

Wearable Cameras for Better Self-Reflection

Context

We regularly videotape students conducting negotiation simulations to provide students a tool for observing and reflecting on their negotiation skills. I was looking for a way to make this more meaningful by providing better quality video footage. I was also looking to explore meaningful ways to expose students to emerging technology in the classroom.

Project

With the ABA now requiring all students to complete at least six experiential courses before graduation, professors may be worried about best practices or how to better engage students. One way is to have them videotape themselves and watch the footage to self-assess their skills. Asking students to videotape themselves performing exercises is not new, but because of the advancement in technology, we can now give students a first perspective of what it is like to interact with them in a specific setting. In the past, legal educators were limited to using static video cameras or other devices set up to the side, capturing footage of the event from the third-person perspective, observing the activity. With wearable cameras, students can watch footage of an exercise from the first-person perspective of the individual with whom they interacted. This could be their opposing counsel in a negotiation, a party in a mediation, the client in a client interview, or even the judge or jury in a trial.

Objectives & Outcomes

Students overall shared that the wearable cameras enhanced their learning. One student commented, "I thought the 360 view provided by the cameras were preferable to using a laptop. As an observer, I was able to pick up on nuances that I would not have picked up on with the laptop." With the wearable cameras, we were able to notice subtle eye movement and facial expressions that were otherwise lost in the third-person perspectives we captured in the past.

Results

Overall, I think the use of wearable cameras enhanced student learning. Students gained greater insights into their behavior, but I am not sure it is great enough to justify the expense

and time that goes into using the wearable cameras. We piloted this project in Spring 2015 and for the past year have used wearable cameras in seven additional sections of Negotiation at the law school. This semester, I conducted one exercise using the wearable camera and a second exercise using the older static camera method and will be surveying students to compare their experiences in mid-April. I expect students will say they felt they gained greater behavioral insights when using the wearable cameras but that they prefer using their own cameras or devices for the sake of flexibility in scheduling.

Lessons Learned

In this project, I learned that emerging technology can greatly enhance student learning. Something like a GoPro, used in extreme sports, can be brought into an academic environment to enhance teaching, while also exposing students to emerging technology and how it is being used in their field (for instance, personal injury attorneys are using wearable cameras to capture a day in the life of a claimant suffering from damages). Next time, I would work on streamlining the check-out procedure for students to use the wearable cameras. I ended up spending hours deleting footage and charging cameras, which was not an efficient use of my time.