

April 2007

The Use of Podcasts in Education

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Recommended Citation

Citation Information: Shea, Susan M. MS; Vogler, Robert DSN; Phelps, Cynthia L. PhD; and Willcockson, Irmgard U. PhD, "The Use of Podcasts in Education" (2007).

DigitalCommons@The Texas Medical Center, Advances in Teaching and Learning Day, *Advances in Teaching and Learning Day Abstracts*. Paper 41.

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Background: The use of podcasts has emerged as an important tool for use in education. This is especially relevant in nursing schools with the shortage of nursing faculty. The use of podcasts allows the instructor to provide lectures and other course content to students.

Objective: The purpose of this project was to determine if the use of a podcast to review lecture content would result in an increase in the students' retention and understanding of the concepts. Adult Learning Theory was applied since podcasts allows students to be self-directed and actively involved in the learning process.

Methods: A podcast reviewing the main concepts presented in a classroom instruction was sent to 29 first year nursing students. Twenty-eight students did not receive the podcast. The students were tested over the content covered in the classroom instruction and reviewed in the podcast. The scores on the content were compared between the control and experimental groups.

Results: The experimental group performed better than the control group on 6 of the questions. On 3 questions, more students in the control group answered the question correctly. On one question, both groups were equal. When compared to the 2006 statistics on the same test questions, there was an overall improvement on all the questions except for one question where the scores decreased from a 79% to a 75%. Students listened to the podcast from 1 to 7 times prior to the exam. All the students found the podcast review helpful and wanted more content reviewed by podcast.

Conclusion: The use of a podcast to review lecture content appears to have resulted in an overall increase in student retention. A larger sample size will be needed to determine significance. These technologies can provide students with learning opportunities and actively involve them in the learning process.