



The role of collaborative podcasting in developing student engagement and reflective practices

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Abstract

Reflective practice enhances professional development and competencies (McLeod et al., 2020) and influences individuals' perspectives on thinking and decision-making (Mann et al., 2009; Ng et al., 2015). Social media can transform education, stimulating learning and enabling learners to own their education while extending their professional development (Purvis et al., 2016; 2020). For example, social media can create a rich, collaborative, interactive learning community space that is freely available and accessible to showcase their work to the wider disciplinary field (Beckingham and Nerantzi, 2015; Middleton and Beckingham, 2015) and enhance their employability for graduate readiness after university (Beckingham, 2023).

This research explored students' confidence in reflecting on practices in a Level 5 module through co-creating a podcast. Students studying Obesity and Weight Management (n=29) participated in a module-long activity to assist their summative reflective practice assessment. A collaborative podcast episode was created weekly, with students invited to curate the content based on the weekly topic. Students' identities remained anonymous, and ethical approval was obtained from Solent University. Results highlighted a mixed engagement response. However, among those who actively participated and a majority who assumed a passive role as podcast listeners, their reflections benefited positively from this pedagogical method. While some students faced challenges in grasping the connection between the podcast and professional development, the reflection at the end of the semester highlighted the benefits of incorporating social media to enhance student engagement and learning.

In the future, a collaborative effort with learning developers could refine the podcast co-creation method to create a more effective and engaging approach. Thus, this collaboration may extend to cross-disciplinary activities in other modules and courses, fostering a 'student partners' model for inclusivity and shifting students' perceived behaviours towards their learning.

Keywords: co-creating podcasts; learning development; student-teacher partnership.

Community response

Methods of assisting students to develop a greater sense of ownership of their learning were particularly lively topics at this year's conference. Given the relative ease of access to podcasting, this presentation very helpfully enabled colleagues to understand how it might be applied to enable students to engage in reflective practices in their learning via creating collaborative podcasts.

The paper outlined the potential and challenges of this learning technology. The amount of work required of the tutor drew many questions, particularly around scalability. Attendees were interested in using collaborative podcasts to promote peer working, student independence and agency and appreciated the relative ease of extending the approach to other academic fields.

It was great to hear about podcasting as a platform to engage students in processing knowledge in a novel way whilst simultaneously (the hope would be) enhancing their ability to communicate specialist information to a general audience, which is certainly a beneficial skill for employability (Linda Riches, University of the West of Scotland).

Next steps and additional questions

Podcasting is used across the sector in various ways to enhance learning. Discussions on the availability of the technology, the resourcing involved and best practices in using

podcasts to engage students were all stimulated by this presentation. Some specific questions also arose:

- Would there be scope for students to be more involved in the co-production so that they recorded the podcast? This might give students more ownership of the project, increasing overall engagement.
- Rather than the tutor putting so much effort into producing podcasts, would it be possible to use existing materials as a springboard? For example, students could listen to a podcast episode, critique it, and/or add to the content for their version.

Author's' reflection

The presentation at the ALDinHE conference provided an insightful opportunity to showcase an alternative approach to supporting students' reflective practices of their own learning on the module's content. The conversation with the community provided many questions for me to draw upon and thoughts on how best to improve for the future. Questions asked after the presentation were valuable. It was the first time this project has been introduced to the students, thus the need to do all the legwork weekly to make accessibility for students as easy as possible. Going forward, the suggestion of using existing materials as a springboard for students to listen to and critique could be an alternative option. Perhaps this might work, but I will definitely try with the new cohort! I want to thank ALDinHE for the opportunity to share my project with the wider community and to the community for providing constructive feedback during the session's conversation.

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