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# 'None of my other teachers know my face/emotions/thoughts': digital technology and democratic assessment practices in higher education physical education

Julia Sargent <sup>a</sup> and Shrehan Lynch <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK; <sup>b</sup>Initial Teacher Education, The University of East London, London, UK

## ABSTRACT

Digital technology and its use within democratic pedagogy has been an under-researched area in physical education (PE) and higher education (HE). Furthermore, we know little about how democratic assessment methods are experienced by students in HE. As such, this article explores student perceptions and experiences of democratic assessment practices through video narratives in HE PE and how these video narratives allowed students to demonstrate their learning. Using student responses from an e-questionnaire, the findings discuss how the video narratives elevate students' self-awareness, generate emotive and affective responses, elicit performative acts and provide an authentic assessment experience. In particular, the consideration of a student's environment is presented as a novel finding in comparison to previous literature. The authors discuss these findings in relation to teachers' democratic practices and video narratives as a vehicle for supporting authentic assessment experiences.

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Assessment; video narratives; pedagogy; student; physical education

## Introduction

### *Digital technologies and assessment in physical education*

The use of digital technologies (such as iPads, mobile phones and 'apps') for teaching and learning in physical education (PE) has been growing in recent years. Within the discipline, we are increasingly seeing research that demonstrates the application of digital technology to support student engagement (e.g., Goodyear et al., 2014, 2017), movement (e.g., Palao et al., 2015; Quennerstedt et al., 2017) or professional development (e.g., Gleddie et al., 2017) in conjunction with increasing trends in the broader field of educational technology. One particular facet of PE where digital technologies have been applied is in supporting the assessment of students' learning. Research suggests that one of the most common forms of digital technology that has been used to support assessment is video (Zhang & Li, 2018). Whilst we recognise that videos can be applied in a plethora of different ways, research has shown the effectiveness of using videos to capture student performances for both summative and formative assessment (Lopez-Pastor et al., 2013; Van Vuuren-Cassar & Lamprianou, 2006).

A piece of digital technology that has been applied with both summative and formative forms of assessment is the electronic video portfolio or e-portfolio. E-portfolios can be defined as both a product (i.e. a digital collections of artefacts such as videos) and as a process of learning (i.e. it incorporates a reflective process of the digital artefact and what they represent) (Chambers et al., 2017). Chambers et al. (2017) demonstrated how e-portfolios can be used to compile evidence of

**CONTACT** Julia Sargent  [julia.sargent@open.ac.uk](mailto:julia.sargent@open.ac.uk)  Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University, Jennie Lee Building, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, UK

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student progress/learning through platforms such as Google Docs and that they can support students' learning in a lesson or module. Additionally, Weir and Connor (2009) found that students enjoyed the creation of video portfolios and that it was a different way to capture development in pupil learning. Students believed that most of their learning occurred through their completion of the portfolios using video (Weir & Connor, 2009). As a result, e-portfolios can be applied in a variety of ways to support assessment such as providing a collection of students' reflections of their learning over a period of time or providing an alternative means for students to demonstrate their understanding.

In relation to formative forms of feedback when using videos for assessment, O'Loughlin et al. (2013) found that when working with primary school children, video impacted positively on student performance, motivation and support with their self-assessment. Similarly, Casey and Jones (2011) found that using videos in a secondary school context (such as video analysis of student performances) developed a deeper understanding for the students and had a positive influence on the students' engagement in PE. When working with secondary schools in Australia, Penney et al. (2012) acknowledged that senior students perceived the video assessment task to be authentic and meaningful for students on their PE course.

One particular distinction when using videos for assessment purposes in PE is students' creation of videos as form of assessment (i.e. students are tasked to create a coaching video on how to perform a layup in basketball) or using videos as an alternative platform for assessment (for example, asking students to reflect on what they have learnt in a lesson using video rather than through a written essay or exam). For example, Lim et al. (2009) argued that students could be tasked to create a video that represents teamwork in PE (using clips of physical activity) and could provide a verbal commentary on key coaching points. As such, the video itself is the form of assessment as it captures the physical performances needed to illustrate teamwork. On the other hand, Romano and Schwartz (2005) used digital technologies such as e-portfolios, video recording and online discussion as a tool to elicit and encourage trainee teachers to reflect on their teaching. For them, video was the platform for the assessment. This article seeks to shed light on the latter and investigate HE students' perceptions of video as an alternative platform for assessment.

As Cheng and Chau (2009) purported, additional research is needed to explore and examine a variety of pedagogical methods in order to advance our understanding of how students are supported in reflective practice as mediated by video or other digital tools. In particular, video as an alternative platform for assessment and to capture students' learning experiences is relatively sparse in PE compared to general education and warrants further investigation (Hay & Penney, 2013).

### *Digital storytelling*

The notion of 'digital storytelling' has been used since the late 1900s, emerging out of the community arts movement (Wu & Victor Chen, 2020). In their systematic review of literature, Wu and Victor Chen (2020) concluded that students in education may create films or videos to create new or advance knowledge of a topic area. They also reported that digital storytelling was often integrated within other pedagogical strategies, for example, in collaborative learning (Chang, 2017; Wu & Victor Chen, 2020). From a practical perspective, digital storytelling can operate as an alternative to traditional written tasks which, in turn, provides students with an opportunity to present themselves and their learning in a way that they may not be so eager to share in a written essay or report (Jenkins & Gravestock, 2012). In addition, Austin et al. (2019) found that digital storytelling can provide an effective medium for students to convey their experiences and provide new insights in their learning to their tutors. As a result, digital storytelling and video narratives can provide a viable research method in order to gather student voice and feedback of students in HE (Austin et al., 2019, 2021). Subsequently, the incorporation of digital storytelling (or video narratives which we refer to henceforth) can serve as a suitable method to support positive student outcomes in HE and can be incorporated within different pedagogies (e.g., democratic/transformational approaches).

## ***Democratic pedagogy***

When an educator gets to know students through rapport building activities and students become involved in the learning process, learning can be meaningful to them especially if they have engaged in democratic pedagogies (Lynch & Sargent, 2020). A democratic pedagogue resists traditional norms of authority and the notion that the teacher is a knowledge-broker. Instead, democratic educators attempt to liberate minds rather than indoctrinate them (hooks, 2003). Educators thrive on knowledge sharing with students and adopt conversational approaches, because learning in participatory reciprocal ways ultimately places learning as a social experience (Butler, 2016). In order to see the classroom as a place of open possibilities, democratic educators view learning as a place of empowerment, occurring beyond the designated teaching spaces and specifically linking to the complex lives and realities of students (hooks, 1994, 2003).

In PE, a democratic curriculum moves from a traditional dominated focus on physical competency and performance of students to the holistic educative development of students (Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). Consequently, PE curriculum approaches are well thought out, have breadth and depth, teaching is individualised and student centred, focuses on the negotiation of experiences to promote ownership, responsibility and participation, has a social element that adopts alternate assessments and promotes student growth and inclusion (Ennis, 1999; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019; Penney & Chandler, 2000). The focus of this article is alternate assessments; henceforth we explore assessment as a social and democratic process in more detail.

## ***Assessment as a social practice***

Democratic educators realise that assessment is a social activity. It is 'required by people, developed by people, implemented by people, performed by people and has implications for people right across education systems' (Hay & Penney, 2013, p. 3). Assessment is administered both at micro and macro levels by individuals who have competing interests and purposes for education. It can be argued that students are often siloed into intellectual groups such as mixed ability, 'gifted and talented', or special education due to their performance on tests or ability grouping. This testing and selection process shares a clear message to young people about the knowledge we value as an education system (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Digital technology as a means for social interaction has been an under-researched area in PE. When both teachers and students engage with technology such as SeeSaw (an online e-portfolio), FlipGrid, Padlet, TikTok, among others, assessment becomes a fluid and reciprocal process and such applications of assessment refute inorganic standardised traditional examinations. Accordingly, assessment becomes a form of dialogue where students practise democracy (Lynch, 2019; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019; Parkison, 2018) and such technological apps are already used by students in their everyday life, it makes the learning experience personally relevant (Haeussler Bohan, 2018; Hay & Penney, 2013). Talking more broadly than technology, hooks (1994) argued that students feel a responsibility to contribute and become engaged in the learning process because the teacher-student dynamic is reimagined engaging learners within the subject matter when learning relates to their everyday experiences.

When assessment is viewed as dialogue, the hierarchical traditions of assessment are put into question (Lynch, 2019). Instead, the typical social stratification nature of assessment that lends itself to neoliberal structures (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) becomes a site of authenticity and engagement for students to participate in the application of learning (Lorente-Catalán & Kirk, 2014; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). However, little is known regarding how democratic assessment(s) are used in PE, especially at the HE level (Lorente-Catalán & Kirk, 2014). Furthermore, in this context, little is known in terms of how students experience using digital technology as a form of democratic assessment. Henceforth, this study sought to explore students' experiences of digital technology (specifically videos) in HE PE. The specific research questions explored in this study included: (a) How

did video narratives allow students to demonstrate their learning? (b) What are students' perceptions/experiences of using video narratives as an assessment tool?

## Materials and methods

The data are drawn from a broader study investigating student experiences of democratic teaching practices and alternative digital assessment methods in HE PE from January 2017 through May 2017 (Lynch & Sargent, 2020). During this study, this study took a digital ethnographic approach, which allowed us to practise ethnography in different ways (Pink, 2016). As such it is not confined to specific procedures and is methodologically flexible (Varis, 2016). Foregrounded as a reciprocal and collaborative approach, digital ethnography allows researchers and participants to engage in digital methods that are already consumed in the everyday lives of participants (Hjorth et al., 2017; Pink, 2016), for example, Facetime, Zoom, WhatsApp (Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). Researchers engaged in digital ethnographic work become collaborative in the sense that they engage in dialogue and provide feedback; they are more than an observational tool and produce knowledge researching the concept of experience (Pink et al., 2016). Video narratives are one method that has been adopted for use in digital ethnographic work, providing a personal self-representational reflexive tool to understand experience in a given moment (Lovell & Baker, 2009). It places the participants as autobiographers (Murthy, 2008) describing experience and implications of digital approaches (Pink et al., 2016).

## Setting and participants

College-aged students participated in this study and took part in one of three PE courses (water aerobics, aerobics or tennis) at a large south-eastern university in the United States. The second author, Shrehan, was the educator of the courses and received retrospective institutional review board approval after the classes were taught. Shrehan has a democratic view towards education, and the purposes of her classes are to engage students in high levels of reflection that allow them to engage critically with subject matter. The goals and pedagogies used for the class are detailed in Lynch and Sargent (2020). At Shrehan's institution the most common method she observed used for assessment was traditional exams and classroom presentations, whereby students were required to recite information back to the educator. This approach to assessment conflicted with Shrehan's philosophy as she wanted to engage students in creative, reciprocal and authentic approaches and with the view that assessment is a form of dialogue and a social process. Consequently, Shrehan adopted video narratives as an assessment tool in an attempt to challenge hierarchical status quo assessment measures traditionally used at HE institutions and to engage students in their learning process. Thus, the focus shifted from what content was learnt and instead on to the complex learning experience, for example, what were the conditions for learning to occur? What from past experiences promoted learning? And what learning can be transferred into life/broader society?

The course requirements included video narratives and a reflective essay that are detailed in Table 1. Narratives were uploaded to a discussion board where other class colleagues could interact and see them/respond, or, if the student didn't want other students to view their narratives, they titled the file 'do not look – only for Shrehan' or were given the option to email Shrehan the file. After each narrative, Shrehan would comment as a process of ongoing dialogue, her comments often asking the students to think more deeply and critically about their learning/reflections or to comment on something for the next week. She also referred to their narratives in class and attempted to make meaningful connections with students regarding them, e.g., 'I noticed you reflected on this aspect of the class, why?' 'Why was this meaningful to you to discuss?'

Following ethical approval, after the classes had ended, and grades had been issued to students, Shrehan emailed all students outlining the study, asking for their consent to take part. Students were asked for access to their assessment materials that were uploaded on the university's online digital

**Table 1.** Course assessment requirements.

Water Aerobics & Aerobics – 1 credit course	Tennis – 1 credit course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 digital narratives</li> <li>● 1–5 minutes in length</li> <li>● Could follow a script or free-talk</li> <li>● Use any digital device to record</li> <li>● To be uploaded at particular intervals during the course to a group discussion board</li> <li>● The instructor responded with feedback within two working days on the content of the narrative and with questions to be considered for the next narrative entry</li> <li>● 1 final reflective essay</li> <li>● Open format reflecting on class experience</li> <li>● Uploaded to the online learning platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 digital narratives</li> <li>● 3–8 minutes in length</li> <li>● Could follow a script or free-talk</li> <li>● Use any digital device to record</li> <li>● To be uploaded on three specific intervals during the course to a group discussion board</li> <li>● The instructor responded with feedback within two working days on the content of the narrative and with questions to be considered for the next narrative entry</li> <li>● 1 final reflective essay</li> <li>● Open format reflecting on class experience</li> <li>● Uploaded to the online learning platform</li> </ul>

platform, and findings related to these materials are outlined in Lynch and Sargent (2020). In total, 12 students provided consent to take part in the study. These students were also invited to take part in an anonymous e-questionnaire sent on Google Forms on their experiences using digital technology as an assessment tool. Eight students completed this e-questionnaire. Their demographic information is provided in Table 2. Exemplar questions included in the e-questionnaire were, what do you think the purpose of a video narrative is? What were your initial thoughts on doing a video narrative? Where did you typically do your video narrative? What do you see as negatives of doing a video narrative? What did you learn each week by doing a video narrative?

### Data sources and analysis

Data were collated from a 27-question, open-ended e-questionnaire. Once the data were uploaded onto shared files, both authors then engaged in a collaborative analysis. First, we familiarised ourselves with the research questions we were attempting to answer. Then data were assigned to one or both of the questions through a process of sub-coding (Salanda, 2013). For the second phase of the analysis, we adopted the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss., 2008). Each researcher looked for incidents of similarities, considered the meaning of words and looked for common themes. This process was done dynamically using a large whiteboard where we visually displayed the data and our analytical codes. Throughout this process, we made a description for each theme and questioned each other's thematic choices through dialogue and making theoretical comparisons. Finally, we decided final theme names and selected quotations for use within the manuscript. Throughout, we kept an audit trail by writing analytical comments. We also engaged in thoughtful reflections on our role, feelings and motives within the data collection and analysis, thus engaging in relational ethics (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Consequently, we attempted to forefront our manuscript with the voices of our participants and were cautious that it is very much *their* experiences of digital technology and not *ours*.

### Findings and discussion

This article attempted to answer two main research questions: how did video narratives allow students to demonstrate their learning? What are students' perceptions/experiences of using video narratives as an assessment tool? As such, they attempted to answer calls by Hay and Penney (2013) to capture students' learning experiences using technology in HE. Four themes illustrated the findings: (1) video narratives elevate self-awareness; (2) emotive affective responses; (3) the performative act; and (4) the authentic experience.



**Table 2.** E-Questionnaire, demographic and contextual information described by the participants.

Participant and respondent number	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	How often technology used	How many hours a day technology used	What forms of technology used	Technology uses	Where technology is used
1 – Sandra	Female	22	White American	Daily	4–6	iPhone, MacBook, TV	Social media, games, school work	Computer at home or at the library, phone anytime during a break
2 – Kionna	Female	21	Black American	Every day	12	Cellphone, TV, radio, laptop	Everything	Home
3 – Gabriella	Female	21	White American	Very often	8	Computer, iPhone, TV	Social networking, school work and leisure	Everywhere – car, bed, classroom, walking to class
4 – Roxy	Female	19	White American	Daily	8	Laptop, cellphone, TV	Social media, school, leisure	My bedroom
5 – Luke	Male	20	White American	Daily	3–4	Phone, laptop	Phone for leisure and laptop for school	House and around campus
6 – Viv	Female	20	White American	Every day, all day long	12	Laptop, smartphone, TV	Everything	School
7 – Megan	Female	20	White American	A lot	5	Cellphone, computer	Leisure, homework, social media	Class, apartment
8 – Jacky	Female	19	White American	Very often	5	Computer, cellphone, TV	Social networking, school work and leisure	Dorm room, library, when bored, i.e. the bus

### ***Video narratives elevate self-awareness***

Video narratives are a reflexive tool to understand experience in a given moment (Lovell & Baker, 2009). When students reflect on their learning process, they can share what they represent (Chambers et al., 2017). The students in this study supported the reflective nature of video assessments, 'I think it is an effective medium to gauge what a person experienced in an event ... It gave me a chance to reflect on activities in a way I might not otherwise have done' (Luke). Viv noted that she 'discovered something I never thought I'd like & it was actually something I loved'. Sandra also reflected on her heightened self-awareness through the reflection process:

I really reflected a lot on myself and my experience with each event ... This [the video narrative] allowed me to actually talk about what I experienced rather than being graded on what I know (or at least guessed correctly) ... I think it was a great assessment tool that made me think really hard about the things that I had done in this class. With most classes, you take the test and then forget the material, but the video narratives forced me to really reflect on what I did and what the outcomes were.

Moreover, one's learning through experience should be valued as much as the factual information. 'There is indeed a place in the learning process for telling one's personal story' (hooks, 2010, p. 55). The video narratives allowed the assessment to be experienced as 'more than memorisation and allowed us [the students] to think critically instead of mindlessly doing something' (Gabriella). The video narratives provided students space 'to stop and think about what I've done in the previous week' (Kionna). An important requirement in the fast-paced college world. Roxy specifically highlighted that 'it [the video narratives] allowed me to delve into my thinking and reflect on what I was good/bad at, and the significance behind each activity'. Supporting Casey and Jones (2011), we agree that the use of digital technology can lead to a greater understanding of students' learning and enhance student engagement. As we found, the students began to question the activities they experienced within lessons and come to an understanding on their personal preferences. Subsequently, the reflection became personalised for the students. Moreover, the reflections allowed Shrehan and the students to refute a 'banking approach to education'. Shrehan asked stimulating questions, or what Paulo Freire (2007) called 'problem posing' as a pedagogical tool. Problem posing allows students to question their position in the world and makes critical connections to the democratic project. As an example, not only did students reflect more deeply about their experiences, but they also became more self-aware of the abilities they developed whilst using the video narratives. Gabriella, who was originally very apprehensive to use video narratives 'got over my [her] terrible film voice and actually appreciated talking about my [her] thoughts on things we did'. Whereas Jacky recognised that her 'speaking skills improved' and 'the narratives allow you to synthesise information and how to effectively talk about what I've [she'd] learned'. Viv also stated, 'I love them [the video narratives] it's crazy to see the confidence I gained while doing these [video narratives]'. Due to Shrehan's democratic philosophy towards education, students reciprocally enhanced skills needed for a democratic society, for example, picking a location (choice, ownership), speaking skills (voice) and confidence to share (participation). Furthermore, students' conceptions of video narratives were in line with Shrehan's intent for the assessment. For example, they referred to the video narratives as 'critical', 'teacher insight', 'relaxed and fun', 'a way to show progress', 'a form of storytelling', 'creative', 'different', 'exciting', 'subjective', 'vulnerable' and a place to be 'open'. As a consequence, video narratives not only enhanced the students' self-awareness, but they also gained alternative benefits to those of traditional assessments.

### ***Emotive affective responses***

Assessment is a social process (Hay & Penney, 2013). As a result, social situations elicit deeper levels of reflection whereby students can gain intense feelings. For example, video narratives allowed the

students in this study to be 'vulnerable', 'expressive' and the embodied connections encouraged psychological emotions as an affective process. As Sandra shared:

I think that a video allows students to be more vulnerable and open. I think it also allows them [students] to get their point through without spending days writing a paper that will never be read entirely . . . it captured my true feelings and emotions about a topic.

Megan concurred, 'I learned about my feelings about things as well as I had to recall what we learned'. Luke summarised:

I enjoyed it [video narratives] because I felt it [the video narratives] allowed me to better express myself and how I felt during the event than just writing about it. It was the ability to better express the emotions of an experience . . . it [the video narratives] was definitely a more fun alternative to taking an exam because I was able to express myself instead of just bubbling in answers.

Diverse modes of speech are essential to democratic educators as conversation is central to the pedagogical process (hooks, 2003), and learning should be exciting and challenging (hooks, 1994). Kionna specifically articulated that 'It [video narratives] gives you a chance to evaluate what you've done for the week and really think about how something may or may not have affected you.' Roxy agreed:

[Video narratives] Comes from the heart as you are able to truly express your feelings through emotions, allowing for a more realistic view on each week's class . . . None of my other teachers know my face/emotions/ thoughts because the narratives allow me to express myself more freely than a test or essay.

As such, Roxy felt that the video narrative allowed her to express herself in a way that she may not have experienced before. This is a powerful example of 'bringing emotional intelligence to the telling of stories' which 'heightens our awareness and perception' (hooks, 2010, p. 52) within the educational exchange. It is important to note that after each narrative 'after a day or two we [the students] would receive some form of feedback on what could improve in our next video narrative' (Luke). Shrehan would ask 'why did you think that?', 'what experiences have led you to believe that way?', 'is there another perspective that you have thought about?' Thus, the exchange was two-way, a reciprocal process rather than a transmission of knowledge from the educator to the student and regurgitated back, known as 'banking education' (Freire, 2007). The students felt able to express their emotions and demonstrate their learning in a way even they and the educator may not have experienced before. This is particularly pertinent in considering future assessment and the types of educational outcomes educators aspire students to gain and take forward into future educational experiences. Moreover, this further highlights that a problem-posing education has the potential to stimulate true reflections, which is a necessary component for those practising democratic pedagogies.

### ***The performative act***

The disconnect or, as Traxler (2009) termed it, 'untethering' of learning from a fixed space, often provided by mobile technologies or pedagogies, suggests that education could and perhaps should, offer students opportunities for learning in spaces unbounded by the four walls or the traditional classroom (Schuck & Maher, 2018). Given the choice or opportunity to do so, it would seem that students will work and study in ways, and in spaces, that suit them, rather than being constrained to a closed learning environment (Schuck & Maher, 2018). The students in this study seemed to plan the space in which they performed their video narratives. They often conducted their recordings in spaces and places that they felt were 'private' and where 'they could be alone' (Roxy). For example, Sandra explained that she 'usually just did my [her] narrative in my [her] room because it was a private area where I [she] could talk to my [her] computer without looking like a crazy person'. Conversely, Gabriella did her video narrative in her car 'because my car is my favourite place in the world and I could video myself where no one else could interrupt me or hear me speak'. These

quotes demonstrate that the students found value in the activity as a private and individual space of reflection. Schuck and Maher (2018) also found similar experiences where students would work in ways and in spaces that suited them. A notable difference to our study includes the control of performance in that students could specifically plan the activity into their daily lives due to the mobility of their technologies and within the scope of their own personal preferences.

The students also chose to perform their video narratives in an environment where they felt comfortable. For example, Viv chose to record her video on her bed because it was 'where I felt most comfortable'. Thus, whilst the environment and the technologies used to record their narratives were different for each student, the privacy and comfort they felt in the space were important to supporting their reflective and emotive experiences. Students chose to present a specific version of themselves that they wanted to share on the video. For Kionna, 'home was a more controlled environment' where she chose to complete her video narrative, and Viv chose to perform her video narrative on her bed 'because it had a plain backdrop'. A quote from Jacky encapsulates this presentation of the self that was valued by some students: 'I filmed in my dorm room. It was convenient and I could control the noise and lighting ... I would wait longer after getting home to shower so I looked presentable for the narrative.'

Whilst Shrehan did not place any assessment criteria on the quality, type or structure of the video narrative, students saw the importance of the assessment process and wanted to control how they and their reflections were presented to their educator/peers. Linking this perspective to Goffman's (1990) metaphors of the theatre and the presentation of self, the 'front stage' that students chose to show to Shrehan was self-imposed and an important part of the assessment for the students. This stretched beyond just the content of their reflective narratives but was a broader focus on the self. Furthermore, the performative act allowed students a sense of responsibility and ownership over their assessment process and the image they wanted to portray throughout it to their peers/Shrehan.

### ***An authentic experience***

Students' experiences and perceptions of the video narratives were generally positive, and many of the students provided more narratives than expected of them. This supports other literature which suggests that students enjoy the creation of videos as a different way to capture their learning (Weir & Connor, 2009). Roxy explained that she 'loved the video narratives as opposed to other types of homework assignments'. Students also found the narratives a fun alternative to other assessments they had previously experienced. Luke explained that it offered a 'fun alternative to writing an essay', and both Roxy and Kionna saw the experience as a 'fun way to submit their assignment'.

Some students thought that the video narrative was going to take a lot of work but actually found the process easier and faster when comparing it to other assessment methods such as a test or writing a paper. This supports the work of Roberts (2018), who found that e-platforms for assessment can be quicker and easier for students to use. Viv illustrated how she found the video narratives 'an easy way to explain what it is I [she] did'. Some students were resistant or sceptical regarding the value of the narratives prior to their experience but valued the learning journey they went on. For example, Kionna thought the video narrative would be 'too much to do every week', yet her assessment experience ended up 'being really easy'. Therefore, video narratives provide an outlet to challenge knowledge value systems that students have been indoctrinated into (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) and showed the appropriateness of the application of technology into democratic pedagogy. Put differently, students can be resistant to different approaches to learning, thinking they will be more time-consuming or more strenuous than what they are institutionalised to through their schooling. However, after trialling them their perspectives can change, and they can see and reap the benefits of such approaches.

Whilst many applications of digital technology into education, such as videos, may not appear radically new or innovative (Selwyn, 2016), the students perceived the video narratives to be

'different' and 'innovative' learning experiences for them. Roxy, in particular, described the newness and authentic experience she gained from the video narrative assessment:

It is super easy to do and different, which is exciting ... different and innovative ... so far [I've only experienced in college] tests, essays and homework so this is different. It is different and innovative as no other teachers do this, I liked it ... I would continue the narratives and share the idea with other teachers.

Interestingly, students found their video narrative experience less stressful than other assessments they had experienced. Roxy described the video narratives as 'more relaxed', whereas Jacky liked the video narratives as there was 'no stress of an exam' and it was 'more informal'. Megan explained that 'it is much different than a test and a lot less stressful than a test or paper'.

Finally, students found the experience authentic as they were able to see the benefits and transferable skills to their future careers. Jacky explained that her 'speaking skills improved' and that it allowed her to 'synthesise information'. In addition, Megan found that the video narratives 'make[s] you do speaking and presenting which helps in the future for jobs'. For these students, it would, therefore, seem that the video narratives and the assessment process became a site of authenticity and engagement for students to participate in the application of learning (Lorente-Catalán & Kirk, 2014; Lynch & Curtner-Smith, 2019). This fluid and reciprocal process through ongoing dialogue throughout the semester was taken part in by both teacher and student through feedback, which was afforded by the video narratives and refuted inorganic and standardised traditional assessment processes such as exams, where students frequently gain little/no feedback. Consequently, the learning was authentic and meaningful for the students.

## Conclusions

This article attempted to answer two main research questions, how did video narratives allow students to demonstrate their learning? and what were students' perceptions/experiences of using video narratives as an assessment tool? Video narratives elevated students' self-awareness and allowed them to provide emotive responses in which to demonstrate their learning in the assessment. The video narrative itself became a performative act in which students felt able to share private reflections and control their learning environment in a comfortable space. Students perceived the video narratives to be an authentic learning experience that was different from their normal assessments. Indeed, some went as far as suggesting that the learning experience allowed them to develop new skills to aid their future employment.

As educators, we must be wary and cautious of these experiences and, while our narrative supports a story of seamless implementation, we must remember that students experience different realities to ourselves and adopt different modes of digital technology. Thus, we must be conscious that technology is a rapidly changing environment that we must continue to evolve with; pedagogical uses of technology cannot afford to be static, they too must evolve.

Although students found the video narratives easier to do, they were also emotive and caused them to sense experiences in particular ways. In itself, this is a new finding of video narratives, that they cause affective emotive responses when delivered as part of a democratic curriculum and assessment. However, the literature on alternative assessment has been viewed as effective pedagogy and in itself an endpoint (Lorente-Catalán & Kirk, 2014). Despite suggestions that alternative assessment is an effective pedagogy, work that focuses on alternative assessment as part of the democratic project must also carry forward the case that new, innovative, challenging initiatives must challenge powerful institutions of education that standardise curriculum and assessment and make all students symbiotically robotic. Furthermore, educators in academic disciplines outside of PE, while set up in traditional teaching spaces must also embody the democratic spirit from pedagogy to curriculum to assessment, which means refuting banking educational approaches (Freire, 2007) and traditional forms of assessment such as examinations. Indeed, as the students in this study advocated for, perhaps more teachers could use video narratives as the platform for such assessment and pedagogic HE practice.

Moving forward, we call educators into action, drawing on a range of qualitative methodologies to challenge traditional practices in HE and specifically those in relation to digital technology and assessment. Notably, while our students suggest that their experiences using video narratives were positive, we caution that our sample size was small and consequently not generalisable to the broader student population. However, the findings suggest future benefits that educators and students may experience if the approaches are adopted, such as employability skills, a medium to express themselves and authentic/fun experiences of assessments.

Assessment is the heart of pedagogical practice; it allows a continued dialogue between student and teacher that stimulates learning. When technology and pedagogy align, more students may begin to value practices that disrupt the status quo of traditional schooling practices. Indeed, if we can involve students in the assessment process, we may be able to provide more authentic assessments and learning experiences for the students we teach, and they can be more enjoyable for all involved.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

**Julia Sargent** is a lecturer within the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University. She has worked there since 2018 and is currently involved in developing the online curriculum. Her specialisms include the use of technology within teaching and learning, pedagogy and professional development.

**Shrehan Lynch** is responsible for teacher training in physical education at the University of East London. She trains teachers on all routes including PGCE, School Direct and Apprenticeship programmes. Her specialisms include research on sociocultural issues in physical education, social justice pedagogies in teacher education, and physical education.

## ORCID

Julia Sargent  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9082-8378>

Shrehan Lynch  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8939-3143>

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