THE BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO PODCASTS

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Recommended Citation
Nigmatullina, Almira Shamsunovna (2019) "THE BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO PODCASTS," Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University: Vol. 1 : Iss. 8 , Article 71. Available at: https://uzjournals.edu.uz/namdu/vol1/iss8/71

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Cover Page Footnote
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Erratum
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THE BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO PODCASTS
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Abstract: The use of podcasts in teaching foreign language to students of universities is discussed in the article. The article defines the concept of a “podcast” and describes the didactic properties and methodological functions of podcasts in teaching a foreign language.

Keywords: podcasts, innovation, English, higher education institution, information technology, motivation.

At present modern English lesson can not be represented and effectively implemented without the use of modern educational technologies. Moreover the most productive technologies, in my opinion, are information and communication, project method, student research, multilevel learning, differentiated learning, etc. The construction of the educational process at the lesson and in extracurricular activities entails the active use of modern educational technologies, taking into account modern requirements to the quality of education, to the level of formation of educational activities.

Living in the digital age has many perks, but it’s especially great when it comes to language learning. Today, we can improve our English quickly and easily with the help of our phone, tablet or computer, and a good internet connection.[1] Mainly whether you’re jogging on a treadmill or commuting, podcasts are a great way to get a better grasp of any foreign language. So what is a podcast? And why is it so beneficial to implement this learning habit in our personal growth journey?
New technology always has a heavy impact on education, and Podcasting is no different. Many learning institutions are cutting back on textbooks and investing in technology enhanced learning. Podcasting, as one of the latest mediums to emerge into the mainstream, is one of the forefront technologies in this change. Podcasting offers the opportunity for lecturers to easily broadcast engaging audio content, which students can then listen to at any time and wherever they are. A student only needs to subscribe to a podcast feed and suddenly you can push educational content to them, rather than wait for them to come. Podcasts can easily be used in Schools, universities or colleges to engage students, and improve your teaching and learning practise.

Many learning institutions which have incorporated podcasting in their education system, have reported really positive results. This can be attributed to the ease of creating and consuming podcasts as well as the various ways in which education podcasts enhance the students’ learning experience. There are a lot of advantages of podcasting in education. Let’s take a look: Even though podcasts are commonly described as on-demand internet radio talks. The word “podcast” is a portmanteau, a combination of the words pod and broadcast: Pod refers to iPod devices and implies that this content is portable so you can listen to it anywhere you go. Broadcast is inspired by the medium of radio as podcast content can be consumed exactly the same way. In particularly these tracks are typically audio recordings of a conversation between a host and a guest speaker, just like the ones you can listen to on the radio, or a single monologue of a person sharing his or her thoughts. If you want to improve your listening skills, you need to listen to English! Podcasts are like a radio show, and if you find the right ones, you’ll soon become addicted.

One of the great powers of podcasting is the attention is attracts. It’s tricky to encourage students to spend 30 minutes reading an article or watching a recorded lecture. That’s because text and video require the student’s full attention – they need to sit patiently, doing just one thing. As you probably know, this is tricky, not least because of the range of distractions just sitting waiting on the next browser tab. However podcasting, on the other hand, can be done in otherwise wasted time, or alongside a routine activity. Students are far more likely to listen to consume your material if they can do it on the bus, driving the car, washing the dishes or in the gym. Because they’re already distracted with a rote task, the content gets great attention. While text and video struggle to attract 2 or 3 minutes of viewing, podcasts routinely run an hour or more.

Thus one of the most interesting and valuable uses of Podcasting in Education is the concept of student created content. You might allow students to create their own podcast, perhaps including questions, discussions, presentations or projects. These can then be made available to their classmates. This allows students to take control of an aspect of their education and, therefore, encourages engagement in the material. They can question, they can contribute and they can teach each other.

Generally there’s no better way to practice your listening comprehension than being super excited to listen to the next podcast of your favorite English speakers. Podcasting refers to the creation and regular distribution of podcasts through the Internet.[2] Podcasts, which can include audio, video, PDF, can be subscribed to and downloaded through web
syndication or streamed online to a computer or mobile device. Subscribers are then able to view, listen to, and transfer the episodes to a variety of media players. With podcasting, there is no larger regulatory group or oversight such as experienced on the radio. Instead, podcasts simply consist of the podcasters and the podcasts. However there are many uses for podcasting for the classroom. It follows that they can be used to convey instructional information from the teacher or trainer, motivational stories, and auditory case studies.

Therefore podcasts can also be used by the learners as artifacts and evidence of learning; for example, a student might prepare a brief podcast as a summary of a concept in lieu of writing an essay. Podcasts can also be used as a means of self-reflection on the learning processes or products. Podcasts can help keep students on the same page, including those that are absent. Absent students can use podcasts to see class lectures, daily activities, homework assignments, handouts, and more. According to Jonathan Copley, many students choose to use podcasts as a supplement to lecture materials. Before classes, students use podcasts to gain an overall understanding of the upcoming lecture, which makes them feel more confident and much more prepared for the class.

The use of podcasts better prepares students for classes and promotes discussions. The download of podcasts peaks both immediately after a podcast has been uploaded and right before examinations or deadlines. Students use podcasts as part of their review for exams because it provides different methods of reinforcement of course material. [3] This includes (1) visual reinforcement of material, (2) testing of their knowledge base, and (3) adding variety to the review experience. In addition, students who missed the lecture because of sickness or other reasons can use podcasts to catch up on their notes. Students learn better when they have a teacher present the materials, rather than going over other people’s notes. Finally, students with disabilities and students who do not speak English as their first language use podcasts because they can listen to the material repeatedly. These students all find podcasts more useful than the traditional handouts because in a conventional classroom setting, it is impossible for students to pause and resume the class.

It is said that podcasts present a broad array of narrative types and subject matter. With podcasts, you can choose the content and form that fits your particular lesson, and the possibilities are endless: fictional stories, educational and inspirational TED talks, current events/world news, history, sports, pop culture/entertainment, and investigative journalism. Using an array of forms keeps your class fresh and engaging, and podcasts expose students to a wide variety of methods of communication, including narration, casual dialogue, scripted dialogue, and interviews.

Also, featuring diverse subject matter keeps the class exciting and gives them access to a whole world of knowledge and wisdom. English classes can fall into a rut of using the same types of stories; podcasts can provide new subject matter that not only keeps you and your students more engaged but also allows students to experience exemplary communication outside traditional texts.

According to Robin H. Kay, there are seven key benefits regarding the use of video podcasts for students. [4]

- Students can control the pace of their own studies
- Increase in motivation
• Improvement in study habits
• Positive impact on testing skills
• Does not reduce class attendance
• Active participation
• Scale up their knowledge

Podcasting can be a tool for teachers or administrators to communicate with parents and the wider community about curriculum plans and content, student assignments and other information. The best thing about the podcast is that you can listen to it whenever and wherever you want. Nowadays, it’s a convenient and effective way to learn a language for people with at least an elementary level of English. Everyone can find a podcast that suits their needs and can help them achieve their goals. [5]

The first thing I learned about podcasting was that it is a powerful medium. Podcasting is powerful not only because it has the ability to relate complex arguments into digestible bits of information, but also because it can transform those arguments into relatable stories.

It can be concluded that Podcasts really are an innovative means of teaching English in a higher education institution, as they form language skills and speech skills in various types of speech activities (listening, reading, writing), enrich lexical reserves, improve grammatical skills, increase the motivation to learn English, and allow you to personalize learning, contribute to the differentiation of students’ activities, and also intensifies independent work.

References: