall view of the quality of the work. This *feedback flow* is a key concept in my discussion. The diachronic intertwining of assessment and feedback revolutionises the very operation of assessing, and the production and consumption of feedback, which is now likely to combine different degrees of “summativeness” throughout the video.

For the sake of clarity and precision, therefore, I would suggest that “summative”, or even better, “summarising” and formative be considered traits to be predicated, exclusively, of feedback statements, not of assessment as a process or

assessment as a task. No matter how we design it, any task could in principle attract all sorts of feedback. The fact that the lecturer may choose not to provide corrections, extended comments or advice is not inherent to the task, but external to it.

4.3 Feedback and grading

Grading, as the application of a numerical rating to specific aspects of the quality of the work of the students is part of the process of assessment. Grades, when communicated to the student, become one of the components of the feedback. Although assessment and grading are carried out, typically, within the same set of actions and students tend to receive the grade and the comments at the same time, in my experience, the bundling of the grade with the rest of the student feedback is problematic.

In my opinion lecturers should aim at decoupling grades and feedback. Jackson and Marks [9] recommend withholding the grade in order to encourage engagement learning. I believe the focus on the numerical mark can distract the student from the learning resulting from the digestion of the feedback. ASF, as explained in my previous paper [1], makes the temporary withholding of the grade, whilst the student digests and act upon the feedback, more attractive as an option for the lecturer. With it being a new method that delivers richer feedback, receiving a video without the grades, which can be posted one week later, for instance, is an acceptable trade-off for the students.

4.4 Feedback Loop

Closing the feedback loop is a major concern amongst practitioners. Jackson and Marks [9] have demonstrated, in line with other authors, that setting an obligatory student learning reflection on the feedback, which also counts towards the grade, has a positive effect on student performance.

Another option for teachers willing to improve the closing of the feedback loop is to ensure that there is an effective and strong connection between a sequence of assessed tasks over the course of the year. That way, there is a clear

incentive to use the feedback provided in earlier tasks such as drafts or introductions to an essay or project.

What is relevant for us in this respect is that a) at least the consumption of the feedback is far more likely to occur when it comes in audiovisual form, regardless of other arrangements around the sequencing and nature of the assessed tasks, and b) that low student engagement with feedback can be due to the lack of incentives built-in within the course structure for increasingly pragmatic students.

5 THE NEED FOR CHANGES

In May 2018 a Focus group was organised with the participants of an event on assessment. Three groups of 5-6 lecturers in a research-intensive UK university were arranged onto separate tables. They were purposefully self-regulated, so there was no member of the research team in charge of conducting the discussions.

The questions presented to the participants were intended to bring up experiences and thoughts about the difficulties that lecturers encounter in assessment and feedback. I wanted to see in what ways the lecturers' concerns related to my analysis on the Marketisation of Higher Education, the crisis of writing and on the conceptual and practical inconsistencies that afflict the area of Assessment and Feedback, as described in the previous sections.

The participants were asked to dedicate three minutes to think about one piece of assessment in their modules that receives written feedback and meets as many of the following requirements as possible:

- At times it is very difficult to explain to the student why something is wrong.
- Too much time is spent by the lecturer choosing her words carefully when writing the feedback.
- Fear/belief that many students are not going to read the feedback on different aspects of their work and engage actively upon it.
- Ability to work out roughly the grade by having a quick read to one or more paragraphs.

- Difficulty to recognise quality traits of the student work that are not explicitly included in the assessment criteria.

The participants were then invited to share their experiences and discuss in groups. By eliciting relatively spontaneous reflections and stories I was able also to link some of the lecturers concerns to the opportunities that, ASF presents:

- ASF allows lecturers to phrase better the messages to students and explain feedback more clearly and confidently.
- The chances of students accessing ASF are greater if there is a video.
- The new medium facilitates, indirectly, a more rigorous and less intuitive assessment process as it enables decoupling of grading from feedback.
- ASF allows for more lecturer reflection on the quality of the task and the assessment of it, as orality would foreground aspects of the process that typically remain hidden behind the routine of the written practice, such as emerging criteria.

Without aiming at generalising my interpretation to every corner of the Higher Education Sector in the UK, I would like to identify some factors informing the ongoing dialogue between lecturers, institutions and students that emerges from these discussion groups from the perspective of the lecturer, whose agency seems to be in decline.

The integration of learning objectives and feedback in the learning process is the first nodal point of the debate: lecturers expect students to follow up the feedback provided and act upon it, but find the apparent lack of engagement from students rather frustrating. Creating 'intermediate tasks' such as drafts of sections of projects, is one of the ways to ensure there is an incentive for the student to read and act upon the feedback, but effectively, there appear to be no solutions that do not involve greater effort from the lecturer in terms of course design and tighter regulation on the student responses to feedback.

The outcome of this research confirms that assessment and feedback is an area of practice where the professional authority of the lecturer

strives to claim its space at a time when both the institutional framework in which they operate and the demands and expectations from students appear to gain strength.

The lecturer's professional voice appears to be caught between the overly institutionalised language of assessment, the "waffle" as one participant said, and the need to liberate their subjectivity through more heartfelt comments to the student. It seems that one consequence of the rationalisation of learning is that the criteria for assessment also act as a frame, or rather a straitjacket, for the feedback to be provided. The comments given to the student about her work are pushed through the sieve of the formal categories or rubrics established for its assessment. The lecturer's actual narrative, when sharing her thoughts with the student, reflects the tension between the need to justify the grade and the desire to help the student to improve. Although by explaining the reasons for the mark we may be increasing learners' self-awareness, the language of assessment itself may not be that accessible. Moreover, the linking of the concrete (what the student actually did or wrote) to the general (the assessment category) requires a syncretising mental and linguistic journey where valuable content can be lost. In any case, no matter how formative they might be, grade justifications do not provide a solution or way forward to the student.

6 TYPOLOGIES OF ASF

After having used ASF for more than four years on a regular basis; having seen more than 100 examples of usage by 5 research participants from a research-intensive university; and having examined also the excellent work carried out by Arias [10] and Kaur [11], both in the area of Languages, I have developed 14 categories of feedback that are exclusive, or at least particularly relevant, to ASF. My intention is to demonstrate the wealth of opportunities for engagement with student work that this method offers. These categories are not to be considered binary options, but gauges of a dashboard to be wisely adjusted by each practitioner according to their preferences and the needs of their students. In many cases, we could also refer to them as stylistic properties. In the five case studies of the

following section, we will see how each lecture has created her own ASF mix. This is a notably improved version of the categorisation presented in my previous paper [1].

6.1 Live vs. Staged

The lecturer may opt to go through the work of the student, as encountered for the first time, whilst recording her comments, with the use of pause and record when needed. This can create a very personal and fresh Feedback Narrative Flow. Alternatively, the lecturer can carry out groundwork before recording. The preparatory actions can vary, as we will see in some of the case studies.

6.2 Text-led vs. Lecturer-led

The Feedback Flow may follow the order set by the text of the student or the sequence of files as submitted. Alternatively, the lecturer may decide to establish her own order for her narrative.

6.3 Stand alone-vs. Accessory

The video can be used as the only means for the feedback or, at the other end of the spectrum, the video can be just as a non-essential extra to the feedback provided in a more traditional way.

6.4 Targeted vs. Overall

The Feedback can refer to specific traits or parts of the work of the student, or cover it overall.

6.5 Intermediate vs. Final

When the task is only one of a series that the student is working their way through, the instrumentality of the feedback can be very obvious. However, when a student receives feedback on a final task, at the end of a part of a programme, year or degree, there may be no references or evident connections to other forthcoming academic tasks.

6.6 Individual vs. Group

When the feedback is given to a group, not to an individual, the scope, detail, content and tone of the feedback will adapt to that circumstance.

6.7 Granular vs. Summarising

The lecturer may wish to engage in greater or lesser detail and depth with specific aspects of the work of the student.

6.8 Content-focused vs Skills-focused

ASF can focus on the knowledgeability of the student as shown on the work, on quality of the student sources and how well they understood them or, at the other end of the spectrum, can focus on the student academic skills, for instance when applying knowledge to the solution of a problem or developing an argument.

6.8 Corrected vs. Non-corrected

There are tasks in which lecturers opt to provide corrections, give the solution or the correct answer to the student, whereas in many cases, lecturers point to the problem and even describe it but do not correct the work.

6.9 Teaching-focused vs. Grading-focused

The statements made by the lecturer can be aimed exclusively at helping the student to engage with actual contents of the course, in the context of specific aspects of the student work, or, at the other end of the spectrum, the lecturer may opt for justifying the grade given to each aspect of the work of the student.

6.10 Reasoned vs. Not-reasoned

The lecturer may want to explain why something that the student wrote is wrong. Alternatively, she may just indicate the type of error, or simply say that something, in her professional view, does not work well without providing a reason.

6.11 Dialogic vs. Monological

Dialogical feedback implies setting questions orally, during the video, for the student to reflect about her work. For instance the lecturer can say: "I have highlighted this sentence in green because there is a grammatical issue: can you think, in the light of my previous comment, what it is wrong with it? Press pause now and think

about it". Then, the lecturer continues talking, giving her full comment on that sentence.

6.12 Multi-source vs. Mono-source

The lecturer can bring up on the screen all sorts of texts or other resources produced by others, for instance, an article written by another academic, in order to enrich or illustrate their feedback. Alternatively, she can pass just comments and ideas of her own.

6.13 Media-rich vs. Language only

Images and sound (other than the voice of the lecturer) can support the lecturer's narrative. However, bear in mind that in any type of ASF there is always a visual ingredient made up by the framing of the text of the student and the lecturer's deictic support, which I explain in the next set of categories.

6.14 Visually deictic vs. Audio deictic

Deixis, or more precisely indexicality, is a key concept in ASF. It means signalling. This can be done by highlighting parts of the text of the student, pinpointing at them or simply zooming in. Alternatively, the signalling can be done by talking, for instance by reading aloud or summarising the sentence or idea of the student that one wants to subsequently comment upon. Visual deixis can be very stimulating and economical and hence contribute to an agile Feedback Flow, providing an effective nesting of complex ideas.

7 THE EXPERIENCE WITH ASF

As part of my research, I recruited five lecturers in a UK research-intensive institution for them to try ASF with their students. I later examined samples of around 100 videos produced and interviewed them separately. The sample is made up of a wide range of tasks, mainly within the Humanities and Social Sciences Curricula.

The data collected through the project also includes the focus group of the previous section, responses to questionnaires from students who received ASF and even one focus group with one of the student cohorts.

The purpose of this research was not to draw any statistic inferences on the data, but rather to identify patterns of use, reasons provided and issues encountered, from the perspective of the lecturer, mainly, but also from that of the students. This hopefully has allowed me to analyse the usage of ASF and draw some critical conclusions.

At the beginning of the trials, the lecturers had been explained the way ASF had been used by the lead researcher in assessing and producing the feedback. However, they were given flexibility and freedom to experiment. Information was provided on two of the basic options for the feedback, as per the previous section: Live versus Staged and Self-standing versus Complementary. Guidance on how to use the tool and how to share the videos with the students etc. was also offered. All the participants will be referred as female in this article. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of my Faculty at the University of Leeds.

7.1 Research Participant 1

Research Participant 1 (RP1) used ASF in her undergraduate BA Final Year subject on script-writing. The task required students to produce a story according to a brief. The grade obtained in the task counted toward the final mark of the student in that subject. It was a Final Feedback task.

The lecturer opted for a Live Feedback video with no preparation other than bringing up on the screen the file with the Word document submitted. She would, however, play pause and record at times, in a very strategic but apparently casual way, as not everything that she was encountering in the text was worth commenting. The whole of the work was covered (Overall Feedback).

The Feedback Flow was evidently Text-led, i.e. determined by the student work. It was highly linear, as never the lecturer would go backwards and forwards commenting different parts within the rather extensive text.

There were constant references to terms used in the assessment criteria when commenting, combined with very rich and often entertaining critiques of passages within the story written by the student. These comments were formulated in very friendly language, sometimes of a familiar register. This is not out of tone with the oral language used in the professional world of the arts, but it would not pass the test of formality that one would associate with academic written language. There was a genuine and warm engagement with the story and the characters of each student in an accessible yet educationally constructive manner. Only at the end of the video, the language would turn more formal, as the grading decision was explained.

In the interview, the participant confirmed that she felt much more comfortable expressing herself orally, particularly when she had to communicate Not-reasoned Feedback, which would typically be coached around formulations such as “I am not getting here a sense of”.

For her, ASF allowed her to provide a much richer and abundant feedback than if she had written down her thoughts in the form of a gloss. In spite of that, she declared that assessing this task with ASF did not take her longer than using written feedback.

7.2 Research Participant 2

RP 2 teaches in a Masters programme. The task was a long essay in which students had to reflect critically on complex issues regarding learning and teaching. The mark obtained counted 70% toward the grades of this subject. RP 2 thought this was meant to be an important piece of feedback within the whole degree of these students because it served as a bridge toward the final dissertation, which was due two months after this essay. To an extent, this could be classed as Intermediate Feedback.

RP 2 chose to record the video once the essay had been marked and after writing some comments on the text of the essay using the annotations tools in adobe. She explained that she wanted to do her thinking first before starting the recording. She believed that students would not benefit from her sharing with them the

process of digesting the contents of the essays. Therefore, she took notes separately as she went along assessing the work in order to remember key points to be mentioned in the video. The written feedback was of such extension, even though the lecturer said that in written-only feedback she would have elaborated even more, that the video, only of around 5-7 mins, came as a complement of the written feedback. This is a clear example of Staged and Accessory ASF

If we look at the Feedback Narrative Flow, we can see that it is Text-based, as the recording follows the order of the student text. RP 2 goes through her previous written annotations and expands on them orally, presenting a richer and more contextualised version of the written granular feedback. There are also constant oral self-glosses and creative paraphrasing of the written comment combined with useful clarifications. This is therefore a good example of relatively Granular and Targeted ASF, as RP 2 developed her narrative only over specific aspects of the work of the student but in some depth. There are no explicit references to assessment criteria, but rather to the ideas of the student, which means that the ASF was not so Grading-focused as Teaching focused.

Despite this granularity, there were no corrections given because RP 2 did want students to work them out for themselves. Additionally, the majority of her explanations focused on the argumentation of the student, rather than on subject-specific knowledge. Therefore this is an example of Non-Corrected, Skills-focused ASF.

There were positive comments, but the participant explained that international students were less concerned about receiving positive comments and wanted the lecturer to concentrate on what requires improvement. It is noticeable that the mark and the summarising comments for each of the categories were provided only in writing.

The participant recognised the value of oral communication, particularly presential, in helping students to reach episodes of deep learning and critical realisation, both about subject specific concepts and aspects of their

own learning. She said she would try to get every student in her module at least one orally commented piece of work and suggested that she would like to use this method earlier in the year with a task that counts towards 30% of the grade for this subject, because in their subject this is something that needs to be provided as early as possible, because understanding key concepts and achieving competence in dealing with complex texts is the foundation for the rest. She would also consider splitting the mark from the feedback in order to give more value to coaching and scaffolding.

RP 2 also showed concerns about how inclusive feedback is generally and wondered whether ASF was actually better in that respect, particularly for foreign students, who made up the majority of their cohort.

The style of assessment used by the lecturer also deserves consideration. In our discussion we concluded that, despite the fact that she would review and adjust her own marking constantly throughout the process, she is a very holistic marker that can skim read and look for quality traits quickly, placing the work within a certain range of marks within the first minutes of reading, yet she would also engage with the nitty-gritty of the student work in a very analytical way.

The comments of RP 2 to the students were quite formal and elaborated compared to those of RP 1 and somehow resembled in structure and vocabulary to comments one would expect in writing, or in an academic seminar, more than the comments from any of the rest of participants. In the interview she confirmed that that was the way she felt she ought to communicate with the students. This difference may be due to the fact that these are MA students, and even perhaps to the nature of the discipline itself. The participant attributed it to her professional background in teaching academic writing and her many years of experience.

Interestingly, this was the only participant who was not worried at all about the question of her privacy. She would not be upset if the video was to be shared by the student with someone else,

even though in the interview she was pushed to consider the scenario of an angry student who disagreed with the mark sharing in social media the link of a video that contains something as personal as the lecturer's voice and ideas.

7.3 Research participant 3

RP 3 had to deliver Intermediate ASF within 5 days. The task was the draft of the introduction of a business plan that student would have to write up in full following the initial feedback two weeks later. The grade was not part of the mark for the subject, but the feedback was key for the students' chances to obtain a good mark later on. (Intermediate ASF). The students had done their work in teams and the ASF was directed to each team as a whole. (Team ASF)

Given her time constrains, the lecturer had to consider very carefully how to organise her work in order to maximise the time she had and produce the best feedback possible. She reflected upon her experience with the assessment of that student work in previous years, when she had to distribute her feedback between the boxes of each rubric and the overall comments, and concluded that she needed a light-touch preparation ahead of the videos (Staged ASF).

She would first read a batch of three pieces of student work, highlighting extracts and making quick handwritten notes for her to remember what to talk about during the videos, which would be recorded immediately after. This way, the lecturer combined the best of both worlds: a degree of preparation of the content of her feedback, with the freshness of the unscripted comment on a piece of work recently seen. The length was 800 words, which was ideal because the lapse between the first impression of the reading and the recording would be of only 30-40 minutes approximately. Alternating the preparation and the recording introduces more variety and perhaps makes it less hard than total Live Feedback Recording, which is what Participants D and E did. It created a sense of sequencing that allowed her to distribute her time and takes brakes. When asked why not going paragraph by paragraph reading, then pressing record, and then pause and read, and then record more, RP 3 said that that type of

almost live recording can be a bit intimidating. One of the reasons for this is that in her discipline she feels that she has to tread very carefully when giving feedback. The students are very competitive and she cannot give too much help with the feedback, because they are supposed to work out how to make the most out that feedback and find the solution to the problems highlighted by the lecturer by themselves (Non-corrected ASF). The spontaneity of the video recording can be tempting and end up leading the lecturer to give too much away.

The participant also indicated that assessing whilst talking has the inconvenience of not being able to recap and review what you have said to the student so far when you are about to reach the end of the recording.

The videos were between 5 and 7 minutes long and the lecturer combined deixis with rephrasing of the student statements seamlessly, followed by her commentary, which always sounded very authoritative and expedite.

RP 3 believes that the content of the oral feedback was lengthier than in written form. In terms of overall time, RP 3 believes it took her slightly longer than last year and ASF was more intense work. However, on the positive side, she had only one enquiry from students asking for clarification of the feedback, whereas in previous years she had many. That means that she saved time on that front.

RP 3 was satisfied with the experience. She felt very comfortable speaking. She likes talking with students and this felt like a one-to-one. The recording helped her to become much more aware of the process of consumption of the feedback and the importance of the order of the information for the student and she is planning to use video for general feedback as well.

One negative point raised was the impossibility of doing this type of work had she been in her office at University, which is shared some times with 5 other colleagues. During the interview RP she also mentioned the difficulties encountered operating the software from her computer at home.

Regarding privacy, she would feel uncomfortable with videos of individual feedback being shared beyond their intended audience because of the sensitive nature of anything to do with individual students' academic performance.

7.4 Research participant 4

ASF was provided in a subject in which students submit a portfolio of designs. It was an assessed task with grading, but not end-of-the-year. Being a year 1 module, the marks do not count toward the final degree classification, yet a pass is required.

RP 4 decided to record Live as she encountered the work of the students, so this is, like in the case of RP 1, another prime example of Live Feedback. There was some general minimal preparation, though, ahead of the recording. RP 4 had to open the assessment sheet and the files submitted by the student before the recording. This enabled her to be visually very effective, as the files opened on the screen would match perfectly the frame of the recording.

The Feedback Flow was rather distinctive due to the nature of the task and the assessment criteria. Firstly, this was not a written task, although a small amount of text was produced in the Style guide. That meant that the task did not have a linear order for the lecturer to consume and digest, hence facilitating a more Lecturer-led Feedback Flow. Secondly, each assessment criteria often matched one specific task within the student portfolio. This enabled RP 4 to structure the video in the form of episodes that would start in with Granular statements and finish with Summarising. RP 4 would open the files submitted by the students with the software they had used to produce the different components. When she was examining the work of the student, her feedback statements were complemented by visual deixis (pointing at parts of the screen with the mouse's pointer) to gloss specific details in the design work. As soon as a certain aspect of the work had been sufficiently explored, she would shift to the assessment sheet and explain the reason of the grade for that aspect of the work, highlighting the appropriate

box of the mark-sheet on the screen. There were references to the learning objectives of the task when paraphrasing the criteria and passing the judgement, with an effective use of the text highlighting facility.

RP 4 explained in our interview that the preparation and execution of the recording, did not take longer to produce than what would take to review the work and give feedback in writing, yet the amount of advice and explanations provided to the students was greater.

7.5 Research participant 5

This was an undergraduate module on English for Academic Purposes. Students sat an in-class exam that was hand-written and was later scanned by the lecturer, who provided feedback on a PDF document that she would highlight as she discussed it.

RP5, who had tried ASF before, decided to read first the essay of the students on paper and take notes on her notepad of key aspects of the work, typically 3 aspects per student, that she wanted to comment on during the recording. She then decided that she was going to record herself going through the essay twice, firstly with those staged comments, which were focusing on academic skills, and then with comments on the quality of linguistic expression, which is an important objective for these students of English as a Foreign Language. However, as she started the first recording she changed her mind and decided to combine both types of comments within the Feedback Flow, as this seemed more natural. RP5 recorded each video immediately after her first reading of each essay, as she wanted not to forget what to say and avoid hesitations.

For RP 5 it was difficult at times to stop talking. As a natural and committed teacher it is hard to feel one is depriving the student of advice. At the same time, however, she was conscious of the need to be concise, and fair to all students, so she decided that 10 minutes as a maximum was ideal for this tasks and those students.

The criteria to select what aspects to comment on are worth mentioning. RP 5 emphasised the

need to give students a better stance when they have to write another essay again. She chose to concentrate on those aspects that would give students the possibility to improve easily and did not engage with minutia or with learning objectives that perhaps were out of reach for them, with a focus on personalising the feedback according to the level of performance.

RP 5 made frequent Not-reasoned statements when commenting on the accuracy and clarity of the language used by her students. She recognised that this could generate tension or frustration amongst the students. This latter type of feedback is far more common than we think. For the student, both accepting that feedback and questioning it are part of the learning. RP 5 explained that she was aware of the perceived subjectivity of lecturers' feedback comments, but she believed that it is easier to nuance and project knowledge-based authority using one's voice. Besides, for her, intonation and oral emphasis help students to capture deeper meaning.

7.6 The students

Unfortunately their response to my invitation to participate was uneven, with very low responses in RP 1 and RP 2. However, all the main findings of previous research by other authors, whose work was reviewed in my previous paper [1] was clearly corroborated. For the students ASF is, overall, a superior form of Feedback.

There are, nevertheless, some differences in their responses that, in my opinion, stem directly from the subject culture and background of each cohort. In the case of RP 3, students, who had a background in business, were much aware of the fact that the path and pace of consumption of the feedback is somehow enforced by the lecturer's video. Effectively, ASF prevents students from skim-reading. As RP 3 was providing Intermediate ASF, the position of power of the lecturer-narrator in relation to the student-listener was even more evident. Melh and Fosse also report of a student who strongly disliked ASF because it increases the amount of work the student has to do. However, the feedback from RP 3 students was very positive, except for some complaints about the quality of the sound. RP 4

and RP 5 received overwhelming praise. The student data for RP 1 and 2 is insufficient.

8 NEW HORIZONS

The work of Mehl and Fosse [12] between 2015 and 2017 on screen-cast feedback deserves special attention for three reasons: First, their research is used by the providers of one specific tool, Screencast-O-Matic, who feature their research in their webpages. Secondly, an effective improvement in grades following the use of this method has been reported, which is something to celebrate. And thirdly, and crucially, these educators frame their Digital Commentary Grading Project within the field of mentorship, not assessment and feedback. This re-conceptualisation of assessment and feedback as a form of mentoring, connects very well with some of the proposals put forward in this article, such as the separation of feedback and assessment, and confirms one of the tentative conclusions reached in the Poland Conference of 2018 [1]: Screencast feedback is not about transporting the rituals and conventions of feedback and assessment from the written realm into the audiovisual realm. Instead, the medium transforms the nature of what we do, firstly as a way of constructing meaning and, secondly, in educational terms. Mehl and Fosse have effectively ushered screen-casting of student written work into that new world of the interpersonal close relationship.

9 CONCERNS

9.1 Privacy

Some of the participants expressed the need to maintain the contents of the video feedback as private as possible. There is one important reason why one would prefer not to have their voice and thoughts shared, accidentally or intentionally, with an undetermined audience: the videos have been recorded for a specific student in a very particular situation and make sense in that specific context. In that respect, the paid-for Mediasite platform used in our trials ticks the box. Their sharing and privacy tools enable one-to-one only sharing. This does not prevent students from "re-capturing" the content of the video if they wish to do so and have

adequate tools. However, the use of privacy settings can act as a strong deterrent against frivolous or vindictive “happy trigger sharing” provoked by student dissatisfaction with the lecturer, for instance. With adequate disciplinary rules in place, in addition to the privacy settings, premeditated student sharing can be reduced to a very minimum.

Screencast-O-Matic enables the seamless use of passwords to protect the videos, but currently do not offer the option to share videos with only specific registered users in their free version. Nevertheless, this software, alongside others such as Screenpresso allows downloading. This way, users can share with students through OneDrive, whose privacy settings do allow the type of one-to-one only sharing that many lecturers would expect. This is also the case with the new Microsoft product Stream. I believe that facilitating seamless private sharing is the next step for the video industry as a whole.

There seems to be a connection between the type of audiovisual feedback provided and privacy concerns. It is worth noting that the only participant who explicitly stated that the ‘shareability’ of the video was not a concern at all, was RP 2, who delivered Staged ASF using an oral language that, in its structural patterns, tone and register, was much closer to written formal language than the rest of videos from the other 4 participants. I believe this difference in attitude, this positive self-confidence, may be due to the fact that this lecturer is not departing as much as the rest from the traditional genre of written feedback provision. She affirmed that her coaching, inclusive and facilitatory persona would be the same in speaking as in writing and that she felt confident about her spoken comments being highly professional. Her Staged and Accessory ASF is certainly the closest one can get to an oral version of the written feedback. To me, this is another indication of the importance of language in the formation, external projection and social recognition of our public academic identity.

9.2 Performativity

Another important question was raised by one research participant: the performative nature of

ASF. RP 4 produced videos for around 45 students. The average length was 35 minutes and the visual and pedagogical quality was extraordinary. However, this highly diligent participant confessed feeling the pressure of having to perform in front of the microphone. This is probably due to the high volume of work and her high standards of delivery, but, nevertheless, it is a very fair point. Maintaining one’s composure during the recording, ensuring that the tone and the wording are always right, requires sustained effort on various fronts. It is not an activity that allows for less than 100% concentration. Video recording, even if it is just the screen and your voice, no talking-heads, is a more immersing and enveloping activity than writing notes. It also requires a suitable and quiet space, as highlighted by RP 4.

These concerns, like some others expressed in this article about the effect of Marketisation on academics, connect clearly with the comprehensive work of Richard Hall, who has researched and written about the exploitation of academics [13]. In the era of video and easy sharing, the demands of video content add a new item to the list of employment duties of academics. This alters their professional identities and personae, as, for good or bad, they are becoming digital communicators and performers. However, in my opinion, and following my research, I believe the benefits of ASF in terms of professional autonomy and satisfaction outweigh the sacrifices that it may involve.

The objections to ASF on the basis of its performative nature relate also to arguments made against the introduction of lecture capture, almost by default, in various institutions [14]. For the critics of lecture capture, a lecture is an event meant to be ‘presential’, whose educational value derives from the integrity of the sensorial and social rich experience of attending, physically, the lecture. However, as opposed to what happens with lecture-capture, ASF does not imply ‘devaluation’ of an originally ‘presential’ activity. Sadly, one-to-one presential face-to-face feedback of undergraduate written work, particularly, in the first years of a degree, does not really happen that often in Higher Education. On the contrary,

the introduction of ASF represents a notable educational enrichment when compared to the traditional lecturer-student communication that the provision of traditional feedback involves.

9.3 Platform Integration

With the centralisation of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) at institutional level, the question of platform integration becomes essential. In an ideal world, ASF should be part of a one stop-shop: the lecturer goes to their VLE, brings the work of the students on the screen (and anything else she wants to show), records the video without having to leave the VLE and delivers the grade and any other files if needed, also within that platform, without having to search for the student name or ID number in order to store and deliver the video.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy solution for existing products, as far as I know, without investment in additional customisation and ad-hoc integration work. This means that there is an opportunity here for software providers. In our 5 experiments, only one of the tasks had to be assessed anonymously. This created administrative complications as the identity of the student for whom the video was intended was not a name but a very long number. This can be particularly problematic in large cohorts.

Finally, adequate data storage limits within those platforms and video retention and deletion policies should be adopted to meet the needs of lecturers.

10 CONCLUSIONS

Our Higher Education curricula is characterised by the diversity of the assessed tasks. Pough's identified more than 50 types across the sector in the UK [15]. Given also the variety of specific subject-based assessment and feedback cultures, the preferences of individuals lecturers and the multiple options offered by ASF, it is necessary to ensure that no attempt to standardise the pedagogical aspects of ASF practice is made at central or even local level within institutions, as this may prevent educational creativity and undermine teaching effectiveness.

ASF should, instead, be discussed openly with students in each cohort of the programme and introduced progressively, depending on demand and appetite for it from both students and lecturers. These two recommendations are in line with the findings of Deely [16] who considered in her research, amongst others, the use of Camtasia for ASF. As Ryan, Henderson and Phillips [17] confirm, ASF is clearly a superior method that can live together with other modes of feedback.

Equality or consistency of provision institution-wide should be interpreted with flexibility. In my research, a concern in this respect was raised by a participant in the student focus group who said that the length of the videos should be similar for all students in her cohort. This may be impractical when a student has greater need of support than others. The way forward is to ensure that any differences in treatment are fair, can be justified and that students know beforehand what to expect. In my experience, when a very talented student receives a shorter video than others, mainly full of praise, no issues about the length of the video are raised at all.

Strong efforts should be made to disseminate case studies that emphasise the richness, in terms of options, of this practice, for instance by featuring different types of assessed tasks within each case study, like we have done in this article.

ASF will have a disruptive effect on the theory of assessment and feedback. The practicalities and affordances of this new method will require new concepts and principles that capture and guide educational practice.

In my view, ASF should remain as Teaching-focused as possible. This will keep ASF outside the realm of grading, where rules can impose a type of feedback aimed at justifying the mark for each rubric, in detriment of other types of comments from the lecturer. When some form of Grading-focus feedback is necessary, then a traditional marksheet with extended rubrics and descriptors being commented upon by the lecturer, supported by visual deixis, will certainly do the job. Using colour coding when highlighting parts of the student work, associating each colour with each basement

criteria, is another option. In my experience, nevertheless, the student demand for grade justification diminishes when they receive rich and Teaching-focused ASF. This was the case also with RP 3.

From a linguistic point of view, it has been very stimulating to see how remediation, the adaptation of the modes and tools of an older genre, traditional written feedback, to produce a new genre, ASF, works in different cases. The important lesson to draw from this aspect of the research is that the empowerment of the lecturer as a designer of ASF is a factor that should be emphasised and can generate excitement. All our Research Participants displayed a great deal of autonomy and inventiveness in their use of ASF and their students responded very often enthusiastically. Navigating between Granular, Summarising, Corrective, Teaching-focused and Grading-focused statements seamlessly in ASF is an art. It requires connecting the concrete, the abstract, the specific and the general through narrative. Nevertheless, commenting on student work is not that different to what lecturers do as part of their job. The ability to communicate with students is in the professional DNA of lecturers. Universities have the means to support their training in the use of the tools.

The links between Marketisation and educational practices are evident, but digital technology can also be used to counteract the very ideological, political and economic system that has engendered it. Greater learning personalisation, in itself and politically decontextualised, is a plausible aspiration, providing that the integrity of the curriculum and the knowledge-based authority and autonomy of the lecturer are respected. The question is whether we opt to deliver personalisation exclusively through protocolled, or even automated, responses to student learning analytics or, instead, we do so through initiatives such as ASF, which reinstate the capacity of technological and educational agency of lecturers.

REFERENCES

1. Martínez-Arboleda, A.: "Student Feedback through Desktop Capture Feedback: creative Screen-casting" (*Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on E-Learning and E-Technologies in Education* (ICEEE2018), Lodz, Poland (2018)).
2. Roberston, S., Komljenovic, J.: "Unbundling the University and making Higher Education Markets" in Verger, A., Lubienski, C., Steiner-Khamsi, G. (eds.): *The global education industry*; Routledge, New York (2016).
3. Nixon, E., Scullion, R., Hearn, R.: "Her majesty the student: marketised higher education and the narcissistic (dis)satisfactions of the student-consumer". *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-21 (2016).
4. Munro, M.: "The complicity of digital technologies in the marketisation of UK higher education: exploring the implications of a critical discourse analysis of thirteen national digital teaching and learning strategies". *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 15:11 (2018).
5. Martínez-Arboleda, A. "Artemis: Poetry in the Age of Eversion". *The Language Scholar* (2) (2017).
6. Kress, G. "Gains and losses: New forms of texts, knowledge, and learning". *Computers and Composition*. Vol. 22. Issue 1. 5-22 (2005).
7. Black P., Wiliam, D: "Classroom assessment and pedagogy". *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 25:6, 551-575. (2018).
8. Taras, M.: "Summative assessment: The missing link for formative assessment" *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 33(1): 57-69. (2009)
9. Jackson, M.; Marks, L.: "Improving the effectiveness of feedback by use of assessed reflections and withholding of grades". *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41(4), pp. 532-547. (2016)
10. Arias, B.: Case study: Audio and Video Feedback. Digital Education Office. University of Bristol. (2015) <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/digital-education/ideas/all/ex027.html> (Accessed 28/02/2019)
11. Kaur, K.: "Enhancing International Students' Experience with Formative Feedback through Audio Feedback" in the forthcoming issue of *The Language Scholar* (<https://languagescholar.leeds.ac.uk>)
12. Mehl, M., Fose, L.: Digital Academic Revolution: Mentorship Competence. #5 The Analysis. Learning from our metadata. OLC Research Centre for Digital Learning & Leadership. Online Learning Consortium. (2017)
13. Hall, R.: The implications of Autonomist Marxism for research and practice in education and technology. *Learning, Media and Technology*. (2014).
14. Nordmann, E.: "Capturing the lecture?" *Wonkhe*. (2018) <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/capturing-the-lecture/> (last accessed 28/02/2019)
15. Pough, S (ed.): A Compendium of Assessment Techniques in Higher Education from Students' Perspective. Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (2018) <http://teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PUGHcompendiumcomplete.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2019)
16. Deeley, S: "Using technology to facilitate effective assessment for learning and feedback in higher education". *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43:3, 439-448 (2018)
17. Ryan, T., Henderson, M., Phillips, M., "Feedback modes matter: Comparing student perceptions of

digital and non-digital feedback modes in higher education". Br J Educ Technol. (2019).