In-the-moment video feedback for online counselling students' role play assessment: A research note

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Abstract. Although the importance of feedback has been highlighted in education, innovative practices to improve the quality of feedback remain to be reported. Moreover, traditional text-based feedback often misses the emotional tone of feedback, therefore is susceptive of misunderstanding. This is a cause for concern in many online programmes, in particular counselling as this discipline focuses on communication. Accordingly, the present research note reports our on-going study appraising the first-hand experience of online counselling students who have received our in-the-moment video feedback for their role play video assessment. Inductive thematic analysis was used on semi-structured interviews. Two themes were identified: 'High feedback satisfaction' and 'Safer communication'. Findings will help educators and online education institutions to create innovative ways of providing helpful feedback to students.

Introduction

There is a strong research consensus that feedback is important, with some arguing that it is inextricable from the learning process (Orsmond & Merry, 2011). Quality feedback is especially important in online learning, augmenting a sense of belongingness for students to the university (Gaytan, 2015). In more recent times, COVID-19 has meant that online learning being utilised more (Suzuki et al., 2022), with challenges faced adapting to the new mode of delivery and feedback (Kotera, Spink, et al., 2021; Moorhouse, 2020).

Students are generally dissatisfied with traditional text-based feedback (Sadler, 2007), as it can be unclear, impeding its value (Price et al., 2010). Changing digital technology has allowed educators to capitalise on digital tools to provide video feedback (Lowenthal et al., 2022). Studies have highlighted the strengths of video feedback in overcoming these challenges: helping students understand what the feedback means (Chalmers et al., 2014) and providing a personal touch (Kotera, Chircop, et al., 2021; Kotera, Cockerill, et al., 2019). Video feedback offers students an opportunity to get out of their heads and hear the emotional response that is more clearly conveyed through spoken words than writing (Kotera & Winson, 2021; Lowenthal et al., 2022). Feedback also plays a vital role in skills teaching (Shute, 2008). A meta-analysis demonstrated that video feedback has a statistically significant effect on the interaction skills of professionals (Fukkink et al., 2011). In sum, video feedback has considerable advantages in education today.

Method

This study aimed to explore the first-hand experience of students receiving in-the-moment video feedback, which comments on students' video assessment as if a sport real-time commentary (see Figure 1). This clarifies specifically what the marker refers to in their feedback. The context of this study was in a 20-credit Counselling Skills module in the University of Derby, Online Learning's online University Diploma in Counselling Studies and Skills (Kotera, Edwards, et al., 2022). This module has a formative assessment (0% weighing towards grade) where students film their role play counselling session, upload it to the module, and the tutor records themselves making comments throughout providing a running commentary (Kotera, Green, et al., 2019; Kotera, Green, et al., 2021). The tutor may also stop the student tape at times to give more detailed feedback related to a specific area.

Online interviews were conducted with five students to appraise their experience of receiving this form of feedback. The co-authors YK and KT interviewed students as they were not directly teaching this module. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for inductive thematic analysis, which was suited for this rather under-explored area (Kotera, 2018). YK conducted analysis, and DM and KT reviewed for accuracy and

consistency. Consensus was reached after their reviews and a meeting attended by the three.

Figure 1: Tutor offering in-the-moment video/audio feedback to a student role play video.

Findings and Discussion

Though we are still recruiting more participants to yield more generalisable and transferable findings, two themes were identified: 'High feedback satisfaction' and 'Safer communication'.

'High feedback satisfaction' was based on that all interviewed students were highly satisfied with the in-the-moment video feedback relative to text-based feedback. They also noted that they would like to receive it again and would recommend it to other students too. 'Safer communication' refers to a smaller chance of misunderstanding with the tutor. For example, international students reported that it helped them notice where a British tutor used sarcasm, through their facial and body movement, bridging cultural differences (Shimoni et al., 2013). The tutor intended to be friendly using sarcasm, which however made these students feel confused, panicked or even upset in written communication, suggesting a danger of written feedback (Kotera, Kaluzeviciute, et al., 2021). The emotionality and timeliness of the in-the-moment video feedback helped students understand the tutor's intention more accurately, supporting their sense of belongingness to the university. These characteristics helped home students as well, who noted that the in-the-moment video feedback was felt more positive than text-based feedback, as the presence of the tutor in the video feedback made them feel safe.

Video feedback helped students understand the tutor's emphases, identifying the key components of the feedback through voice tone and body language (Watson et al., 2017). Students reported that it was vital to see how the tutor conveys feedback. In general, a sense of personal touch

can be a challenge for online learning, and more so in this subject (Kotera, Rawson, et al., 2022; Kotera, Spink, et al., 2021); these students found that being able to see and hear the tutor's feedback addressed this challenge. As demand for online education and counselling education increases (Kotera, Maxwell-Jones, et al., 2021), this type of video feedback can offer robust feedback to students' practical skills. Though more data collection is needed, our findings can inform educators and students in this field.

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Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent
All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all participants for being included in the study.

Ethics Approval
University of Derby research ethics committee has approved this study. The procedures used in this study adhere to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

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