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Dialogising Video Assessment in Higher Education: Students and Lecturer-Teacher Voicing our Lived Experiences of Initial Teacher Education

Visual Pedagogies and Innovative Assessment

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Abstract

Video assessment in higher education, especially initial teacher education (ITE), has been linked to enhanced knowledge acquisition, creativity and critical thinking. Conversely, the stipulated benefits of video have been claimed to, at times, reach beyond what can be known. Modern, epistemic crises within higher education are bringing these tensions of video assessment to the fore. Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is unsettling traditional forms of academic integrity, whilst politically

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motivated pedagogical reforms position university-based ITE as antiquated, and thus inadequate at producing 'ready' graduates for vocational training. This article enters this discursive landscape with a dialogue of students and a lecturer-teacher, each voicing their everyday, lived experiences with video assessment, situated within a university-based ITE degree. Employing Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic philosophy, these authors form a polyphony, each with an equal right to speak in a chorus of unmerged voices. Their dialogue suggests video assessment can encourage student voice as an ethical, visible encounter, decentring the authority of written academic conventions. With video posing an epistemic, localising provocation, it is further signalled as having potential to subvert an over-reliance on GenAI and bridge the perceived theory to practice divide of vocational degrees.

Keywords

innovative assessment – video assessment – student voice – teacher voice – Mikhail Bakhtin – dialogism – polyphony – higher education (HE) – initial teacher education (ITE)



FEATURE This article comprises a video, which can be viewed [here](#).

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1 Introduction

Video assessment in higher education, especially initial teacher education (ITE), has been a celebrated mode of learning for well over a decade (van & Sherin, 2002). Videos integrated into tertiary settings have been linked to enhanced knowledge acquisition, creativity, and enriched critical and analytical thinking (Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021; Speed et al., 2018). Conversely, others have cautioned that the stipulated benefits of video and video assessments, at times, over-reach the knowable given enthusiasm for this mode (Reyna & Meier, 2018; Trenholm & Marmolejo-Ramos, 2024). We contend, these ambiguities speak to a lack of lived and received truths voicing everyday encounters with video assessments in the literature. Given this mode is now, arguably, ubiquitous within higher education, and poses unique opportunities in response to the discourses confronting the sector, we suggest dialogues that share common-place encounters with this form of assessment offer a timely opening.

Bringing the conflicting dialogues of this mode to the fore are modern, epistemic crises related to the surgency of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and challenges to university-based vocational degrees, particularly ITE (Glazzard & Tate, 2025; Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Kofinas, 2025; Stanford, 2025). The increasing abilities and accessibility of GenAI are said to be profoundly transforming higher education by unsettling the value and integrity of academia, with traditional forms of written assessments especially vulnerable (Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Kofinas, 2025). In addition to these tensions are politically motivated pedagogical reform narratives, targeting vocational, university-based ITE, accused of being inadequate at producing 'ready' graduates, due to their antiquated methods (Glazzard & Tate, 2025; Stanford, 2025). Against these discursive time and space encounters, the voices of those being spoken on behalf of are not always heard. As a consequence, the authors of this article offer their everyday realities, which the received truths of crisis can omit.

Situating this dialogue within the common-place, three students and a lecturer-teacher voice their lived truths of a video assessment for their second-year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education) course in Aotearoa New Zealand. The assessments for this course were unexpectedly creative and sophisticated, demonstrating considerable analytical depth, prompting the lecturer-teacher (Fiona Westbrook) to invite the students into a co-authorship (Teisa Bernard, Briana Maleko & Iunisi Taukolo). The video one group of students produced, shared within this article, is the opening encounter that these four authorial voices enter into dialogue with, respond to, and build upon.

Employing Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981; 1984) dialogic philosophy, these four voices enter polyphony, each with an equal right to speak, in conversation with the video, and with one another. Through this dialogising, video assessment as a lived experience, is voiced as an ethical and visible encounter, unsettling the primacy of written academic conventions. Because video poses an epistemic, localising provocation, it is also signalled as a means of countering an over-reliance on GenAI, and of closing the theory to practice gap vocational degrees at university-based institutions can be accused of.

2 Video Assessment and Higher Education

Video assessments in higher education offer unique opportunities that written forms may not (Atkinson et al., 2024; Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021). Tertiary students creating, producing and consuming videos for the purpose of assessment has been linked to enhanced knowledge acquisition, creativity, as well as enriched critical and analytical thinking (Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021). Hawley and Allen (2018) explain how the creative, open-ended potential of video can facilitate innovative critical thinking, which written assessments are less likely to prompt. This is because of the interweaving of complex problem-solving, demonstrating and visualising ideas, making videos important modes for active learning and content generation (Atkinson et al., 2024). Fyfield et al. (2019) similarly note that video in higher education fosters active, unscripted encounters with content, generating the kind of engaged meaning-making that written forms rarely demand. Meanwhile, students have self-described video assessment as boosting their confidence, supporting inclusive learning and enabling co-creation (Cardace et al., 2026). Speed et al. (2018) add that by observing and creating videos, students can become active learners in ways that reinforce knowledge as construction, rather than consumption. Noetel et al. (2021) have also claimed that video enables students to enter sustained, collaborative, critical minded encounters with the material. Consequently, they explain, students can gain deeper meaning-making with course content, surpassing what can be 'typically' achieved by writing alone.

Other voices within the dialogue of video assessment have suggested tensions and contradictions, with disagreement about the extent to which videos are effective within higher education. Conducting a literature review, Reyna and Meier (2018) highlighted how this mode is under-researched and under-theorised, citing limited scalability of implications, as well as tensions with students' technological fluency, with this shortcoming posing considerable barriers. Also conducting a literature review, Hawley and Allen (2018) noted,

alongside the aforementioned benefits, almost all studies outlined student and lecturer-teacher frustration and stress due to the challenges of video assessment creation, including access and fluency with software, equipment, device compatibility and technological skill. A further scoping study identified gaps in the research, with little systematic examination of how video aligns to instructional goals, and how student learning is measured when these tasks are used as assessment (Snelson, 2018). Referring to a specific video blogging assessment, students asserted that video was less beneficial than the lecturer-teachers had assumed (Reeves et al., 2017). The students added that videoing did not enhance their engagement with course content, with perceptions it was an uncomfortable time-waster. These espoused benefits and critiques signal the need for more voices within the dialogue of video assessment, particularly those of students and lecturer-teachers speaking from their everyday experiences, meeting received truth with their lived encounters.

2.1 *Initial Teacher Education Entering the Fore*

For ITE, video assessment has frequently been positively framed, including the claim it bridges lingering concerns about the theory to practice divide (Rogge & Herzig, 2025; Tripp & Rich, 2012; van & Sherin, 2002). This contested divide suggests a gap between what student teachers learn in university classrooms, and how this is applied to the teaching settings they enter. Whilst debatable, video has been labelled a means of bridging theory and practice. As early as the 2000s, video integration within ITE was argued to foster student teachers' noticing of complex and noteworthy events, recognising how these were significant, consequently enabling them to pedagogically respond (van & Sherin, 2002). Videos have been argued to support student teachers' theoretical analysis, seeing practice from a new perspective to trust the evidence of observation, over prior assumption (Tripp & Rich, 2012). Similarly, Rogge and Herzig (2025) stipulated video embedded into ITE enables theoretical sense-making that surpasses 'simple noticing'. Additionally, they found that the more interactive the use of video, the more sophisticated the student teachers' engagement with practice became. For a profession that is dependent on the interweaving of theory and practice (Vick & Martinez, 2011), video assessment, therefore, holds considerable potential.

Additionally, video has been argued to provide student teachers with a reflexive tool to analyse their pedagogy as an embodied act (Rogge & Herzig, 2025; Tripp & Rich, 2012). When student teachers encounter themselves on screen, they are granted a third person perspective for viewing their practice (Riveros, 2012; Xiao & Tobin, 2018). Visibilising their emerging professional identity by capturing their embodied encounters, video may support student

teachers' reflective dialogues (Cronqvist, 2021; Riveros, 2012; Xiao & Tobin, 2018). They can, therefore, attend to their enacted practice alongside the child's (Cronqvist, 2021). This embodied learning can enable deeper, contextualised analysis and reflection by observing how feelings are expressed through the body, rather than abstracted from it (Hung, 2014).

Furthermore, video can foster rich dialogues that support student teachers' professional growth (König et al., 2022). While student voice in higher education can foster meaningful and agentic engagement in their learning (McLeod, 2011; Seale, 2009), traditional, written assessments may not elicit student voice (Quinlan et al., 2025). Conversely, through video, student teachers can observe their communication, including the self and others body language, and verbal expression, which might otherwise go unnoticed (Cronqvist, 2021). Rewatching recorded practice can open dialogic encounters that redirect and sustain critical analysis, encouraging students to voice their thinking (König et al., 2022). This level of dialogic engagement can support student teachers to feel accountable to change with and alongside peers (Tripp & Rich, 2012). In turn, these encounters can prompt them to implement changes, and to seek new sources of professional knowledge beyond their pre-existing viewpoints, and potential biases. Hence, video offers an entry point for structured, collaborative dialogic analysis, even for those with limited teaching and contextual experience, making meaningful connections between higher education and classroom teaching (Rogge & Herzig, 2025; Tripp & Rich, 2012).

2.2 *Video Assessment: Responding to Modern Concerns*

Video also has the potential to respond to modern concerns within higher education assessment, such as GenAI misconduct, and ITE graduate 'readiness'. GenAI is a prevalent and advancing technology, causing considerable anxiety about the authenticity of students' assessment (Gruenhagen et al., 2024; Kofinas, 2025). Due to the ability of GenAI to create swathes of writing, it is feared to be upending academic integrity, with its rapid adoption and accessibility troubling the detection of misconduct and plagiarism (Gruenhagen et al., 2024). Whilst there is disagreement as to the extent to which GenAI can be detected by lecturers, written assessments appear particularly vulnerable, encouraging a turn towards creative modes (Kofinas, 2025). Consequently, traditional assessment formats are claimed to be increasingly ill-suited to the pace of technological change elicited by GenAI (Friginal & Ho, 2025). Although not overlooking the critical issues of GenAI, it can provide opportunities for lecturer-teachers to reconsider how assessments are designed to foster authenticity and competencies, as well as how to equip students for multiliterate futures (Coman et al., 2026; Friginal & Ho, 2025; Xia et al., 2024).

Hence, a shift toward creative, dialogic modes, such as video assessment have the potential to respond to these concerns and possibilities, given the aforementioned embodied and reflexive demands it entails.

Another modern concern that video assessment may respond to is the perceived shortcomings of student teachers' 'readiness' to move from the university to educational settings. University-based, vocational teaching courses and programmes are under increased government scrutiny, with steep ideological discourses at play, labelling ITE from these institutions in crises (Glazzard & Tate, 2025). This received truth of crisis can be evidenced in media reports and inflammatory social media commentary as a means of fostering a discourse of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and moral panic around these institutions and degrees (Glazzard & Tate, 2025; Shields, 2025). One such encounter is illustrated in the Aotearoa New Zealand university-based ITE context, where this article is situated (see Dolan, 2024; Tulloch, 2024). The local government has drawn from the OECD's *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) 2024 to challenge the readiness of recently graduated teachers, claiming ITE needs a comprehensive reform that decentres the university (Stanford, 2025). This framing is not novel nor unique to Aotearoa. Comparable international crisis narratives, and consecutive policies, have imposed reforms that have been criticised for being technicist and reductionist (Glazzard & Tate, 2025). Notably, ITE is often positioned paradoxically as both the problem and the solution to the systemic challenges facing education and society more broadly (see Glazzard & Tate, 2025; Shields, 2025). This imposed framing overlooks the systemic conditions and overarching support mechanisms shaping teacher supply, retention, confidence, satisfaction and preparedness, shifting the 'blame-game' of these systemic failings away from policy and onto to ITE providers (Shields, 2025). Modern crises such as these encourage further student voices to enter the discourse, so their lived experiences can enter the conversation, offering responses to modern crises such as these, and the role video may play.

3 Entering the Dialogue: Co-Authoring Voices

Inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981; 1984) dialogic philosophy we, a teacher-lecturer and students, share our voices of a video assessment. Bakhtin (1984) explained how

The consciousness of other people cannot be perceived, analyzed, defined as objects or as things – *one can relate to them dialogically*. To

think about them means to *talk with them; otherwise they immediately turn to us their objectivized side*; they fall silent, close up, and congeal in finished, objectivized images.

BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 68, emphasis in original

Steeped in this entry, we offer our differing voices not through a traditional analysis of researcher, participants and data, that can *objectivise* the other by presupposing an unchanging, static *finished* singular truth (Frank, 2005; White, 2016). Rather, we enter into *talks* between our differing consciousnesses and lived truths to *dialogically relate* to one another's experiences of a video assessment in ITE. With dialogue an onto-epistemological entreaty, constituting reality and knowledge acquisition, only through common-place encounters, such as those within this article, are continual becomings possible. We, therefore, enter into a dialogue to constitute and ascribe our everyday meanings and truths of video assessment, responding with our lived experiences to those who have entered into this dialogue before us.

This Bakhtinian form of dialogising has previously been employed as a means of inverting traditional researching binaries of subjects and objects, to contemplate lived truths and invite embodied voices to speak on their own behalf (Matusov et al., 2019; Westbrook et al., 2021a; White, 2016). Matusov et al. (2019) utilised this framing to upend the reductive binary of the researcher-lecturer as the expert and the student as subject. They explained that through a Bakhtinian dialogue, "students' lives generate the educational curriculum, in a form of their own inquiries and puzzlements", fostering new interests, commitments and passions (p. 289). For Wegerif (2019), when dialogism is entrenched within educational encounters, a multiplicity of voices are enabled, which can clash, play and have different perspectives, facilitating learning in ways traditional approaches cannot. With video more specifically, lecturer-teachers in a study by Westbrook et al., (2021a) engaged in dialogue about web-conferencing, in conversation with student responses, enabling a coalescing of lived truths to inform holistic meaning makings. For White (2016), a Bakhtinian dialogue with those seen in the video reorients the researcher's monologue by enabling deeper encounters, meaning-making and possibilities, due to the inverted notion of an other being an expert of someone else's life. Adding to this literature, this article breaks with traditional notions of researcher and researched, to enter a discussion as lecturer-teacher and students, who each have an equal right to speak. Not as participants and data, but as co-dialoguing authors, voicing our lived experiences of video assessment in ITE on our own behalf.

3.1 *A Polyphony of Authorial Voices*

To uphold this equal dialogue of lecturer-teacher and students voices, we situate our discussion within the Bakhtinian concept of polyphony. When the self feels they have a fully valid voice, where their words do not have any pressure to be reduced or merged into consensus, this forms what Bakhtin (1984) termed polyphonic dialogue; a “plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event” (p. 6). Participatory voices that form polyphony are considered the highest form of discussion, enabling the “great dialogue”, due to the abundance, freedom, community and equality that this form can foster (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 63). Whilst from a Bakhtinian orientation, voice is the extent to which a speaker feels able to share their worldview, dialogue is the encounter between two or more speakers. Entering this polyphony, our dialogue of video assessment in ITE forms a chorus in the discussion that follows, whilst simultaneously upholding our unique and distinctive voices. By no one voice attempting to reduce what the other can say, our dialogue of video assessment speaks to our unique realms, that are refractively developed in the spaces in-between the self and other (Bakhtin, 1981).

As dialogue is relational, all voices are shot through with others, formed through discussions that are adopted, rejected and assimilated into the self's worldview, in a process of continual becoming (Frank, 2005). Consequently, it is possible that our voices carry traces of one another, that we share ground we did not know we held. Bakhtin (1984) explains that the “*ideological* multivoicedness” of polyphony is the “specifically compositional application of counterpoint, linking together the various tales incorporated into the novel [/ dialogue], the various stories, the various planes” (p. 42, emphasis in original). Given this relational, interwoven nature of becoming, we may find ourselves *linking* with the lived experiences of the other through our dialogue, posing *counterpoints* and *various* positions in our *compositions* and *applications*. Yet our discussion resists the kind of finalized conclusion that would congeal what remains living (Bakhtin, 1984). It is through encounters such as these, within and beyond this article, that video assessment in ITE stays open and answerable, alive to the unfinished, everyday truths of those who inhabit it.

Entering the “great dialogue” of polyphony, we are also granted a space to present our responses to the stated advantages of video assessment, critiques and modern crises of higher education. We respond to these discourses as an ethical act, not attempting to presume the values and encounters of the other. We recognise that as unique selves, formed through differing times, spaces and previous dialogues, the self can never speak for the other. To do so would

‘finalize’ by seeking an end to dialogue by establishing a presumptuous monologue, one that supposes all that an other can be (Bakhtin, 1984). Embodying this value, we as the lecturer-teacher and students reject perceiving and being “totally quantified, measured, and defined to the last detail” (Frank, 2005, p. 965). Each of our voices does not seek to utter the last word. Instead, we aim to participate in a dialogue that continues beyond this text, an ethical entreaty that positions this article as another point in the discussion, rather than a final statement, on video assessment in ITE. Consequently, we aim to highlight our unfinished and answering selves, as “*someone[s] actually present, someone who hears him [or her] (the author) and is capable of answering him [or her]*” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 63, emphasis in original). The concerns, tensions, strategies and values each voice brings are bound to the self’s particular times and spaces. Never replicable, these serve as lived truths for those interested in gaining deeper insights into the experiences, ideologies and worldviews of those within the discourse. Authorial narratives that espouse received truths of what video assessment offers, the modern crises of GenAI and ITE are, therefore, placed in conversation with our lived encounters.

3.2 *A Dialogic Turn: Designing a Video Assessment*

The catalyst for this article was a video assessment that sat within a second-year Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education [ECE]) course. Situated in Aotearoa New Zealand, this ITE course focused on a strand of the local bicultural ECE curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (translatable from te reo Māori as a woven mat on which we all stand and weave), Communication | Mana Reo. Student teachers worked in small groups of two to three, reviewing the video footage of young children in an ECE setting, then filmed their analysis as a dialogue. The quality of the work submitted struck Fiona Westbrook for its creativity, depth and critical engagement with the content matter. An invitation to co-author an article exploring video assessment was sent to all students who received a moderated A range grade. Teisa Bernard, Briana Maleko and Iunisi Taukolo, who had worked together as a group on the assignment, agreed to co-write this article. The video below was created by Bernard, Maleko and Taukolo for their assignment. No ethical approval was required as the video was produced by the named authors, who offer this resource alongside their voices as a provocation.

The dialogue that follows places this video in conversation with our divergent, polyphonic voices. Neither the video nor our responses seek to subordinate the other. Rather, we engage in conversation with this mode to render meaning that one mode alone could not. Consequently, each operates as divergent components of our integrated chorus, not as product, data and analysis, but as a provocation for the potentials and lived experiences when encountering a video assessment in ITE.



VIDEO 1 *Mana Reo Group Assignment* by Teisa Bernard, Iunisi Taukolo and Briana Maleko. (See [here](#).)

First, Fiona Westbrook shares her voice as the lecturer-teacher. She offers her pedagogical rationale for the assignment redesign and turn toward the layering of a video as a medium to be analysed, and mode to be created. Then, Bernard, Maleko and Taukolo share their divergent voices, and lived experiences of the video assessment as student teachers. Forming a chorus, our voices are then brought into conversation with each other, and with the literature to contemplate the convergences, tensions and ambiguities. The shift between “I”, “we”, “us” and “our” across the sections that follow speaks to our polyphonic positions within a shared dialogue, none of which has the last word.

4 Lecturer-teacher Voice: Developing a Video Assessment

As the lecturer-teacher, I (Fiona Westbrook) was prompted to redesign the original, written assessment for a video mode in response to the learning outcomes of the course and my concerns about GenAI. Because the course centred on the Communication | Mana Reo strand of *Te Whāriki*, which understands language as a multimodal, cultural encounter of meaning-making and empowerment (Ministry of Education, 2017), a dialogic approach felt most appropriate. Therefore, students were asked to observe a video-recording of young children and teachers within an everyday ECE setting. Then, in small groups they were asked to engage in a discussion to share their analysis of what they felt they saw and heard in the video, alongside their peers’ observations. The next step was their creation of a video, submitted as the assessed element of

their assignment. Designing this process, I was aiming to encourage students' analyses of the multi-modal modes of communication they observed on the recording of an ECE setting, alongside their refractive contemplation of how their analysis might differ from a peer's. In addition to how they communicated with fellow student-teachers, including how they did so to conceptualise and produce a video, hopefully fostering meta-cognition of language and dialogue as a pedagogical provocation, reflecting the course's learning outcomes. For Bakhtin (1984) "to be means to communicate" (p. 297). To layer communication in this way was to invite a deeper, evolving meaning-making with course content and one another in ways responsive to the everyday realities of ITE, ECE settings, and the relational nature of dialogue as communication.

My intent in developing this video assessment was also to respond to the modern concerns of GenAI. For me as a lecturer-teacher, a critical concern is the potential for large language models (LLMs) to homogenise student voice. I am not opposed to GenAI and LLMs when they are employed as tools to support learning. However, what worries me is the extent to which students might be tempted to subordinate their subjectivity and positionality to LLMs, given the projected authority and epistemic confidence of this technology. Moon et al.'s (2025) analysis of 2,200 college admission essays found that LLMs significantly limited creative, diverse voices. Autoregressive responses quickly produce authoritative writing, favouring "predictable and conventional outputs over novel or unexpected ones" (Moon et al., 2025, p. 8). I worry these overly assured LLM responses may undermine students' confidence in their thinking and writing. From my perspective, this potential devaluing of the self's voice is particularly consequential in ITE, where reflection and positionality are pedagogically essential (Gillett-Swan & Baroutsis, 2024; Vick & Martinez, 2011). Given these concerns, I wanted to design an assessment that placed creative, dialogic voice at its centre. Video was selected because of its potential to bring together a diversity of unique voices, each playing out in the encounter of the dialogue recorded (Rogge & Herzig, 2025). Whilst I do not contend that the potential of video assessment removes the presence of LLMs, I feel it might place this tool in conversation with the voice of students, as opposed to silencing them.

Upon marking the video assessments, I was immediately struck by their depth of imagination and critical reflection. Each group chose a diversity of roles, with some posing as news reporters, whilst others were tongue-in-cheek jesters with a blooper reel of mishaps. Most had a staged element, which I had not initially conceived of when designing the assignment. Yet they all appeared unique expressions of the students' voices, producing richly, responsive dialogues about communication within ECE. Consequently, I feel that

video assessment, if utilised in ways that centre the voices of students in a chorus, has the potential to be a meaningful ITE endeavour. One that supports both theoretical conceptualisation and theory, through a practice-based contemplation of pedagogy.

5 Student Teacher Voice: an Opportunity to Discuss Differing Perspectives

As a student teacher (Teisa Bernard), being asked to watch and then record a video, rather than write an essay, altered how I planned and captured my thoughts from the outset. I went through the video recording and wrote down what I thought. Then, coming together with my group to discuss what they had seen, demonstrated how differently we had each interpreted communication in the footage. I do not think this would have been the case in the same way if we analysed something written, rather than recorded. Observing the emotions and responses meant we sometimes had different ideas, and rather than causing friction, I found this gave us interesting ways of discussing our perspectives.

Replaying the children's video over and over to check our thinking, then discussing the concepts and reviewing it again added more understanding with each watch. Our different interpretations meant more reviewing and, consequently, more learning. The recording we observed also brought the course content to life and made it more real. It became apparent to me that communication is not always verbal. I could see how the children interacted with each other and with the teacher in so many ways, and each way was as valid as the others. For this course in particular, seeing children in a real setting really drove home the importance of us as teachers creating space for all forms of communication, in a way that would otherwise have remained purely academic. After this experience, I would consider including video more in my own teaching practice, balancing it with written material.

This assignment also changed how I used GenAI, at least in part. I generally treat GenAI as a research assistant. It can help me identify areas to explore and focus my reading, but I still read and evaluate the sources myself and decide what is relevant to the assignment. Because the video we analysed was a different mode from a usual written assignment, we needed to watch it several times, take notes and discuss what we noticed. This made the process more human-centered because our initial ideas came from observing the people in the video and reflecting on what their interactions meant. It gave us more confidence to begin with our own interpretations, rather than asking GenAI for help to inform them.

Only after we had identified the key ideas did GenAI have a useful role. From this position we then used this technology to support our identification of possible areas of research connected to what we had observed. We then read and evaluated relevant academic sources and used these to deepen our understanding before putting the ideas into our own script for filming. As such, GenAI supported the research process, but the observations, interpretations and final voice remained ours.

Talking in front of a camera also prompted us to sharpen and redirect our analysis in a way that writing does not. Because there is less you can fit into a video than a written reflection, we had to focus on the key elements, which made each concept we discussed feel more important. I was a bit nervous in front of the camera and there were plenty of takes where we struggled to get through, but by the end I was quietly proud of how we worked together and were able to bounce off each other. One piece of feedback we received was that we looked like a morning breakfast show, which made me feel we had reached a professional standard.

6 Student Teacher Voice: Not Just What You Know, But How You Think and Work with Others

The video assessment changed how I (Briana Maleko) approached communication. Instead of writing everything in detail, I had to focus on the most important ideas and be able to explain them clearly in a short amount of time. I found I needed to understand the concepts more deeply so I could talk about them naturally, especially when I was responding in the moment to what the others were saying. What the video format made visible in a way that writing could not was how we were building on each other's ideas, the agreeing, the adding of examples, the expanding on each other's points together. That kind of collaborative thinking and interaction does not come across the same way in a written essay.

One moment that stood out for me came mid-discussion, when we started linking the children's communication to our own group process. We realised that, like the children, we were also building on each other's ideas, negotiating, and collaborating. That was not something I had considered before the discussion began. It emerged from the dialogue itself, and it became one of the strongest insights I took from the whole experience.

The more we watched the children's footage, the more I noticed the details I had initially missed, the pointing, the tracing, the use of drawing to explain thinking, and how each of these was as communicative as speech. Concepts

from *Te Whāriki* like multimodal communication and the role of the teacher became clear and meaningful to me in a way they had not been through reading alone.

Watching ourselves back felt a little uncomfortable at first, but I was also proud of what we had made together. I think filming made me more aware of how I was speaking, and after a while it started to feel more natural and more like a genuine discussion. I left this experience more confident in my capacity to observe and interpret children's communication, and with a clearer sense of how I would use video in my future practice, both to support my own reflection and potentially in collaboration with other teachers. Video assessment, I now think, allows you to show not just what you know, but how you think and work with others. It makes the learning process itself visible.

7 Student Teacher Voice: a Productive Pressure for Authenticity and Connection

At first, I (Iunisi Taukolo) felt scared knowing that recording a video required me to clearly explain my thinking out loud. I realised it was the first time I had done this form of assessment, and I found it put pressure on me to engage more actively with the content. I needed to communicate my ideas with confidence and clarity. But I came to see that pressure as productive. For me and my group, where English is our second language, *talanoa* (a Pacific practice of open, relational dialogue rooted in shared storytelling) is our strength, and the video format enabled me to freely express my ideas with others in a way that essay writing does not always enable. Our ideas could be delivered effectively through the tone of our voices, our facial expressions, the way we responded to each other in the moment. Before recording, we organised our thoughts so our points were clear and relevant, which I believe is what quality conversation is all about.

The children's footage opened my senses in a way that reading about concepts in class had not. I could see how the small gestures made by children aligned with everything we had studied about how children communicate their learning with others and with the teacher. I realised I had always noticed these forms of communication happening, but had considered them unimportant, or simply not paid enough attention. Now I understand how essential careful observation is for understanding children's communication in an ECE setting, and I am more determined to be diligent in observing children on my next practicum. This form of assessment has also changed how I think about digital tools, from seeing recording simply as a way to capture something, to

understanding it as a valuable way to support observation, reflection, and ongoing improvement in teaching practice.

I think the assessment also reduced the temptation to rely on GenAI because the focus was on our personal understanding, and our ability to communicate it. A written response can sometimes make me focus on producing a polished academic answer, but presenting through video highlighted the importance of authenticity and connection. It also encouraged me to develop my own ideas first and use GenAI only as a support, rather than allowing it to replace my thinking.

Watching the video back, I was at first a little uncomfortable, thinking I could have done better, but after watching it several times I felt proud of myself, knowing it was my first experience of this kind of assessment. What also struck me was realising that I had been able to build on the others' points of view as we communicated our perspectives together.

8 A Polyphonic Chorus: Lecturer-teacher and Student Voices in Dialogue with Video Assessment

When placing our distinct voices in a polyphonic chorus there were overlapping lived truths, even though we did not set out to merge or defer to one another. Despite not always eventuating in the way initially conceived (Fiona Westbrook), the video assessment established a 'great dialogue' of abundant voices, engaged in innovative knowledge creations. This mode facilitated an unexpectedly sophisticated level of engagement with the ITE content, reflecting previous assertions that video assessment enables enhanced knowledge acquisition, translated into creative productions that enrich critical, analytical thinking (Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021). As student teachers, the multi-voiced polyphony that the video facilitated deepened our thinking (Teisa Bernard, Briana Maleko & Iunisi Taukolo), enabling us to see, learn and build upon one another's insights, supporting us to reflect upon our differing perspectives. These encounters reinforce Noetel et al.'s (2021) claims that video supports critically minded, collaborative and sustained engagement with course material. Our experiences also signal Speed et al.'s (2018) insights, that video enables a deeper level of learning through active engagement. Consequently, dialogues such as ours, that flourish from video designing, analysis and production, can support a polyphonic 'great dialogue', fostering an abundance of creative and analytical encounters with the self and other, advancing our engagement with course content.

The ways in which video assessment enables modes of thinking and expression, not always facilitated by written modalities, was another feature reflected across the literature and our lived experiences. As was hoped for (Westbrook), the video created space for alternative communicative practices that privileged student voice (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo). Because written assessment carries the accumulated authority of Western academic convention and values steeped in colonial discourses (Darvin & Zhang, 2023), it can prompt narrow modes of thinking and knowing (Atkinson et al., 2024; Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021). The mentioning of *talanoa* (Taukolo), as a traditional Pacific practice of inclusive storytelling and relationship building, indicates how video may disrupt colonising ideologies. Darvin and Zhang (2023) have also argued that video within higher education can enable students to resist colonial ways of knowing, constructing a translanguaging space in which learners reframe their identities as knowledgeable experts with the authority to speak confidently. With the mode of video reconfiguring relations of power, they argue, students were able to assert their identities as legitimate, multilingual speakers and claim the right to speak (Darvin & Zhang, 2023). For ITE in Aotearoa New Zealand, where *Te Whāriki* positions communication as cultural, multimodal and relational, and where the teaching profession is increasingly diverse, assessment designs that foster *talanoa*, blooper reels and analytical depth, signal a significant, potentially decolonising, pedagogical tool.

The theory to practice divide, a persistently framed crisis in ITE, was another discussion point across our voices. The video facilitated deeper content engagement, sought in the initial assessment design (Westbrook), through the layered discussion this mode prompted (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo). For instance, rewatching children in an ECE setting made the course content come to life, deepening understanding in a way that would otherwise have remained lofty (Bernard). Concepts from *Te Whāriki* also became clearer through observation, in a way that reading had not achieved, supporting the development of pedagogical confidence (Maleko). Furthermore, video facilitated understandings that merely reading about in class could not (Taukolo). Our lived truths speak to van and Sherin's (2002) assertion that video fosters teacher-noticing. In addition to Rogge and Herzig's (2025) more recent insights, that the more interactive the use of video, the more sophisticated student teachers' engagement with practice becomes. Students have previously voiced that 'authentic' and 'meaningful' assessments enabled them to engage in the task in ways that were connected to the real-world, facilitating greater choice (Quinlan et al., 2025). The lived truths of our student voices (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo) offer such encounters, signalling the potential of video in ITE responding to modern concerns of graduating teacher readiness.

Concerns for GenAI and LLMs silencing student voice also came to the fore. The concern that LLMs might tempt students to subordinate their subjectivity to a voice that projects authority and epistemic confidence without positionality (Westbrook), was a lesser concern for us as student teachers (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo). However, the nature of video, and the dialogue it encourages altered our use of GenAI due to the creative embodiment of voice this mode prompts, necessitating subjective discussions (Bernard & Taukolo). Because of this, the video, rather than GenAI and LLMs, became the starting point of our researching and thinking, disrupting the potential, at least to some degree, to over-rely on this technology. Starting with our interpretations, and only then checking in with GenAI encouraged the fore-fronting of our voices. This act further enabled us to develop confidence in our abilities as student-teachers, feeling capable of grasping and applying the course content to our vocational context (Bernard & Taukolo). In requiring students to be present, and dialogically committed to a communicative act that is difficult to outsource, video encourages student voice in ways that written assessment cannot (Quinlan et al., 2025; Xia et al., 2024). For ITE in particular, where self-reflection and positionality are pedagogical imperatives for 'quality' teaching (Vick & Martinez, 2011), video assessment may grow in importance, posing a counterforce to the sense GenAI represents a kind of supreme, authoritative, finalising voice. Potentially then, with the increasing accessibility and advancements of GenAI and LLMs, video assessment pose a valuable opportunity to offset the growing presence, and perhaps overreliance on these technologies within higher education and vocational training.

Our lived experiences (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo) as student teachers, moving from initial discomfort, fear and self-consciousness towards an eventual pride, reflect a pedagogy of discomfort that motivated deeper engagement with the course content. The sense there was little space to hide from one's own ideas (Maleko) encouraged the ethical act of being visually present. This embodiment with assessment called us (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo) into a more invested relationship with the course content. These lived experiences speak to a pedagogy of discomfort, whereby being outside of one's comfort zone prompts deeper critical reflection and learning (Nolan & Molla, 2018). Described as a critical component of teacher growth, discomfort, though often avoided is, therefore, an important encounter (Westbrook et al., 2021b). The camera appears a means of eliciting such discomfort, which can then turn into a productive pressure (Taukolo). Whilst written assessment can be revised, polished and distanced from the self, the embodied, committed nature of our video placed us (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo) in immediate relation with our own, and others', ideas. Consequently, video assessment can be steeped

in a pedagogy of discomfort, signalling how being called beyond one's comfort zone can be a provocation for professional learning and growth (Nolan & Molla, 2018).

The connection between video and voice was also generative for us as student teachers (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo). Voice embodies the self's identity, agency and the capacity for reflection (McLeod, 2011). For student teachers in particular, voice is critical to vocational preparation, with teaching a relational, subjective and value-laden profession (Gillett-Swan & Baroutsis, 2024). Written assessment, steeped in traditional Western power dynamics, can limit whose voice is recognised as competent, and whose ways of knowing count, entrenching hierarchies and dominant behaviours that constrain what can be said and by whom (Sun et al., 2014). In contrast, the video assessment encouraged our student voices through collaborative dialogues, visibilising our thinking as knowledge construction (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo). Having creative, open opportunities through a video format, also allowed us to draw on our culturally situated communicative practices of relational storytelling, enabling us to freely express our voices (Taukolo). Consequently, the mode of video, as an assessment format, enabled us to have discussions in ways that upended monologic information consumption, as suggested by previous studies (see Hawley & Allen, 2018; Noetel et al., 2021). As already indicated, writing can be composed incrementally, revised and polished into a performance of competence. Conversely, video called our student voice (Bernard, Maleko & Taukolo) into being through encounters with peers, with the material, and with the complexity of the ideas being worked through. Fyfield et al. (2019) similarly found that video in higher education fosters active student voices, through unscripted encounters with content, which written forms rarely demand. Video assessment that centres dialogic encounters could, therefore, support student teachers' university-based ITE degree training, by bringing their diverse, equal and unmerged voices into a polyphonic chorus.

9 Reflecting on our Polyphonic Possibilities and Loopholes

A notable feature of our polyphonic chorus is the supporting responses about the video assessment. Each author agreed to co-author this article because the assessment had been a meaningful encounter. It is, therefore, unsurprising that our voices (Fiona Westbrook, Teisa Bernard, Briana Maleko & Iunisi Taukolo) carry a positive disposition toward this mode. Fittingly, dialogism is an enduringly positive philosophy, orientated toward the possibilities that arise when voices encounter one another in a great dialogue. It is perhaps

fitting that an article shaped by this philosophy finds itself situated within this possibility space by upholding the voices of lecturer-teacher and students through the mode of assessment and article writing. However, Bakhtin also dwells in loopholes and ambiguities, such as those highlighted in the aforementioned literature that dispels the espoused benefits of video assessment (see Reyna & Meier, 2018; Trenholm & Marmolejo-Ramos, 2024). Reflecting Bakhtinian ambiguity, we do not seek to resolve these dialogues. Instead, we add our voices as those inside one encounter, responding to the uncertainties that others have named from theirs. Whether these lived truths will resonate with or trouble the received truths of the literature and the reader is a dialogue this article welcomes and encourages.

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