

Podcast—An Apt Learning Tool for Generation Z

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Generation Z and millennials who are grown up with digital devices can use digital technology with ease, even though they are not digitally literate. Hence, one of the effective methods of educating these generations will be through mobile learning (M-learning). Mobile learning in simple term is accessing learning contents through mobile devices. It has lots of advantages, such as easy accessibility, availability of contents anywhere at any time, and learning at our own convenience, with instant sharing of contents and portability.

One popular and rapidly growing method of M-learning among these generations is podcast which can be either audio podcasts or video podcasts/vodcasts. A survey has found that at least one-third millennials listen to podcast everyday, whereas 75% of generation Z have access to paid version of podcasts. This has proven their interests toward podcasts.¹ Currently, we can see that there is a rapid increase in number of podcasting in the field of medicine as a learning resource material and medical journals with high impact factor have started producing podcasts to match the recent trend and to attract these millennials and generation Z learners.²

Being aware of the important benefit of podcasting that it helps to overcome the time restrictions of regular didactic lectures, the educators do creative podcasting to enhance the knowledge and learning experience of the students. In addition, it also helps for their better understanding on specific as well as important topics. It is an amazing tool for slow learners to improve themselves in a self-paced manner and extremely suitable for the auditory type of learners.³

A study has shown that podcasts of shorter duration of <5 minutes are preferred by the students for revising and recalling the learned contents just before their assessments.⁴ So, an ideal way of creating a podcast is by splitting individual lecture into different segments of podcasts with shorter duration focusing on a single significant learning objective to gain more attention of the listeners rather than having the entire lecture as a single podcast of lengthy duration. Additional important and relevant materials related to a topic which cannot be dealt during the regular lecture classes can also be provided as podcast to the students for covering the topic in a broader manner.

To cope up with the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic crisis, all the higher educational institutions have implemented online teaching. As researchers have proven earlier, one way of improving the learners' experience is supplementing the online lecture sessions with creative podcasts of good quality, specifically on difficult topics. Hence, we can use them as a complementary tool to online teaching to improve the students' understanding. Also, it helps the slow learners to learn at their own pace and for engaging visual learners we can provide the content as vodcasts.³

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Even though it is a time-consuming process for the teachers to develop an effective educational podcast, its efficiency in improving the learners experience and learning outcome is undeniable. It provides better understanding of a topic by the student on repetitive listening. At the same time, it helps the teachers to make their students to understand concepts easier as well as increase the student performance and thus attain their ultimate goal. Hence, podcasts are really an effective supplementary learning and teaching tool for both the learners and the teachers, respectively.

Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (SBV), Puducherry, a deemed-to-be-university, has started podcasting with different series focusing on various areas of healthcare system not only for the benefit of students and teachers but also for the welfare of the society during this alarming situation.

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