Learners' Perspectives on the Use and Support of

Student Created Video Assignments at James Madison University

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Program: M.Ed., Educational Technology

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Description of the Project:

This research is an exploratory analysis of the use of student created video assignments at JMU, a pedagogical strategy that is increasingly common but not widely researched. The study collected quantitative data via an online survey of JMU students with the objective of examining the use, design, and outcomes of student created video assignments at James Madison University. Survey topics included the requirements of the assignment, the course that included the assignment, resources available and/or used to complete the assignment, students' perceptions of the learning outcomes, as well as non-identifying information about each respondent's demographics and academic experience at JMU. Following the constructivist precedent set by Nikitina (2009), the study focuses on students' perspectives. The rationale for this decision is that intentions and available resources from the faculty or University are only effective if the learner has awareness of them.

The research asks to what extent JMU students complete video assignments, and whether factors such as students' academic experience, demographics, video-watching habits, or learning preferences correlate with a greater likelihood of completing such assignments. Data about the steps students took to complete their most recent video assignment includes their rating of the helpfulness of resources such as libraries, computer labs, and classmates. Other details include the instructional design factors of the assignment and students' opinions on how effectively the assignment helped them gain skills such as media literacy, collaboration and problem solving. Data analysis sought to identify what correlations, if any, exist between the design of the assignment,

resources accessed while completing the assignment, and students' perceptions of the educational value of the assignments. The demographic data about survey participants, and the courses which included the student created video assignments, provided a means for identifying any significant differences between different types or learners and/or learning environments.

Initial findings from the research indicate that nearly 50% of undergraduate students and 80% of graduate students have completed a video assignment at JMU. There is significant variance among which college and academic units use such assignments, and more frequent usage in online courses. Approximately two-thirds of students who complete video assignments do not access any JMU support services to prepare for or complete the assignment. Instead of formal resources, students find value in learning from classmates, online resources, and hands-on experimentation. Overall, student created video assignments seem to be received favorably by students and effective for achieving a variety of learning outcomes across many disciplines.

Significance of the Research:

The student created video assignment is a promising form of digital scholarship, but it requires a significant investment of time and resources. This research aims to help educators recognize the instructional design elements, academic support resources, and other factors that correlate with positive learning outcomes for student completed video assignments.

Research into student created video assignments identified multiple student learning outcomes for student created video assignments, including development of a

wide range of skills (Kearney & Shuck, 2004; Robin, 2006; Hafner & Miller, 2011). The multimedia/video production process "can be an effective instructional strategy and tool for student engagement that facilitates learning and critical thinking – in any discipline" (Shuldman & Fontaine 2015, p. 645). As a form of digital storytelling, student created video assignments engage learners in digital literacy, global literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, and information literacy (Robin, 2008). In many ways, the student created video assignment parallels the traditional research paper and the creative writing process, from crafting the rhetoric for a purpose and audience, to steps in the research, planning, composing, and editing processes (Bruce & Chiu, 2015).

Technological advancements since the turn of the century have reduced the cost and complexity of video production and distribution to the point where anyone can create and share a digital video (Snelson & Perkins, 2010). The 2008 Horizon Report Higher Education Edition declared, "Video is Everywhere" (p.8). In 2014, the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) reported on the trend of digital scholarship centers in higher education with case studies of nine institutions (as of July 2016, expanded to twenty-one). These resource centers (a.k.a. media labs, scholars' labs, digital humanities centers, etc.) extend the campus library beyond books and journals by providing technology, training, and expertise for students engaging in new forms of digital research and scholarship.

Preferred Presentation Format (ranked):

1. Panel
2. Poster

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