# YouTube as a tool of formative dissemination of the final project: The case of the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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**Abstract**
*This article proposes the use of YouTube as a tool of formative dissemination of the activities associated with the final project in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Specifically, it examines this formative approach through the creation of video tutorials, while also seeking to promote students' active participation, giving them a prominent role in their own training process by asking them to produce videos to present and defend their final projects.*

**Keywords**
*Higher education, video tutorial, video defence, YouTube, final project.*

**Resum**
*Aquest article proposa l'ús de YouTube com a eina de divulgació formativa de les activitats vinculades als TFG del Grau de Publicitat i Relacions Públiques de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. En concret, recull aquest plantejament formatiu a través de la creació de videotutorials, alhora que busca impulsar la participació activa dels estudiants i els brinda un paper protagonista en el seu propi procés de formació, en proposar-los que produeixin vídeos per a la presentació i defensa dels seus TFG.*

**Paraules clau**
*Educació superior, videotutorial, videodefensa, YouTube, TFG.*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the use of video as an educational resource has risen significantly, including its use as a complement to face-to-face teaching, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Pattier & Ferreira, 2022; Succar et al., 2022). Teachers at all educational levels, including the university, have chosen to integrate audiovisual materials into their classes. Video tutorials in particular are used as a complement to traditional teaching strategies to facilitate comprehension of the information (Bengochea & Medina, 2013) and make the teaching-learning process more dynamic and appealing. Within this context, YouTube has become the platform of choice to both find and share these resources, thus becoming an invaluable tool for education.

One of the essential reasons for using these resources is to support a generation of students who are increasingly habituated to consuming content via multiple platforms, formats and digital media and to meet them on their own terms (Bengochea & Medina, 2013). According to Gutiérrez et al. (2018), some students claim that the tutorials available on YouTube are extremely helpful in their learning process because they can watch them as many times as needed and they adapt to each person and their level of understanding. Furthermore, YouTube is a tool that offers students the possibility of creating and disseminating their own educational materials, like projects and research, facilitating other students, professors and people interested in the topic access to these materials. Thus, with millions of videos available on a wide variety of topics, YouTube has become a rich, diverse source of learning.

Despite the increasing use of audiovisual resources in university teaching (Bengochea & Medina, 2013; Placencia, 2015), particularly platforms like YouTube (Gallego Domínguez & Murillo Estepa, 2018; Lozano Díaz et al., 2020; Maraza-

Quispe et al., 2020; Posligua Anchundia, 2020), their specific application within the context of final projects for Bachelor's degrees has not yet been thoroughly explored. The final project is a compulsory subject in higher education in Spain in which the students have to apply the knowledge and competences acquired during their programme in a integrated fashion. Even though there are common guidelines for the design, development and presentation of the final project, as well as guidelines on the different modalities and contents of the different sections (Sierra Sánchez et al., 2018), each university establishes their certain particular rules. In this sense, it may be worthwhile to specify these particularities to both students and professors, especially new ones. No specific class for students or training for their advisors on the final project is currently offered in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB).

Furthermore, after completing the final project, many students have to grapple with their projects' lack of visibility, which limits their ability to share their research. YouTube could play a valuable role in addressing these challenges.

This article presents a teaching innovation project which received funding in an internal call for applications at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The project was developed by the faculty in the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication at the same university. The instructors in this department are responsible for most of the final projects in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations, as well as other Communication degrees.

This project proposes using YouTube as a tool of formative dissemination of activities related to the final project. Specifically, it focuses on creating formative video tutorials while also seeking to promote students' participation, giving them a prominent role in their own training process by proposing that they produce videos to present and defend their final projects. This proposal allows students to develop communicative and creative skills while also promoting greater interaction with the academic community. This project also addresses the need to improve the visibility and dissemination of students' work by using a globally known platform like YouTube to facilitate access to and feedback from a broader audience.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 The didactic use of video in the educational setting

The integration of the information and communication technologies (ICT) into teaching has brought about a pedagogical innovation. The availability of digital platforms, resources and teaching materials contributes significantly to students' training in their future competences. According to the recommendations of the European Council, acquiring digital competences is essential in the learning process. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers receive to receive training in this area (Calero Sáchez, 2019) and to use these tools in their own teaching. To this end, the Ministry of Education and Professional Training has developed the 'Reference Framework for the Digital Teaching Competence', which compiles digital resources and tools to support teachers as they create and edit, communicate, share and collaborate, among other aspects (INTEF, 2017).

Video has become a teaching resource that facilitates teaching and the comprehension of information. The use of videos in the teaching-learning process makes it more dynamic and appealing, as prior studies have highlighted (Choe et al., 2019) while maintaining high learning outcomes in online education. We presented different lecture video styles with standardized material to students and then measured learning outcomes and satisfaction with a survey and summative assessment. We created an iterative qualitative coding scheme, "coding online asynchronous lectures" (COAL. Furthermore, in higher education, there is evidence that the use of videos can improve the learning process (Noetel et al., 2021). However, it is important to note that some authors warn that educational videos can be more effective when they are applied in groups with a homogeneous educational level (Kohler & Dietrich, 2021). Videos can be used both to teach students content and for students to express and communicate what they have learned (García Aragón, 2016). Therefore, this resource not only allows educators to convey and enhance comprehension but also facilitates creative communication of what students have learned.

In recent years, the use of video has experienced considerable growth in educational communities and has been shown to afford major advantages for formal and informal education during crises, such as COVID-19 (Lowenthal & West, 2020; Pattier & Ferreira, 2022). The consumption of audiovisual content through digital platforms has increased, and more and more students are choosing to use these resources for their education (Bengochea & Medina, 2013). Furthermore, the imminent arrival of artificial intelligence is challenging forms of teaching-learning based on interaction, which is leading to the development of more automated and predictive education (Incio Flores et al., 2022).

The diverse video style available in the field of education (Choe et al., 2019; Zacarias Ricardo & Revilla Miguel, 2019) while maintaining high learning outcomes in online education. We presented different lecture video styles with standardized material to students and then measured learning outcomes and satisfaction with a survey and summative assessment. We created an iterative qualitative coding scheme, "coding online asynchronous lectures" (COAL include video tutorials or training clips (Bengochea & Medina, 2013). Video tutorials are distinguished from other from recordings of face-to-face classes because they are designed specifically to be watched asynchronously. They include contents that complement traditional formative strategies, facilitate an understanding of the subject and improve the quality of learning (Bengochea & Medina, 2013; Jiménez Castillo & Marín Carrillo, 2012). According to García Aragón (2016), the use of images in videos may make phenomena or concepts easier to understand

because they allow static and moving images, sound and text to be combined in a single piece. This integration of elements facilitates the expression of the information to be taught and consequently improves the receiver's ability to understand it.

Fyfield et al. (2019) suggest certain principles for the design of video tutorials: they should focus on a single learning topic, be short in length and direct students' attention toward specific elements on the screen. Therefore, while these educational videos can be a significant informative resource for students, their success in the university community depends on the production quality of the content to ensure that it is synthetic, quick and effective (Fyfield et al., 2019).

There is a range of tools and media that allow video tutorials to be created (Placencia, 2015). For example, the INTEF (2017) digital kit includes tips to create high-quality video tutorials, as well as recommendations for tools and media to produce them (like Filmora, Screencastify, Monosnap, Active Presenter) and edit them (like VideoPad, Filmora edición, Openshot, Wevideo). These tools allow educators to design and develop effective video tutorials which can be shared via a variety of digital platforms. Among these platforms, YouTube has become one of the most popular among educators, primarily since the pandemic (Pattier & Ferreira, 2022; Succar et al., 2022,) due its due to its ability to overcome connectivity barriers in certain social and cultural contexts.

## 2.2 YouTube as a tool for educational dissemination

YouTube is the social media with the fourth highest number of users young users and is ranked second by users in Spain according to the annual study by IAB Spain in 2023 (ELOGIA, 2023). This platform was created as a space to display and disseminate one's own audiovisual contents (Maraza-Quispe et al., 2020). Its mission, according to its creators, is 'to give everyone a voice and show them the world' (YouTube, no date). Users of this digital platform can enjoy a wide variety of content in audiovisual format and create and share their own videos with an extensive audience. YouTube offers the possibility of personalising the experience through the creation of one's own channels, subscriptions to channels of interest and interaction with the contents. Furthermore, it is available in more than 88 countries through a variety of devices, which fosters global connectivity (Lozano Díaz et al., 2020).

The content available on YouTube is considered an invaluable source of knowledge for both students and teachers. For this reason, it is the ideal educational platform, as it offers the possibility of consuming, creating and sharing videos that facilitate knowledge, entertainment and social visibility (Gutiérrez et al., 2018). The use of YouTube videos as teaching material generates positive results in students' learning due to their keen interest in audiovisual contents (Pérez Gómez & Cuecuecha Mendoza, 2020). According to Gutiérrez et al. (2018), some students claim that the tutorials available on YouTube contribute to their learning process because they can be viewed as many times as needed, adapting to the person

and their level of understanding. However, some authors claim that attitudinal factors like perceived utility or ease of use, as well as the quality of the materials, are crucial factors in getting students to appreciate using YouTube videos as teaching material (Harper et al., 2023).

Many professor comment that this social media facilitates the understanding of information when presented in video format (Posligua Anchundia, 2020). However, Harper et al. (2023) stress the importance of professors first choosing the contents in order to avoid the perception of risk among students if they consult inaccurate or obsolete contents or spend too much time searching for appropriate contents themselves.

On the other hand, YouTube facilitates the administration and organisation of collections of online educational videos, which contributes to academic training. Students also have the opportunity to become producers of videos and to disseminate them via the social media. Thus, YouTube is a potentially beneficial option in the field of education (Maraza-Quispe et al., 2020), as well as one of the social media, along with TikTok and Instagram, used the most by higher education institutions and faculty to connect with the university community (Lozano Díaz et al., 2020).

There are many experiences using the social media, and specifically YouTube, as a teaching tool in university education. The literature and a direct search on YouTube itself show a wide thematic range that encompasses language learning, pedagogy, law, medicine and chemistry. Many of these experiences emerged from the faculty's desire to seek effective formulas for teaching innovation and reflect different ways of making the most of the medium's potentialities. Many articles describe how to prepare a repository of selected videos in the medium itself (Farag et al., 2020; Lozano Díaz et al., 2020; Rudenkin & Grushevskaya, 2019). Other experiences are based on faculty developing their own materials. In this case, we can distinguish different modalities: classes or lectures recorded in the face-to-face classroom (with MIT OpenCourseWare as the main referent) or developed specifically for educational channels (Pattier & Ferreira, 2022; Ranga, 2017), and the creation of video tutorials or training clips (Bou Franch, 2021; Zhyrun, 2016). Likewise, we should highlight experiences based on students' role as content creators (Orús et al., 2016).

## 3. The final project in the UAB Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations

The final project is an essential requirement to earn an official university degree in Spain. It became compulsory through Royal Decree 1393/2007 dated 29 October 2007, which was later amended by Royal Decree 861/2010, dated 2 July 2010, and Royal Decree 43/2015, dated 2 February 2015, which addressed curricular, structural and organisational transformations (Sierra Sánchez et al., 2018). The final project is done towards the end of the degree programme, and its goal

is to assess competences associated with the degree. Each university determines the number of credits (ECTS) assigned to the final project (a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 30 ECTS), as well as the modalities and procedures of the defence and assessment of the project.

At the UAB, these aspects are regulated in the university's academic rules (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2022). Likewise, for the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations, the access requirements and guidelines for developing and assessing the project are specified in a section of the Faculty of Communication Studies website (no date). The final project is a compulsory subject worth 12 ECTS in all programmes in this faculty. It can take on one of two forms (research or project) and can be done either individually or in a group. According to the rules, each project must have an advisor who is an expert in the field, and its assessment must include a compulsory public defence.

## 4. Objectives of the innovation project

The innovation project presented in this article seeks to use YouTube as a tool of formative dissemination of the activities associated with the final projects in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the UAB. To do so, the following specific objectives were set:

- To promote the creation and posting of video tutorials related to planning, developing and presenting final projects on the official YouTube channel of the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication at the UAB in order to contribute to students' complementary training for this project and to help the faculty in charge of advising them.
- To promote the preparation of videos presenting the final projects of students in the Bachelor's degree and to disseminate them via the same YouTube channel

Unlike many experiments using YouTube in university teaching in which the teachers choose videos previously posted in the social media (Lozano Díaz et al., 2020; Oliva Marañón & Gallego Trijueque, 2021), this proposal entails producing in-house audiovisual materials, avoiding the 'lesson' format.

## 5. Methodological proposal / work method

Based on the specific objectives, a study was planned with two phases which were conducted simultaneously. The first phase focused on creating and posting video tutorials. The second phase focused on compiling videos presenting final projects with marks of at least 8.5 (out of 10) in order to disseminate them. The goal of this action was to promote students' work and turn it into a reference for future students, thus bringing additional value to the final projects.

### 5.1 First phase

In the first phase, a methodological approach was designed that bore in mind students' training needs and the support that faculty need when advising final projects, especially new faculty that are advising them for the first time.

Initially, relevant topics that could be addressed in the video tutorials were identified, most of them based on the experience of the project team and conversations with other professors in the degree programme. The following training needs were detected:

needs related to the final project planning process, like the kinds of final projects, academic rules, the role of the advisor, etc

- needs related to developing the final project: structure according to type, methodological tools, handling references and the bibliography, plagiarism, etc
- needs related to the defence of the final project, both face-to-face and on video: length, resources and additional tools.

In addition to defining the topics, the most appropriate formats for the video tutorials were explored. The goal was to generate a communicative style that was appealing to students, considering the use of voiceover to provide the relevant explanations and including images from a variety of sources, like our own recordings, images from free image banks (www.pexels.com), music free of copyright (www.jamendo.com) and screen captures. Plus, institutional images that the UAB makes available to the university community were used to incorporate features of its corporate identity.

Next, scripts were prepared for the first videos produced. The decision to start the channel with these first few videos reflected two criteria: to provide material that was chronologically congruent with the stages in the final project, and to meet the demands of the faculty in the degree who mentioned specific training needs in prior informal conversations. It was considered important to establish a suitable length for the videos (between 1 and 3 minutes) to make them more user-friendly, avoid boredom and discourage students from stopping while viewing them. Later, the production and post-production stage of these materials began (see Figure 1).

The materials were posted on the YouTube channel of the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication of the UAB (@departamentpublicitatuab853) within a playlist called 'Final Projects – Tutorials'

### 5.2 Second phase

In the second phase, we enlisted the collaboration and complicity of final project advisors in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations. These professors play a core role in supervising and guiding final projects, so they were sent a letter introducing the project and inviting them to participate actively in it.

The advisors were supposed to act as intermediaries with the students interested in preparing the videos presenting explaining their final projects. To facilitate this process, they were provided with informative materials that they were supposed to share

**Figure 1. Stills extracted from one of the tutorial videos published on the YouTube channel**



Source: Own elaboration.

with their students, which included detailed instructions, tips and practical tools to prepare the videos. The advisors were also asked to request the participating students to sign a document granting image rights.

Throughout this process, any questions from the collaborating faculty were welcomed and answered. Furthermore, recommendations provided by the advisors were taken into consideration and integrated into the project. This collaboration and feedback were essential to guarantee the success of this phase in order to achieve the project's objectives.

Once the process of writing and defending the final project was over (in the months of June and July 2022 and 2023), the advisors were asked to send in the videos. The team in charge of the project chose the videos that were ultimately posted on YouTube. It is important to note that even though some of the projects earned a mark higher than 8.5 out of 10, not all the videos of the final project defences met the quality standards needed due to flaws in their image and/or sound, which excluded them from the channel.

Having considered all these factors, the material chosen was posted on the YouTube channel of the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication of the UAB, with proper identification of the topic, the authors and the advisors of each project. The material was added to a playlist entitled 'Final Projects' during the months of July and September 2022 and 2023, and this was the responsibility of the team in charge of this project.

## 6. Results

The preliminary results of this project enable us to highlight several key aspects. Regarding the production of video tutorials, we should mention the difficulty entailed in developing high-quality materials that are appealing and do not fall into the more traditional tutorial formats (polymedia-type videos or PowerPoint presentations with audio). To achieve this, it essential to apply a professional audiovisual production approach, which requires

technological resources and specialised staff that may be unavailable to some professors. However, scriptwriting is a more accessible task, as it covers contents related to professional team's teaching and research. These videos are brief and dynamic and explain the contents in an appealing, clear and concise fashion, in line with what some authors have suggested (Fyfield et al., 2019).

Regarding students' participation in creating and producing the videos to defend the final project, is important to acknowledge that the results were somewhat limited. Fewer materials than what we had initially forecast were ultimately produced due to factors that were beyond the influence of the project team: not all the final projects reached the minimal mark of 8.5 out of 10, and those that did do not always provide a video of sufficient quality to be shared on the channel. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the students who decided to participate in the initiative and prepared their video defences for the channel expressed their satisfaction with the proposal and positively rated it.

Consequently, we believe that more work to reinforce the collaboration protocols with the final project advisors is necessary. Even though the professors who were asked to collaborate responded positively to the initiative, actual participation was limited and few of them reminded their students of the possibility of preparing this audiovisual material.

Therefore, it is essential to support both the advisors and the students more closely so that preparing the video defences becomes a common practice within final projects. If the advisors see the usefulness of these materials or the channel in general, they will be more likely to motivate their students to collaborate in creating them. Regarding the students, it is essential to overcome obstacles like the perception that preparing a video defence duplicates the effort of the final project, given that they also have to hold a public defence as stipulated in article 271.1 of Royal Decree 822/2021. The strategy of turning this into a 'routine' could contribute to boosting its use. In this sense, the possibility that the video of the defence contributes to part of the overall grade in the presentation section of the assessment

rubrics or in the award of prizes or mentions for the best videos could be considered.

## 7. Conclusions

Final projects are an opportunity for students to demonstrate the competences they have acquired during their Bachelor's degrees, as well as their skills at autonomous work and independent learning. In line with previous studies based on teaching innovation experiences, it has been found that the use of video tutorials improves the understanding of contents (Bengochea & Medina, 2013; Jiménez Castillo & Marín Carrillo, 2012) and that YouTube is an effective platform for fostering students' independent learning skills (Posligua Anchundia, 2020; Sandoval Lozano & Rojas Gutiérrez, 2021). Therefore, one of the objectives of this innovation project was to develop specific content for those students who have to do their final project and make it available via the social media used by young people the most. However, the project was not solely limited to this initiative.

Current education laws consider digital skills an essential requirement (INTEF, 2017), especially for future professionals in the field of communication. Moreover, it is important to highlight their value in sharing one's work publicly. Thus, it is considered worthwhile to motivate students who are finishing their final projects to generate content via YouTube, and this matches with the findings of other studies which stress the need to support students as producers of educational content (Lozano Díaz et al., 2020).

The limitations of this project include the lack of technological and human resources available to conduct it. This entailed a major barrier that limited the ability to produce more video tutorials.

Another important aspect is that this project was developed specifically for the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the UAB. This restricted the scope of the video tutorials and the dissemination of the final projects via YouTube. Furthermore, we are not yet able to assess the real impact of the activities proposed. Once the initial period of application has elapsed, an assessment should be undertaken to determine the usefulness of the video tutorials and the true extent of the dissemination of the final project videos available on YouTube.

Therefore, we would like to suggest several future actions that are essential to this project. First, it is crucial to promote the channel among final project advisors in the Bachelor's in Advertising and Public Relations at the UAB so that they recommend it to students. This would help the channel reach its target audience and enable students to benefit from it. Plus, the channel's visibility could spark the interest of other students, which would enable more videos showing final project presentations and defences to be available for general consultation. It would also be worthwhile to consider the possibility of extending the project to other platforms, like Instagram or TikTok, to adapt to young people's changing technology habits.

Secondly, it would be beneficial to assess the suitability and impact of the video tutorials among both final project advisors and students in the process of developing their own final projects. This would help to determine whether the project is truly useful and provide the chance for suggestions regarding contents or topics that could be included in the video tutorials. Ultimately, this assessment would contribute to the constant improvement of the resources and provide more effective support for students doing their final projects.

Finally, the channel and its contents could be extended to other degrees taught in the Faculty of Communication Studies at the UAB, given that the academic rules related to final projects share many points in common, regardless of the programme. In this way, the YouTube channel could also be used by students in the Audiovisual Communication, Journalism, Interactive Communication and Communication in Organisations degrees. In recent years, the use of video as an educational resource has risen significantly, including its use as a complement to face-to-face teaching, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Pattier & Ferreira, 2022; Succar et al., 2022). Teachers at all educational levels, including the university, have chosen to integrate audiovisual materials into their classes. Video tutorials in particular are used as a complement to traditional teaching strategies to facilitate comprehension of the information (Bengochea & Medina, 2013) and make the teaching-learning process more dynamic and appealing. Within this context, YouTube has become the platform of choice to both find and share these resources, thus becoming an invaluable tool for education.

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