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Lecture Recording for Inclusive Education

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Research Domain: The Digital University and new learning technologies (DU)

Abstract: Where lecture recording is being promoted as an institution-wide solution to a range of concerns relating to student performance and attendance, there is a pressing need to understand how such technologies contribute to the quality of student experience (Cilesiz 2015). This paper will present results from a research project investigating the extent to which lecture recording technology can be creatively deployed to promote inclusion, diversity and well-being in higher education. Interviews with students and teaching staff were undertaken at a research-intensive Scottish university, with findings surfacing mixed views: lecture recording provided benefits for specific student needs, but also raised concerns in relation to the teaching of ethically sensitive topics. Conclusions will discuss supporting university strategies in excellent teaching and student support, and developing the creative use of technologies to widen access.

Cilesiz, S. (2015) Undergraduate students' experiences with recorded lectures: towards a theory of acculturation. *Higher Education*, 69(3): 471-493.

Paper: Introduction

This paper will outline preliminary results from an ongoing research project that is investigating an institution-wide lecture recording initiative at a research-intensive Scottish university. Staff and students from across the institution have been interviewed, with the aim of examining the extent to which lecture recording technology can be creatively deployed to promote inclusion, diversity and well-being in higher education. Preliminary findings are outlined, with full conclusions expected in time for the conference.

Background and rationale

Lecture recording systems - involving the videoing of lectures and subsequent uploading to online spaces for replaying - are usually perceived simply as a way of providing a substitute for missed

lectures (McCunn and Newton 2015). However, there is a pressing need to understand how lecture recording technologies contribute to institutional strategic aims, effective pedagogical practice, and the quality of student experience. Much of the research in this area focuses on the relationships between lecture recording and educational performance or attendance (e.g. Brooks *et al.* 2014), as well as assistance with understanding concepts and providing opportunities of revision (e.g. Yeung *et al.* 2016).

While this focus on student attainment is valuable, lecture recording technologies offer much more potential for enhancing student experience, and working towards the broader goals of inclusion and diversity, health, and wellbeing. Research in this area includes: teaching strategies for deaf students (Debevc and Peljhan, 2004); frequent use by dyslexic and non-English speaking students (Leadbeater *et al.* 2013); female students engaging in video lectures significantly more than male students (Romanov and Nevgi 2007); increased autonomy for students who juggle with work and life commitments (Cooke *et al.* 2012); and equitable access for those who face special circumstances (Chang 2007).

While O'Callaghan *et al.*'s review (2017) asserts that students can be positive about lecture recording, further empirical research is needed to provide in-depth analysis of student experience (Cilesiz 2015). The project has therefore been guided by the following research questions:

- How do students from diverse groups view and experience lecture recording?
- How do members of teaching staff utilise lecture recording for inclusive teaching?
- To what extent can lecture recording creatively enhance equity and inclusion by catering to diverse learning needs and styles?

Research aims:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the use of lecture recording by diverse student groups and teaching staff.
2. Investigate ways of utilising lecture recording to facilitate inclusivity in teaching and learning, in response to increasing student diversity.

Methods

The project undertook in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 10 members of staff and 15 students. Representation across disciplines was achieved, in particular to capture the differences between 'factual' or 'discursive' teaching and learning, and specific groups who might be more likely to encounter accessibility barriers (e.g. disabled students, mature students with work/family

commitments), and levels of study (undergraduate and postgraduate). Thematic coding analysis has surfaced the following preliminary themes:

Initial findings

'Benefits for all'

Lectures were sometimes described as difficult to understand, for reasons such as the complexity of the content, the speed of delivery, or the accent of the lecturer. Significantly, these responses derived from students who did not necessarily identify themselves with particular groups, or specific access or ability issues. In this way, lecture recording appeared to be understood as providing general support, rather than specifically for students perceived to have a 'special' need.

'Go to your lecture'

Student participants consistently emphasised the importance of attending lectures in person. They valued the opportunity of studying at the University, and felt that lecture recording should be treated as a 'luxury service', not a replacement of attending lectures in person.

'Students do not want to be recorded all the time either'

Students were hesitant about having tutorial and discussion formats recorded. They feared that this would stop them from speaking freely, as they would be anxious about making mistakes and having their comments reheard by other students.

'How to learn sensitive topics when being recorded'

Students conveyed understanding about the issue of sensitive topics being recorded, and the concerns from other students and staff about being seen to comment and participate in such conversations. There was also a view that students and staff in higher education should be learning more about how to navigate challenging discussions and accommodate participants with opposing viewpoints, particularly where students felt that they were living in an era of the 'everyday possibility' of publicity.

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