The academic TikTok: Academics' perceptions and uses of Microsoft Flip as a vlogging platform

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Vlogs, asynchronous video blogs where individuals film themselves to share personal experiences, have been widely used in educational settings. This study explores the integration of Microsoft Flip (Flip), a vlogging platform, in higher education, focusing on its use by academics during a 3-year pilot preceding institution-wide adoption. Grounded in Driscoll and Burner's (2005) constructivist theory, this research involved interviews with 10 academics from an Australian university, examining their experiences, challenges and recommendations for using Flip. The findings reveal that Flip facilitates innovative activity design, promoting user-friendliness, interaction and self-directed learning. However, privacy concerns, technical difficulties and engagement shortfalls were identified consistent with broader educational technology adoption issues. To minimise these challenges, academics suggested setting clear guidelines on how to use Flip to enhance learning and offered suggestions on how to organise the activities effectively. This research offers insights for academics and learning designers considering Flip in the tertiary educational context, highlighting its potential as a tool for enhancing learning experiences.

Implications for practice or policy:

- Implement scaffolded teaching in higher education, emphasising peer interaction, sequential assessments, and clear instructions to boost student learning outcomes.
- Provide academics with targeted resources and training to effectively integrate vlogs in teaching, addressing technological barriers.
- Use vlogging for summative assessments to ensure authentic uptake which also mitigates challenges within identity verification and artificial intelligence misuse in higher education.

Keywords: vlogging, Microsoft Flip, authentic assessment, identity-verified assessment, peer-to-peer engagement, constructivist theory, TikTok

Introduction

Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat) have become integral to student daily life and are no longer mere novelties. TikTok has become a global social media phenomenon, with 834 million users worldwide, projected to hit 1 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2023). TikTok is the quintessential artefact and example of the attention economy, whereby immediate attention in short-form videos is played continuously for micro-level engagement. For instance, complex concepts are provided in short video snippets that are easily digestible, accessible and entertaining (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021).

Academics can use TikTok or other vlogging tools, such as Microsoft Flip, to facilitate flipped, blended or fully online classroom models, where students preview video content at home and use class time for interactive discussions and activities. These platforms have been used for in-class collaboration, extracurricular initiatives and assessment, providing learners with opportunities to actively interact with and formally or informally learn from the online content (e.g., Awidi et al., 2019; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Malik et al., 2019; Manca, 2020). Moreover, TikTok's features, such as duets and challenges, encourage collaborative learning and peer engagement (Tan et al., 2022). This enables students to create content together or react to each other's videos on platforms, such as Microsoft Flip (Flip), fostering a more connected and engaged student experience.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic's shift to online or blended learning, educators have explored innovative methods through social media, such as vlogging, to maintain student engagement and connection (Aldukhayel, 2021; Hassan, 2023). A vlog, short for "video blog", is an asynchronous medium, often associated with YouTube, where individuals film and publish their personal opinions or experiences online, differing from live streaming, where communication is in real time (e.g., Brott, 2023; Hassan, 2023; Snelson, 2015). Research on the application of vlogs in educational settings has shown their effectiveness for language learning, content engagement and confidence development (Dunbar, 2019; Hassan, 2023; Liu, 2016; Tuyet & Khang, 2020; Yeh et al., 2022).

A prominent vlogging platform is Flip, which enables students and educators to create short videos (15 seconds to 10 minutes) for instructional purposes while also supporting peer-to-peer feedback through video or written responses and allowing teachers to offer personalised or public input (Carver & Pantoja, 2021; Kleinschmit & Rembold, 2020; Yeh et al., 2022). By leveraging Flip, students can engage with each other asynchronously, learn through vlogging and establish socio-emotional connections at their own pace (Carver & Pantoja, 2021; Yeh et al., 2022). Its popularity is evident from its widespread implementation in over 100 countries and more than 20,000 online and/or blended learning environments, particularly in K-12 settings (Kleinschmit & Rembold, 2020).

Despite the extensive scholarship on student perceptions and experiences with Flip (e.g., Craig, 2020; Kleinschmit & Rembold, 2020; Quimba, 2019; Taylor & Hinchman, 2020; Yeh et al., 2022), limited research has investigated its integration into academics' teaching practices (T. D. Green et al., 2021), especially within the Australian higher education sector. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the application, challenges and suggested practices of Flip by academics at an Australian university during a 3-year pilot before its wider institutional adoption. By analysing academic views on Flip, the research aims to expand knowledge of vlogging in constructivist learning and assess alignment with Driscoll and Burner's (2005) learning preconditions, focusing on complexity, realism, relevance and social negotiation.

Literature review

Vlogging in the higher education sector

Hassan's (2023) systematic review examined 60 recent papers exploring educational applications of vlogs across higher education and K-12 settings and found that vlogging could serve as an effective tool for reflection, instructional design and pedagogically to strengthen links between theory and practice. Hassan recommended that "future research may focus on the effectiveness of using vlogging to help pre-service teachers utilise and include multimedia as an integral part of the curriculum. Studies that experiment with vlogging using different platforms such as Flip and VoiceThread" (p. 10). This study responded to Hassan's call for research in this domain.

Vlogging platforms, such as VoiceThread, Kaltura and Padlet, are content-focused and less user-friendly than Flip, which is free for educators and secured by Microsoft's single sign-on. Flip supports sequential vlogging, ideal for ongoing reflection and learning documentation, unlike YouTube and Kaltura, which are more for content hosting, or VoiceThread, which emphasises media. This approach to vlogging, exemplified by Flip, facilitates continuous learner assessment and deters academic dishonesty.

In higher education, vlogging was found to facilitate critical reflection, self-expression, motivation and information. In her study on the reflexive applications of vlogging in the context of an undergraduate course on counselling theories, Brott (2023) observed some other benefits of vlogging. Based on Bloom's taxonomy, students not only showed comprehension of the course theories in each module but also exhibited improved evaluation skills through subsequent vlogging activities. Echoing the findings of previous research (e.g., Chalkias, 2023; Hui et al., 2018), Brott (2023) also found that vlogs served as a valuable learning analytics tool, enabling instructors to gather feedback from students and collect data on their overall performance. This data assisted instructors in planning subsequent lessons and determining the content to be covered.

Despite the suggested benefits of vlogging, several challenges have been presented. Hassan (2023) identified technical difficulties and students' sense of vlogging as an atypical form of communication detached from their daily reality. Reeves et al. (2017) revealed that students rarely rewatched their videos but preferred to watch the videos of their peers. Shyness and privacy concerns were also reported by students (J. R. Stoszkowski, 2018). Hassan's systematic review advanced the understanding of vlogging research. However, it revealed a gap within the literature that most studies primarily examined students' experiences and not teachers' perspectives.

Flip as a vlogging platform

Flip, previously known as Flipgrid, is a free vlogging platform, part of the Microsoft Office 365 suite, available in web-based and mobile applications. Flip is divided into groups and topics, in which groups function as courses, classes or tutorial groups, and topics represent specific activities or prompts for student engagement (Microsoft Flip, 2023). Within each group, educators can create a variety of topics. Before distributing access to students through QR codes, links or integration into a learning management system, instructors can customise settings to control the visibility of student responses and access to the group (Dunbar, 2019; T. Green & Green, 2017; Kleinschmidt & Rembold, 2020).

Students can respond to topics by recording 15-second to 10-minute video or audio on the platform, as set by the educator (Dunbar, 2019). Students can also add stickers, images and drawings to their recordings, share their screen and camera simultaneously and edit their video directly on Flip (e.g., Craig, 2020; T. Green & Green, 2017; Kleinschmidt & Rembold, 2020; Quimba, 2019). Alternatively, they can upload pre-existing recordings. Upon completion, students can respond to their peers' recordings by writing a comment or recording an audio or video. The educator can then view all students' recordings and comments and provide individualised feedback privately or publicly to the group (e.g., Carver & Pantoja, 2021; Taylor & Hinchman, 2020). It should be noted that other vlogging platforms, such as VoiceThread and Padlet, offer several possibilities for activities and assessment. For example, they can facilitate motor skill development in sports education, in which an older student posts a video on how to do the task, and a younger student would then mimic and record themselves trying to practise that skill at their own pace (Taylor & Hinchman, 2020). In the context of the arts, where 50 middle and high school students used Flip, Johnson and Skarphol (2018) found that vlogging was instrumental in creating authentic reflection blogs as part of students' e-portfolios.

Research has also pointed to the benefits of vlogging more generally. McLain (2018) reported that in the context of English for Business, short video responses significantly enhanced students' speaking skills and self-confidence, as evidenced by their post-course evaluations. Similarly, Mango (2019) noted improvements in the speaking and listening skills of students learning Arabic at an American university. Quimba (2019) found that Flip enhanced nursing students' job satisfaction and reflection skills by better enabling them to articulate their work experiences compared to traditional discussion blogs. Through a survey with undergraduate students at the University of Central Lancashire, J. R. Stoszkowski (2018) identified seven strengths of Flip: Accessibility: One click to log on, one click to record; Flexibility: Asynchronous, can be done at the student's leisure; Participation: Equal participation by those who are less likely to speak in class; Appeal: Students prefer watching other students speak; Formative feedback: Student-to-student and student-to-instructor easy video-based feedback; Tracking: Engagement, views and minutes watched can gauge students' engagement; and Compatibility: Can be integrated into Microsoft Teams among others.

Vlogging tools like Flip can also challenge unemotional and unverified forms of assessments, particularly discussion forums. T. Green and Green (2017) discussed the emotional connection that Flip affords and discussion forums lack, being the human, emotional and social interaction that connects with others. This was also consistent with Carr's (2020) findings that compared to discussion boards and other video assessments. Flip ranked the highest in "enhancing creativity, demonstrating understanding, student voice, and usefulness toward learning" (p. 303). Furthermore, pharmacy research that compared the use of Flip for self-reflection tasks and traditional written assignments resulted in a high preference for the

online tool for both academics and learners; however, engagement (as a self-reported means of peer-to-peer engagement) was not statistically significant (Kiles et al., 2020).

Although most studies indicate Flip's effectiveness, they also acknowledge challenges akin to those related to vlogging in general previously discussed. J. R. Stoszkowski (2018) noted that using Flip requires students to have access to a camera-equipped device, thus emphasising accessibility concerns. Privacy-related concerns were also expressed by some students who felt uneasy about the possibility of saying something inappropriate while recording themselves. Another aspect that emerged was the presence of technology issues, particularly browser compatibility problems, whereby Google Chrome and Firefox were found to be preferable due to Safari's screen pop-up blocks. These challenges underscore educators' role in adequately preparing students for using the platform, designing appropriate tasks and ensuring a clear understanding of the settings.

Theoretical framework

The current study employed Driscoll and Burner's (2005) constructivist theory, a widely recognised framework in instructional design chosen for its widespread use and ability to provide insights into online learning environments (O'Connor et al., 2022). The theory acknowledges that learning involves constructing knowledge through social interaction and negotiation rather than transmitting information. It highlights the significance of students connecting and making sense of their ideas in collaboration with others, leading to the development of cognitive processes and the creation of new knowledge (Driscoll & Burner, 2005). Their constructivist conditions of learning theory comprise five fundamental principles, shown in Table 1, which informed the interpretation of the study's findings (Driscoll & Burner, 2005; Jonassen et al., 2008).

Table 1
Principles of Driscoll and Burner's (2005) constructivist theory

Principle	Explanation
Complex, realistic and relevant	The primary approach is to integrate learning within complex and pertinent environments for learning to possess sufficient complexity to cultivate certainty amid uncertainty (Driscoll & Burner, 2005; Jonassen, 1998).
Social negotiation	This condition suggests that learning is shaped through social interactions, whereby new ideas and insights are generated (Almala, 2005).
Support multiple perspectives and multiple modes of learning	To support learning by developing visuals, objects and video that help garner interest through different modes of representation, such as visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning (Capp, 2017; Driscoll & Burner, 2005; Hall et al., 2012).
Ownership of learning	Ownership involves learners being active participants in the learning process, being self-regulated and setting goals but also being able to monitor and self-instruct when necessary (Harris et al., 2012; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).
Self-awareness of the learning process	Self-awareness is critical for students to question their biases, viewpoints, and positionalities in constructing knowledge in the context of their understanding of the world (Driscoll & Burner, 2005).

Research questions

This exploratory research sought to investigate how Flip, a vlogging platform, has been integrated into the teaching of academics from the Australian higher education sector. The research questions were as follows:

(1) How do academics perceive the usefulness of Flip in different use cases and contexts in higher education?
(2) What challenges do academics encounter when using Flip, and what suggestions do they have for improving the platform?

Methodology

Participants

This study involved 10 academics teaching different courses and subjects in the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty of an Australian university. Their teaching experience ranged from 10 to 32 years, and they all had used Flip for at least 1 year. See Table 1 for a summary of participants' profiles.

Table 2
Participants' information

Participant ID	Role	Teaching experience (years)	Teaching context	Length (years); frequency using Flip
P1	Casual academic	18	Pre-service teacher training	5; once a semester
P2	English teacher	22	Teaching English as a second language courses	4; weekly
P3	English teacher	15	Pre-service teacher training and teaching English as a second language courses	5; once a semester
P4	Casual academic	12	Korean language courses	2; twice a semester
P5	Visiting academic	10	Spanish language courses and Spanish extracurricular activities	2; twice a semester
P6	Lecturer	32	French language and culture courses	2; once or twice a semester
P7	Lecturer	30	French language courses	2; 12 times a semester
P8	Lecturer	23	Social sciences courses	1; twice a semester
P9	Casual academic	12	Chinese translation and language courses	2; once a semester
P10	Lecturer	14	Intercultural communication courses	2; three times a semester

The participants were recruited voluntarily through purposive sampling as they were selected directly from those staff who participated in the university's 3-year pilot program (Stratton, 2021). It is essential to rationalise, especially within interview-based qualitative research, why only 10 participants were chosen for this study (Marshall et al., 2013). The research aimed to locate and develop a richer and more in-depth understanding of the uses of Flip rather than a quantitative survey of preferences. Ethics was obtained in this study (Project ID 2022/HE000963).

Data collection

Before the data collection, participants who agreed to join the study received a participant information sheet and signed a consent form. Individual semi-structured interviews were then conducted with 10 academics over a 3-month period. The interview consisted of 25 questions, adapted from Carpenter et al. (2020) and Carpenter and Krutka (2014), and divided into four sections: Demographics, Flip experiences, Flip activity examples and Future plans. The Demographics section collected essential details on participant's institutional affiliation, role, teaching experience, courses delivered and pedagogic stance. The Flip experiences section elucidated initial acquaintance with Flip, its integration into specific courses, duration and mode of use, frequency and the types of educational activities it supports. It also probed the rationale behind Flip's adoption, its academic merits, student feedback and any challenges alongside mitigation strategies. An exemplar Flip activity was discussed in the next section to discern its educational intent, student engagement, duration, settings, moderation and feedback methodologies. The Future plans section gauged participants' intention to continue with Flip and their recommendations for its broader adoption in higher education. Interview questions were piloted and revised to ensure clarity based on the feedback of a learning designer from the same university.

Two of us conducted the interviews, which took approximately 1 hour. To ensure the practicability of the interview scheduling process for the participants, the interviews were conducted online via Zoom and were audio recorded.

Data analysis

The audio recordings of the interviews underwent a rigorous analysis process. Firstly, we transcribed them verbatim. The transcriptions were then analysed qualitatively, following a thematic approach and iterative in-vivo coding procedure (Saldaña, 2021). This coding procedure consisted of segmenting and coding the entire interview with concepts that emerged from the participants' words. This coding process captures the meanings and perceptions conveyed by the participants (Saldaña, 2021). In the initial phase of coding, the related concepts were reviewed and grouped into broader categories. This step allowed us to identify common themes and patterns in the data. Subsequently, in a second round of coding, similar concepts were consolidated into broader categories, encapsulating the core ideas that emerged from the interviews. Finally, from the broader categories, a theme emerged. A theme represents and unifies all the participants' perspective, providing a coherent and comprehensive narrative of the findings. To ensure the reliability and validity of the codes, one of us analysed approximately 20% of the data independently. The results of this analysis were then compared. In cases where differences arose, a discussion of the best representation of the concept was adjusted and refined to ensure consistency and accuracy to better represent the intended meaning. Mind maps were manually created to visualise the relationships between categories, codes and examples to enhance the understanding of the data. In each mind map, a numerical value in parenthesis was added to illustrate the frequency and prevalence of the ideas of all the participants. Thus, the total number in each category represents all the codes associated with that category. For instance, three comments were coded as learning content and 12 as practising and assessing language skills, which were then grouped into the category of presentations. This process was carried out manually, with no support from software other than Microsoft Excel for organising the transcribed data.

Findings

As shown in Figure 1, four main themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. Each theme is discussed and exemplified in the sections below.

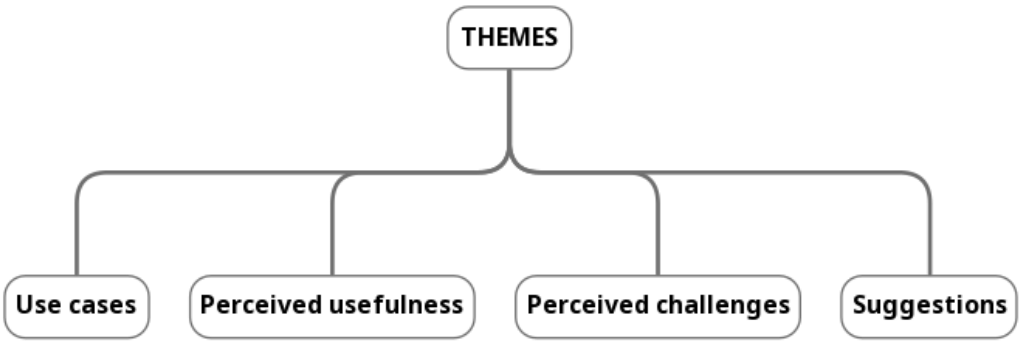

Figure 1. Themes and categories

Use cases

In this theme, participants talked about the different ways in which Flip was implemented in their pedagogical practices. As shown in Figure 2, three main uses were identified: presentations, interactions and reflections.

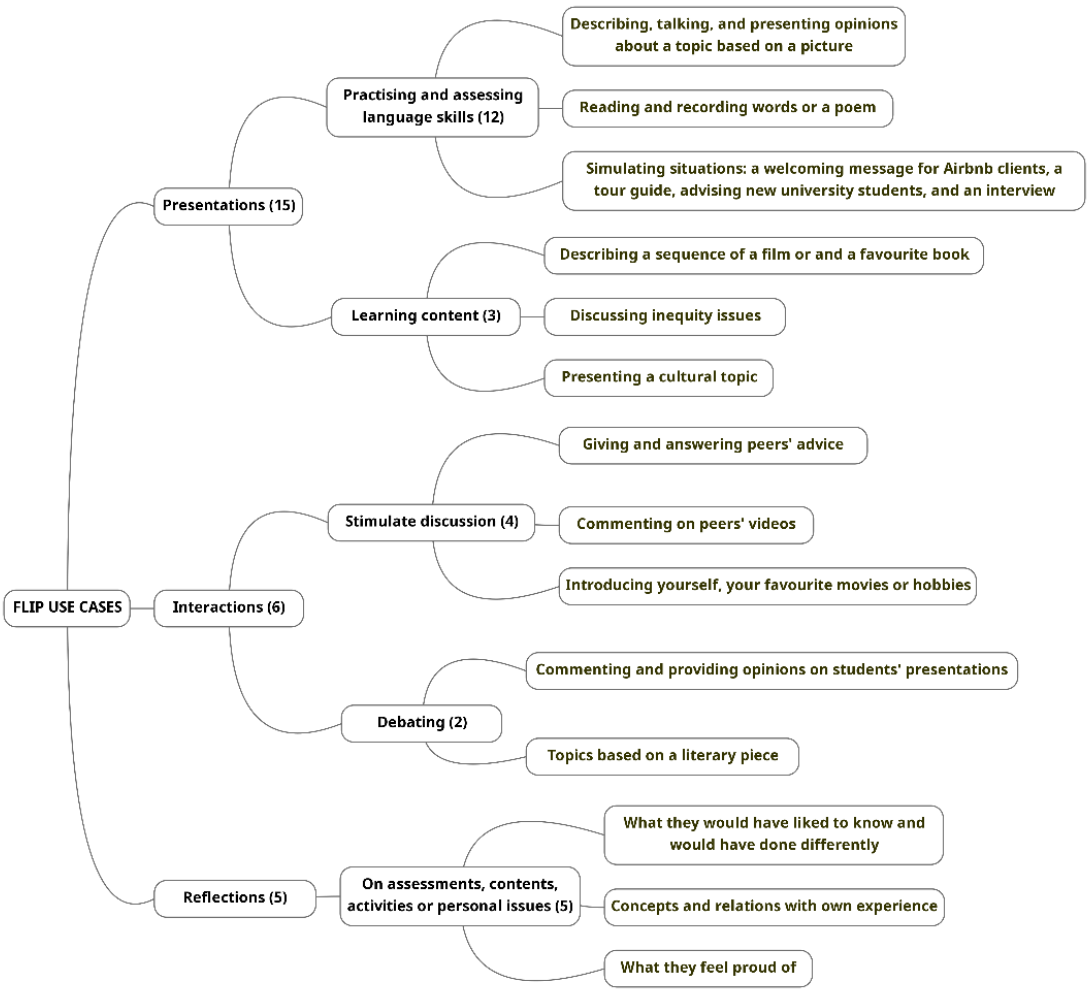

Figure 2. Use cases

In the presentations sub-theme, participants created activities on Flip so that students could present on a diverse range of topics. For example, presentations were used to assess students' language skills in language courses – "I use Flip as a way they [students] can record themselves, they practise the poem, and then I can give them feedback through Flip for their speaking assessments". Students were also encouraged to practise their speaking skills by simulating a real-life situation, "Students created a video selling services as a tour guide in their local area. I set up the page that said, 'Take your tour guide', so it looked more authentic as if they were posting on a tour website" (P7). Additionally, with presentations on Flip, students explored and learned course content. For instance, Participant 8 asked students to pitch an idea to examine two axes of inequality and questions, which were some of the key concepts of the course.

Flip was also used to encourage student interaction within the platform or in the classroom. For that, two categories emerged: stimulating discussion and debating. For example, Flip was used as a continuation of the development of a lesson plan. In this case, "The students had to listen to two recordings and respond to each other questions verbally on the platform" (P3). Additionally, an example of a debate activity was when "students have to enter into a kind of debate on Flip about a particular topic and argument related to a particular book. Then, they uploaded a video in relation to a question, and the other students will react to that video" (P6).

Finally, the activities implemented on Flip facilitated students' reflection on their personal experience of the learning content, learning process, instructional methods, the course and related activities. For instance, "Students talked about what they would like to be able to do with French, why they chose it and what they would like to have known at the beginning of the semester" (P7). Students also "recorded a video reflection in Flip of their learning task towards the end of each module. They were asked to reflect on what they'd learned in the module about communication, discussed the meaning and implicature referring to the reading and content and to relate that learning to their own lives" (P10), thus useful as a reflecting tool that encourages students a deeper understanding of their learning progress and personal connections to the course content. Overall, incorporating Flip as a video tool activity in higher educational settings allows academics to create unconventional and stimulating activities beyond the traditional written assignment or oral presentation, with the advantage of being flexible and adaptable to the specific students' learning needs.

Perceived usefulness

Participants perceived Flip as useful in four distinct categories, with the numbers associated in each category representing the frequency with which participants referenced each theme, as shown in Figure 3. Participants described Flip as user-friendly and interactive and perceived it to increase students' learning autonomy.

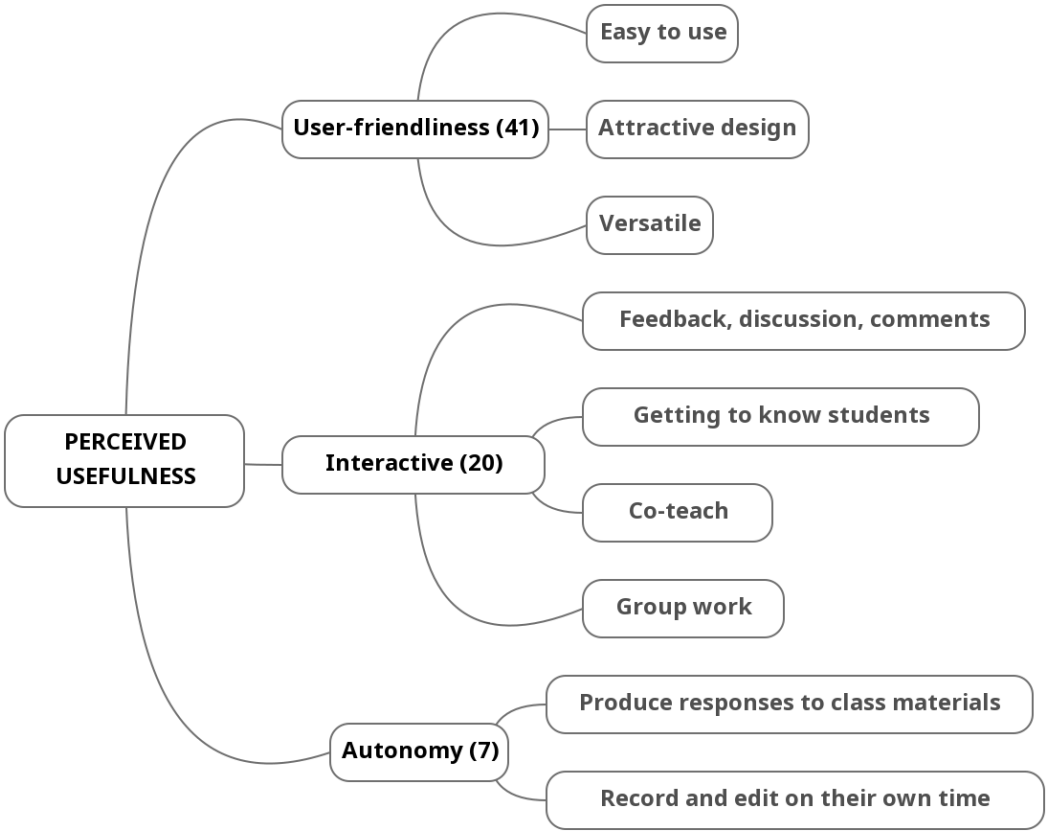

Figure 3. Perceived usefulness

The user-friendliness category can be illustrated when participants mentioned that it was easy to use to share with students and among colleagues, it loaded quickly, it had an attractive design and it was versatile. For instance, Participant 7 commented, "Flip is quite straightforward, and you could do many exciting things". Furthermore, it has an attractive design, an advantageous feature for younger students. Comments included, "I think young generations prefer the bright glowing fluorescence as any kind of colours is really good. Flip's images and its designs are quite young and lively" (P9). The tool also allowed for a level of personalisation by "seeing the instructions in that standard format, save you very much all your work from the start" (P7). This makes it a versatile tool that "can be used as a handover" (P1), a "basic presentation or use the videos in another activity" (P5).

Additionally, Flip was seen to provide opportunities for closer interaction about personal and shared interests. For instance, one participant commented, "I thought this might be a nice way of putting them [students] in touch with other people who are passionate about similar issues" (P8). Similarly, getting to know students, "I think, as a teacher, you may be interested in knowing who is coming to your classes, to your course, to your conference and to have some feedback and ideas of what people think about the topic" (P5). This also allowed the participant to provide more relevant, authentic and realistic feedback on student performance and progress with the teaching team: "It's really easy to go back and double-check, or if I'm uncertain about a mark, I can get my tutors to double-check" (P8).

Flip was mentioned as a relevant tool that increases students' learning autonomy because when staff create an "interactive activity where it is set up, then, the students get on with it" (P1). They can "work with it more themselves" (P2), "in their own time and re-record if they want to" (P1). Therefore, using vlogging tools, students are encouraged to take ownership of the material and actively engage with it by representing, posting, sharing and owning their work, as they are more invested when expressing their

learning. Overall, participants perceived Flip as useful in their teaching environment, primarily for being user-friendly, fostering interactions and promoting self-directed learning and autonomy. By shedding light on the perceived usefulness, it is possible to provide valuable insights for educators and researchers seeking to optimise the integration of Flip into educational settings.

Perceived challenges

Despite the potential benefits and usefulness perceived by academics using Flip in their classrooms, they often encountered various challenges that can hinder its seamless integration. These primarily revolve around the platform's issues, particularly the lack of specific functions or integrations with other technologies. There were also concerns regarding how to use the platform correctly, students' ability to navigate the platform correctly and their lack of engagement (see Figure 4).

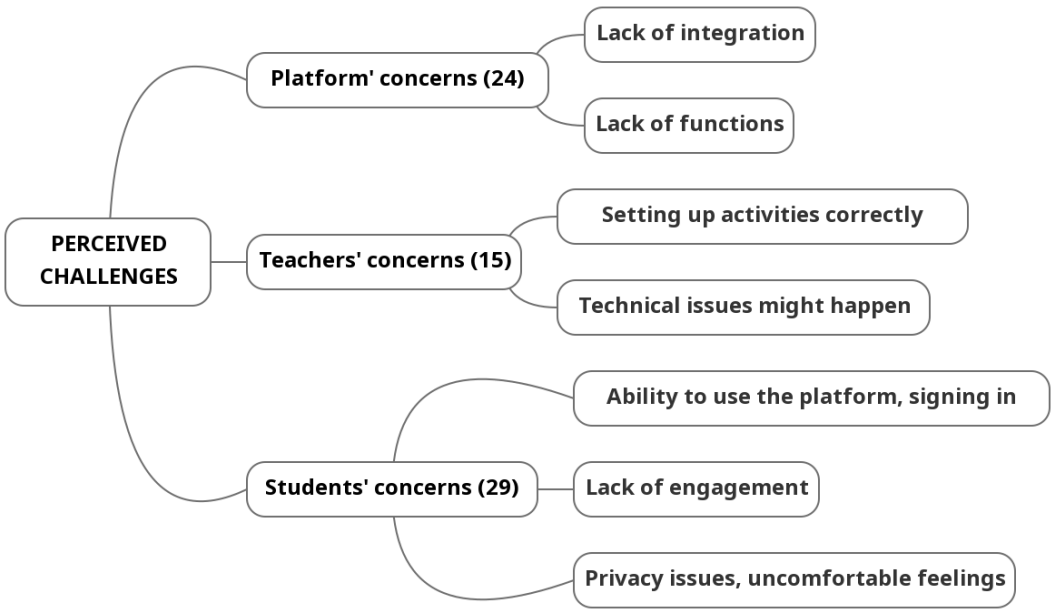

Figure 4. Perceived challenges

First, platform issues are related to technical challenges and inconveniences experienced by academics in using Flip in different activities and assessments, particularly because Flip was not fully integrated with the university platforms to check plagiarism or identify students' credentials. Also, staff reported that Flip does not contain some functions, such as a reliable marking feature, which makes it difficult to evaluate students' work from the tool itself. Additionally, the time limit for the videos is up to 10 minutes, which reduces the number of activities that require longer periods or deeper explanations. Participant 7 expressed that "for any kind of oral recordings for more advanced courses. The time limit is a bit of an issue", limiting the staff's uses for assessment and creativity.

Teachers' concerns related to their confusion regarding the correct set-up of Flip. For some, "It can be confusing, I guess, between looking at the group, and then what's an activity within a group? And do you have to create a new group for every class that you teach?" (P3). But what teachers struggled with most was their fear that the technology might fail. For instance, Participant 8 was really worried that they had not set a particular Flip topic correctly and privately, which might discourage students from exploring the platform's full potential.

Participants were also concerned about how students would engage with the platform and whether they would be overwhelmed, uncomfortable or disengaged. They feared students would complain about using

Flip in assessments or receive comments about privacy and security issues. For instance, "occasionally we get students who for some reason don't seem to be able to log on, due to the browser" (P6). Similarly, Participant 2 expressed, "I assure my students that only people in the class will be able to see these videos of them. But I'm not sure if I can guarantee that, I don't know, you know" (P2). Additionally, there were some concerns about the lack of engagement, such as "I don't know how many times to use it without getting people to be tired of, not another video" (P5).

Recommendations

The main recommendations can be divided into two categories: those relevant to promoting learning and those applicable in terms of how to organise the activities efficiently within the platform (see Figure 5.

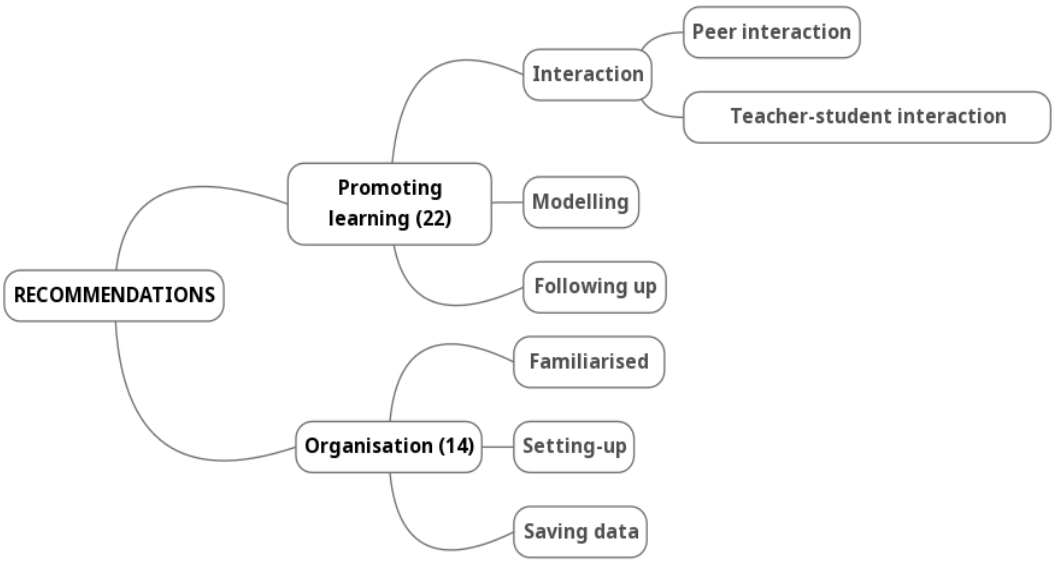

Figure 5. Suggestions

In terms of promoting learning, participants mentioned that Flip could promote teacher and peer interaction. For instance, Participant 9 mentions that by making Flip accessible to all students, they could watch the videos and provide feedback comments to their peers, start a conversation or talk to each other by adding brief sentences. Modelling the task shows students what is expected from them:

> Make sure you put up videos yourself first and do it roughly. Don't do a beautiful copy. Just do a kind of here I am, here's what I expect from you and show the students how you'll be getting them feedback. What is the video about? How does a feedback video look like? (P8)

In other words, they recommended that academics be the first to post a vlog, as it models and scaffolds what students need to do. Furthermore, following up on the activity would ensure students' engagement in the activity completion:

> If you're going to set it as an outside task. Just make sure you've got something that you're going to do with it and say, all right, we'll check this on Thursday morning, or we'll be using those videos to do another step. So, if you don't have one up there, you won't be able to participate in the class, so make sure you get them to do it. (P3)

In terms of organisation, participants recommended that both teachers and students need to be familiarised with the platform: "Just play around with it. Familiarise yourself with it. It's super user-friendly. It's intuitive, but like anything, the basic stuff is really intuitive" (P4). They also recommended

designing the activity according to the time and with clear instructions. The group category in Flip works as a class, for instance, FRENCH1010, and the topic as an activity. That way, within a group, teachers can create as many topics as they need, making it easy to organise the activities within each group. Additionally, Participant 4 recommended that if teachers are using Flip as an assessment piece, it is important to make a backup copy of the data and the marks in case of unforeseeable events. Overall, these suggestions offer valuable insights for educators and instructional designers looking to integrate Flip effectively into their teaching practices.

Discussion

Research question 1: Use cases

This study explored the use cases, perceived usefulness and challenges of using vlogging tools in a higher education setting. The data revealed that Flip is regarded highly for its user-friendly interface, interactive capabilities and autonomy-enhancing features. Such attributes align with Driscoll and Burner's (2005) first principle of making learning more complex, realistic and relevant. In over half the use cases, Flip was used to promote more authentic and practical assessments. This finding is similar to those of Keiper et al. (2021) that real-life scenarios within vlogging act as a catalyst in developing authentic learning environments, especially in the face of COVID restrictions and the lack of human connection. Similarly, the few studies that focused on educators' perceptions of Flip also noted that "It takes the learning beyond my classroom walls and makes learning French more real to the students because they are having authentic conversations" (T. D. Green et al., 2021, p. 793).

The simplicity and intuitiveness of Flip, as described by participants, resonate with literature that has identified ease of use as a critical factor in technology adoption (Granić & Marangunić, 2019; J. R. Stoszkowski, 2018). The attractive and engaging design of Flip, highlighted by vibrant colours and personalisation options, echoes the findings of Tien et al. (2018) and T. D. Green et al. (2021), where emotionally engaging design elements have been shown to facilitate better learning outcomes.

Interactivity, critical in vlogging, provides students with opportunities for authentic engagement with their peers and instructors, fostering a sense of community and collaboration while negotiating meaning. Participants saw the benefit of students engaging in social negotiation and realisation, where they calibrate, align and recentre their focus based on the classmates around them. This is supported by J. Stoszkowski and Collins's (2022) observations of increased critical debate and Yeh et al.'s (2022) findings on social negotiation within the vlogging context, where students' perceptions of the world helped others make sense of theirs. Although student debates were identified only by two participants, J. Stoszkowski and Collins's evaluations of their sports students noted that during vlogging-based student debate, learners were gauging each other's worldviews, which promoted higher-order thinking.

Autonomy and self-regulation in learning lend themselves well to Flip's flexible nature, allowing students to engage with content and tasks at their own pace. This self-directed learning is a cornerstone of Driscoll and Burner's (2005) constructivist approach and is echoed by T. D. Green et al. (2021), who noted that such autonomy provides students with a genuine voice in their learning process. This is consistent with the vlogging literature for its ability to induce more critical and self-reflective students (Brott, 2023) while at the same time meeting the preconditions of appreciating multiple voices, viewpoints and perspectives outlined by Driscoll and Burner.

Perceived usefulness

The adoption of Flip as an educational tool reflects a broader trend towards interactive and user-friendly technology that supports independent learning. The results of this study show that participants view Flip as particularly useful due to its ease of use, attractive design, versatility and capacity to foster interactivity and autonomy among students. These facets are critical in the context of technology acceptance and adoption within higher education (Granić & Marangunić, 2019).

The design of Flip, described as both user-friendly and emotionally engaging through its use of colours, animations and personalisation, correlates with an increase in learning outcomes. This finding aligns with the work of Tien et al. (2018) and T. D. Green et al. (2021), who argued that such design elements significantly enhance the learning experience. The capacity of Flip to provide multiple perspectives and modes of representation is a prime example of the application of Driscoll and Burner's (2005) principles in practice.

The concept of social negotiation is central to understanding the interactions that occur within Flip. It allows students to construct meaning and understand their place in relation to their peers, thus enhancing the learning process. The interactive features of Flip, particularly those that allow for feedback, discussion and comments, not only facilitate this social negotiation but also promote a culture of reflective learning that is both situated and sequential.

Furthermore, the autonomy afforded by Flip empowers students to take control of their learning. This is evident in the autonomy category of the results, where participants noted the tool's ability to allow them to produce responses to class materials and record and edit at their pace and time. This level of engagement leads to a greater investment in the learning process and, as T. D. Green et al. (2021) have confirmed, gives students an authentic, confident and valued voice within their learning environment.

Research question 2: Perceived challenges

The discussion of challenges associated with the use of the Flip is multifaceted, encapsulating technical, pedagogical and ethical factors. These challenges are not just theoretical but are grounded in the practical experiences of the educators within this study. Most obviously, participants on over 15 occasions mentioned technical issues as a challenge, especially since the software needs access to the camera, which is sometimes blocked automatically. The fact that Flip is not supported by Safari further exacerbated these concerns. Although J. Stoszkowski and Collins (2022) also mentioned these as challenges, academic training is needed to ensure successful first-time use of the platform.

Platform-related issues such as the lack of integration with existing university systems and the absence of essential functions are more than mere inconveniences; they represent significant barriers to the adoption and effective utilisation of Flip. The absence of integration with plagiarism detection tools, such as Turnitin, underscores a gap in academic integrity safeguards, even though it promotes identity-verified assessment. Moreover, the constraints on video duration limit the depth of oral assessments, thereby potentially curbing the expression of complex ideas for high-stakes summative assessments.

Educators' concerns about designing activities correctly highlight a need for clearer guidelines and more intuitive user interfaces, even though this is often one of its hallmarks. The fear of technological failure is not insignificant, considering the reliance on these platforms for high-stakes assessments. The apprehensions about the correct use of the platform signify the importance of providing educators with low-stakes practice environments, as suggested by Cardullo et al. (2021), to bolster their confidence and proficiency before employing these tools in their teaching.

The cognitive load on students due to editing requirements points to a potential conflict between the desire for authenticity in vlogs and the time investment required to achieve it. Although Huang (2021) has flagged the issue of time-consuming post-editing, Healey-Benson (2021) posited that personalisation enhances the authenticity of vlogs, which can be an essential aspect of student engagement and reflective practice.

Furthermore, the challenges of engagement and privacy are not to be underestimated. Issues of privacy and ethics in vlogging call for the establishment of clear guidelines and responsible pedagogies, as highlighted by Papaioannou et al. (2022).

However, a critical challenge that is perhaps a recommendation from the outcomes of the interviews with participants is that Flip is more effective when it is used as a summative assessment item. This finding is supported by the literature, suggesting that vlogging assessment involves cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills that involve creativity and articulation that deserve to be treated and assessed more seriously (Healey-Benson, 2021).

Suggestions

The study highlights that Flip can significantly increase teacher-student and peer-to-peer interactions. The participants highlighted the importance of an accessible platform for providing feedback, suggesting that Flip's video-based feedback can facilitate a more dynamic and engaging exchange while emphasising the value of teachers modelling tasks through their own video submissions, thereby setting a relaxed and realistic standard for student contributions. This aligns with Driscoll and Burner's (2005) assertion that modelling is essential in outcomes-based assessment, reinforcing the idea that educators should lead by example to scaffold student learning.

The use of Flip for continuous sequential engagement was also highlighted, with suggestions to utilise the platform for activities outside of class time, ensuring that these tasks are integrated into the curriculum with clear expectations and follow-up activities to maintain student involvement and ensure the completion of learning activities.

On the organisational front, the need for familiarisation with Flip is evident. Although the learning curve is small, participants advised that educators become well-acquainted with the platform to leverage its user-friendly and intuitive design. The recommendation to set up activities with precise timing and instructions suggests a structured approach that integrates group work and targeted activities within the class framework. Furthermore, it is recommended that vlogging platforms such as Flip are to be used for summative assessment in an effort to increase its impact and importance.

The suggestions provided by participants offer a multifaceted framework for integrating Flip into educational practices. By fostering interaction through modelling and ensuring thorough organisation and familiarisation with digital tools, educators can enhance the learning experience. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on digital pedagogies, where the focus on interaction and structured organisation supports effective curriculum design and student engagement, consistent with the principles of student partnership and active learning models that have been central to Driscoll and Burner's (2005) work and contemporary digital teaching methodologies.

Conclusion

This study has illuminated the diverse applications and reflections on Flip, as articulated by 10 academics engaged in a 3-year pilot program. The tool's ability to foster realistic learning environments, encourage multiple perspectives and promote self-awareness and ownership aligns with Driscoll and Burner's (2005) constructivist conditions of learning, highlighting its pedagogical value.

Despite the enthusiasm for Flip's potential, technical difficulties, privacy concerns and a lack of comprehensive support emerged as significant challenges. These issues, once thematically analysed, signal that training and support are vital for its adoption as both a challenge and a recommendation. Furthermore, harnessing peer interactions, clarity of assessment expectations and the strategic use of the platform for summative assessments to maximise its impact are notable suggestions for others considering adopting the tool. The study suggests that while vlogging software presents certain challenges, its benefits in enhancing student learning and engagement are pronounced, warranting greater consideration for their implementation in Australian universities. The slow uptake in higher education contrasts with its widespread acceptance in primary and secondary education, hinting at a potential missed opportunity within the tertiary sector. As such, this study advocates for a more proactive approach to incorporating such vlogging tools in university settings.

Author contributions

Author 1: Conceptualisation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing; **Author 2**: Literature review, Ethics application, Data collection, Data curation, Data analysis; **Author 3**: Data collection, Data analysis.

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