



VR-VIDEO REFLECTION

OSUN Connected Learning Contest Winner

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Course: Advanced Writing for Media

I assigned the weekly VRs at the onset of the semester, when the class met in person, but as the semester progressed and we segued into online teaching, the VRs easily made the transition. VRs better prepared students for class discussions. They allowed me to hear from all the students, not just those who come forward during the limited classroom time. The VRs offered a dimension of intimacy between speaker/student and listener/me. They were not shared; I was the sole viewer. Students were frank, emotional, thoughtful. The VRs gave me talking points for discussion and allowed me to prepare more deeply to respond to their responses rather than responding in real time. My initial VR assignment--their trial run--was to respond to the course syllabus. Many said they had never read a syllabus so thoroughly or been asked to reflect on one. Technological glitches were rare. In the course evaluation, students said the VR was not only one of their favorite activities, but that they found it changed the way they read the material and discussed the material. I will use VRs in the fall semester for every class I teach.

Advanced Writing for Media

A 200-level media writing course composed of five writing assignments exploring media forms, the creation of a digital magazine portfolio of work, and weekly reading assignments and discussions of long-form journalism.

Practical and pedagogical value

Reflection is a common pedagogical practice and is solidly entwined with thinking and learning. Most take written form. I found that the video reflection in this selfie culture

created a familiarity, ease and informality that encouraged candor, deep thought and genuineness. It also encouraged some creative fun (one student used sock puppets to act out a scene in the reading.) I got to know my students as individuals in ways I have not in other exercises. The absence of the arena of talking in front of others encouraged dimensions of my students to come forward and to be seen. I felt tender toward them, entertained by them and encouraged to hear what their reflections of the writings had meant to them. They often exceeded the requested 1-3 minutes with their analysis and insights. The small and changing glimpses of background and scenery gave them fuller context as individuals alive in a larger world than the classroom.

The assignment

Each Wednesday (the day before we had a student-run class discussion about assigned readings) students submitted a 1-3-minute video reflection of the reading and what they had learned from it in terms of craft and content. They made VRs with their smartphones. I gave very few parameters for production. I told them: read, reflect, record, review and send to my university email or upload onto our LMS platform. If the file is too big, use WeTransfer and send a link.

Students used smartphones. I used my laptop. Some used WeTransfer or pCloud to accommodate larger files for storage and transfer, but these are both free. No additional tech tools were required on either side.

Example Video Reflection:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iswt7BiMX_roqLMbtmQFxSXyneXgrW57/view?usp=sharing