

LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING – NOTIONS OF VIDEO-BASED ASSIGNMENTS IN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

As video-based communication becomes an increasingly prevalent mode of expression in professional and academic contexts, higher education faces the challenge, and opportunity, of integrating multimodal production into its pedagogical practices (Navarrete et al. 2025). This paper examines master's students' experiences in a university-level course where two group assignments were completed and submitted in the form of short videos. Each group consisted of three students, collaborating to design, script, record, and edit their work. The study explores how students initially received the video-based assignment format, how they navigated the process of creating the videos, and how they reflected on the experience afterward. Drawing on students' reflections, in-class discussions, and observations collected during the project period, the analysis reveals a trajectory of their perceptions. The findings are triangulated through a questionnaire in the next few weeks. At the outset, students are expected to express uncertainty, some regarding their technical skills, others the perceived ambiguity of creative tasks compared to traditional written assignments. Despite this initial hesitation, groups quickly developed working norms and distributed roles and tasks, maybe according to individual strengths, indicating that video production naturally encouraged collaboration, negotiation, and peer support (Campbell & Cox, 2018; DeLange, 2020). Whilst at least partly having a good time. During the production phase, students are also expected to report a heightened sense of engagement and ownership. The performative nature of video prompted deeper internalization of content, as groups sought to communicate ideas clearly and compellingly. The iterative process of scripting, recording, and editing further required students to agree upon the central concepts and make deliberate mutually agreed design choices, fostering critical reflection on the subject matter. Challenges, such as time management, diverging creative visions, and technical constraints, are likely to have emerged as meaningful learning moments as well as hindrances along the way. Post-assignment reflections are anticipated to show that students valued the authenticity and variety introduced by video-based assessment. There may be feelings of accomplishment and format enabled expressions of insight and creativity that written submissions often constrain. Students have indicated that the assignments felt more aligned with the communicative demands of contemporary working life, increasing the perceived relevance of the course. The findings suggest that short video assignments can enrich learning by promoting collaboration, creativity, and conceptual understanding. The paper concludes with recommendations for instructing video-based tasks that balance structure and openness, support equitable participation, and support students' technical and creative development.

Keywords: *Video-based assignments, university assignments, student supporting.*

1. Introduction

Video-based communication has rapidly become an important mode of expression in professional, organizational, and academic contexts. Meetings, project updates, onboarding, teaching, and even assessments increasingly rely on audiovisual formats rather than exclusively written text (Khomysyak, 2024). As higher education is expected to prepare students for contemporary working life, this shift raises both challenges and opportunities for pedagogical design (Borghi et al., 2016; James, 2002). In particular, educators are prompted to reconsider how assessment practices might integrate multimodal and performative forms of knowledge expression rather than just using traditional written submissions alone (Navarrete et al., 2025). Thus, it may be concluded that newer winds are blowing.

Within this context, video-based assignments have gained attention as a means of fostering active learning, collaboration, and engagement (Noetel et al., 2021). Prior research has suggested that video production tasks can support deeper learning by requiring students to articulate ideas clearly, negotiate meaning collaboratively, and reflect on both content and form (Campbell & Cox, 2018; De Lange et al., 2020). At the same time, such assignments often introduce uncertainty for students, who may still be unfamiliar with creative assessment formats or concerned about technical competence, role distribution, and evaluation criteria (Nguyen, 2025). Understanding how students experience these tensions is therefore critical for designing effective video-based pedagogical practices to make the best of them.

This paper examines master's level students' experiences on a university course in which two group assignments were completed and submitted for assessment as short videos. Each group consisted of three students who collaboratively designed, scripted, recorded, and edited their outputs. Rather than treating video solely as a delivery medium, in this particular case the assignments positioned video production as a learning process that demanded collective sense-making, creative decision-making, and mutual responsibility. The study focuses on how students initially perceived the video-based assignment format, how they navigated the production process, and how they reflected on the experience after completing the tasks.

Empirically, the study draws on multiple qualitative sources, including students' written reflections, in-class discussions, and observations collected during the project period. These data are supplemented and triangulated with a questionnaire administered in the weeks following the assignments. Together, these materials allow for a process-oriented analysis of how students' perceptions evolved over time. Initial responses are expected to reveal hesitation and uncertainty, particularly related to technical skills and the perceived ambiguity of creative tasks compared to more familiar written assignments. As the work progressed, however, groups developed shared working norms and distributed roles, often aligning responsibilities with individual strengths. This suggests that video production can function as a catalyst for collaboration, peer support, and negotiated expertise.

During the production phase, students are anticipated to report heightened engagement and a growing sense of ownership over both the process and the outcome. The performative and public nature of video appeared to encourage careful consideration of key concepts and how they were communicated. Iterative cycles of scripting, recording, and editing required groups to agree on central ideas and jointly commit to design choices, thereby fostering critical reflection on course content. At the same time, practical challenges—such as time constraints, divergent creative visions, and technical limitations—emerged as both obstacles and meaningful learning experiences.

Post-assignment reflections indicate that many students valued the authenticity and variety introduced by video-based assessment. Feelings of accomplishment were commonly expressed, and students highlighted that the format enabled forms of creativity and expression that written assignments often constrain. Importantly, students also perceived the assignments as more closely aligned with the communicative practices of contemporary working life, which increased the relevance of the course in their view.

Overall, the findings suggest that short, group-based video assignments can enrich learning by promoting collaboration, creativity, and conceptual understanding as suggested by Cornock & Crombie. (Cornock & Crombie, 2021). By foregrounding students' lived experiences, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on multimodal assessment in higher education. The paper concludes by offering practical recommendations for designing video-based assignments that balance structure and openness, support equitable participation, and scaffold students' technical and creative development.

2. Design

The master's programme under scrutiny in this paper includes compulsory courses that build on foundational content typically covered in the bachelor's phase. Should one have already a suitable bachelor's degree, person may or may not have the necessary basics required for successful completion of the master courses. Having said that, the study program is rather packed. Because applicants may enter the master's programme with a bachelor's degree from another institution or discipline, some students may lack the prerequisite knowledge or 'know how' needed to complete the such master-level courses successfully. At the same time, the curriculum is tightly scheduled and leaves limited room for adding remedial acquisition of skillsets. The question arises how is this mode and opportunity perceived by the students and also partly commented by the staff.

The scrutiny in this paper observes a master stage course, business intelligence centered *Basics for Business Data Analytics*, which provides essential contents for master-level knowledge management studies. Under the standard delivery mode, *Basics for Business Data Analytics* is taught in the third term. The course entails seven lectures and weekly activities in addition to the case assignment given by an outside party, most often a business enterprise sought by the teacher responsible. The assignment is to be done in groups of three to four students, two groups solving each case. The students are to very independently approach the case but also independently to frame the assignment, obviously in accord with the case organization thus underlining proper communication. This is also mentioned as a learning objective. An example of an assignment is to position a business to its competitive surroundings by competitive analysis and benchmarking. In addition to this maybe make suggestions for further development of operation. This study examines how the independent assignment delivery per video was taken and perceived by students and how it is viewed by teaching staff.

Empirically, the paper foregrounds students' perspectives while also incorporating teaching staff reflections on the implementation. All 23 students in the study year 2025–2026 taking part on this particular course were invited to respond to a 32-item questionnaire comprising Likert-scale items (1–5) and clarifying open-ended questions. In addition, the two instructors responsible for the course were interviewed to contextualise the student responses and capture staff views on the arrangement. Owing to unanticipated factors, e.g. previous engagements, and scheduling constraints, only 18 students completed the survey. Nevertheless, the qualitative responses showed early signs of thematic saturation, providing initial support for the robustness of the observed patterns.

3. Background

The current Tampere University, and the very community, was established as the former Tampere University of Technology, University of Tampere, and Tampere University of Applied Sciences merged. The merger took with the year 2019 beginning. At the same time the ownership of the University of Applied Sciences was transferred from the city of Tampere to the newly formed Tampere University thus creating the community. The individual universities were founded in the 1960s, while the origins of the University of Applied Sciences date back even further.

The newly formed university encompasses nearly all internationally recognized fields of study in its seven faculties. The university has a strong focus on research and education in technology, health, and society. Tampere University is one of Finland's most versatile and multidisciplinary universities. The community includes approximately 32,000 students and over 5,000 staff members. The university operates on three main campuses in Tampere, Finland's third-largest city, and has three university centers in following cities: Lahti, Pori, and Seinäjoki. The purpose of the university centers is also to address the more localized needs of the areas mentioned.

This paper focuses on the teaching activities at the Hervanta campus, on which the former University of Technology resided, and which was primarily the domain of the more technical teaching and research. It is important to note that the university has made ever since the merger significant efforts to ensure uniformity across all campuses, so the observations in this paper are likely applicable at least to a degree to other parts of the university as well, even if the cultural difference between the campuses, e.g. between the humanities and electric engineering, is occasionally said to be there.

The daily routines of the teaching staff often include research work and research-related tasks, with few individuals being able to focus solely on one area, be it teaching or research. The pedagogical and didactic expertise of the staff varies, as many individuals come from research backgrounds. Similarly, the technical proficiency of staff members ranges from those who use basic tools like PowerPoint and PDFs to those who are adept with advanced features of learning platforms and AI tools. The tasks of the staff can be broadly categorized into teaching (the main focus of this paper), research, and administrative duties. The latter category is somewhat ambiguous, as it may or may not be connected to the other two areas.

4. Findings

As implied before, the students were expected to express uncertainty, some regarding their technical skills, others the perceived complexity of tasks demanding a novel kind of creative approach compared to traditional written assignments. Despite this initial hesitation, groups quickly developed working norms and distributed roles and tasks, maybe according to individual strengths, indicating that video production naturally encouraged collaboration, negotiation, and peer support.

All in all, the students' views on delivering videoed assignments varied from nerve-racking to pleasant change, even if the majority of the students have had previous experience of delivering videos on some individual occasion.

"The video assignment felt like a pleasant change. Appearing on video comes naturally to me, so I was excited about the format." (Respondent 11)

The students were enquired how they felt when they experienced that the course assignments would be submitted as videos. The students elaborated freely based on their feelings towards the questionnaire. The video assignment was anticipated by the students as time-consuming and demanding, perhaps with a more neutral feeling about the assignments than anxious.

"I don't particularly like video submissions; making them nice and polished is usually more time-consuming and difficult than many other forms of submission." (Respondent 5)

Almost all found the assignments by video at the end more educational, challenging in a good way and even fun. Time is spent on work that differs from the usual, which should be considered and supported with clear guidance.

"Completing a video assignment is faster compared to writing, but preparing for the performance and arranging the space requires effort." (Respondent 7)

Casting, or agreeing on the roles in the teams, was one thing that drew attention to various tasks related to video delivery. All groups, except for one (out of eight), described group dynamics to be good. The groups worked well together, everyone participated and the assignment task and roles were divided evenly.

"Everyone was truly equal in terms of organizing the work, sharing responsibility, and doing the actual tasks." (Respondent 14)

The main tasks in group, or different roles that were mentioned were: Ideation/Concept development; Scriptwriting; Filming; Editing; Appearing on camera; Technical problem-solving. Also keeping team spirit high was mentioned, and this is of course a valuable team effort as well. It seems that in most cases (except for the one) the whole team was involved in every stage, thus enabling versatile learning experience for all team members whilst learning new ways of working either together or from one another.

"In my group, the work was not divided very evenly; in the end, I found myself planning the videos and practically implementing the assignments myself, while my group mainly appeared in the videos." (Respondent 8)

This is hardly an ideal situation, yet a possibility. The staff is advised to prepare appropriate measures for such occasions

The actual making of the videos was not seen as a problem. The smartphone was mostly used to make videos and then edited with various tools and on various platforms. Should either be more novel to any one member of a team, s/he quickly learned the required activity.

5. Conclusion

It seems that, despite all prior expectations, even fears the staff might have had, students are quite willing to engage in producing video submissions for their coursework. We had anticipated that they would be more hesitant about the technical implementation or about working with unfamiliar people, or video themselves in delivery process, but this proved not to be the case. Students approach the matter confidently in a very mature manner. Some even threw themselves at it and really used their imagination in scripting the videos, although this rather seems to be a positive exception. They generally participate well in working groups with people they do not know, and they are able to agree on working methods and, where appropriate, divide tasks according to strengths and interests in a notably mature way. It is worthwhile to encourage creativity when that is desired, since natural conservative caution is often students' first choice of approach. More broadly, clear instructions and criteria for both the work itself and its assessment must be in place from the outset.

One major obstacle might have been the actual phrasing of the assignment delivery. Some understood it perfectly but equally it was reported to be nigh incomprehensible. This underlines the significance of the clarity of the thing to be done, what is expected and what is being valued in the grading of the deliverable. Similarly, to be kept in mind is naturally the actual content-based assessment of the assignment, that they actually promote the case solution.

The collaborative learning process and the internalisation of course content appeared to be strengthened by the need to condense and present the material in a video format. In doing so, students actively transformed the knowledge they had acquired into a new form of expression, which supported both understanding and application.

As for the technical execution, students are ready to adopt new ways of working quite quickly, provided that they are encouraged appropriately and given guidance on how to proceed. The students' responses suggest that the university should provide adequate facilities for this kind of work if creative, original, and otherwise high-quality outcomes are expected. Even a suitably quiet space and location to make the video, seemed occasionally to be hard to find. What these facilities should be and how they can be implemented remains a matter for further consideration.

One learning objective was also to practice presenting one's acquired knowledge and learned contents. This was well achieved in groups that reported well-functioning cooperation, those teams who did not experience so well-functioning team structure did not realize the full potential. This may be addressed with better instructions on the activity, but not studied in depth in this paper.

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