

Podcasting Student Feedback

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Level any

Group size max 25

Technology requirements

VLE, microphone, audio recording and audio editing software e.g. Audacity, GarageBand, etc.

Skills required

Staff need to be able to manipulate and edit MP3 files.

Rationale

Providing students with effective feedback is a perennially challenging issue with staff and students alike and is a vital component of their ongoing learning. Podcasting offers a novel approach to feedback that has the potential to be timely, constructive, and individualized. It also provides an opportunity to support a range of learner styles and increase student engagement through reflection.

Teaching method

Podcasts were recorded directly into a hand held iPod with a microphone attachment. The audio files, around 2 to 3 minutes in duration, were automatically downloaded and compiled into a podcast using GarageBand software. Each enhanced podcast (with supplementary images) consisted of two sections, first generic group feedback on the assignment, and second, more specific individual feedback. Podcast assignment feedback (PAF) was created after each assessment point and was uploaded onto the University's Virtual Learning Environment. They were situated within each student's personal development portfolio (PDP) and made available to download only. The PAF could be played online or transferred to a MP3 player. Students without a suitable MP3 player were able to borrow an iPod from the Department. An automated email was sent to each student communicating that feedback was available.

Benefits

Enhances the student learning experience and has the potential to engage the student more with the feedback and process

Pitfalls

Undeniably, the inclusion of this type of feedback was labour intensive (the creation of the podcasts and upload to the VLE) but it was rewarding for tutors. This type of 'individualised' feedback would not be suitable for large groups. Remember to compress your audio files down to smaller (<10Mb) file sizes to aid file transfer.

Evidence of effectiveness

A full evaluation of podcasting student feedback was undertaken which suggested that the use of PAF enhanced the student experience of this module. The benefits were most tangible in terms of improved quality of assignment feedback that incorporated both generic and student-specific feedback. More subtle 'side-effects' included the importance of the tone of delivery of the podcast and the less superficial nature with which podcast feedback was apparently treated.

Advice to others

Students may need an initial session to explain how the VLE works and how to download and play the MP3 files.

References:

France, D., and Wheeler, A (2007) Reflections on Using Podcasting for Student Feedback. *Planet*, Vol. 18, pp. 9-11.