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The journal is published in partnership with the CDI twice a year and is available both in print and online (Print ISSN 2046-1348; Online ISSN 2059-4879). Institutional subscription (online only) costs: £120 (plus VAT where applicable). Annual print subscription costs £30 UK, £35 Europe outside UK or £40 outside Europe, including postage. Individual online subscription costs £25 (plus VAT where applicable).

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The *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* is published in partnership with the CDI by: National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC), The Lodge, Cheerbrook Road, Willaston, Nantwich CW5 7EN.

[www.nicec.org](http://www.nicec.org)

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# Overview of this issue

Welcome to the Journal of the National Institute of Career Education and Counselling. In this edition established academics, new writers and practitioner researchers bring us useful insights into career learning and the interplay between theory, practice and research. The UK government's recent career strategy placed renewed emphasis on career learning in schools in England making it a highly topical subject for consideration. However, career covers all stages of life and needs to be supported by a life-long engagement with learning, hence the articles extend beyond the school setting. Our authors reflect on programme design, review the development and implementation of career learning frameworks and tools, and explore external and internal contextual factors that influence the career learning process. Whilst different in focus and context, at the core of all the articles is the theme of client and participant career learning leading to progression in career development.

A particular landmark for NICEC is the publication of an article by **Laura Walker** which was awarded the Bill Law Student Memorial Award 2019. In this opening piece, Laura explores the implications for career guidance practice of late career decision making, where she characterises the learning as a process of discovering more of themselves – 'more of me'. The findings are set out using a visual which is unique to the author and very helpful for use by practitioners. The image of 'dancing with fear' is powerful, and reminiscent of Bill Law's use of imagery in his concern to help practitioners to apply the lessons learned through research to practice.

In the two articles that follow, **Lis McGuire** and **John Gough** write from different perspectives about the process of designing learning experiences. Liz explores adopting a collaborative approach between the provider and the user of services. Although the article focuses on addressing the needs of persons with mental health problems, her findings and reflections are equally relevant to programme design for other user groups. Similarly, John's reflections on a collaborative process in training careers leaders in England highlights

the importance of engaging the voice of the learner in enabling them to develop this role effectively in complex and demanding educational environments.

The next three articles focus on specific aspects of working directly with clients, and present new career learning tools and a career framework. These developments, rooted in practice, include a mix of 'what works' along with reflection on what was less successful, and insights into why that might be. First, **Katie Dallison** describes the development and implementation of Plan: Me. Piloted within higher education, this tool takes a holistic approach to career decision making, integrating goal setting, and allowing clients to map out a process of how they can move themselves forward independently. Second, we have an article by **Keren Coney and Ben Simkins** in which they consider the potential of using 'screencasting' technology to support students' C.V. writing. Third, **Lewis Clark and Carolyn Parry** review their creation of the INSPIRED teenager framework designed to support collaborative career-based learning between parents/carers and their teenage child.

The final two articles are concerned with the wider context within which career learning takes place. **Szilvia Schmitsek** explores the educational experiences of young people in England, Denmark and Hungary who had been at risk of dropping out, but later gained a qualification at a second chance provision. In contrast, **Nikki Storey** is concerned with the influences on the career beliefs of students in an ethnically diverse state school in London. Using an adapted short version of the 'Careers Beliefs Patterns Scale', Nikki examines the interlinked impacts of ethnicity and socio-economic status, and draws out recommendations for practitioners.

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Lyn Barham & Michelle Stewart, Editors

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# Enhancing CV feedback: Providing feedback to students and graduates using screencasting technology

Keren Coney & Ben Simkins

**Literature** suggests that using screencasting technology increases the quality of feedback. However, there appears to be an absence of published work on using screencasting to provide feedback to students/graduates on their CVs. This mixed methods study aims to address this gap in the literature, exploring perceptions of students/graduates who received CV feedback via screencasting. Evidence from a small quantitative survey (n=79) and a focus group (n=4) suggested that the participants found the feedback via screencasting was easy to understand and personalised. Objective measures of the participants' CVs suggested that the changes participants made following feedback had improved their CVs.



## Introduction

### What is screencasting?

Screencasting is a type of instructional technology in the form of a software programme that is used to capture images from a computer screen to produce a video. Guided audio instruction can be recorded concurrently with the captured images. The screencast is then sent electronically to a student and accessed independently (Hoepner, Hemmerich & Stirling-Orth, 2016). Screencasting has been identified as a form of technology that can help to improve students' and graduates' perception of the feedback they receive (Marriot, 2012).

### Context

It is expected that most students will be required to create a Curriculum Vitae (CV) during their time

at university. Whilst some seek this help face-to-face, others, in particular graduates, ask for guidance via email. It can be challenging to suggest the major corrections that are sometimes required, whilst also providing encouragement to a student in their job searching. The use of screencasting software would allow a student/graduate to hear an audio recording of a careers professional whilst watching a 'video' of that professional highlighting changes or indicating certain parts of the CV or application form on the screen.

Feedback has been described as 'one of the most potent influences on student learning and achievement' (Jonsson, 2012, p.63). One challenge for careers professionals is not necessarily in how to provide effective feedback face-to-face, rather how to provide quality feedback remotely. For CVs remote feedback would typically be provided by attempting to describe changes via telephone or by using the review feature in a word processor to add comments into the document. But is there a more effective approach available? In the UK university sector, technology has been identified as being underutilised in supporting the development of student employability (Chatterton & Reebeck, 2015). In this report, 'screencasts' and 'video' were singled out as examples of 'potential for greater adoption' (Chatterton & Reebeck, 2015, p.20).

The use of screencasting could also benefit students living off campus, who may find it more difficult to access a face-to-face appointment. Additional benefits of adopting screencasting could include improving the service provided to students who have English as a second language (MucCulloch, 2010), students with dyslexia (Rotherham, 2009) and students with visual impairments (Lunt & Curran, 2010).

## Literature review

A literature review using Library Search and further exploration using the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services journal, Phoenix, revealed no published research on the use of screencasting for feedback on CVs. This suggests that there is a significant gap in research and that currently there is no academic or professional literature specifically around screencasting feedback on CVs.

Script markers have reported that using screencasting encouraged them to focus on feedback useful for deep learning such as content, rather than surface learning such as spelling and punctuation (Vincelette, 2013). Likewise, screencasting has been associated with increased student understanding of feedback (West, 2016). Students have reported also that the ability to hear the feedback and simultaneously see where

this feedback applied in their work led to a greater understanding than just written or audio feedback alone (Orlando, 2016). As well as aiding understanding, hearing the tone used in delivering the feedback was associated by students with a more personal feedback experience (Thompson & Lee, 2012). In particular, Vincelette and Bostic (2013) found that students made more effective revisions of their work when feedback was provided via screencasting.

The use of screencasting has been associated with feedback that has a high level of detail, leads to greater understanding and is of a more personal nature. However, this association comes predominately from the use of screencasting in an academic context. The aim of this study was to investigate if students and graduates perceived the same benefits when receiving feedback on their CVs.

## Research questions

1. To what extent do students and graduates perceive screencasting to provide high quality feedback in the following areas:
  - a. Depth: the level of detail and specificity of the feedback
  - b. Clarity and understanding: knowing what the feedback means and how it should be implemented.
  - c. Personalised: the extent to which the feedback was tailored and distinctive to them.
2. To what extent does screencasting have an impact on student and graduate action on the feedback?

## Methodology

Quantitative data was collected from students/ graduates from a university in the West Midlands through a questionnaire with additional qualitative data collected through free text boxes and a focus group. The rationale behind using this mixed methods approach was that it allows for the collection of richer data and has the potential to provide a more complete picture of the student experience of screencasting (Descombe, 2008).

Over a two-month period, screencasting was used to provide feedback in response to all requests for CV feedback received via email. In addition, all Year 1, 2 and finalists were contacted via email and invited to submit their CVs. This probability sampling approach was

selected to reduce the risk of bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). All participants were encouraged to act upon the feedback and re-submit their updated CV. They were also invited to take part in a focus group.

## Participant questionnaire

An anonymous questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale, ('Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree' with a neutral mid-point) was used to record the level of student/graduate agreement with statements relating to the use of screencasting for receiving feedback. The questions reflected the research questions and so covered the following areas:

- **Clarity:** the feedback was clear and easy to understand.

- **Understanding:** it aided their understanding.
- **Depth:** they received feedback that was more detailed.
- **Tailored:** they perceived the feedback as being more personal.

Each question was followed by a free text box inviting additional qualitative data.

## Re-submitted CVs

A CV marking rubric tool was created to score the CVs before and after feedback was provided by screencasting, and so measure the distance travelled (improvement) in terms of acting on the feedback. The construction of the rubric was informed by the 'Part-by-Part Development of a Rubric' process (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p.6-15). Initial evaluation of the rubric was conducted using the Metarubric evaluation checklist (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p.94). A Delphi method was used, involving the careers practitioners to gain consensus on the suitability of the CV rubric for assessing CVs and to calibrate it as a tool.

Using the CV rubric, the CVs from each participant who had resubmitted their CV for further feedback were given a score. There were four dimensions to the rubric: presentation, structure, linguistic quality and content. A CV could be awarded up to 5 'marks' in each section, leading to a maximum score of 20 marks. The researchers scored each resubmitted CV independently using the CV rubric. Scores that diverged were discussed and an overall score agreed. To show the 'distance travelled', the marks allocated by each researcher for each of the four dimensions for both CVs were added together and 'before' and 'after' scores compared. Using this measurement tool, it was possible to examine the improvement, or 'distance travelled' from the first CV submitted, to the second CV submitted by the same participant, after they had received screencasting feedback and acted upon this feedback.

For the focus group a semi-structured group interview approach was used. Examples of questions included 'What was your overall experience of receiving feedback on your CV via screen casting?' and 'Is there anything you would change about receiving

your feedback using this format?' This interview was recorded and transcribed allowing the data to be analysed in relation to the research questions.

## Results

A completed questionnaire was returned by 46 students/graduates, of whom 13 re-submitted their CVs and four attended a focus group. The focus group comprised one graduate and three undergraduates, two male and two female.

The response from students regarding screencasting was overwhelmingly positive, with all but one of the questionnaire participants stating that they liked screencasting as a form of providing feedback on their CVs. In the next section the findings are related back to the earlier research questions

### Clarity

The topic of clarity of the screencasting feedback provided more mixed results from the questionnaire (approximately three-quarters believed the feedback was clear and easy to understand, whilst a minority disagreed). However in terms of clarity of the recording, comments made by several participants indicated a specific sound issue was experienced by some, but not all: 'Microphone was a bit crackly at times' and 'sound was good but a little bit fuzzy'. This issue was explored during the focus group, but these participants did not agree that there had been a sound problem, perhaps indicating that the issue could have arisen due to the quality of the sound equipment used by those who found the recording was unclear. This is a concern however, and further consideration should be given about this potential issue.

### Understanding

All but three of the participants believed that screencasting had aided their understanding of the feedback given, several of whom noted that the combination of audio and visual feedback was particularly useful: 'all of the points were verbally explained and well evidenced, watching them work through it (the CV) also helped to understand any issues from a recruiter's perspective'.

## Depth

When asked about the depth of the feedback provided using screencasting, almost all of the participants agreed that this had been to a greater extent than expected, with one stating: 'this was considerably more detailed than an email could ever be'. Focus group participants concurred that this format allowed for an increase in depth, with statements such as: 'it was very detailed, so it was easy to make changes'.

## Tailored

Similarly, nearly all participants believed that this form of providing feedback was of a more personal nature than other forms. For example, one indicative response was: 'screencasting meant that I could actually see my own CV, and knew that the feedback being given was specific to me rather than just generic comments'. Interestingly, one focus group participant suggested that the tone of voice was key: 'I liked the tone it was delivered in and that's really useful when we're doing something that's quite important'.

## Accessing the screencasting

A theme which emerged through the focus group discussions related to how the participants had accessed the feedback. One sub-theme was around the issue of the type of device used. Several participants noted that they had first accessed the feedback on their mobile phones, but when they understood the extent of the feedback, had then decided to use laptops. Some described how they used a 'split screen' approach on their laptop/PC, where they could view both the screencasting recording and their own CV at the same time. All described how they used the pause function on the screencast, so that they could edit their CV as they listened to the feedback. One described this: 'so I turned my laptop on, had my CV on one side and the screencasting on the other side, I pressed play and then just did all the alterations from there...and then I went back and just made sure I'd done everything'. This is not something that had been anticipated by the researchers, but demonstrates a practical way for a recipient to observe the feedback, whilst also making alterations to their CV.

## CV rubric assessment

When the sum total scores of the four CV rubric dimensions (presentation, structure, linguistic quality

and content) were compared for the CVs submitted *after* feedback with the originally submitted CVs, it was found that the re-submitted CV sum total scores were higher in every dimension.

**Figure 1: Participant changes in score for each dimension of the CV rubric**

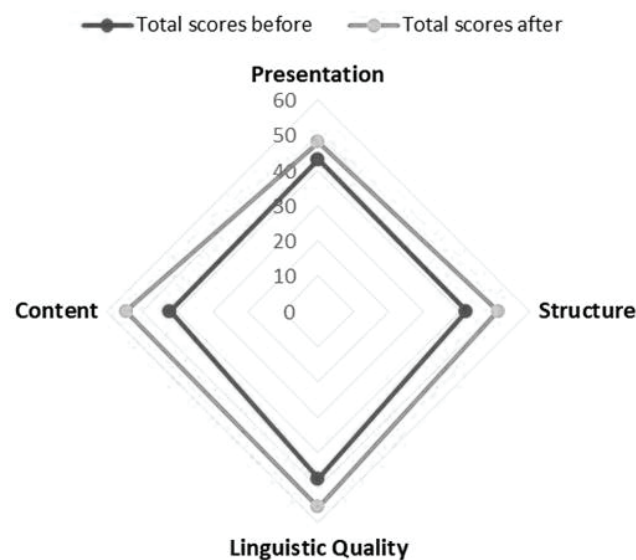
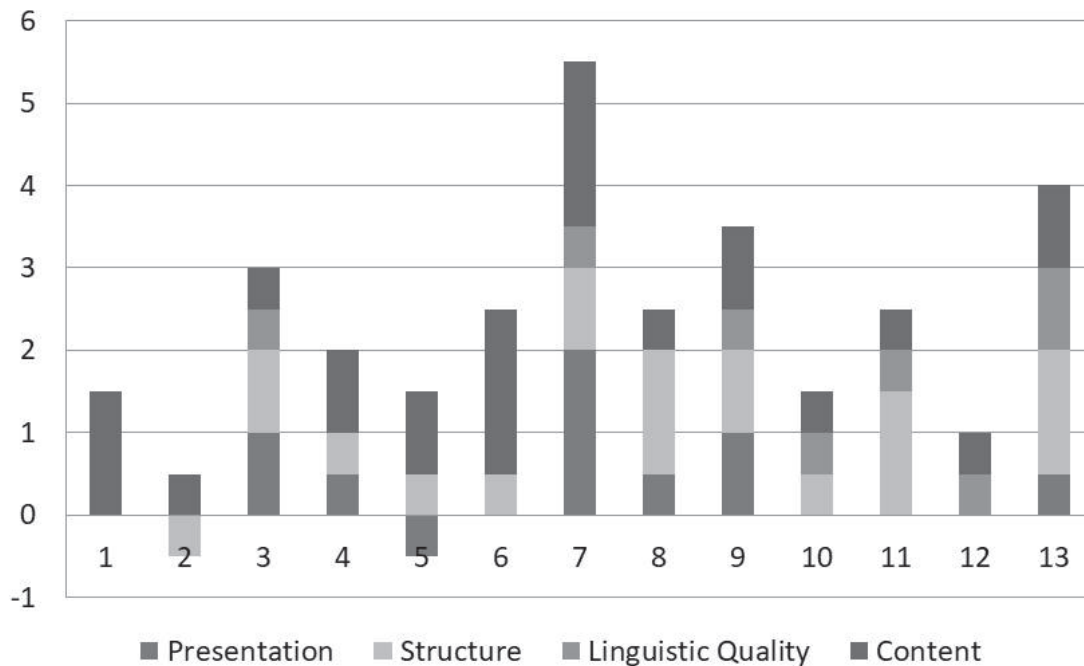


Figure 1 shows a detailed examination of the changes in score (between first and second versions of the CV) for each participant. As can be seen, there is noticeable variation in where the changes have occurred, in terms of the rubric's four dimensions. This is perhaps to be expected, as the participants are individuals who submitted very different CVs. Some first CVs were already of a high standard and required only small suggestions of changes to be made. Hence, these participants may not then have a high score in terms of the improvements made, or 'distance travelled'. Others needed more alterations and therefore, if these participants responded to the suggestions made via the screencasting, it was possible for these to receive a higher score.

The results (Figure 2) show that the second CVs of participants two and five had a negative change in score in one dimension (structure for participant two and presentation for participant five). This was due perhaps to a misunderstanding in the feedback provided; although to ascertain the reasons for this would require further research. However, overall, changes to the CV in response to feedback via screencasting resulted in a second CV which scored more highly on the rubric. This indicates that feedback

**Figure 2: The change in total scores for each dimensions of the CV rubric before and after screencasting feedback**



delivered via screencasting had a positive impact on the action taken by participants.

## Discussion

The findings of this small study indicate that there are real benefits to using screencasting as a medium for providing remote feedback on students/graduates' CVs. Using the rubric to measure the extent to which the participants' CVs had improved enabled the researchers to demonstrate that receiving feedback via screencasting had resulted in action which led to positive changes in the participants' CVs. These positive changes were in some or all four dimensions on the CV rubric. While it is not possible to demonstrate that these positive changes are greater than would have occurred with other forms of remote feedback (e.g. written feedback only), they do demonstrate that screencasting presents an effective medium for providing this feedback.

Participants' views that the feedback via screencasting exceeded expectations regarding the level of detail, how personal it was in nature and how it aided understanding concur with the literature (Vincelette & Bostic, 2013; West, 2016; Orlando, 2016; Thomson,

2012). The theme of how the participants accessed the feedback was unexpected and demonstrated a practical way to go through the feedback and has been included in the 'Recommendations for Careers Practitioners' section as something which should be suggested to recipients.

Also of interest was the finding that the length of screencast recording appeared to be of less concern to students/graduates than the careers professionals had feared. This was due to the flexible way in which the recipients were accessing the feedback. Up to 20 minutes was thought to be an appropriate length dependent on the amount of feedback required.

Importantly, the study highlighted the value of including guidance on how to access the feedback in the email to the student/graduate which contained the link to the screencast. Suggestions also included guidance on how to watch the recording using a split screen so making it possible to pause the recording and make alterations at the time. Plus, how to rewind the recording and re-listen to it as required, and once alterations have been made, how to store the feedback file so it could be referred to when using the CV to apply for a different position.

## *Enhancing CV feedback...using screencasting technology*

Several participants also suggested it would be helpful to include a written summary of the feedback, perhaps in bullet points, in the email sent to the student/graduate, especially if the feedback was complex, with many different points covered.

To assess the rigour of the study the participant questionnaire and focus group explored how students/graduates felt about receiving feedback via screencasting and was evaluated using Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The model has four levels: reaction, learning, behaviour and results. Level one examined the extent to which the participants found the method of feedback favourable. Using the CV rubric to measure the extent of improvement in the participants' re-submitted CVs (exploring the learning that took place for the participants and investigating the degree to which the participants had applied what they had learned) extended the breadth of the study to levels two and three, and led into level 4, the results.

### Limitations

The number of participants limited the scope of the study. Of 79 student/graduate participants, 46 responded to the questionnaire (a return rate of 58%); 13 of whom re-submitted their CVs for further feedback and which were measured for 'distance travelled' following the initial screencasting feedback. The focus group was similarly small with 4 participants (5% of the total participant cohort). Yet, the data was thought adequate to provide an impression of participants' opinions and of the impact of this new format of feedback, although participants were not part of a particular subject discipline or year group, so it cannot be assumed that these results would be replicated in other populations. Also the sample used in this study was self-selected and this may have skewed the data as it may not include the opinions of those who are less likely to use technology when participating in activities to develop their employability. However, the researchers consider this bias to be relatively insignificant, as being a user of technology is a requirement of many elements of university life (for example, students are expected to access course information and to submit assignments using technology). Finally, a methodological issue with this study is the lack of control group, however, the positive

results indicate that a follow-up study which utilises a control group would be worthwhile.

## Conclusions

The findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of the students/graduates involved in the study agreed that screencasting did indeed provide a form of feedback which was detailed, personal and led to a deep understanding. The use of a CV rubric demonstrated that a deeper level of impact had occurred, beyond simply enjoying this form of feedback: the participants had applied what they had learned, with positive results, in terms of quantifiable improvements made to their CVs.

## Recommendations for careers professionals

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for careers professionals who are considering adopting screencasting as a method for providing remote feedback:

- There were strong indications that students and graduates like receiving feedback via screencasting, so the use of screencasting is recommended as a valuable method of providing remote feedback relating to CVs, covering letters and personal statements, where appropriate.
- For screencasting to operate effectively, arrangements should be made to obtain appropriate rooms so recordings can be carried out without risk of disturbance.
- To address concerns relating to the sound quality of the recording, it is advised that quality microphones with a facility to reduce sibilance and proven capacity to produce clear voice recording are used.
- For career professionals new to screencasting training in how to use the technology should be provided as this will have a positive impact on the quality of the recording and the time taken to produce each screencast.



- Whilst recording the screencast, it is advisable to make full advantage of the visual function of this technology in order to make the feedback as detailed and explicit as possible. For example, rather than just referring to a website, open the appropriate webpages during the recording and show the relevant sections using the cursor.
- In terms of the length of time the screencast recording should be, this study found that up to 20 minutes was an appropriate length depending on the amount of feedback required.
- It would be helpful to include a written summary of the feedback, perhaps in bullet points, in the email sent to the student/graduate, especially if the feedback was complex and covered many different points.
- Advice on how to access the feedback should be included in the email to the student/graduate which contains the link to the screencast. Guidance should also be made available on how to (i) watch the recording on a split screen so students/graduates can pause the recording and make alterations at the time, (ii) rewind the recording and re-listen to it as required and (iii) store the file so it could be referred to when using the CV to apply for a different position.



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