

NEW KEY USES OF VIDEO IN EDUCATION:

“Video selfies” for application and communication
“Video Portfolios” for evaluation

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Published in Educational Technology Nov-Dec 2016

[1,123 words]

“Goldman Sachs said all candidates for summer analyst positions must complete a video interview.”

– Wall Street Journal, June 23, 2016

HAVING NOW ARRIVED at a time when powerful digital tools are in the pockets of a great many of our students and teachers, it is time for all who have these devices to be using them, powerfully, to do useful things we could never do before. Among the most important of these tasks is easily taking, sharing, and receiving video. Today, doing this is trivial for more and more of us, and for many of our kids almost like breathing. Yet we highly underutilize this hugely powerful capability in education.

One reason may be that the bulk of our teachers and administrators grew up in an age dominated by movies and broadcast television, and know that making movies and TV shows is a highly complex affair, requiring big crews, a lot of time, and bulky specialized equipment. And they also know that because the actors in movies and television typically have to look just so, lots of makeup and styling is required.

But the new kind of videos that our phones enable—video that anyone with a pocket device can take themselves and send—are very different. They are shared right after they are taken, with minimal or no editing. No “production values” are required—it’s

the message that counts. (Today there is also emerging a third kind of more “produced” short video—we see these on TED and other sites and web channels.) But the simple “video selfie” persists and flourishes, and has become a huge deal for digital native generations.

We are all still learning how to use this new kind of short, self-produced video that we can almost all now easily take and share in education. Many teachers already have students take and submit videos (selfies and other) in class or for homework. Let me highlight two additional ways for educators to take greater advantage of this powerful new capability.

1. Using “Video Selfies” for Adult-to-Adult Communication

The first is to increase the use of quick selfie videos for face-to face—but asynchronous—**between adults**. Watching someone say something is a different experience than reading their memo or email. Imagine each school having a web page with thumbnails of every teacher in a school providing 20-second video answers to their principal’s weekly questions, such as: “What positive innovation can you share with your colleagues?” or “What will you do this month to improve your teaching?” Might you be tempted to go through these? I probably would.

Today fewer and fewer of us, young and old, seem to want to read things longer than brief text messages or to write anything at all unless we have to. But more and more of us are happy click on and watch an under-a-minute video. We should all get comfortable communicating our thoughts this way (i.e. just taking out our phone and starting to talk): it’s a very fast way to communicate, once you get fluent at it. Video selfies can be extremely useful for administrator-to-teacher, teacher-to-teacher, and teacher-to-parent communication. Principals can communicate video messages to teachers “face-to-face” (in the virtual sense), and request video replies. Teachers can ask questions and communicate thoughts and ideas to colleagues through videos, inviting video answers and discussion. Teachers can communicate to parents, individually and as a group.

The need for good communication is not going away—people will continue to write, at various quality levels, probably forever—but much of our communication is quickly passing to other media. Given that almost all of us carry the capability of making these short, communicative “video selfies” in our pocket, let’s all start using it, abandoning any old ideas we may have about video needing to look like the movies or television, and particularly of “not liking to see ourselves on the screen.” Although one’s skill at making these short “video selfies” typically improves with experience, getting started requires very little—other than courage. Here’s how to start: 1. Decide what you will say in your 30 seconds and rehearse it, in your head out loud, once or twice. 2. Hold your phone or tablet at arm’s length, in landscape mode, pointing the front-facing camera at yourself, capturing only your head or face (being this close produces good

audio.) 3. Hit the record button. If the first take isn't what you want, do a second—it takes only 30 seconds. 4. Choose a send option and hit send. All the rest is just refinement and development of a personal style, which comes with experience. A great task for every tech coordinator and IT administrator in our schools is assuring all teachers and administrators become comfortable making and frequently sharing video selfies, and setting up secure places to post them. Remember, if the videos are 30 seconds or less, one can watch at least 100 in an hour. Providing video feedback to something you watch is now just a matter of hitting record and saying what you think. Let's do more of this.

2. Using "Video Portfolios" for Evaluation

A second highly important use of this self-created video is for creating and enhancing students' online portfolios and for preparing students for college and job interviews. Online portfolios are increasingly being introduced into our schools, and videos are increasingly being used for college and job application. Today, online portfolios typically consist of a student's "work product," such as writing, art or other projects. But suppose that the students' online portfolio consisted almost entirely of videos—including videos of the student defending his or her submissions, videos answering questions that teachers posed, and, in addition, videos of the student being mock-interviewed for college or jobs. Imagine if one could see the progression, over time, of a student answering the precise kinds of questions college and job interviewers ask, such as "Tell me about yourself?", "What is the hardest challenge you've faced?", "Talk about a failure and how you overcame it", "What is your passion and how have you applied it to solving problems?" and so on. Imagine if, to justify graduation, all the videos had to be reviewed by an independent committee? We should still be able to see, if we are interested, a kid's specific work. But it would likely be far more interesting to see and hear a student talk about his or her work and themselves.

Speaking continues to be the most important and nuanced form of human-to-human communication. We certainly want our all kids to acquire the skill of speaking effectively. Video can greatly help here. Additionally, video can facilitate all the existing ways to evaluate people. i.e. watching what they do, asking them questions, and asking others about them. Today more and more colleges and companies are requiring video interviews. We should be getting our kids prepared.

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