

Audio Feedback

Architecture & Civil Engineering



Background context

Dr Ricardo Codinhoto teaches the MSc Modern Building Design programme and he uses his smartphone to provide audio feedback, instead of typed feedback, for one assignment. This case study looks at providing audio feedback via Moodle to a group of 27 students. Ricardo also uses the audio recording software on his smartphone as a tool for summarising meetings and actions from his written notes (e.g. during a research project stakeholder review).

Purpose

Initially Ricardo chose to record feedback in this way as a result of not being able to physically type when he had submissions to mark. He piloted this approach with 6 students and as a result he has found the process to be time-saving whilst also enabling him to provide more personal and detailed feedback for students.



- each 2000 word assignment = 12-15 mins of recorded audio
- each assignment = 20 mins quicker to mark

Approach

Ricardo uses a free app called Voice Memo on his smartphone (an Apple iPhone) to record his feedback to students. (Other [apps](#) are available). He prints out a copy of the assessment criteria and refers to it when he reads through coursework, recording his comments. Once completed he uploads the audio files to the relevant students in the Moodle submission point – exactly where he would otherwise upload feedback in Word or PDF format. The students click the link to the file in order to open the feedback in a media player on their PC.



Submissions
downloaded



Assignment compared to
assessment criteria and
comments recorded on
smartphone



Audio files uploaded to
Moodle submission point



Student downloads
the audio file to hear
feedback comments

Outcomes

Pros

- ✓ Many students comment positively on receiving feedback in this way
 - *“Thank you for the feedback, it seems really helpful for clarifying my next steps in the research. I liked the voice recording.”*
 - *“Very pleased. It was the best feedback I ever got from an assignment (was the first time to receive an audio file as feedback).”*
 - *“The tone of voice from the audio file just adds more to the overall understanding of the feedback.”*
- ✓ A convenient way of providing feedback aligned to the assessment criteria
- ✓ More feedback can be given verbally than could be typed in the same time– typically students will receive 12-15 minutes worth of audio
- ✓ In marking times this was a saving, on average, of 20 minutes per student
- ✓ Online Student Evaluations scores are still high after the introduction of audio feedback
- ✓ The audio files are stored in m4a (mpeg-4) format which can be run on most major media players such as Windows Media Player and QuickTime

Cons

- ✗ Audio files take up space on the phone so you need a planned process
- ✗ The phone’s battery will be drained quickly so you may need to have it plugged in
- ✗ Some students comment they would still prefer typed feedback
 - *“I believe feedback in hardcopy is easier to understand and re-read.”*

Recommendations

Ricardo would definitely recommend this approach to colleagues and has a number of practical tips for others who want to try this for themselves.

1. Have clear marking criteria printed out next to the assignment you are marking so you can refer to it explicitly in the feedback
2. After recording five audio feedback files, upload them to your PC and delete from your phone before starting on the next batch
3. Record as you read the work and summarise at the end
4. Manage student expectations about how and when they will receive feedback

Alternatively, Ricardo has marked assignments electronically using a rubric. This also provides the opportunity to provide feedback against specific criteria and is possible in Moodle and Turnitin.

Further reading: Attenborough, J (2011 *Using formative audio feedback via Moodle to feed-forward and enhance learner engagement in assessments*) [online] Available from: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/using-formative-audio-feedback-moodle-feed-forward-and-enhance-learner-engagement> (Accessed 22 May 2017)