



Lay Summary Video blog (vlog)

Background Assessment type: lay summary video blog (vlog)

Faculty: Medicine

Department: School of Public Health

Course: Global Master of Public Health (GMPH)

Module: Research Portfolio 4

ECTS: 15

Weighting: 10%

Number of students: 105

Assessment overview

A lay summary video blog (vlog) is a 5 minute individual video presentation providing an overview of students' research project presented to a non-scientific audience. It is developed alongside a journal article (find case study here) that summarizes research findings to a scientific audience. Both assessments are equivalents/ alternatives to a more traditional combination of a dissertation and a viva.

Programme overview

Global Masters of Public Health is a fully online degree with 105 students (numbers as of 2021/22) coming from across different parts of the world. Students on the programme are part time mature students who are often working and are spread across many different locations and time zones, hence the programme is spread over 2-3 years.

Design decisions

Rationale for the assessment type

When Global Masters of Public Health (GMPH) was developed, the idea was that it would be equivalent to the on campus programme just spread over time. The on campus Masters has a viva where students have to present for 15 minutes, which is then followed up by questions lasting approximately 5 minutes. This was mirrored in the online programme through the vlog. The vlog is them presenting their research to a lay audience. This is a very important skill, particularly for public health professionals as part of a public health professional's duties is engaging and educating, discussing public health issues with the public who are often not part of the public health community, who don't have the same knowledge.

Fit with other assessment methods on the module and the programme

The assessment is part of Research Portfolio 4 module. There are four modules that are interlinked, i.e. research portfolios 1, 2, 3 and 4. The vlog is the culmination of research portfolio 4 and throughout those four modules the students design and develop their own research project. In Portfolio 4 they undertake their research and then they write it up as a journal article. The vlog is the final assessment undertaken for the module and is strongly linked to the Journal Article.

Insights colour key

Educational Developer

Inclusivity

Learning Designer

Registry

Careers

Practicalities

Preparing students for the assessment

All of the assessments for the module are discussed in detail at the start of the module. The students are made aware of what the assessment is, what the timeline is and how they will be assessed (i.e. what the criteria are). This information is also available in the handbook. In addition to that there are live drop in sessions where assessment can be clarified further and due to the nature of the cohort students are encouraged to email or use the



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forum for any further clarification and support if the live sessions are scheduled at a time when attendance is made difficult due to prior commitments or time zones.

The students are given four questions to cover in their video (imagine they were being interviewed):

- “why did you conduct this study?”
- “what was your methodology?”,
- “what did you find?” etc,
- “what did you conclude?”

Alongside additional guidance as to requirements of the output - they can only just speak into a camera, they can't use graphics, or anything that distracts from the spoken message aimed at lay audience. The focus of assessment is checking if students can take their journal article, condense it into 5 minutes, and understand that the way you would explain your research to someone who's in the same area is different to how you would explain it to someone who is not from the same area.

Marking

The marking criteria are as follows:

- Lay Audience (including adapting content, how understandable to the content is and use of jargon or complex language)
- Content (including structure, coherence, relevance, topics covered)
- Style (including delivery, language, tone, grammar, rapport with audience)

Presentation Structure

There are two blind independent markers marking the assignments separately. They're all academics within the school of Public Health. Those markers are identified from the department based on their interests and research methodologies they apply. The module lead allocates one person as the first marker, one person as the second marker, and then only the first marker comments are seen by the students. But the first marker is supposed to discuss the work [with the second marker] and potentially combine their comments into one. Hence ultimately just one set of comments is provided to the students.

Feedback

The purpose of the feedback is commenting on how

well they students have done with the task, and think when they next need to discuss something with the public and how they could improve choosing appropriate language.

Limitations of the assessment type

- Having an additional assessment after a high weighted submission (of the journal article) can be additional burden for the students. However, this is equivalent to the on campus students who are not done with assessment after the dissertation but they still need to prepare for the viva;
- While this assessment is meant to be authentic, talking to a video camera can be slightly artificial, however it is currently the best way to test the skills that the team wants to test and as close to a face-to-face conversation that students might be having as professionals;
- In addition to that there is no opportunity to ask questions which would usually happen during public engagement hence the team is trying to find other ways where the lay aspect would be maintained but in a different assessment form, such as a written summary;
- Vlogs tend to be time consuming for the students (informal feedback suggests it could be anything between several hours to days) and sometimes their attention as to what is important and what they need to dedicate time to is misdirected, in this case away from the language towards the visuals;
- Managing students' anxiety around things like: speaking to camera, being filmed, own perception of not being too tech-savvy, potential markers' bias towards recordings of better quality, inequality in terms of device access (iPhone 14 will make a better video than iPhone 6) can be difficult but manageable through building students' confidence. It requires a careful approach and support (and therefore extra resource burden on the course team);

Advantages of the assessment type

- Allows to test skills needed in the future workplace in a more creative way
- Due to students being in different time zones and working full/part time it is very difficult to



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schedule time with the students. Some modules have tried to schedule live presentations via zoom previously and it always has complications (e.g. some students unable to attend, some have poor connection). A pre-recorded vlog is a more feasible approach for a large international online cohort;

- Especially in the modern world a video can be a creative and interesting way of getting across a message that will connect with people. As a professional in this field you might find yourself talking to a video camera. Most employees these days will require an asynchronous interviews which require talking to a camera. While the idea might seem slightly artificial the reality is that post COVID talking to a camera is much more common place professional practice. Hence coming across confidently and eloquently on camera has become a new skill that employers desire, especially in Public Health sector where the purpose is to instigate change and convince the audience to do/ not to do something. Hence overall the idea of a vlog is more authentic in current times;
- The 5 minute time limit is a realistic time for the students to be able to convey the message, given the lengths of public engagements and attention span of the audience. In Global and Public Health a message needs to be delivered in a quick impactful format and this time limit mimics this;
- A pre-recorded video blog is a method that makes assessment processes easier in case of mitigating circumstances. It is also easier to give a sample to an external examiner compared to a live viva;

Advice for implementation

- Providing sufficient guidance for the students at the start is essential. With this assessment, the team constantly have received questions such as “should the filming be done in one go, what background should be used etc.” The more detailed guidance is given at the beginning, the easier it is cognitively for the student;
- Ensure it is clear for the students what is expected from the output, in this case quality of the language over quality of the video output in terms of visuals. This is important to ensure their efforts

are directed appropriately and they don't spend endless amount of time on the assessments. This clarity can be achieved through introducing a formative assessment point or providing exemplars (where appropriate);

- Additionally, it may be needed to provide guidance for the markers as well as the team had to clarify why students did not include any graphics;
- Making a video can be a steeping learning curve when it comes to filming and editing so it is important that preparation is put in place at one point in the programme to help students develop these skills. Also it would be useful to embed opportunities for additional support every time such method is repeated.
- Be clear about what the expected quality is - some sort of exemplars would help, not necessarily previous assessments (for reasons mentioned in text) but a recording by one of the course team showing what is required, and maybe also sharing some tips of how a non-technical person has gone about making the recording;
- It is always advisable to encourage students to include video captions to make their videos more inclusive;
- Offering alternatives to the video for students for whom talking to the camera can be challenging could be helpful to give everyone a chance to demonstrate important skills, especially if presentation skills as such or video production skills are not part of the ILOs and marking criteria;
- When deciding on the length of the video ensure that all the ILOs / assessment criteria can be reasonably addressed in this time. In order to be 'authentic' a vlog should reflect the likely duration that material of this nature would be viewed for in real world;
- For methods that assess oral presentation skills or ability to communicate something efficiently orally it is always good to have a learning outcome that captures those skills;