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Project Title:

Podcasting to support students using the Executive business simulation

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Abstract:

Audio or video podcasts can be a useful tool to supplement practical exercises such as business simulations. In our case study we have used different types of podcast to support the delivery of various courses at the Business School at Leeds Metropolitan University. These podcasts were used as reusable learning resources as they were utilised for three student cohorts with approximately 700 students in total. It was possible to offer the podcasts to students studying at a range of different levels since the podcasts' main focus was to support the learner using a computer-based business simulation.

Project aims:

The aim of the project was to develop and evaluate the use of video podcasts to support students applying enterprise skills and concepts to 'live' business decision making in a simulated business start-up. Objectives

- Develop video podcasts as innovative and reusable learning resources to support students launching of a new company in the European Car Industry.
- Make use of podcasts to support and enhance student decision making in the development and running a new simulated company using business simulation software.
- Aid and develop student skills in terms of problem solving analysis and judgement opportunity perception risk management and initiative in the formation and running of a start-up company.
- Evaluate pedagogic and technical issues of developing and utilising podcasts for business simulations. Share findings and recommendations within the university and also the wider HE environment via conference and journal publications.

Process:

Background It is generally accepted that the most effective educational interventions actively engage students in their learning (see for example Biggs 2003). Such engagement requires both action and thought on the part of students and is facilitated by guided group collaboration (Slavin 1995). In line with these principles students in Leeds Business School undertake a group-based interactive business simulation as part of their module on Business Analysis and Practice (BAP). This is a complex and realistic activity where student teams work in a 'live' market place consisting of all student companies with other European Manufacturers acting as background 'competition' in the market. It was therefore felt that additional and flexible learning resources should be provided to support the activity. We anticipated that by offering such resources in form of podcasts the students would be able to better understand the underlying principles of the business simulation and be able to make more informed business decisions.

Process We have developed different types of podcasts for students in the Business School at Leeds Metropolitan University in their second year of study (Level 2) taking the module Business Analysis and Practice. The students taking this module study various courses in the Business School such as BA (Hons) Business Studies and BA (Hons) Marketing. Additionally

the same podcasts were used to supplement teaching materials for students of two other courses: Strategic Decision Making (Level 3) and for a Diploma in Management studies at postgraduate level. The assessment consisted of a written business plan in which each group outlined the objectives strategies and development of their company. After receiving tutor feedback the students executed their business strategies in the computer-based simulation. The visually enhanced audio podcasts offered tutor discussions of key elements of the computer-assisted business simulation used by the students as well as video podcasts about subject-specific topics. These podcasts were aimed to support the students in their assessment preparations and help with the revision of key concepts. The podcasts were made available via the virtual learning environment (Blackboard Vista) as well as for subscription by web browser-based RSS readers such as Google and downloadable RSS readers such as iTunes.

Outputs:

A series of different types of podcasts including video podcasts and visually enhanced audio podcasts. These podcasts can be accessed via an iPod (by subscribing to rss feeds via iTunes) or via any PC browser - Conference poster presentation at the B

Impact:

Support and develop the students' skills of analysis and evaluation of company results and their relationship of that analysis to decisions made. Provide students with experience in prioritising decisions in a business setting thus increasing thei

Evaluation:

Our evaluation of this approach to using podcasts took into account pedagogic and technical issues using a case study approach. Students studying the 'Business Analysis and Practice' module were surveyed about their views of the podcasts and the way in which they were used. The survey was handed out to the students during the lectures and tutorials one week before the assignment was due. In addition to this focus groups were conducted with students groups in the same week. A total of 137 questionnaires were collected and 12 interviews conducted with student groups.

What next?

Embedding enterprise in the curriculum. We are aiming to build on the success of the CETL Enterprise project on podcasting and videocasting by expanding on the ideas and expertise we have developed. Using podcasts developed to support enterprise in the curriculum we plan to spread our ideas and expertise to other members of staff other modules and courses such that:

1. The podcasts can be used as reusable learning objects for E-learning /distance learning courses.
2. We enable module / course teams to produce their own podvideos and further change the culture of enterprise teaching. This will of benefit to the student but also to the members of the teaching team (staff development). Firstly we'd like to have an impact on faculty then across university and eventually set up consultancy projects with external partners.

Further research into the ways in which students use podcasts and similar web based media in their learning experience so that assessment teaching & learning strategies can be developed to maximise the impact of web based media.

General conclusions:

Student feedback indicates that the podcasts engaged the students and supported their understanding of the Business Analysis and Practice module. Staff and students agreed that the podcasts were beneficial in terms of assignment revision and made it easier for students to understand the subject content. We have also found that the students valued flexibility of use over mobility. In other words the learners perceived it as very beneficial to watch podcasts outside the lecture time either because a class was missed or because they want to review the key concepts. However our findings indicate that learners are less interested in accessing podcasts 'on the move'.

Keywords:

podcasting enterprise business strategy group work. *References Biggs J. (2003) Teaching for quality learning (2nd edition) Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. Slavin R. (1995) Cooperative Learning: Theory Research and Practice Second Edition Merrill.

Podcasting to support students using the Executive business simulation

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- Audio or video podcasts can be a useful tool to supplement practical exercises such as business simulations. In this poster, we share findings from a case study in which different types of podcast were utilised to support the delivery of various courses at the Business School at Leeds Metropolitan University.
- These podcasts were used as reusable learning resources, as they are utilised for three student cohorts with approximately 700 students in total. It is possible to offer the podcasts to students studying at a range of different levels, since the podcasts' main focus is to support the learner using a computer-based business simulation.

Introduction

- We have developed podcasts for students in the Business School in their second year of study (Level 2), taking the module Business Analysis and Practice (BAP). The students taking this module study various courses in the Business School, such as BA (Hons) Business Studies and BA (Hons) Marketing. The students work in groups and run a fictional company using business simulation software, which gives them the opportunity to evaluate their decision making skills. They must prepare a business plan outlining the objectives, strategies and development of their company. The same podcasts were used to supplement teaching materials for students of two other courses: Strategic Decision Making (Level 3) and for a Diploma in Management studies at postgraduate level.

Background



- The visually enhanced audio podcasts offered tutor discussions of key elements of the computer-assisted business simulation used by the students as well as video podcasts about subject-specific topics. The podcasts were made available via the virtual learning environment (Blackboard Vista), as well as for subscription by web browser-based RSS readers, such as Google and downloadable RSS readers, such as iTunes.



The Podcasts

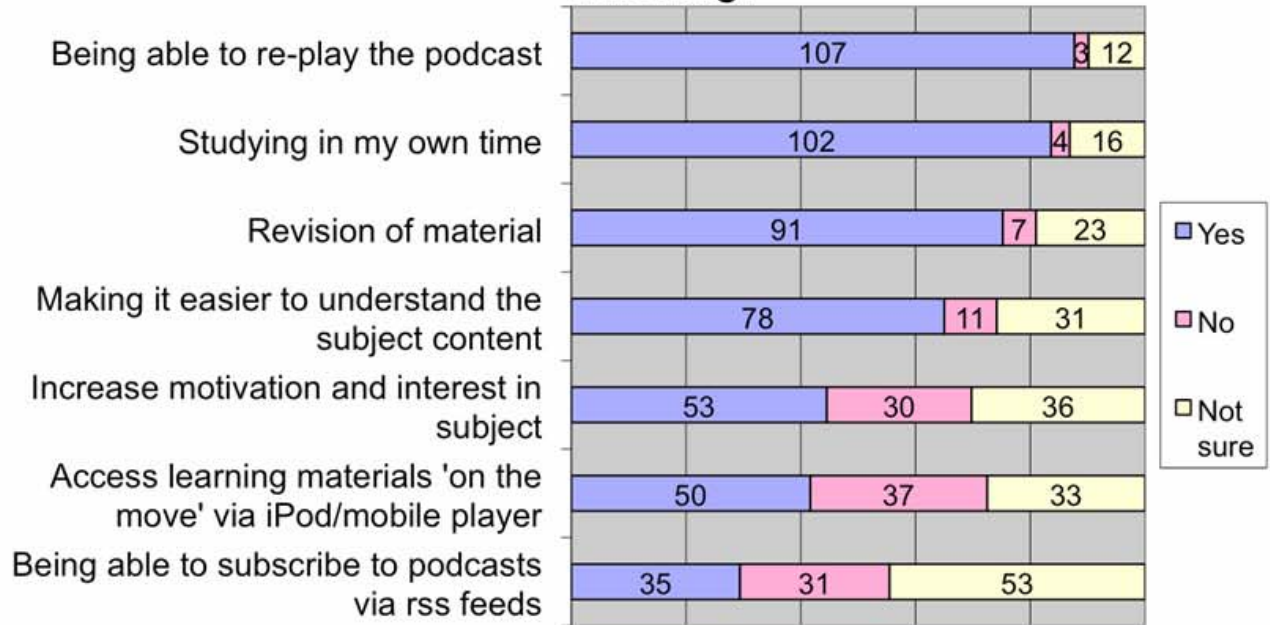
- Our evaluation of this approach to using podcasts took into account pedagogic and technical issues.

Students studying the 'Business Analysis and Practice' module were surveyed about their views of the podcasts and the way in which they were used. The survey was handed out to the BAP students during the lectures and tutorials one week before the assignment was due. In addition to this, focus groups were conducted with students groups during their seminars.

A total of 137 questionnaires were collected and 12 focus group interviews conducted.

Evaluation

Do you find podcasts useful to support you with the following?



Some survey Findings

- Students responses were very favourable. The podcasts were perceived as beneficial in terms of assignment revision and made it easier for them to understand the subject content.

However, we also found that the students value flexibility of use over mobility. In other words, the learners perceived it as very beneficial to watch podcasts outside the lecture time, either because a class was missed or because they want to review the key concepts. However, our findings indicate that learners are less interested in accessing podcasts 'on the move'.

Summary

