

# The impact of camera angles in learning videos on the perception of teaching excellence and emotional connectedness of students

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## Introduction and purpose

Camera angles impact how audiences perceive video content and how emotional connections with people on screen are formed (Schwender, 2001).

Given that teaching is a 'profoundly emotional practice' and it is essential for excellent teaching to have 'a capacity to forge meaningful connectedness' (Su and Wood, 2012, p. 151), it might be that certain camera angles in learning videos improve or hinder the connection with students.

This study examines the impact of low shot (LS) and eye level (EL) camera angles in learning videos featuring a presenter on students' perceptions of teaching excellence and emotional connectedness.

## Literature review

According to Hansch *et al.* (2015, p. 4), 'talking head videos' – *i.e.*, videos featuring a presenter – are amongst the most widely used videos in online learning and can facilitate a connection between the presenter and the audience. This is consistent with other authors, who ascribe videos in an educational context the ability to build connections and motivate students (Koumi, 2006) and, at least shorter videos, to facilitate student engagement (Guo, Kim and Rubin, 2014). All three aspects have been identified as key in students' perception of teaching quality (Su and Wood, 2012).

Ramlatchan and Watson (2017) investigated camera angles in learning videos, comparing high angle and eye level shots' impact on instructor credibility and immediacy. The authors concluded that EL videos are more positively received by students. However, the study neglects lower camera angles, which media research has found to often trigger feelings of inferiority and powerlessness in audiences (Schwender, 2001). In the context of students' perception of teaching, this is an omission in the current discourse, as learning partnerships with mutual respect between learners and teachers are paramount for excellent teaching (Fried, 2001).

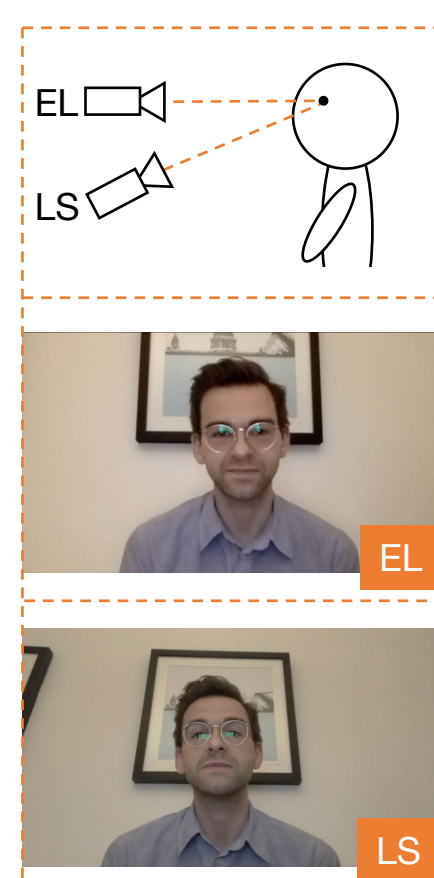
## Research design

Focus group with  $N=6$  level 5 students (4 female, 2 male; av. age 21.7 years,  $\sigma=2.1$ ), enrolled full-time in Advertising and Public Relations course at UWL.

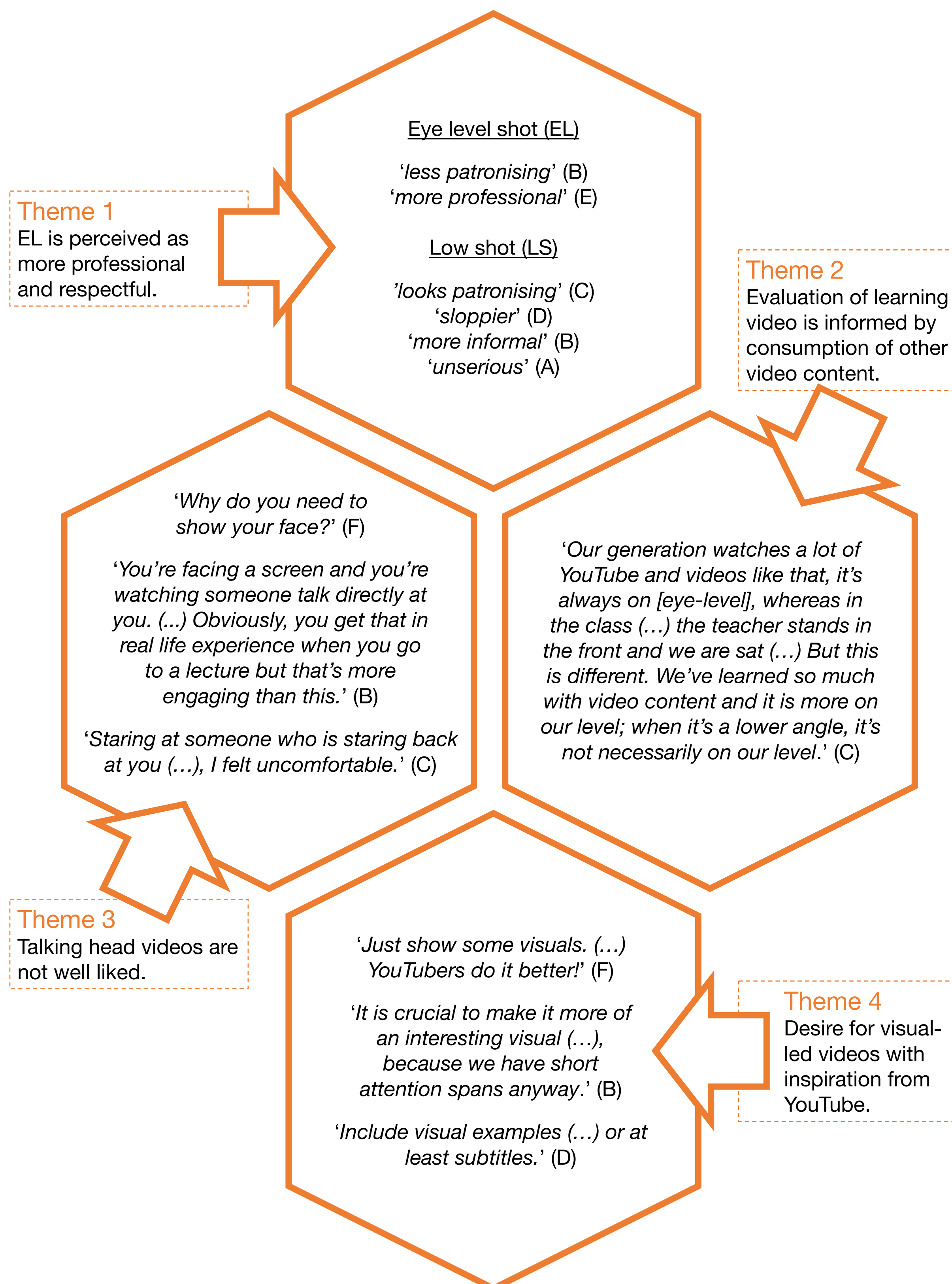
Two short videos (identical, except camera angle; EL and LS) were made available on the topic of 'USP', as part of the module 'Inter-disciplinary Creative Entrepreneurship' – which typically features face-to-face learning environment.

13 open-ended questions, informed by Schwender (2001) and Reysen (2005).

Data collection on 20 March 2019 at SMR; analysed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014).



## Findings



## Discussion

EL appears to positively affect the presenter's credibility and perceived goodwill, which is in accordance with both Ramlatchan and Watson's (2017) findings and expectations from media research (Schwender, 2001). The increase in perceived professionalism and decrease in the feeling of inferiority with EL also positively corresponds to Fried's (2001) ideal of good teaching.

Yet, findings call into question the use of talking head videos altogether, with both EL and LS exhibiting a lack of perceived enthusiasm and ability to motivate and engage. This is in contrast to what Koumi (2006) and Guo, Kim and Rubin (2014) have stated, and might be cause for concern, as these aspects are established by both the focus group and Su and Wood (2012) as key to students' perception of teaching excellence.

The desired emotional connectedness therefore might not be achieved best by talking head videos. A more visual-led approach, or at least visual enhancements, suggested by the students in this study, might be more effective, as it reflects this age group's preferred choice of visual-driven video content as part of their informal learning (Mohr and Mohr, 2017).

## Limitations and implications

The qualitative nature of this study with undergraduate students from the creative industries requires additional data from a more diverse student body to evaluate generalisability of the findings.

Nevertheless, this study, in combination with Ramlatchan and Watson's (2017) insight, indicates that when it comes to learning videos featuring a presenter, EL should be applied to improve student's perception of teaching excellence and emotional connectedness.

For undergraduate students in the creative industries, however, more visual-driven video styles, such as Animations, might be more appropriate and should be further explored.

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