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Using Podcasts as an Educational Tool in Research Methods and Intro to Psychology

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Using Podcasts as an Educational Tool in Psychology Courses

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Introduction
Incorporating technology into the classroom provide a number of benefits to instructors and students. One way of incorporating technology into the classroom is through the use of a podcast. Podcasts are a form of media that are distributed through the internet and downloaded to a computer or MP3 player for playback at the user’s leisure. Studies have shown that students and lecturers hold positive perceptions towards integrating podcasts into the classroom (Sutton-Brady, Scott, Taylor, Carabatta, & Clark, 2009). Using podcasts allow instructors to record required information for students which allows classroom discussion to be more focused on the students needs and hands on demonstrations (O’Brian, Lubke, Beard, & Britt, 2011). Instructors are also able to cut down on time spent reiterating information to many students by directing students to the podcasts. Students can benefit from podcasts in a variety of ways by allowing repeated listening, listening at their convenience, and listening on the go. These benefits could translate into greater student achievement and better test scores for the students.

This study investigates the use of podcasts as an education tool in two undergraduate psychology courses at the University of North Georgia. The current study expected that students exposed to a podcast would score better on a test than when the students were not exposed to the information. To understand the relationship between podcasting and learning we were giving a 10 question pretest followed by a podcast on the same topic. After exposure to the podcast students were then given a posttest to assess their learning gains after listening to the podcast. Multiple podcasts were used to gather data: (1) using GIL for research, (2) types of validity and problems with learning gains after listening to the podcast. Multiple podcasts were used to assess differences in scores for validity pretest scores between RM (M=7.7786, SD=6.6667) and posttest (M=6.6667, SD=0.03280) (t(13)= -.255, p>.803). There was no significant difference in carryover pretest scores for RM (M=6.3333, SD=1.52753) and QM (M=4.54, SD=2.39607) (t(8)= 2.00, p=.886).

Results
A significant difference was found in scores for GIL pretest (M=6.7333, SD=7.96896) and posttest (M=8.0667, SD=9.86151) (t(14)=4.970, p<.001). There was no significant difference for carryover pretest (M=5.4444, SD=2.18518) and posttest (M=6.4444, SD=1.66667) (t(8)=1.154, p>.172). A significant difference was found in scores for ethics pretest (M=5.9, SD=1.96921) and posttest (M=6.97, SD=1.94868) (t(9)=5.468, p<.001). A significant difference was found in scores for validity pretest (M=5.9231, SD=1.49786) and posttest (M=8.6154, SD=1.36875) (t(12)=5.733, p<.001). There was no significant difference in ethics pretest scores (M=5.9, SD=1.41421) and posttest scores for students who did not listen to the podcast (M=5.7, SD=0) (t<2.00, p>.295). There was also no significant difference in validity pretest scores (M=6.3333, SD=1.96837) and posttest scores for students who did not listen to the podcast (M=7.1667, SD=1.60206) (t<2.82, p>.448). There was no significant difference in ethics pretest scores for RM (M=6.7778, SD=6.6667) and QM (M=6.6667, SD=0.03280) (t(13)= -.255, p>.803).

Conclusion & Discussion
The current study shows that podcasts can be helpful for students who are attempting to learn material for their courses. Podcasts provide students with the ability to listen at their convenience and even take more complete notes (Mckinney, Dyck, & Luber, 2009). The expansion of technology into the classroom still needs to be studied more, but learning can occur when students listen to podcasts. Podcasts allow for instructors to dedicate time spent in lecture for hands on demonstrations, personalized discussions, and more one-on-one time to answer questions. The ease of creating podcast materials encourages this medium to be inserted into the classroom. There are barriers to incorporating podcasts into the classroom some examples are: students unfamiliar with technology, students improper use of the material, and technical support from the university (Gribbins, 2008). Some of these barriers can be overcome by properly training the students in how to use the podcast to their full potential. Proper training on how to use the podcasts could allow the students to reach their full potential in the classroom.

References

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