

Otis Assessment, Research and Scholarship Grant
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May 13, 2016

Capturing Performance: Assessing Student Work with Video

That magic in the classroom is ineffable. Articulating what happens in a theater class proves a particular challenge. Those invigorating yet awkward liminal spaces that students inhabit while conveying a character are valuable but near impossible to adequately explain to curious colleagues, administration, and students, especially in my case – teaching performance at a college with no theater department. The goal of this OARS grant for Otis College of Art & Design is to capture some of that magic and confusion of student performance on digital video and to identify the Institutional Learning Outcomes and WSCUC Core Competencies conveyed in this type of student work.

Specifically, I used the OARS Grant¹ to explore the educational value of:

1. Videoing students in the classroom.
2. Assigning students the task of videoing themselves at home.
3. Showing students their classmates' videos to prompt discussion.

Research Questions:

- How does student familiarity with being filmed or resistance to being filmed affect reception and participation in the course assignments?
- How does video recording student performances inside and outside of the classroom affect learning?
- Will students make creative decisions with video?

Research Objectives:

- Determine student comfort level with being filmed inside and outside of the classroom.
- Determine advantages and disadvantages of filming students in the classroom and of assigning “home movies” as homework assignments.
- Identify whether students perceive their filmed performances as part of a process or as a fixed outcome of success or failure.
- Determine Institutional Learning Outcomes conveyed in student work.
- Study student work to determine other values of video-making in the

¹ The purpose of my grant changed at the onset of the project. Initially, I set out to capture not only video of students, but also audio of the critique. Sue Mayberry noted that the audio of the critique was less compelling than the video. I agreed, especially after the first day of filming – the students were more engaged with the video of the performance itself than the audio recording of the feedback.

- curriculum.
- Offer faculty ideas for integrating video-making in their curriculum.
 - Capture and document student performance

I pursued these objectives via an assignment for my Ways of Knowing: Art Imitating Life class, a Foundation-level interdisciplinary liberal studies course with an emphasis on performance, literature, and research.

The Assignment: ‘Capturing Performance’

Prompt:

https://ospace.otis.edu/libs_114_ways_of_knowing_2016_ail_spring_16/Monologue

Embracing the Oral and Written Communication, Information Literacy, and Social Responsibility goals of the college and emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the Ways of Knowing² curriculum, students will write and perform a monologue based on a story they’ve developed from a recent or historical event.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop an understanding of the genre conventions of dramatic literature and monologues.
- Become aware of nonverbal communicative tools, such as body language, gesture, and overall physicality.
- Write a dramatic piece of literature that conveys character, story, and cultural context.
- Integrate lessons of breath support, projection, eye-contact, and connection with the text to better connect with the self, the audience, the historical context, and the psychology and emotional life of the character.
- Identify experiences of empathy and desire for social justice in reading about parties in news events and witnessing classmates in performance.
- Engage in research via sources, utilizing academic research and other source material appropriate for the subject matter.

Assignment Timeline:

1. Search for a specific story from history or from current events in which you feel empathy for a person or group of persons or in which you feel emboldened by a principal.
2. Develop a character from this event and write a monologue that encapsulates the circumstances and the character’s crisis.

² The Ways of Knowing Course is an interdisciplinary theme and issue driven project-based course. The theme for my section: “Art Imitating Life” was theater and performance. This section was paired with Ways of Knowing: Life Imitating Art, a Cultural Studies course focusing on performance theory. We overlapped as we diagnosed narrative, the stories we tell, and how we ‘perform’ in life and on ‘live’ on the stage.

3. First Draft: peer-edit first draft.
4. First Performance: perform piece for the class. Performance will be filmed. All students receive video of performance.
5. Critique: faculty leads a five-minute group critique for every student.
6. Final Performance: perform the final draft of the monologue at home, making three major changes – one for character, one for story, and one for production.
7. Post first and final performance to eportfolio.
8. View final pieces with the class and with partnered Ways of Knowing Section.
9. Complete objective and subjective surveys about first performance, critique, and final performance. Reflect on performance and video.

Institutional Learning Outcomes of ‘Capturing Performance’³:

Creativity & Innovation: Otis graduates will be able to approach their work in imaginative ways characterized by a high degree of experimentation, risk-taking, and divergent thinking, and be able to produce work that challenges convention.

Visual Fluency: Otis graduates will be able to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and create visual materials in both physical and digital formats.

Social Responsibility: Otis graduates will be able to demonstrate an awareness of the social and environmental impacts of art and design, produce creative, sustainable, and ethical solutions in their work, and bring positive change to their communities.

Applicable WSCUC Core Competencies of ‘Capturing Performance’⁴:

Critical Thinking: Otis graduates will be able to identify issues clearly, synthesize and contextualize relevant sources, and make connections across experiences and disciplinary perspectives to create well-reasoned and imaginative approaches to issues, problems, and challenges.

Written & Oral Communication: Otis graduates will be able to express ideas in a coherent, logical, and compelling way, both orally and in writing.

Information Literacy: Otis graduates will be able to assemble, evaluate, and ethically use information from diverse sources to accomplish a specific purpose.

Why Capture Performance?

The original Greek definition of *drama* means ‘to do’. Drama and the performing

³ See more information of both Otis College Institutional Learning Outcomes and WSCUC Core Competencies at: <http://www.otis.edu/institutional-learning-outcomes#sthash.Ds5vCm6z.dpuf>

⁴ WSCUC’s required categories - Otis’ descriptions.

arts demand a constructivist mode of learning – students construct an understanding of the character and story through experimentation, problem solving, and past experience. In their study, “Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education”⁵ Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb emphasize how student learning “involves the integrated function of the total person - thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving” and offers an “adaption to the world”. This integrated learning is an outcome of the monologue assignment; most assignments in theater require such holistic engagement. But it is the digital video recording of performance that makes the classroom a truer ‘adaptation to the world’:

- The technological mode of video parallels student interaction – often through the screens of phones and computers.
- Students already experience narrative, emotion, politics, relationship, and education through video.
- Video allows the students to use the performance – both the classroom performance and the performances done at home – as a moment in a process, not a finished product or a final judgment of success or failure.
- The video serves as invaluable means for editing and adjustment. Factors such as adrenaline and self-consciousness can inhibit student ability to listen and absorb comments from faculty and peers – revisiting the video is their tool for revision.
- Video captures the ephemeral moments (true – much is lost in this ‘capture’; video is a frame of the moment, not a true, absolute document of an event).
- Recording performance allows a more moderate perspective of where the student is in the continuum – the video serves as a mirror (though an imperfect one) and offers an opportunity for self-appreciation and acceptance.

Smart Phone: The Familiar

“More specifically, we must consider and use additional modalities that aid our twenty-first-century-minded students in learning about and through theater”⁶

While students (and this teacher) use digital technology as a means of distancing oneself, screens are also methods for connection. The screens of phone and laptop are the filter, the lens, and the ‘space’ for communication, daily tasks, emotional exchanges, politicking, research, consumption, job hunting, taking chances, rejection, and procuring the basics of life like food and shelter.

⁵ “Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education” Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 2005), p. 194.

⁶ “Multimodal Literacy & Theater Education”, Amy Petersen Jensen, *Arts Education Policy Review*, Vol. 109, No. 5, (May/June 2008), p. 19.

Combining digital video and performance, and filming these performance with cameras on personal devices like smart phones is essential in a course entitled “Art Imitating Life”. Capturing live theater with today’s technology is not only meeting students (and teachers) where they are⁷, but the capturing itself can be a rich endeavor that enhances aesthetic and narrative.

Theater: The Strange

The main task of my OARS grant is to investigate the benefits and pitfalls of filming student performance. A byproduct of this study is the opportunity to investigate the intersection of digital video and theater principles with non-theater majors, students who are perhaps more familiar with editing video on their smart phones than with the strange sensations of live performance.

The tenets of theatrical performance – listening, responding to stimuli, pursuing honest reaction, awareness of breath and body, cultural relevance, filling up the stage or room or connecting with the camera lens – are also skills for the non-actor. What profession or art form does not require listening, awareness, and response to stimuli? Additionally, these visual art and design students study and practice concepts like lighting, angle, intensity, contrast, gesture, context – concepts that can inform character development and the video-making process.

The possibilities for visual art students developing relevant work of this nature is expressed in Amy Petersen Jensen’s “Multimodal Literacy and Theater Education”⁸:

Educators should ask themselves how they might use theater tools and methods to increase students’ critical awareness of the media that surrounds them. Theater teachers can plan for overt instruction that focuses the student learner’s attention on the pervasive media in ways that allow for the meta-awareness of and reflection on patterns and relationships among the students’ bodies, contemporary modes of entertainment, and mediums that convey those modes.

The value derived from theater and digital video technology in a non-theater major’s classroom could allow for such ‘meta-awareness’ and ‘reflections on patterns and relationships’ in that students are subjected to themselves – they are filmed, they watch themselves on film, they film themselves, they download all of these videos onto their phones or computers and upload, edit, and arrange the videos onto their eportfolio (the digital compendium of their academic and studio work). This sequence of course work demands that students study their behavior –

⁷ “Expanding Learning Opportunities with Transmedia Practices: *Intimate Alice* as an Exemplar”, Laura Fleming, *The National Association for Media Literacy Education’s Journal of Media Literacy Education* Vol, 5, No. 2 (2013), p. 371.

⁸ “Multimodal Literacy & Theater Education”, Amy Petersen Jensen, *Arts Education Policy Review*, Vol, 109, No. 5, (May/June 2008), p. 24.

examine how they behave on screen, how they engage through these “contemporary modes” and “mediums that convey these modes”.

Determine student comfort levels with being filmed inside and outside of the classroom.

What Happened?

Week 1, Student Digital Video History:

When I teach a theater class to non-theater majors, the first question I ask is - What is your experience with the theater? For this particular section: four students had experience acting in high school, one student acted professional, and the remaining fifteen had little to no experience. I also informed the students that they would be performing a monologue and that they would be filmed. I heard gasps.

To more accurately measure student apprehension and familiarity with being filmed, I conducted a brief survey of student digital video history, surveying both personal use and video in the classroom.

Student Digital Video History: Classroom & Personal Survey Results⁹:

-58.8% were videoed in high school¹⁰ classrooms.

-52.9.% grew up making videos for fun.

-76.5% of students currently still video themselves for fun.

-88.2% share videos of themselves with friends.

-70.6% post videos of themselves on social media

-Graphed results below show responses to the following question: On these personal videos, do you consider yourself: acting, being yourself, playing a persona, or some other experience, (students checked all that apply).

⁹ Seventeen students responded to the survey.

¹⁰ Most students surveyed were Foundation students.



What do these numbers suggest?

- The majority of students surveyed have experience being filmed in a classroom setting (56.3%).
- The majority of students surveyed feel comfortable making footage of themselves (75.5% make videos for fun)
- The majority of students surveyed share these videos with friends (87.5%) and a smaller majority share videos on the internet for a known and unknown audience (68.8%). This shows many students are comfortable with video in particular contexts – namely, video as a means of social connection and self-expression.
- The students express themselves in multiple mediums and are capable of reflecting on the experiential elements of video and performance, or on the “patterns and relationships...among the students’ bodies, contemporary modes of entertainment, and mediums that convey those modes”¹¹ This response shows a nuanced understanding of the complicated psychological relationship to the medium. For instance, most students surveyed feel like themselves, but also feel like they are acting or adopting a persona simultaneously. A select few experience something as yet undefined. These results suggest students already have meta-awareness.

Weeks 2&3, Genre & Purpose:

Genre: To prepare for the monologue assignment, I showed examples of filmed dramatic monologues to establish criteria. We watched pivotal scenes from film adaptations of famous plays (John Proctor’s monologue outside the courthouse in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and Lady Macbeth’s *Come, you spirits* monologue from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*). I selected stories the students would be familiar with (or plays in which I could give a brief summary of before watching).

¹¹ “Multimodal Literacy & Theater Education” Jensen, *Arts Education Policy Review*, Vol, 109, No. 5, (May/June 2008), p. 24.

We considered the motivations of the character leading up to the monologue, theorized why the actors, art director, and costumes designers made particular choices, and evaluated how setting, body, and voice and fed the story.

We also discussed the research involved for this particular *Crucible* scene (when John Proctor proclaims there is no justice). We reviewed the Salem Witch Trials, the House of Un-American Activities Committee, and examined the playwright's research process as well as his essay on modern tragedies.

For the Lady Macbeth monologue, students examined the feminine and masculine and how Lady Macbeth's text informed this particular adaptation. Students also contrasted the piece with modern ideas about war and ambition.

I hoped these examples and discussions would set a standard for the students, encouraging them to research and think critically about the social and psychological aspects of characterization and about the specificity required for costuming, set, and production.

Purpose: Class discussions focused on specificity and the problems of haphazard choices. This is, of course, true across all genres, but it is especially important to emphasize specificity and purpose when bringing video into the classroom, in part because students are so comfortable with the mode; many share videos with their friends and video is often a mode of passive entertainment. Reminding and reinforcing the purpose of the assignment is essential or the lines between school and personal life, course work and entertainment, might blur. This blurring of lines can be positive, but not if it sacrifices a critical approach.

Week 3, Characterization, Dramatization, & Revision:

Characterization: After reviewing samples of the genre and learning course concepts like catharsis, characterization, dramatization, and empathy, students selected a news article that resonated with a story they wanted to tell or a character they wanted to depict.

Dramatization: Students wrote for ten-minute intervals during class, revisiting the article and concepts of storytelling between suggested writing prompts. Students also stretched their bodies and listened to their breath to better connect with their instruments before reading their work aloud.

Peer Review: Students exchanged monologues and looked for coherence, specificity, and clear context. Going forward, I would like to develop a rubric for this peer review so students can better assess one another's piece and juxtapose the work with criteria of the dramatic monologue form.

Determine advantages and disadvantages of filming students in the classroom and of assigning "home movies" as homework assignments.

Weeks 5 & 6, Filming:

Using my personal iPhone, I videoed the students performing their first draft. I had had planned to upload the video to Vimeo and email the students the link at the end of course, but the students knew more about exchanging video than I did. They suggested that I Airdrop the videos onto their devices.

The process of Airdropping the video onto the student devices – personal phones or laptops – took between two and three minutes. This was an unexpected benefit. I foresaw a drawback of this assignment being tedious hours of downloading video. The Airdrop feature allowed for a near-instantaneous exchange of 2-6 minute videos from my phone to the student's device. All of these exchanges happened between performances, while the next student prepared. Of the eleven students that I videoed on Week 5 – ten received their videos without error (one student couldn't download her work; we rectified it Week 6). No students had difficulty uploading the digital videos on Week 6.

Identify whether students see their filmed performance as a step in a process or as a fixed outcome of success or failure.

Critiques of First performance: After each performance, students offered positive feedback and encouragement. This positive reinforcement was important in the first “draft”. Students received more constructive feedback from the instructor. Suggestions included:

- Reducing the monologue to its essentials.
- Awareness of body, volume, gestures, eye-contact, and enunciation.
- I also required students to make three large choices for the second ‘draft’, the video they make of the same piece at home. The three choices must integrate a noticeable change in the writing, a production (costume, set), and their character's motivation¹²

I audio recorded the feedback so students would have a record (most students had too much adrenaline to take notes afterwards).

Capture and document student performance.

Week 7&8, Home Movies and Eportfolios:

Students then performed the monologue at home, for the camera. Most filmed themselves, but some had classmates or family to assist them. They posted both the first ‘draft’ and second ‘home video’ of the monologue performances on their

¹² Students studied Stanislavsky's Method, including objective (task), super objective, through-action, inner monologue, mental images, the givens of the scene, and analysis of the script as it pertains to the “I” of the character and the self.

eportfolios.

Weeks 3-8, One-Act Play and Eportfolios:

Contiguous with these monologue exercises and performances students developed a one-act play about their event, sometimes including the monologue as part of the play, sometimes developing other scenes for the character. Students uploaded these plays onto the their monologue page on their eportfolios.

Determine Institutional Learning Outcomes conveyed in student work.

Student Work & ILO's:

Gabriel Seace

https://ospace.otis.edu/gabes_e_portfolio/Monolog

Creativity & Innovation: In the first video 'draft' the student is still crafting the story. This is apparent in the writing and in the student's delivery – his voice is low and his eyes are glued to the paper. The student's inspiration for this character came from an article about fighting in Ukraine. He set his story in a mythical, medieval continent. This choice in setting deviates from the assignment: *develop a character that conveys the context of your article*. However, the class also studied Ancient Greek tragedians and how these early dramatists took the dilemmas of the day and reset them centuries before so as not to incite unrest or political controversy. The student cited this as his reasoning for creating a fictional place.

Visual Fluency: It would have been better to film the student up close for the first draft performance. The lighting is also dim. As with all the footage, it would have been better to do a widescreen shot (something one of my students pointed out to me on the final day of class when I filmed their final production¹³).

He needed to face the camera for the second performance. Also, the babbling brook – while evocative for setting – muffled the student's voice.

Oral Communication: This student put thought and effort into the production of his second performance. He selected an appropriate location (in the mountains, by a stream) costumed, utilized props (students were encouraged to give themselves something to 'do' instead of merely speaking; this student brought a sword and cleaned it in the stream). He also made a strong character choice – adopting a brogue – and he had memorized his piece.

¹³ The Final Production of the course is a performance the entire class puts up for the partnered section. This final piece is a stitching together of five or six student plays into one story, usually with a frame of an art student visiting their future phases of life via a spiritual guide – this semester the guide was Otis, The Owl.

Student: Cactus Springman

https://ospace.otis.edu/cactus_springman/Monologue

Visual Fluency: Unfortunately, this student did not post the first performance ‘draft’ on the eportfolio – not the only student who failed to post the first video. Going forward, I’d like to have more accountability in my grading for missing footage.

The video of the second performance is stable and captures all of the student’s gestures, blocking and facial expressions. The lighting is yellowed and the ambient noise is distracting, but the student projects and the setting is appropriate for the piece.

Written & Oral Communication: The inspiration for this piece came from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. The student took issue with artists and fans extrapolating themes of drug use from Carroll’s work. The student directly communicates this distinct point of view through the character: Alice argues with the opium-smoking Caterpillar and insists drugs are not necessary for the creative process. The student developed a specific and compelling adaptation and is expressive with a clear motivation. The student also used an accent for this final performance.

Information Literacy: While the writing is effective, this student, and several others, did not demonstrate adequate information literacy. The student overlooked the central argument in the article¹⁴ (in this case, that the politics and society of our era affect how we read a text; the drug enthusiast interpretations of Alice’s *Adventures in Wonderland* came from the LSD culture of the 1960’s). While conveying this understanding in a piece of creative writing and performance is not necessary, the student should have communicated this in the Signature Assignment, a research-based and analytical component that culminates all of the work on this assignment at the semester’s end. Going forward, I’d like to emphasize the importance of Information Literacy, of accurately assessing the cultural conversation, even in creative writing pieces. A rubric for the monologue that includes research and accuracy could help with assessing student application of this skill.

Student: Cameron Gray

https://ospace.otis.edu/cameron3/One_Act_Platt_First_Draft

Creativity & Innovation: The student developed a satirical piece. He chose an article about a famous chef who duped his audience of food bloggers by secretly serving McDonalds. Elaborating on the idea of deception, the student developed

¹⁴ "Alice in Wonderland at 150: Innocent Fantasy or Dark and Druggy?", Rosa Silverman, *The Telegraph*. *Telegraph Media Group*, (July, 4 2015).

“Cockney Gourmet” a British TV cooking show with a host who has a fake British accent (many students dabbled with accents this semester).

The work is very developed, specific, bold, and professional – he was off book for both the first and second videos. The student had codified a logic for the scene, was very animated in his gestures and, even though it was comedy, took the material seriously and personalized the story. This student studied acting prior to enrolling at Otis College. Since the student had more experience, I catered my feedback. I suggested he further develop the piece. Our dynamic regarding his work was more of a workshop than a critique. Throughout the semester he used the monologue assignment to try out different story and character ideas.

Visual Fluency: While this is some of the best work that came out the class, one would not know it looking at the student’s portfolio. The Vimeo links are haphazardly placed. Going forward, I will require students to upload the video directly onto the eportfolio as a module. Also, more points for the grade will be attributed to the aesthetic of the eportfolio page.

Student: Jonathan Levite

First Draft:

https://ospace.otis.edu/jonathan_levite/First_Monologue_Video

Second Draft:

https://ospace.otis.edu/jonathan_levite/Home_Monologue_Video

Social Responsibility: The student reads a dialogue between an NSA contract hire and an NSA official. The student’s inspiration for the piece came from several articles and a documentary detailing Edward Snowden’s leak of classified information pertaining to the US government’s global surveillance programs. The student conveyed a deeper connection to his source material than my other students – in his performance, writing, research, and in class discussion.

Written & Oral Communication: The first video shows the student reading monotone from a piece of paper. We cannot see his eyes (I also should not have recorded him from an angle). The student also wrote a dialogue, not a monologue. My main suggestion in the critique was for him to rewrite the piece so he is contemplating leaking the information, instead of a back and forth between protagonist and antagonist.

Critical Thinking: Like most students, this second performance, the home video, is a much more intimate portrayal. The student looks directly into the camera (he, like many students, chose to film himself with his laptop camera). Speaking into the laptop screen allows the students took directly into the camera as they read their lines on the screen, with the laptop acting as a teleprompter. The revisions to the script are much more engaging and emotional and the student has dimmed the lights and leans conspiratorially into the camera to evoke secrecy and peril. This second performance embodies the character’s moral dilemma.

Identify whether students perceive their filmed performances as part of a process or as a fixed outcome of success or failure.

Week 7 – Week 14, Watching the Videos:

The videos were not left aside after grading; we revisited the student work, treating each monologue (we looked primarily at the second performance) as an object of rhetorical analysis. We used the student videos to explore new themes we learned about in the course. The students responded well to watching the videos of their classmates. It was an opportunity to foster community. They would have preferred to watch more, but course time did not allow it. Rather than watch all of the monologue videos at once, we watched one or two at the beginning of class for the remaining weeks of the course.

Week 14, Filming Final Production:

On the last day of the semester we performed a production for our partner Ways of Knowing class. The performance was a success, but the video of the performance was not. This is a possible pitfall of video in the classroom – especially with the low-tech option of filming with a phone or tablet. The final production ran fourteen minutes. The sound quality of the video is poor and we should have filmed the production with a widescreen (no more shooting vertical; a video-in-the-classroom rookie mistake). For a more elaborate production like this, I should have also booked a camera and/or someone to come in from the video department.

How does video recording student work inside and outside of the classroom affect learning?

Student Reflections on ‘Capturing Performance’:

Student Reflection, Self & Character:

Did you feel like yourself reading the monologue? Your character? Both?

... Somewhat. I tried to make it less dramatized. The monologue would be more of my thoughts rather than things I would say out loud.

...I felt more like myself portraying a character. I was not fully in the mind of Alice, although I knew her intentions and goals, yet within the classroom setting there is a hesitation to fully take on a character, even for myself, someone who

has a lot of theater and character background. Even in everyday life I sometimes feel like Alice (though truthfully I feel most like the Cheshire Cat) but when presenting my monologue for the first time I just felt like Cactus playing Alice.

...My character is angry, yet still somewhat self-contained. I feel that this is slightly how I would react if someone were to continuously frustrate me because they don't understand my point or refuse to be even remotely helpful.

...In a way yes. I've never experienced a horrible thing like rape but the crisis is something I'm very interested in (in a way that supports the victim) the problem and how the victim is blamed a lot of the time. So I think when I was reading it, I sort of dove into my inner self and found a place where I could connect to the character I created.

Student Reflection, Being Filmed:

Did being filmed make you excited? Nervous? Any other emotion?

...It made me nervous and embarrassed but I enjoyed it somehow.

...Being filmed made me uncomfortable. This was weird because I make a lot of videos with my friends.

...I'm used to being behind a camera, not in front of one. It's nerve-wracking and it definitely heightened my anxiety.

...Being filmed privately made me determined to best capture the emotion of my character which was frustration.

Student Reflection, Watching the Video:

Did the video of the monologue help you revise your piece? How?

...I was so embarrassed to watch my monologue but it helped me to think of what can I do to develop the quality of film and character.

...Somewhat yes, but the critique from Maggie was more helpful. The video helped me revise how my monologue should be performed the next time.

...Yes, I knew what part I was struggling in and I worked on it.

Student Reflection, Future Benefits:

Do you think this monologue exercise will help you in your life? Your career? Both? Neither? How or why not?

...I feel like it is an experience to remember and an experience to talk about if I was ever asked when applying for a job in the future. It's not something everyone goes through, especially in a so-called English class rather than a theater class. So yes, I do think this monologue exercise will help me in my life.

...Sure, I think it helps a bit. I've done plenty of monologues in the past, and this was a good chance to see how far I've come in terms of acting skill and what I've learned from my acting history. It also was good to practice, since I haven't been in theater for a year now (sadly) and it was nice to see if I've faltered or not. I think this monologue exercise is also good to practice stage presence, presentation in a business or classroom setting, public speaking, and giving a little bit of acting practice to those who haven't done so before. And writing the monologue is a very good exercise, since I don't think I've written my own monologue before, and it was interesting to be able to do that.

...I think it will help when I'm writing an essay because I would think of more being me telling what I want to prove/say to the audience.

...I feel like this monologue exercise was fun and exciting but I don't think it'll help me in my career as a fashion designer. Maybe for meetings or presentations when I need to express some categories or to be more confident.

Study student work to determine other values of video-making in the curriculum.

Unexpected Outcomes:

Critical Thinking: An unexpected outcome of the Monologue Assignment was the opportunity to use student videos for rhetorical analysis. Revisiting the home videos, sometimes weeks after students submitted the work, allowed for more objectivity and criticality. Students felt less attached to their work and were emboldened to critique other student work and their own.

The videos that students made in the first half of the semester became decontextualized and re-contextualized over the course of the semester. The students modified their point of view as we read more dramatic literature and theory. The students applied concepts of the curriculum to their videos.

Since we had the shared experience of watching both the live performances and videos together, we could refer back to the pieces during discussion, as if they student performances were communal texts, or as if all of the students had read each of their classmate's papers.

Social Responsibility: The student videos mimicked the life of a piece of media on a network or the internet; their videos entered the cultural conversation, the

student work became the conversation piece and blurred the lines between assignments and life.

The videos transformed from course work to a more democratic experience. Less ‘the teacher grades and the student is judged’ and more teacher and student engagement through dialogue, media, current events, and collaborative aesthetic and social critique.

The assignment also fostered community. The students enjoyed watching one another’s videos – nearly all students shared their home videos with one another before we watched them together as a class. The students had favorites these top picks again and again.

Predicted Outcomes:

- The classroom video added legitimacy to the monologue.
- The home video assignment allowed the students an opportunity to take chances and to vary their gestures, pitch, and emotion in ways they wouldn’t be able to access in the classroom.
- Students had another avenue of connecting to source material that allowed for empathy and characterization.
- The nature of the assignment added depth and meaning to their research
- Both videos - the student performing for the class and the second performance at home – are posted to student eportfolios, offering a digital compendium of student work.

Possible Improvements:

- Provide more guidelines in selecting source material (several students selected superficial topics). Perhaps add this language to the prompt: *pick a topic in which you have an empathic connection to a person or group of people*. The source they select could require approval.
- Develop more robust requirements for research and more feedback regarding integration of source material.
- Show more examples of the genre before the first day of filming and show a greater variety of examples.
- Allow more time to unpack the design and production of examples: review color scheme, camera angle, audio and emphasize aspects like pacing, enunciation, inflection.
- Add more weight and emphasis to visual aesthetic so as to avoid sloppy portfolio pages.
- Obtain a camera from the college for the Final Production – the more elaborate performance that demands better sound capture.

- Experiment with a variety of camera angles for the first draft video - no more vertical shooting.
- Develop a rubric for the peer review of the written monologue so students can better assess one another's piece and can juxtapose the work with criteria of the dramatic monologue form.
- Develop lessons and a rubric for assessment of the video, including concepts like emphasis, contrast, sound, and camera angle.¹⁵

Offer faculty ideas for integrating video-making in the classroom and curriculum.

Recommendations to Faculty:

- Most students are comfortable with the practice. Nearly all make video as a form of communication and entertainment, but asking students to make videos within the curriculum requires that they approach the medium with more criticality.
- Providing samples of the genre – presentations, performances – helps to establish criteria and expectations.
- Filming student presentations allows students to have a more realistic assessment of their own work.
- Treating the initial videos as a draft helps students treat assignments as an ever-changing process rather than an outcome of success or failure.
- The student videos can serve an object of analysis.
- The simple practice of recording performances or presentations with a phone or personal camera allows faculty to integrate technology in the classroom with little prep and in a way that mimics how students and teachers use technology in daily life.
- For more elaborate presentations faculty should get support from the college video department.

Parting Thoughts...

Did the video recording of the classroom change how you felt about your performance? If so, how?

...Yes! It actually made me feel better about my performance. I thought (and my friends thought) I did a great job!

Do you think this monologue exercise will help you in your life? Your career? Both? Neither? How or why not?

¹⁵ "Connecting Assessment and Instruction to Help Students Become More Critical Producers of Multimedia; Voices from the Field", Jonathan William Ostenson, *The National Association for Media Literacy Education's Journal of Media Literacy Education* Vol, 4, No. 2 (2012) p. 175.

...I feel like it is an experience to remember and an experience to talk about if I was ever asked when applying for a job in the future. It's not something everyone goes through, especially in a so-called English class rather than a theater class. So yes, I do think this monologue exercise will help me in my life.

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