Video, Paper, Tutor:
Student preferences for learning new software

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Video tutorial for Photoshop

University students are often expected to quickly learn and use unfamiliar software at the same time as learning class content.

Tutorials that show students how to use new programs can be tutor-led, paper-based or screencast videos. Video tutorials are becoming popular because they are cheap and easy to create; can be used for multiple tutorial groups over consecutive years; and can be shared online for revision. However, it is unclear how students respond to video tutorials.

Science communication students (n=80) were surveyed about their experience using video tutorials about the programs Photoshop (n=63) and Garageband (n-17.)


Video tutorial for Garageband

Over 80% of students preferred videos tutorials.

The most common reason for this was that students can move through the tutorial at their own pace (n=46 comments). They particularly liked being able to pause (n=13), rewind (n=19) and skip (n=5) elements. They also liked the screencast because it was visual (n=17), hands-on (n=7) and easy to follow (n=7).

Students who preferred paper-based (4%) and tutor-led teaching (14%) stated that they disliked moving back and forth in the video (n=3), liked being able to ask questions (n=3) or that their preferred method was easier or more efficient (n=4).
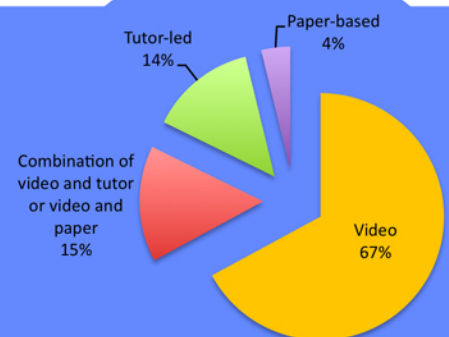
Students preferred method of learning a new computer program (n=80).

On average, students rated the helpfulness of video tutorials as 4.4 out of 5.

When learning new software, students prefer video tutorials over tutor-led and paper-based tutorials. However, 15% of students preferred to have video tutorials in combination with either having a tutor present to answer questions or an accompanying paper handout.

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Visit the video tutorials at www.vimeo.com/22216032
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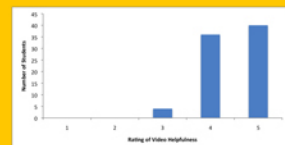
Student's ratings of how helpful they found the video tutorial on a score from 1 (Very unhelpful) to 5 (Very helpful).

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