

## Using Learners' Video Recordings for Skills Development and Assessments

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### Abstract

Using students' video recordings enables learners to develop their skills as well as gain more awareness of self- and peer assessments in foreign language learning settings. Furthermore, with online tools that not only video record but also allow for video sharing, there are numerous benefits for both students and teachers in comparison to speaking assessments done in real time. In particular, learners have the opportunity to practice their speaking tasks numerous times, review their performance, and select the ideal performance that they would like to submit for grading. When assessing, students can rewatch their own and others' performances numerous times, if necessary, with a decrease in the number of distractions that may occur with grading in the classroom. Learners can use their video recordings for self-assessment and use multiple recordings from previous dates to reflect on the development of their skills. In addition, video sharing can allow students to peer assess. An activity using learners' video recordings in English debate classes will be shared. A discussion and adaptations of the activity for skills development and learner-participatory assessments will also be explored.

*Keywords:* assessment, peer assessment, self assessment, video recordings, reflection journals

### Introduction

In fall 2021, first-year students from three English debate classes were required to make videos on an online video-recording and video-sharing tool, *Flip* (Microsoft, 2022), as part of their homework. All three classes had TOEIC scores from 480 to 699, with two classes having in-person lessons and one class having online lessons. Students were also expected to compare their performance from a previous lesson with a more recent one to reflect on their performance as well as complete two reflection journals and two optional online surveys about viewing the videos and self- and peer feedback. In the debate class, during debate tests, The instructor would assess and provide feedback, and students would share feedback of the classmates' performances after the debates. The video-recording activity was created to help the students practice their debating skills, particularly arguments and summaries. The current article builds on research already presented in Arthurson (2022). By taking a more pedagogical focus on implementation of the activity, it is hoped that the article might be of use to other practitioners interested in conducting a similar task. Furthermore, based on the instructor's comments using the rubric for each video submitted by students, it was hoped that learners would become more familiar with performance expectations, enabling them to improve their own performances through self assessing and to better understand how to give feedback to their classmates when peer assessing.

### Literature Review

Using student video recordings alongside self- and peer assessments has many advantages in the language learning classroom with regard to learners' increased usage of skills outside the classroom, more control of output, reduction of stress, and a greater ease in assessments. Students

can practice multiple times and determine which performance they decide to submit, giving them control of their output (King's College London, 2022). In contrast with real-time assessments, videos allow for multiple viewings for assessments of speaking tasks. For students, this can better allow for self- and peer assessments because if they are uncertain about how to grade, they can review the video again while confirming the scoring criteria. They can also watch the video again in case they think they may have missed or not understood something. Furthermore, having students view their own and peers' performances on their own computers or devices may reduce the number of distractions that can occur in the classroom.

In addition, many EFL students in countries where English is not the native language may have few chances of speaking English when not in class (Göktürk, 2016, p. 72). Having students make videos allows them to practice speaking skills wherever their chosen site of recording is and to use English, or any other foreign language under study that is not spoken by the majority of the population, multiple times. For grading, having student recorded videos lessens the stress that often comes with being tested in front of the instructor and classmates versus a testing setting determined by the students who use their devices (Sumardi, Adzima, & Wijaya, 2020, p.67). One point to note when using video recording of student performances is that some learners may not be comfortable with video and prefer only their audio be recorded (King's College London, 2022, para. 15).

Self- and peer assessments allow for students to have greater control over their learning, self-awareness, and reflection of their performances. By having students use grading rubrics in assessments, they can understand what is expected of them as they also use the rubric instead of only the instructor, resulting in more autonomy of their learning (Benson, 2011; Sebba et al., 2008, p. 1). Students can also understand more concretely how their skills have developed or need to be developed when using videos for self- and peer assessment (Qureshiet al., 2019; Sumardiet al., 2020; Tailab & Marsh, 2020). According to a study by Cotter & Hinkelman (2019), students using their own videos with student-led assessments, resulting in a better future output (p. 98). Students can also use their videos as reflection tools (Sumardiet al., 2020, p.67). Accordingly, students can put their performances into the context of how the past performances shape their future performances. By viewing their performances, the learners may also be more confident and potentially more motivated about the language under study (Göktürk, 2016, p. 87). If students have more responsibility over their learning by better understanding how they need to improve their skills, this could lead to a greater desire for life-long learning (Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2013; Sebba et al., 2008, p. 5).

Christian, Hoskins, and Watanabe's (2010) study of Japanese university students' video recordings with self- and peer assessment tasks proved that such activities can be effective in improving learners' speaking skills and providing them with more awareness of their performances. Students would go to their instructors' offices to record their videos using webcams and view them there for the assessments (Christianson et al., 2010). However, changes in accessibility to technology now allow students to choose when and where to record their performances, as most students have access to a computer or device. Accordingly, using online tools to record and share videos seemed an ideal way to also help students to self- and peer assess in EFL classes.

## Procedure

Video-making was part of the students' homework tasks, with eight videos to be recorded with a video-recording and -sharing tool, *Flip* (Microsoft, 2022), during fall 2021's 14-week semester. Students also used a debate textbook, *Up For Debate* (Mishima et al., 2021), with the same rubric that

the instructor used for assessments. The videos would be the basis for students' debate practice, review of instructor feedback based on the rubric, familiarization with the rubric, self-assessments, and peer assessment preparation. The steps students would follow for the activity will be outlined and then followed by a more detailed explanation for each step. The outline is below:

1. Write their argument to the assignment proposition and position for weeks 1 to 6 and the debate summary for weeks 10 and 11.
2. Record their argument on the online tool for weeks 1 to 6, 10, and 11.
3. Receive instructor feedback of the video based on the rubric via the private section comments of the online tool for weeks 1 to 6, 10, and 11.
4. Compare week 2's video with week 6's video and then write about that process in a reflection journal. See Appendix A. Then answer an online survey about self-assessing the debate skills. See Appendix B.
5. Compare week 6's video with week 11's video and then write about that process in a reflection journal. See Appendix C. Then answer an online survey about peer-assessing skills. See Appendix D.

### Step 1

To prepare students for the video recording, part of the homework task included a prompt in a reflection journal requiring them to write an argument for the lesson's proposition and position, including the target language. This would enable the students to be ready for the recording, potentially lessening any anxiety, and to simulate what was required for the mid- and final-term debates, which also used written arguments.

### Step 2

Using the prompt from the reflection journals, students used the video-recording and -sharing tool. Students were given up to five minutes of recording time. The prompt for weeks 1 to 6 was as follows:

*Please use your Reflection Journal to help you. Use the proposition and position (affirmative/negative) you were given in class. You can use your team's arguments and sources. Write your speech with three points, each with a source. Include the summary. Also use Appendix A "Useful Expressions for Debate Skills" on page 58.*

The prompt for weeks 10 and 11 was as follows:

*Please use your Reflection Journal to help you. Use the summary your team made in the lesson. Remember to include your team's three points, the other team's points, the proposition, and your team's position. Also use Appendix A "Useful Expressions for Debate Skills" on page 58.*

### Step 3

Before the next class, the instructor viewed the recordings and posted individual and private

comments to each student, using the rubric for the argument's organization and quality. An example of the feedback for the argument speech is as follows:

*Argumentation's Organization: Good*

*Argumentation's Quality: Supported all points using data and sources*

*Summary: Restate the points again*

An example of the feedback for the final debate speech is as follows:

*Well done! The summary had your team's proposition, position, three points, and the other team's three points.*

Students were expected to read their feedback before the next class. At the start of the class, the instructor gave general feedback about the videos and commented on particular students who had given good performances. During this time, students could also view their feedback.

#### **Step 4**

Students were once again assigned the reflection journals for week 6; however, the prompts were focused on the self-assessment process. See Appendix A. The survey questions were also included in the week 6 reflection journal to prepare students for the online survey. The link to the online survey was shared during week 6 and given time at the start of week 7's class. Students were asked to compare week 2's video with week 6's video. Then they were asked to answer an optional online survey about the self-assessing debate skills such as the level of difficulty assessing their argument's strength. See Appendix B. Students were also asked if watching their videos assisted with assessment.

#### **Step 5**

This step followed a similar process to step 4, with a reflection journal for week 11 having prompts focusing on the peer-assessment process. See Appendix C. Furthermore, the second online survey's link was shared during week 11, and time was given at the start of week 12's class. See Appendix D. The videos to be compared were week 6's video and week 11's video. This survey's question focused on peer assessment.

### **Discussion**

The activity was crafted to help the students develop their debate skills and assessment abilities. In general, most of the students completed the video activity. This means that they practiced their arguments at least once outside of the classroom, developing their debate skills. Furthermore, some students may have had multiple attempts at recording their arguments before posting their final submissions, resulting in more practice of their skills. On the whole, most students completed the videos, though as the semester progressed, the number decreased. The quality of the submissions was quite good, with students completing the requirements of the rubric.

The rubric was often referred to in the class, and the applicable parts were used as the

instructor's comments on the online tool to give individual feedback. Furthermore, the instructor had occasionally referenced those students demonstrating good performances in their videos at the start of the lesson in classes following the video homework task. It was expected that students could have a better understanding of the rubric based on this. Furthermore, it was hoped that the surveys and reflection journals would provide the instructor with more feedback about the effectiveness of the videos for self- and peer assessing. It did provide some information as some students felt that assessing was not difficult, yet many felt that they lacked the confidence to correctly assess.

It appeared that during the peer-feedback sessions after the mid- and final-term debates, the students were comfortable assessing their classmates using the rubric when presenting their feedback to the class. Through the surveys and reflection journals about assessments, many students felt using videos was a helpful tool in assessment. The reflection journals, Appendix A and C, were used to prepare students for the two surveys. The surveys, Appendix B and D, were used to get the students to compare their performances and elicit feedback for the instructor about how they viewed self- and peer assessments using the rubric. There were some issues about receiving duplicate and contradictory responses using the online surveys, in addition to getting students to submit both the surveys. It should be noted that students' consent was gained for the surveys as part of another research project, but the journals were not part of that project, so the instructor had no permission to share journals' contents. These surveys were optional tasks. Consequently, this resulted in 20% of students completing the homework tasks for the required videos to be previewed and correctly submitting both surveys. Nevertheless, a portion of the students' survey responses will be shared below, focusing on videos in relation to self- and peer assessment.

From Survey 1's Question 5, "Did watching the two videos help you to learn how to judge your performance?" Responses are with 7 answering agree, 5 answering not sure, and 1 answering disagree. The responses to the optional prompt are as follows:

*Agree because comparing the two videos helped me learn how to judge because of the differences.  
Agree because I saw obvious change[s] in two videos. Two videos have a big difference[s].*

From Survey 2's Question 5, "Do you think watching your own video helps you to judge other students' performances?" Responses with 7 answering agree, 4 answering not sure, and 2 answering disagree. The response to the optional prompt is as follows:

*Agree because I can find the difference.*

There are limitations, such as with students not completing homework or reading their feedback or using the video-sharing component of the online tool. If students did not do their homework, they did not perform video recordings. Though students received written feedback on their videos, it is difficult to determine if the written feedback was read on the video-making and -sharing tool by the students and if they viewed their videos again to better understand the feedback. During the mid- and final-term test peer-feedback activities, students directly referenced the rubric in class, and at that time, the instructor also gave oral feedback on how well they assessed their peers. Students were required to take notes when judging, so they could give more accurate feedback, but the instructor did not check or give formal feedback on their notes. Doing this may have helped the learners gain more awareness into expectations about giving feedback, consequently helping them to gain more confidence. Furthermore, having students view their classmates' videos on the online tool would also

be helpful so that they might understand how their feedback compares with those of the instructors. This would give students more awareness of how to assess, especially during the mid- and final-term debates.

## **Adaptations**

The activity was created for a debate class, but it could be adapted for any class that uses speaking skills such as presentation or discussion classes. Steps 1 to 3 would be most applicable for video recordings and assessment, as any speaking task could be assigned alongside the appropriate rubric. The benefits of using the video recordings such as awareness of skills, potential improvement of future output, and a source of reflection will still occur (Cotter & Hinkelman; 2019, p. 98; Qureshi et al., 2019; Sumardiet al., 2020; Tailab & Marsh, 2020). Steps 4 to 5 could be changed from a survey or reflection journal to pair or group discussions or even a student video recording for the instructor to gain more understanding of how students perceive assessing. Though these two steps could also be omitted, it is useful to know how students feel about the difficulty of assessing and the usefulness of video recordings so that appropriate support might be given by the instructor. Therefore, it is recommended that the journal prompts and survey questions from the appendices be shared with students and altered based on the students' needs.

For those instructors interested in having their students video record to aid in self- and peer assessments, they can model an ideal performance in a video. Showing it in the classroom could be more practical and beneficial than the aforementioned actions. This video could also be used as a discussion point that could aid learners in reflecting on their own performance regarding what they achieved and still need to achieve pertaining to their skills. Using students' recordings for others to peer-assess would also be useful. Students could compare their comments about their peer's performances with their instructor's to see how their assessing skills are. In addition, checking students' assessment notes of this practice activity would also be beneficial. Moreover, instead of surveys or reflection journals to gain students feedback about assessing, in-class discussion where the instructor would determine the areas of uncertainty based on students' comments and address these to the class could be more appropriate. Such modifications may give students more guidance in developing assessment skills.

## **Conclusion**

Using students' video recordings with self- and peer assessments can be an activity for more concrete awareness of their skills usage, points of improvement for future performances, areas for growth, and even practices to develop life-long learning through more participation and control in their learning. The activity in the debate class required students to record a performing video on an online tool, most often presenting an argument and sometimes giving a summary of their debate. Students were then given private written feedback so that they could understand how they use the rubric when they self-assessed and peer-assessed. An area of concern was that many students were uncertain if they were assessing correctly, so in the future, it is important to give students more examples of how to assess using the video and the rubric. Other speaking classes may also benefit from this activity, which aids in students practicing speaking the foreign language outside the classroom, seeing how their skills are developing, and better understanding how to assess by using videos as a practice for real-time assessments.

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## Appendices Appendix A

### Debate Class: Reflection Journal

After each class, you will write a reflection journal due for the day after the class before 23:59 as a Self-Study Task. Please use the following prompts to help you:

1. Do you think making videos helps you judge how you do in debate, for example:
  - a. organization of arguments, b. quality of arguments, c. debate skills and d. Summaries? Why?
2. Do you feel confident about judging how well you do in a debate? Why?
3. Using your notes (and classmates), write as much as you can about the other team's argument, for example their points, sources, and data.
4. Use the proposition and position (affirmative/negative) you were given in class. You can use your team's arguments and sources. Write your speech with three points, each with a source and include the summary. Also use Appendix A "Useful Expressions for Debate Skills" on page 58.
5. Based on the proposition and position you were given at the end of class, find one point with source(s) and data to support your argument. You will share it with your team in Lesson 7.
6. *Optional*: If there is anything else that you would like to comment on about the class, feel free.
7. Include the word count.

*\*\*Remember to use page 8 and 9 of Becoming a Better Writer to format your journal correctly.*

REFLECTION JOURNAL GRADING INFORMATION: 3 POINTS		
Length 1 POINTS	Understandability 1 POINT	Due date 1 POINTS
Minimum length is written	Ideas could be understood	Submitted on time



## Appendix B

### Survey 1

First, record the Lesson 6 homework video on Flipgrid. Then, watch the Lesson 2 Flipgrid video. Next, watch the Lesson 6 video. Use the Debate Rubric information on pages 62 to 63 to help you complete the Lesson 6 Reflection Journal. After you have completed the journal, please answer these questions. You can complete this survey anytime after recording your video and submitting your journal for Lesson 6. Furthermore, at the beginning of Lesson 7's class, I will also give you time to complete the survey. If you need to use Japanese, you can.

1. To judge the organization of my arguments is

- A. easy          B. so-so          C. difficult

because (Optional):

2. To judge the strength of my arguments is:

- A. easy          B. so-so          C. difficult

because (Optional):

3. To judge the debate skills used in my arguments is:

- A. easy          B. so-so          C. difficult

because (Optional):

4. To judge my arguments' summaries is:

- A. easy          B. so-so          C. difficult

because (Optional):

5. Did watching the two videos help you to learn how to judge your performance?

- A. Agree.          B. Not sure.          C. Disagree.

Because (Optional):

6. Do you feel confident about judging your performance?

- A. Agree.          B. Not sure          C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

If you have other comments about judging Lesson 1 and 6's videos, please share them here:

## Appendix C

### Debate Class: Reflection Journal

After each class, you will write a reflection journal due for the day after the class before 23:59 as a Self-Study Task. Please use the following prompts to help you:

1. Do you think it is easy to judge how classmates do in debate, for example:
  - a. organization and quality of arguments, b. cross-examination, c. rebuttals, and d. final summaries? Why or why not?
2. Do you think watching your own video helps you to judge other students' performance? Why or why not?
3. Do you think making videos helped your performance in debates? Why?
4. Would you like to record a video of your performance again? Why or why not?
5. Use the summary your team made in the lesson. Remember to include a. your team's three points, b. the other team's points, c. 1 or 2 rebuttals, d. the proposition, and e. your team's position in the summary. Also use Appendix A "Useful Expressions for Debate Skills" on page 58.
6. Based on the proposition and position you were given at the end of class, find one point with source(s) and data to support your argument. You will share it with your team in Lesson 12 to prepare for the final debate.
7. *Optional:* If there is anything else that you would like to comment on about the class, feel free.
8. Include the word count.

*\*\*Remember to use page 8 and 9 of Becoming a Better Writer to format your journal correctly.*

REFLECTION JOURNAL GRADING INFORMATION: 3 POINTS		
Length 1 POINTS	Understandability 1 POINT	Due date 1 POINTS
Minimum length is written	Ideas could be understand	Submitted on time

## Appendix D

### Survey 2

First, record the Lesson 11 homework video on Flipgrid. Then, watch the Lesson 6 homework video. Next, watch the Lesson 11 video. Use the Debate Rubric information on pages 62 to 63. You can complete this survey anytime after recording the Lesson 11 homework video. At the beginning of Lesson 12's class, I will also give you time to complete the survey. If you need to use Japanese, you can.

1. Is it easy to judge the organization of the arguments?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

2. Is it easy to judge the strength of the arguments?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

3. Is it easy to judge the debate skills used in the arguments?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

4. Is it easy to judge the arguments' summaries?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

5. Do you think watching your own video helps you to judge other students' performance?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

6. Do you feel confident about judging your performance?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

7. Do you think making videos helped your performance in debates?

A. Agree.      B. Not sure      C. Disagree

Because (Optional):

8. Would you like to record a video of your performance again? Why or why not?

Answer:

9. Feel free to share any other comments related to using videos to judge your performance.

Answer: