Journal of Response to Writing

Volume 10 | Issue 2 Article 4

December 2024

Making Video Feedback for the First Time: A Case Study

Dan Martin
Central Washington University

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/journalrw/

RW
JOURNAL OF RESPONSE TO WRITING

Making Video Feedback for the First Time: A Case Study

Dan Martin
Central Washington University

Abstract: Educators have been using video feedback (VF) to respond to student writing for several decades. Most qualitative and quantitative research on VF has thoroughly demonstrated that students want more video comments along with written feedback (WF). Despite the research supporting the advantages of VF, very few studies identify the labor and time commitment required to learn how to provide effective VF. This paper addresses this gap in the research by identifying where three professors from three different disciplines exerted the most labor to acquire video literacies and create VF for the first time. It also engages the following questions: What are the limitations of making VF? What kinds of labor are required to produce VF? What do educators need to know before making VF for the first time? The findings for this study indicate that instructors new to VF would benefit from additional guidance on how to create video comments, as well as an overview of the labor and time required to gain video literacies, manage paralinguistic activity, and structure and upload video comments.

Keywords: video feedback, gestures, writing pedagogy, multiliteracies, multimodality

Educators have been using video feedback (VF) to respond to student writing for several decades. I began using VF to respond to writing a decade ago when I started teaching online courses. I quickly discovered that video comments can personalize my courses and help me engage with my students. Research on online teaching evinces that hearing a voice and seeing a face can deeply personalize online

Martin, D. (2024). Making Video Feedback for the First Time: A Case Study. *Journal of Response to Writing*, *10*(2), 49–74.

teaching and learning spaces (Warnock, 2009; Grigoryan, 2017). After witnessing the effectiveness of VF in my online courses, I decided to provide video comments to students in face-to-face and hybrid classes. I also administered an informal survey to students in all my courses that asked about their engagement with VF. I found that all students (both graduates and undergraduates) in my classes benefited from the conversational affordances of video regardless of the modality of the course. Examining the value of VF in different modes is an area in need of further research.

Even before COVID-19 exacerbated the need to learn how to teach in online environments, educators were teaching and responding to writing with multimedia tools across disciplines. The majority of qualitative and quantitative research on VF (Borup et al., 2014; Crook et al., 2012; Dunn, 2015; Fukkink et al., 2011; Grigoryan, 2017; Hung, 2016; Jones et al., 2012; Lamey, 2015; McCarthy, 2015; Özkul & Ortaçtepe, 2017; Silva, 2012; Thompson & Lee, 2012; Wilkie & Liefeith, 2022; Wood, 2023) has thoroughly demonstrated that students want more video comments, so educators should be open to using video to respond to writing whenever possible or as needed; however, the labor to learn how to use video for the first time can be daunting and overwhelming. It is also important to reiterate that I still use, value, and advocate for written feedback (WF). Adopting VF does not mean educators should abandon written comments. VF and WF should and can coexist. Educators must not substitute one mode for the other because students like both modes of feedback (Grigoryan, 2017; Silva, 2012).

Even though studies on VF have shown the advantages of video comments, none of these studies identify the labor and time commitment required to learn how to provide effective VF for the first time. Giving feedback in any mode is time-consuming and labor-intensive. More studies on the labor required to learn how to use VF are needed because more institutions are requiring faculty to teach online and provide students with multimodal learning experiences without adequate training and resources. If students want more multimodal feedback options, institutions

need to account for the labor needed to learn multiliteracies and provide instructors with resources to learn how to make VF. Asking educators to acquire video literacies for teaching without acknowledging the labor involved can lead to resenting and avoiding VF altogether. To address the gap in the research on how educators learn to use VF, this paper identifies where three professors exerted a significant amount of labor to create VF for the first time. Instructors new to video commenting would benefit from more guidance on how to make VF and a detailed account of the labor and time required to learn video literacies, manage paralinguistic activity, and structure comments for a video. This paper engages the following research questions:

- What are the limitations of making VF?
- What kinds of labor are required to produce VF?
- What do educators need to know before making VF for the first time?

Literature Review on VF

A significant amount of research on VF proves that video comments are an effective teaching tool. Instructors have relied on VF to construct a more humanizing perception of themselves that students tend to appreciate and value. Students claim that educators who use video comments tend to give more formative, critical, and thoughtful feedback (Thompson & Lee, 2012). Instructor presence and personalization can also lead to better relationships between students and educators. Most of the research on VF has primarily focused on how students engage with VF or has compared VF with WF. Borup et al. (2014) studied how more than 200 students (211 female and 18 male) from 12 sections of a technology integration course engaged with VF to determine if video comments increased the instructors' social presence more than WF. Students in the study completed two surveys, and both students and instructors were interviewed. The results showed that several students felt more connected to their instructors after watching VF, stating that this connection was important to their learning.

In the interviews, the instructors said having the opportunity to edit their video comments was important to their teaching.

However, the interviews with the instructors did not identify a comprehensive process for making VF or highlight any disadvantages they overcame while learning how to create VF for the first time. Crook et al. (2012) examined whether VF increased engagement in courses across disciplines and discovered that even though VF had tremendous potential, the educators in the study relied on WF to respond to 90% of the student writing because they felt WF "'was expected' from them" (p. 389). Thompson and Lee (2012) asserted that "written feedback is a norm within education" because educators and "students have a background knowledge and a repertoire for working with this mode of feedback." An overdependency on print literacies and a culture of WF may be inhibiting educators from using VF.

Lamey (2015) used Photo Booth on a macOS to record video comments for students in a philosophy class. Of those who took the survey, 53% preferred VF because it was more informative than WF and increased personalization between the professor and student. However, not being able to see where a comment directly related to a particular section of the paper was concerning for several students in the study. Students wanted to know where the video comments referred to a specific section of their writing. Lamey claimed that educators would get more efficient at making VF over time, but he never identified his process for learning video literacies or how long it takes to become efficient with video. Mathisen (2012) investigated how educators implemented VF across a range of disciplines and determined that video comments were easier and faster to provide to students, but there is no account of these educators' processes for making video comments. Fukkink et al. (2011) highlighted how video captures paralinguistic and non-verbal cues that can bolster communication between students and educators. Hung (2016) also found valuable connections between VF and gestures. He examined how 60 EFL students responded to VF over one semester and discovered that video comments

gave second language learners an opportunity to model their teachers' verbalizations and body language. The affordances of video allow educators to capture paralinguistic activity that can enhance communication. Body language and gestures greatly impact language use (Baveals et al., 2014) and how students learn colloquial and academic literacies (Hung, 2016), but none of these studies examined how educators made VF or identified the labor required to learn video literacies.

Dunn (2015) conducted a one-year study on the use of Tegrity, a screen capture tool, to provide students with audio feedback (AF) and VF in a technical writing course. Seventy-three percent of students who completed the questionnaire preferred Tegrity over WF (Dunn, 2015, p. 8). Thompson and Lee (2012) completed a study on using Jing (now TechSmith Capture™), another screen capture tool, to provide VF in five sections of a college-level writing course taught by two instructors. Thirty-two out of 40 students responded to their survey and preferred VF over WF, but none of the instructors were interviewed or surveyed about their experiences working with Jing. Jones et al. (2012) used a screen-capturing tool to provide feedback to MBA and undergrad students. They interviewed 75 undergrad students and 20 tutors over 2 years. Almost all the students claimed VF was formative and valuable. Some questions about downloading speeds and the audibility of the videos were posed to instructors in a survey, but the survey and interview data do not fully account for the labor required to solve those technical problems or any of the other processes for making VF.

McCarthy (2015) used Camtasia™, another screen capture tool, to provide students with audio, video, and WF to determine which feedback mode students preferred. A survey with 77 responses found that students preferred AF or VF over WF because of the quality of the detailed comments. Wood (2023) examined how screen-capturing tools for feedback motivated students to uptake feedback and co-construct knowledge with the instructor. Wilkie and Liefeith (2022) examined "live synchronised video feedback" in an undergrad sports coaching class and also found that

"many of the study participants specifically identified detail as being an important characteristic of the video feedback" (p. 12). However, none of these studies outline the labor required to learn how to use screen-capturing tools and software. Despite students' overly positive reactions to receiving VF, they still want a wide range of feedback modes, including WF.

Silva (2012) examined student preferences for VF and WF during the revision process and discovered that students valued how VF was conversational, but they also appreciated how WF helped them quickly locate and revise surface-level errors and sentences that needed editing. Silva contends that there are advantages and disadvantages to both video and WF, depending on the purpose of the feedback (p. 3). Grigoryan (2017) also discovered that nontraditional students in online courses preferred a combination of audiovisual feedback and WF to prompt revision. She argues that more research on multimodal feedback is needed to determine if audiovisual feedback can "enhance feedback in online learning environments" (Grigoryan, 2017, p. 85).

Özkul and Ortaçtepe (2017) compared how students used WF and VF to revise their work and discovered that students who received VF made more corrections to their writing because the video comments were more comprehensive than the WF. Students also appreciated that educators invested more time into creating VF and that they had the ability to rewatch the videos as many times as they wanted (Özkul & Ortaçtepe, 2017, p. 872). However, educators need more research on teachers' experiences with VF that capture the "advantages and disadvantages" of using VF and the labor required to learn how to make video comments for the first time (Özkul & Ortaçtepe, 2017, p. 874). Many of these studies ignore important multimodal and semiotic literacies that educators will have to learn to design effective VF. Acquiring multiliteracies can be labor intensive and require software and technological resources.

Despite the advantages of using VF and the evidence that students want more multimodal feedback, many educators avoid it because of the labor required to learn video literacies. Providing any form of feedback

on writing is a highly labor-intensive process, so asking educators to implement VF for the first time requires a time and labor commitment that should be transparent. Cavanaugh and Song (2021) highlighted the shortage of qualitative interviews with educators about how they "make sense of their commenting experience when using different media" (p. 10). Most of the research on VF does not account for the labor needed to develop video literacies. Designing VF requires working with semiotic modes, translating sounds, images, and text, and applying an alternative set of decisions about how audiences will watch, see, hear, and interpret video content. Video is a medium with a "specific media language and semiotic system" (Spielman, 2006, p. 55) that takes time and practice to learn how to use as a feedback tool. Video also captures how "speakers spontaneously emphasize, particularize, embellish, or replace words with their facial displays, gestures, and other depictions" (Bavelas & Chovil, 2000, p. 167), so it is important for educators to understand how gestures can enhance or complicate communication in a video. McCarthy (2015) asserted that alternative mediums for feedback require instructors to focus on different criteria like body language, eye contact, hand motions, tone, and speed of voice, which may be difficult to manage when using video for the first time. Deliberately using paralinguistic cues (or avoiding misusing them) to enhance teaching and learning requires critical awareness and understanding of gestures as multiliterate activity (Bavelas et al., 2014). This awareness results from extensive practice using video as a feedback tool. A significant portion of the labor required to learn how to use VF is tied to learning about multimodality and semiotics and developing critical video literacies for teaching.

Theoretical Framing

I use semiotic theories for teaching and learning (Gee, 2004; Bezemer & Kress, 2008) and multimodal theories for teaching and learning (Bruce, 2009; Lovett et al., 2009; Miller, 2007) as a theoretical frame to identify some of the constructivist labor educators exert when enacting semiotic

principles for teaching and learning the video literacies necessary to make VF. The "semiotic principle" states that learning is the process of "coming to appreciate interrelations within and across multiple sign systems (images, words, actions, symbols, artifacts, etc.)" and that only focusing on linear, alphabetic writing limits our semiotic abilities (Gee, 2004, p. 49). Learning video literacies is part of a network of labor required to create VF and implement the semiotic principle into a course. Developing multiliteracies demonstrates an embracing of the semiotic principle and a willingness to invest time in finding new "potentials for learning" for students (Bezemer & Kress, 2008, p. 168). Bezemer and Kress (2008) asserted that "potentials for learning" are an "ensemble of semiotic features of a text or an environment—objects, texts, people—that provides the ground for learning and in that way may shape what learning is and how it may take place" (p. 168). Avoiding multimodality for teaching and learning is a form of resistance to the potentials for learning and the semiotic principle. To find potentials for learning for VF, educators must become multiliterate and learn how to produce multimodal teaching materials.

Video design requires a set of complex multiliteracies that involve "planning, organizing, producing, polishing, and evaluating texts, while also employing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, group dynamics, aesthetic judgment, and media literacy" (Lovett et al., 2009, p. 79). Providing effective, formative VF requires time to practice. Miller (2007) argued that "digital video production" is "a multimodal literacy practice . . . similar to writing text" that is labor intensive (p. 70). She reiterated that "digital video compositing is quintessential multimodal literacy that allows orchestration of visual, aural, kinetic, and verbal modes electronically" (Miller, 2007, p. 66). Gestures are also semiotic and multimodal. Miller's definition of multimodal literacy, like the semiotic principle for learning, includes body language and the way that meaning is enacted and instantiated through paralinguistic activity. I use semiotic theories for gestures and body language (Bavelas et al., 2014; Bavelas & Chovil, 2000; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2006) as frames to identify some

of the labor necessary to manage paralinguistic activity when making VF. Body language is a complex form of communication that needs to be accounted for in VF.

Data Collection

I conducted an IRB-approved case study at a large research institution in the Southern United States with three professors from three different disciplines who were formally trained in writing across the curriculum (WAC) theory. Each professor in this study previously participated in a 16-week Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Fellows Program at the university, where they learned about writing studies. I wanted participants for the study to have knowledge of composition and rhetoric and assessing writing. The WAC Fellows Program at this university trains cohorts of faculty from across disciplines to design and revise learning outcomes, writing assignments, and assessment tools. Recruiting professors for this study who had an understanding of WAC pedagogies increased the opportunity to examine formative feedback on a well-designed writing assignment. Case studies provided me with an appropriate qualitative methodology to address my research question.

I used Thomas and Myers's (2015) definition of a case study to outline this project: "Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems, which are studied holistically by one or more methods" (p. 3). I decided to interview the professors in the study throughout the term to gain insights into their processes for making VF. Case studies also allowed me to collect VF samples to review and transcribe. I was able to watch, listen, and transcribe over 100 pieces of VF, but the results and findings of the video transcripts were too large to include in this paper. They have been published elsewhere or will be published in a forthcoming manuscript.

I sent out nine emails to nine different professors who had participated in the WAC Fellows program. I received three email responses expressing interest in the project. This led to my examination of how Roger

(all names provided are pseudonyms), an Associate Professor of History; William, an Associate Professor of Psychology; and Joe, an Assistant Professor of Nanoscience, made VF to respond to student writing over a 16-week term. Roger was the only participant who did not own or have access to a computer with a video camera, so he borrowed a laptop from the university for the term to complete this study. After Roger checked out the laptop, I met with him in my office to discuss making videos with Photo Booth, a video recording tool on his laptop. I demonstrated how to access and use Photo Booth, and I showed him how to access the video files on the computer and upload them to Canvas, the university's learning management system (LMS). This meeting lasted approximately 45 minutes.

The Interviews

I adopted a semi-structured, qualitative interview approach to interview each professor about their experiences with VF at the beginning, middle, and end of the course for a total of nine interviews. A qualitative interview approach positions the interview participants as "meaning makers" instead of "passive conduits for retrieving information" (Warren, 2002, p. 83). Warren (2002) asserted that "researchers often choose qualitative interviews . . . [when] their concern is with establishing common patterns or themes between particular types of respondents" (p. 85). I wanted to identify common labor struggles for creating VF. Interviews allowed me to center the voices of the participants and provide them with a space to narrate their stories about designing VF for the first time. Giving participants plenty of room to talk about their experiences with VF allowed me to situate each professor as a meaning-maker and identify common and specific experiences across all the participants.

Before the study began, I interviewed each professor to learn about their feedback practices and how they had been giving feedback to students before the study. In the second and final interviews, I asked the professors to discuss how they made VF and identify the advantages and

disadvantages of using VF. I conducted the second interviews after each professor made at least five pieces of VF on a writing assignment for five different students. I conducted the final interviews after the term was complete, and I finished some partial coding of the interview transcripts.

When I met with William to conduct the first interview, he had already given VF to all 13 of his graduate students during the first week of class. He provided VF on nine weekly reflection assignments over 16 weeks. I asked each professor to provide each student in the course under study with at least one piece of VF on at least one writing assignment. Despite that reiteration, William produced 117 pieces of VF. I was only able to transcribe 84 of the 96 videos that he provided me. He was unable to locate 21 video files on a thumb drive he used to save the VF, and I was unable to open 12 video files on the thumb drive he gave me.

Roger provided 20 of his 28 undergraduate students with VF; however, I was only able to access 16 of those video files. Four of the videos he provided would not open because they had been damaged. Roger gave eight students WF instead of VF because he became overwhelmed with using video. He misjudged how long it would take him to make VF, and he ran out of time. He had to get feedback to his students as quickly as possible, so he used WF. Joe provided group feedback to undergraduate students. He made six total videos that responded to two groups of three students and one group of four students. Each group received two pieces of VF.

The interview data were analyzed using inductive coding methods. After I transcribed all nine interviews, I used open coding to determine the emerging themes connected to the labor for making VF. I used NVivo, a qualitative research tool for coding written transcripts, to code the interview transcripts, revise my codes, and organize emerging themes. I focused on identifying the emerging codes for the labor needed to make VF for the first time. Managing privacy concerns, organizing video comments, developing video literacies, and controlling paralinguistic activity

were the primary themes associated with the substantial labor for making VF that emerged from coding the data.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that it only includes three professors. Three participants cannot provide a broad purview of educators' experiences for making VF for the first time. Conducting research on a larger group of professors using VF for the first time would provide a wider perspective of the labor struggles for producing VF. It was difficult to find educators willing to use VF for the first time because of their labor concerns. Several professors were unwilling to participate in the study because of the extensive time needed to learn video literacies. Another limitation of this study is that it does not include participants who have experience using VF to compare with first-time users. Studying more professors who have different experience levels using VF would broaden the scope of the results and expose additional concerns with the amount and types of labor required to create VF. A final limitation of this study is the lack of quantified data on the labor the professors exerted. Asking professors and participants to keep detailed time records for designing VF would provide more accurate labor data.

Results and Findings

Roger, the Historian

Roger had the least experience using video before the study, and when asked to consider whether or not he would use VF again or recommend it to other instructors, he expressed some concerns. He told me, "I would recommend it. But I do think it depends on if you had a fear of the technology that's much greater than mine going in; it might be more problematic for you. If you were more technologically competent than I am, it would probably be a much greater thing." Roger was hesitant to agree to use VF in the future or to recommend it to other educators because of the time commitment. He also claimed that it was difficult to articulate his thoughts when

recording himself with a video camera. He found himself "getting tongue-tied," saying, "I wanted to get into something more complicated, and then I was kind of pausing cause maybe this isn't the forum to do this." Roger's video comments got entangled because he lacked experience using video to provide feedback. He needed more time to learn video literacies, which was an emergent theme in the interview data across all the participants.

Roger made 20 pieces of VF before he stopped; he gave the remaining eight students in the class WF because VF frustrated him. Each piece of VF Roger made had an average of 273 words and was, on average, 1 minute and 22 seconds. For Roger, generating VF "was time-consuming":

> I did about 20. I know it's not going to make sense, but it took me three and a half to four hours on a Sunday morning just doing that. And the way I would do it is I'd go through the paper and I'd write down some notes. And then I'd record it, and then I'd watch it to make sure it made sense. And then I'd move to the next one. And I think I may have been putting grades in at the same time. I'm not sure. So, it took more time than I thought.

Preparing and organizing comments for a video, recording and uploading video files to an LMS, and conducting quality assurance on a video were too time-intensive for Roger. He relied on "a bullet list" on a sticky note to organize his comments, noting "five things" he "wanted to hit" in the VF. Roger used this same method to generate WF for students. Sticky notes were Roger's primary method for maintaining a consistent voice, remembering what he wanted to say to each student, and sustaining eye contact in the VF. Roger would have benefitted from more research on how educators prepare and outline comments they intend to video record.

Roger's inexperience with video kept him from locating the potentials of learning with VF as a teaching tool until the study was over. After the study, he spent a significant amount of time reflecting and thinking about the difficulties he had to overcome to make video comments. He revealed that he did not know what he was doing when he made his first 20 pieces of VF:

> [From] the first paper to the twentieth, I go, "Wow. I don't really know what I'm doing," to, "I know what I'm doing well enough now that I want to do something more sophisticated; something a little more helpful." So, I guess another way to say that is I think if I'd done this three more times, I could probably give them a more polished product if that's what I want.

After reflecting on his experiences with VF, Roger acknowledged its potentials for learning. But when I asked him about the advantages of VF at the end of the study, he told me, "To fully answer your question, I would need to do it a lot more. And, of course, that's not your issue. That's my issue." He was also the only participant to abandon making VF because he became overwhelmed and underestimated the time it would take him to make video comments. Roger never became comfortable using VF during the study despite investing several hours of labor into making VF. He never found the same value in video commenting as William. Even though William struggled to make VF at the beginning of the study, he became the most comfortable and experienced with video commenting by the end of the study.

William, the Psychologist

William gained the most confidence in his ability to make VF during the study, but it took an incredible amount of labor. He said, "The first couple of videos were a lot for me. I practiced it once before I recorded it. I went through it, and I got tangled in all my words, but then once I got into the flow, it sped up quite a bit. Then I got used to it." He was unable to pinpoint the exact amount of VF he had to make before he became comfortable, but it took him some time to remember what he wanted to say in each video. He insisted, "[My video feedback is] less perfectionistic than my written comments because I can't retain it. It's taking me enough time to do all of these things." William struggled to remember what he wanted to say to each student in the video. This, too, was a common theme in the study. All the participants found it difficult to organize their comments for a video and recall what they wanted to say and do. Verbalizing comments

for a video is different from preparing written comments. Another significant concern William expressed was the labor required for naming, organizing, and managing video files. He became increasingly frustrated with the time it took to upload video files from his computer to Canvas, the LMS he was using to teach. He spent several hours figuring out how to name, export, and upload video files. William said,

> When I tried it on my laptop—[using] the built-in camera—the files were too big. It used a different program automatically. It pulled from a different program, and I couldn't upload them, so I have to make sure I have my external webcam and I leave it in the office.

Knowing where video files are stored on a computer, what type of video file the computer or camera creates after recording, and how to find and move video files requires important video literacies that take time and practice to learn.

William also had privacy concerns about VF. Most of the student writing that William was commenting on contained highly sensitive content that needed protection. He said that he had "to remember to do it [VF] in the office, or I have to remember to bring the webcam home so I can do it at home." William disclosed that he does a significant amount of "Grading on the go, and I have to be in a private area. I'm not going to be sitting in the airport giving them [video] feedback." Having access to a safe space to record VF means potentially waiting for or spending time securing a safe space to record video. William also had concerns about the quality of his VF and did not know if the students engaged with his comments. After rewatching himself give VF, he became increasingly critical of how he appeared and sounded on video. He was developing the critical video literacies needed to make effective VF, and he wanted to rerecord video comments to improve communication. He said, "The frustrating point is I do all of my written comments in pencil, and sometimes I worded that wrong, and I'll change that. When I videotaped it, and I didn't say it exactly the way I think, is it worth it having to redo the whole

video or just let it go?" Educators learning video literacies may have to spend extra time rerecording VF until it is succinct and coherent. William also became distressed about a lack of eye contact in his VF. He spent several hours trying to maintain eye contact, taping student papers to his computer screen or holding student papers near the camera so he could read his written comments on the paper while recording. Joe experienced similar struggles while making VF.

Joe, the Nanoscientist

Joe, an Assistant Professor of Nanoscience, made a total of six videos for three groups of students. One group contained four students, and two groups contained three students. Joe had "a hard time remembering what [the students] wrote." He continued: "I'm just used to looking at the paper, and you think about it while you look at it. So now I have to remember, 'Okay, this is what I said.' And that's why I made a couple of bullet points on things that I wanted to address in the paper." Joe divulged that he needed more time to practice making VF and developing video literacies. He told me, "The first time, I had a lot of do-overs. One of the videos was like 4 minutes, I think. Or over 2 minutes, which I think is getting long. I would get stuck in my thoughts or things like that. Or I wouldn't like what I was doing." Joe's thoughts got tangled, and he had a hard time determining an appropriate length of time for his VF. He struggled to organize his thoughts and speak on video, much like William and Roger. Joe had to "make some notes, and kind of have like three bullet points that [he] really wanted to hit on and use it as a playbook to run through the video." Despite Joe's small sample of feedback, each piece of VF Joe made had an average of 380 words and was, on average, 2 minutes and 43 seconds. All the professors in this study needed to create and refer to a set of notes to record a coherent video. Joe admitted that it took him longer to make VF than he anticipated: "It was literally the first time I did this particular format, so I think each video I had probably three tries. Whereas, I assume, if you're experienced, you might just get them in one

try." Joe had to rerecord all the videos he made three times, and he never became comfortable using VF during this study. All the professors in this study rerecorded their VF. Joe made several drafts of VF for each student group before settling on a final version to send out, and this took him a significant amount of time. Had Joe known what to expect while making VF, he could have anticipated and potentially limited the amount of labor needed to make video comments for the first time.

Discussion

Effective learning is dependent on pedagogies that center on the semiotic principle for learning (Gee, 2004, p. 111), but educators must have multiliteracies to foreground the semiotic principle in their curriculum. All the professors in the study directed a significant portion of their labor to learning new video literacies. Ball (2004) contended that the "semiotic modes of new media" alter how we understand information and form knowledge, and they take time to learn and process (p. 410). Writing instructors who are new to using video comments will most likely struggle to make a piece of cohesive VF on their first several attempts. This struggle may lead educators to abandon VF because of the labor required to learn video literacies.

Bruce (2009) contended, "The multimodal nature of video allows a writer to choose from a number of compositional elements during the production process," which is very different from the production process for written comments (p. 443). Multimodal compositional elements can include decisions about image, sound, text, color, timing, narrative voice, and structure that take time and practice to learn how to make. When using video, "there will be a broad and complex entanglement of modes associated with verbal communication, including the use of language, tone, tempo, and volume, as well as non-verbal communication including gesture, gaze, posture, eye contact, and so on" (Lamb, 2018, p. 4). Educators must learn how to use a range of multiliteracies to design effective video comments (Lovett et al., 2009; Bezemer & Kress, 2008). The

New London Group (2014) stated that "one of the key ideas informing the notion of multiliteracies is the increasing complexity and inter-relationship of different modes of meaning" (p. 198). For example, multimodal design is one of six design areas with specific "functional grammars . . . that describe and explain patterns of meanings" (The New London Group, 2014, p. 198). Semiotic design processes rely on functional grammars for meaning-making, which are learned over time.

The professors in this study had to expend a tremendous amount of labor to try and acquire functional grammars for producing VF, even though William was the only participant definitively successful with this acquisition. Like the other professors, William struggled to make VF at the beginning of the study, but he became the most comfortable using VF after producing over 100 videos. He was the only participant to fully embrace the semiotic principle and find numerous potentials for learning in his VF, but it required him to exert a substantial amount of labor. William recorded 117 pieces of VF over a 16-week term, and each piece of VF William made had an average of 354 words and was, on average, 2 minutes and 23 seconds. That is just over 41,000 words and a little more than 270 minutes (over 4 hours) of spoken feedback.

Roger reiterated how much time it took him to manage the functional grammars for designing VF. He made just over 20 videos, but he needed more time to become comfortable using video. His thoughts got tangled while making VF, and he had to rerecord videos on several occasions. He did not resist the semiotic principle of learning, but he could not sustain it without more experience using video as a teaching tool. Roger reverted back to WF when he became overwhelmed with VF. On the other hand, Joe struggled to make six videos and had the least impact on the study. He also had to rerecord videos multiple times. Joe did not embrace or resist the semiotic principle, but he needed more time to learn how to use VF. The number of videos an educator needs to make before they become video literate will vary and may involve other variables, such as varying experiences using video as a teaching tool and creating video comments.

Another multimodal design area that professors spent a significant amount of labor managing in this study was the use of body language.

All the professors became self-aware of their visual presence after watching themselves in the videos. Joe was concerned about his lack of body language, and Roger and William wanted to avoid breaking eye contact. Speaking and gesturing into the camera inspired a different level of awareness of one's feedback quality. The New London Group (2014) contended that "Gestural Meaning (body language, sensuality)" is another design area with its own set of functional grammars (p. 200). When someone verbalizes feedback in a video, their gestures affect how students listen and generate meaning. Bavelas et al. (2014) advanced that "visible acts of meaning are inseparable from the words with which they occur at the moment and with which they form an integrated message" (p. 167). There is a semiotic system for making meaning of body language.

Gestures in VF are part of a "Discourse" (Gee, 1989) for implementing multimodal pedagogies and a significant communication act. Discourses contain "words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1989, p. 7). The functional grammars of gestures are a literacy for a multimodal pedagogical Discourse. Gee (1989) argued "that any socially useful definition of 'literacy' must be couched in terms of the notion of Discourse" because Discourses are sites for multiliteracies (p. 9).

Joe noted that his lack of experience using video as a teaching tool and teaching with multimodal pedagogies hindered him from taking advantage of his paralinguistic activity. He claimed, "It's hard to use body language, and I think that's something I want to try to do a little bit more because I was sitting there talking, and I missed the kind of moving around and using my arms and hands and to be more expressive." Educators can be deliberate with their use of paralinguistic activity and non-verbal cues to communicate in VF, but learning to control body language for a video takes additional time and may be dependent on one's personality or experience teaching with alternative modalities. Even though Joe wanted

to utilize his body language, he never did. However, early in the study, William saw an immediate opportunity to take advantage of his predisposition to use paralinguistic activity.

William was very animated with his hands and body language when he spoke. Bavelas and Chovil asserted that "Speakers often use hand movements that enact or reenact some action being described" (p. 172). William told me that he began to use gestures to his advantage in the vid-eos to avoid miscommunication. He said,

> [I have a] tendency to use a lot of humor [when teaching] and be facetious and stuff like that, and that can really go awry in a written comment. [The students] don't see facial expressions, so I think I'm able to deliver comments and be more my personality in my feedback with video. I try not to do that in my written comments, although I slip into it, and then it can be dangerous.

William said it is difficult for him to manage his tone of voice and personality in WF and that his students have struggled to read his humor. He asserted, "I've got to be more careful about what I say and how I say it when I put it in writing cause they don't get facial expressions." This, of course, does not mean that body language eliminates ambiguous comments in VF, but gestures can provide an additional layer of communication that can support verbal or written comments. Semiotic facial expressions in VF "may emphasize or modify the meaning of what is said in the assessment," and relational facial expressions "signal and monitor affective cues between the participants" that are important for decoding gestures (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2006, p. 132). One of those cues is eye contact, and all the professors spent ample time thinking about a method for maintaining eye contact in VF.

Eye contact was the most difficult gesture for the participants to maintain, and it was directly related to how the professors organized video comments to record. None of the professors wanted to break eye contact, and they believed that eye contact was an important characteristic of formative VF. Each professor had to look down or to the side of the camera to

read comments on a notepad, sticky note, or student paper. Roger posted comments on sticky notes to the side of his computer to limit the number of times he had to look away from the camera and break eye contact. William wrote comments on student papers and taped the papers to the side of his computer to limit the number of times he had to break eye contact. If educators want to avoid breaking contact, they will need an outline or a script to help organize their thoughts and then find a method to refer to the outline without breaking eye contact.

Many instructors will need time to develop an efficient method for structuring video comments before they are capable of designing coherent VF. The strategies that educators use to create WF may not work to create VF. Growing more comfortable in front of the camera may lead educators to use more body language effectively in a video, but it may not. Some instructors may be more prone to using gestures because of their personality, and some may not. Roger and Joe were not as animated as William in their VF, and they did not become more animated as a result of making VF in this study. More research is needed to determine how educators learn how to use VF.

Conclusion

Organizing comments and managing gestures for a video requires video literacies and a commitment to semiotic principles for teaching and learning. When making VF for the first time, a significant amount of labor is devoted to learning multiliteracies, managing gestures, and organizing video comments. Professors in this study needed more time to learn video literacies, and they needed to develop a self-awareness of their paralinguistic activity and how to control gestures to communicate. Lastly, these professors needed a method for structuring and recording video comments so they could maintain eye contact, remember and recall their comments, and sustain a consistent tone of voice. Enticing professors with limited video-making experience to adopt VF is difficult if they cannot imagine how its benefits outweigh its costs in time and labor.

Martin, D. (2024). Making Video Feedback for the First Time: A Case Study. *Journal of Response to Writing*, *10*(2), 49–74.

Educators should not substitute VF for WF, either. Research on VF and WF has demonstrated that students like both modes of feedback (Grigoryan, 2017; Silva, 2012). Another area of research on VF that needs more attention is using VF with written corrective feedback (WCF). For example, can VF—a more conversational mode of feedback—provide indirect WCF since indirect WCF focuses on providing comments about corrections instead of corrections (Lira-Gonzales & Valeo, 2023, p. 7)? Research on whether or not VF is an effective tool to support WCF would be valuable since we know both modes of feedback are formative and can provide unique learning experiences. There is also room for further studies on using VF to provide more conversational comments on low-stakes assignments (Cohn & Stewart, 2016). Students benefit from feedback on the early stages of the writing process, and they need more informal, conversational comments to help move their writing forward. More research on VF and low-stakes feedback would be helpful, but first and foremost, we need more educators to use VF and expand its potentials for learning.

Martin, D. (2024). Making Video Feedback for the First Time: A Case Study. *Journal of Response to Writing*, *10*(2), 49–74.

References

Ball, C. (2004). Show, not tell: The value of new media scholarship. *Computers and Composition, 21*, 403–425.

Bavelas, J., & Chovil, N. (2000). Visible acts of meaning: An integrated message model of language in face-to-face dialogue. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 19*(2), 163–194.

Bavelas, J., Gerwing, J., & Healing, S. (2014). Hand and facial gestures in conversational interaction. In T. M. Holtgraves (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of language and social psychology* (pp. 111–130). Oxford University Press.

Bezemer, J., & Kress, G. (2008). Writing in multimodal texts: A social semiotic account of designs for learning. *Written Communication, 25*(2), 166–195.

Borup, J., West, R. E., Thomas, R., & Graham, C. R. (2014). Examining the impact of video feedback on instructor social presence in blended courses. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 15*(3), 232–256.

Bruce, D. L. (2009). Writing with visual images: Examining the video composition processes of high school students. *Research in the Teaching of English, 43*(4), 426–450.

Cavanaugh, A., & Song, L. (2021). A comparison analysis of five instructors' commenting patterns of audio and written feedback on students' writing assignments. *Journal of Response to Writing, 7*(1), 5–35.

Cohn, J., & Stewart, M. (2016). Promoting metacognitive thought through response to low-stakes reflective writing. J*ournal of Response to Writing, 2*(1), 58–74.

Crook, A., Mauchline, A., Maw, S., Lawson, C., Drinkwater, R., Lundqvist, K., Orsmond, P., Gomez, S., & Park, J. (2012). The use of video technology for providing feedback to students. Can it enhance the feedback

experience for staff and students? *Computers and Education, 58*(1), 386–396.

Dunn, C. K. (2015). Preparing professional writers via technologically enhanced feedback: Results of a one-year study. *The Journal of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering, 31*(2), 1–19.

Fukkink, R. G., Noortje, T., & Kramer, L. J. C. (2011). Video feedback in education and training: Putting learning in the picture. *Educational Psychology Review, 23*(1), 45–63.

Gee, J. P. (1989). Literacy, discourse, and linguistics: Introduction. *Journal of Education, 171*(1), 5–176.

Gee, J. P. (2004). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Grigoryan, A. (2017). Audiovisual commentary as a way to reduce transactional distance and increase teaching presence in online writing instruction: Student perceptions and preferences. *Journal of Response to Writing, 3*(1), 83–128.

Hung, S. A. (2016). Enhancing feedback provision through multimodal technology. *Computer and Education, 98*, 90–101.

Jones, N., Georghiades, P., & Gunson, J. (2012). Student feedback via screen capture digital video: Stimulating student's modified action. *Higher Education, 64*(5), 593–607.

Lamb, J. (2018). To boldly go: Feedback as digital, multimodal dialogue. *Multimodal Technologies Interact, 2*(3), 49.

Lamey, A. (2015). Video feedback in philosophy. *Metaphilosophy, 46*(4–5), 691–702.

Lira-Gonzales, M.-L., & Valeo, A. (2023). Written corrective feedback and learner engagement: A case study of a French-as-a-second-language program. *Journal of Response to Writing, 9*(1), Article 2.

Lovett, M., Gossett, K. E., Lamanna, C. A., Purdy, J. A., & Squire, J. (2009).

Writing with video: What happens when composition comes off the page? In J. Kalmback & C. Ball (Eds.), *Reading and writing in new media* (pp. 1–25). Hampton Press.

Mathisen, P. (2012). Video feedback in higher education—A contribution to improving the quality of written feedback. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy, 7*, 97–116.

McCarthy, J. (2015). Evaluating written, audio and video feedback in higher education summative assessment tasks. *Issues in Educational Research, 25*(2), 153–169.

Miller, S. M. (2007). English teacher learning for new times: Digital video composing as multimodal literacy practice. *English Education, 40*(1), 61–83.

Özkul, S., & Ortactepe, D. (2017). The use of video feedback in teaching process. *TESOL Journal, 8*(4), 862–877.

Peräkylä, A., & Ruusuvuori, J. (2006). Facial expression in an assessment. In H. Knoblauch, H.G. Soeffner, B. Schnettler, & J. Raab (Eds.), *Video analysis: Methodology and methods: Qualitative audiovisual data analysis in sociology* (pp. 127–142). Peter Lang.

Silva, M. L. (2012). Camtasia in the classroom: Student attitudes and preferences for video commentary or Microsoft Word comments during the revision process. *Computers and Composition, 29,* 1–22.

Spielmann, Y. (2006). Video: from technology to medium. *Art Journal, 65*(3), 54–69.

The New London Group. (2014). From a pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. In C. Lutkewitte (Ed.), *Multimodal composition: A critical sourcebook* (pp. 193–232). Bedford/St. Martin's.

Thompson, R., & Lee, M. J. (2012). Talking with students through screencasting: Experimentations with video feedback to improve student

learning. *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy, 1*(1). http://jitp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2012/table-of-contents-issue-one/

Warnock, S. (2009). *Teaching writing online*. NCTE.

Warren, C. A. B. (2002). Qualitative interviews. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 83–102). Sage Publication.

Wilkie, B., & Liefeith, A. (2022). Student experiences of live synchronised video feedback in formative assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education, 27*(3), 403–416.

Wood, J. (2023). Enabling feedback seeking, agency and uptake through dialogic screencast feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 48*(4), 464–484.