

Development Of Students' Podcast Skills as Part of Lecturer's Teaching Variation to Improve Students' Digital Communication

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Abstract

This study aims to develop students' podcast skills as part of teaching variations to enhance digital communication capabilities in the industrial revolution 4.0 era. The method employed a structured approach consisting of four main stages: preparation, implementation, practice, and evaluation. The program was conducted at the Sociology Education Study Program, Manado State University, involving 25 students as participants. The preparation stage included needs assessment and learning module design. The implementation stage focused on theoretical understanding and technical skills development. The practice stage involved group projects where students created their podcast episodes, while the evaluation stage assessed both technical and content aspects of the produced podcasts. Results showed significant improvement in students' podcast skills, demonstrated by the increase in test scores from an average of 31.72 in the pretest to 80.56 in the posttest. The evaluation revealed that students successfully developed competencies in podcast production, from conceptualization to final editing. Additionally, participants showed enhanced abilities in digital communication, teamwork, and content creation. This program proved effective in developing students' digital communication skills while providing practical experience in modern content creation.

Keyword: *Development, Students' Podcast Skills, Lecturer's Teaching Variation, Improve Students' Digital Communication*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital skills is one of the demands in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. Students as the younger generation who will enter the workforce are expected to have communication skills that are relevant to current technological developments. One important aspect of digital communication is the ability to convey information effectively through various media, including podcasts. Podcasts have become an increasingly popular communication platform, both among professionals and the younger generation, so they have great potential to be utilized in the world of education (Smith & Smith, 2020).

Podcasts can be a creative and flexible medium to train students' communication skills. In learning, podcasts allow students to develop speaking skills, critical thinking, and systematically organize information. In addition, this activity can also encourage students to better understand digital content production technology, including the planning, recording, and editing processes (Hew, 2009). Thus, podcasts are not only relevant to improving communication skills, but also help students master the technical skills needed in the digital era.

For lecturers, the use of podcasts in the teaching process provides a variety of interesting learning methods. This method can create a more

interactive and innovative learning atmosphere. Through podcasts, lecturers can encourage students to be more active in conveying their ideas and opinions. This is in line with the modern learning paradigm that emphasizes the importance of active student participation in the teaching and learning process (Kay, 2012).

In addition to improving digital communication skills, podcast development is also relevant in building student media literacy. Students are expected not only to be consumers of digital content, but also to be responsible content producers. In the process of creating a podcast, students learn to understand the audience, compose the right message, and manage communication ethics. This is important to form a generation that is wise and ethical in using communication technology (McGarr, 2020).

Through community service, students' podcast skills can be developed in a structured manner. This activity not only provides direct benefits to students but also contributes to the wider community by producing educational and inspiring content. Thus, this activity has a broad impact, both in the academic and social realms (Hew, 2009; Smith & Smith, 2020).

This student podcast skills development program also supports the efforts of educational institutions in presenting technology-based learning innovations. This is in line with the mission of higher education to prepare students to face global challenges. In addition, this program

can also be a means of collaboration between lecturers, students, and various external parties, such as the podcaster community or the creative industry (Kay, 2012).

On the other hand, podcasts provide an opportunity for students to explore topics that are relevant to their interests and needs. This activity can increase students' learning motivation because they feel more involved in the learning process. By involving students directly in the creative process, lecturers can transform conventional learning into a more interesting and meaningful experience (McGarr, 2020).

Communication skills trained through podcasts are also beneficial for students' future career development. In the world of work, the ability to communicate effectively is one of the main competencies that is widely sought after by companies. Through this activity, students can hone their public speaking skills, formulate ideas clearly, and collaborate in teams (Hew, 2009).

However, the development of these podcast skills requires a structured and needs-based approach. Lecturers need to design appropriate learning programs, from the planning stage to the evaluation stage. In addition, there needs to be adequate support for facilities and infrastructure to support this activity, such as recording devices and editing software (Smith & Smith, 2020).

Specifically, this program is expected to bridge the needs between students' communication skills and the demands of the digital world. By integrating podcasts into the teaching process, students not only gain technical skills, but also important values such as cooperation, responsibility, and creativity. This makes this program a relevant and strategic effort in answering today's educational needs.

METHOD

The method used in this community service is designed to provide students with podcast skills in a structured manner by involving lecturers as the main facilitators. This community service is carried out through three main stages, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation. This approach aims to ensure that students gain theoretical understanding and practical experience in developing digital communication skills through podcast media

(Hew, 2009).

The first stage is preparation, which includes identifying student needs and determining desired outcomes. Lecturers conduct an initial survey to identify students' level of understanding of podcasts and measure their interest in creating audio content. In addition, this stage also includes the procurement of supporting materials and devices, such as recording devices and audio editing applications. The learning module is designed with reference to student needs, including material on effective communication, interview techniques, and management of digital content production (Kay, 2012).

In the implementation stage, students take part in a series of training activities divided into several sessions. The first session is an introduction to basic theories about podcasts, including their functions, types, and potential as a digital communication medium. This session is continued with a discussion of basic speaking techniques, composing a storyline, and preparing a script. The second session includes technical training, such as the use of recording devices, audio editing applications, and other technical settings. All of these sessions are facilitated by the course lecturer with an interactive approach, allowing students to ask questions and practice directly under the guidance of the lecturer (McGarr, 2020).

After understanding the basic theories and techniques, students are given the opportunity to practice their skills in small groups. Each group is asked to design and produce one podcast episode. This process involves creative stages, from determining the theme, writing the script, recording, to editing the audio content. During this process, the lecturer plays an active role as a mentor, providing input, and helping students overcome technical and content obstacles faced. This project-based approach is effective in increasing student understanding through direct experience (Hew, 2009).

The evaluation stage is carried out after students complete their podcast production. The resulting podcast is played and assessed in a class discussion forum. Evaluation criteria include technical quality (such as sound clarity and editing) and content quality (such as theme

relevance, story structure, and attractiveness of delivery). The lecturer provides constructive feedback to each group to help them improve the quality of their work. In addition, students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences during the podcast creation process, so that they can identify strengths and areas for improvement (Kay, 2012).

Through this method, students not only gain an understanding of podcasts as a digital communication medium, but also develop practical skills that are relevant to the needs of the modern world. Lecturers as the main facilitators play an important role in ensuring that each stage of the service runs according to plan and provides maximum benefits for students. This approach is in line with the principle of participatory learning which encourages active involvement of students in the learning process (McGarr, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Development Of Students' Podcast Skills as Part of Lecturer's Teaching Variation to Improve Students' Digital Communication

This activity was carried out in the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Manado State University with 25 students as training participants.

The following is a list of questions used for the pretest and posttest in the student podcast skills training:

Pretest:

1. What is the definition of a podcast according to your understanding?
2. Mention the podcast platforms that you know.
3. Have you ever been involved in the podcast production process before? If so, tell us about the experience.
4. In your opinion, how can podcasts help the digital communication process?
5. Mention the tools needed to start podcast production.
6. What do you know about the content structure in a podcast?
7. What are the initial steps that need to be taken to start producing a podcast?
8. What do you know about time management

in podcast recording?

9. What are the obstacles that might be faced when producing a podcast?
10. How confident are you in producing a podcast independently? (Scale 1-5)

Posttest:

1. Explain the meaning of podcast and its potential in improving digital communication.
2. Mention the podcast platforms that can be used for educational content distribution and their advantages.
3. What technical devices have you used during the training to produce podcasts?
4. Describe the workflow you have learned to produce a podcast.
5. How do you create a clear and comfortable sound in a podcast recording?
6. Mention and explain the basic audio editing techniques you have learned.
7. What obstacles did you encounter during this training, and how did you overcome them?
8. How do you plan to use podcasts to support the learning process in the future?
9. What new knowledge and skills have you gained from this podcast training?
10. How confident are you currently in producing podcasts professionally? (Scale 1-5)

The pretest questions aim to understand the extent of participants' knowledge and experience regarding podcasts before the training. Meanwhile, posttest questions are designed to measure the development of participants' skills and understanding after the training. The results of the pretest and posttest will be compared to evaluate the success of the training and to develop strategies for improving similar activities in the future.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Scores of Training Participants

No	Student Name	Pretest	Posttest
1	PM	35	80
2	RC	42	85
3	SR	23	85
4	SP	26	80
5	YU	40	75
6	ZS	31	70

7	DE	22	75
8	ES	26	80
9	EM	29	80
10	EK	36	80
11	EP	41	82
12	ET	25	90
13	FE	23	85
14	FG	39	80
15	HT	31	80
16	IB	34	75
17	NA	38	75
18	NW	37	85
19	PP	36	85
20	AI	40	85
21	IE	35	80
22	UE	27	75
23	NE	30	80
24	TK	28	83
25	RW	29	79

Source: Primary Data

1. Preparation Stage:

The preparation stage is a crucial initial step in learning how to make a podcast. At this stage, the lecturer conducts a survey to understand the level of knowledge and interest of students in podcasts as a digital communication medium. This survey is an important foundation for designing an effective learning program that suits the needs of the participants.

Picture 1. The lecturer conducts a survey to understand the level of knowledge and interest of students in podcasts



Sources: Primary Data

After getting an overview of the initial conditions of the students, the lecturer then identifies the learning objectives to be achieved. These objectives include aspects of theoretical knowledge about podcasts as well as practical skills in producing audio content. Setting clear

goals helps in developing a focused learning structure.

Preparation of learning materials is the next focus where the lecturer collects various reference sources about podcasts. This material includes the definition, history, types of podcasts, and examples of successful podcasts. The availability of comprehensive materials is very important to provide students with an in-depth understanding.

Technical aspects also receive special attention in the preparation stage. The lecturer takes inventory of the equipment needed such as microphones, headphones, and audio editing software. Choosing the right equipment will support the quality of learning outcomes.

The creation of a structured learning module is the next step. This module is designed by considering the results of the initial survey and includes effective communication materials, interview techniques, and digital content production management. The module structure is arranged systematically from basic to advanced material.

Preparation of learning space and facilities is also not overlooked. Lecturers ensure the availability of adequate space for recording practice, including considering the acoustic aspects of the room. The comfort of the learning environment will support an optimal learning process.

Preparing a realistic learning schedule is an important part of the preparation stage. This schedule considers sufficient time allocation for theory and practice, and provides space for discussion and feedback. Good time planning ensures that all learning objectives are achieved.

Lecturers also prepare the evaluation methods that will be used. Assessment criteria include technical aspects such as audio quality and editing, as well as content aspects such as story structure and delivery methods. Clarity in evaluation criteria helps students understand the targets to be achieved.

Preparation of guidance strategies is also carried out carefully. Lecturers plan the approach that will be used in guiding students, including methods to overcome obstacles that may arise during the learning process. This strategy is important to ensure that each student receives

adequate support.

Making practical guides is part of the preparation stage. This guide contains technical instructions for using equipment and software, as well as tips and tricks in podcast production. The availability of guides makes it easier for students to follow the learning process. Lecturers also prepare examples of podcasts that will be used as references. Choosing the right examples can inspire students and provide a concrete picture of the expected results. These examples cover various genres and podcast formats.

Picture 2. Lecturers give examples of podcasts



Source: Primaty Data

Preparation of a learning documentation system is also carried out. Lecturers design a way to document student progress, including recording obstacles and solutions found during the learning process. This documentation is useful for evaluation and future program development.

Lecturers prepare strategies to encourage student creativity. This includes preparing various podcast themes and formats that can be developed, as well as brainstorming methods that will be used in class. Developing creativity is important for producing interesting podcast content. Preparation of contingency plans is also not left behind. Lecturers prepare alternative solutions for various possible technical or non-technical obstacles that may arise during learning. Readiness to face various situations ensures the smooth running of the learning process.

Finally, lecturers prepare an effective communication system with students. This includes forming online discussion groups and determining consultation schedules. Smooth communication between lecturers and students is essential for the success of the podcast creation

learning program.

2. Implementation Stage:

In the implementation stage, the learning session begins with an introduction to the basic theory of podcasts. The lecturer provides a comprehensive understanding of the definition of podcasts, the history of their development, and their role in the modern digital media landscape. This material is an important foundation for students to understand the broader context of the learning they will undergo.

The function of podcasts as a digital communication medium is discussed in depth in the first session. Students learn how podcasts can be used for various purposes, from education, entertainment, to marketing. This discussion is enriched with concrete examples of successful podcasts that already exist.

Various types of podcasts are introduced to students, including monologue, dialogue, interview, and storytelling formats. Each format is discussed in detail, including specific characteristics, advantages, and challenges in its production. This understanding helps students choose a format that suits their goals. The potential of podcasts as a digital communication medium is an interesting discussion. The lecturer explains how podcasts can reach specific audiences, build communities, and create strong engagement. This discussion helps students understand the strategic value of the skills they are learning.

The learning continues with basic speaking techniques that are essential for podcasts. Students are trained in vocal aspects such as articulation, intonation, and breath control. Practical exercises are conducted to help students develop an engaging and professional voice.

Picture 3. Student Learning everything about podcast



Source: Primary Data

Story building is the next focus of learning. Students learn about effective narrative structures, storytelling techniques, and how to build tension in a story. They are also taught how to create content that flows naturally and attracts the attention of listeners.

Script preparation is an important component of learning. Students are taught the format for writing podcast scripts, techniques for developing ideas, and how to organize information. They also learn how to write for the ears, not the eyes.

The second session focuses on the technical aspects of podcast production. Students are introduced to various recording equipment, including microphones, audio interfaces, and other supporting devices. They learn about basic setups and how to optimize recording quality.

Picture 4. Student learning about podcast production



Source: Primary Data

Training on the use of recording

equipment is carried out hands-on. Students practice how to set audio levels, microphone positions, and correct recording techniques. They also learn to overcome common technical problems that often arise during the recording process.

Audio editing applications are crucial learning material. Students are taught to use popular editing software, including techniques for cutting, merging, and cleaning audio. They also learn to add background music and sound effects.

An interactive approach is a characteristic of each learning session. Lecturers encourage active student participation through Q&A, group discussions, and hands-on exercises. The dynamic learning atmosphere helps students understand the material more easily.

Lecturer guidance takes place intensively throughout the learning session. Lecturers not only provide material, but also help students overcome difficulties they face. Direct feedback is given to help students improve their skills.

Each learning session ends with a short evaluation. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned and identify areas that still need improvement. This evaluation helps ensure a thorough understanding.

Lecturers also give small assignments between sessions to reinforce learning. These assignments are designed to help students apply their newly acquired knowledge and build confidence in making podcasts.

Throughout the implementation stage, flexibility in learning is maintained. Lecturers are ready to adjust the pace and learning methods according to the needs and abilities of students. This adaptive approach ensures that every student can follow the learning well.

3. Practice Stage:

The practice phase begins with the formation of small groups consisting of 3-4 students. Group division is carried out by considering the diversity of abilities and interests, so that each group has a balanced dynamic to complement each other in the learning process.

Each group begins their project by

brainstorming to determine the podcast theme. Intensive discussions are held to choose topics that are interesting, relevant, and in accordance with the target audience. This process helps students learn to collaborate and reach agreement within the team.

Once the theme is determined, the groups begin to develop their episode concepts. They conduct in-depth research on the chosen topic, collect the necessary data and information, and identify unique perspectives that they will present in their podcasts.

Scriptwriting is the next crucial stage. Each group writes a detailed script, including an interesting opening, informative main content, and an impressive closing. This script also includes technical instructions for the background music and sound effects to be used.

Picture 5. Podcast learning process



Source: Primary Data

The recording process is carried out after the final script. The group arranges the division of roles, either as a host, resource person, or recording technician. They utilize the speaking techniques they have learned to produce professional and interesting recordings.

The editing stage is a challenge for each group. They apply the technical skills they have learned to cut, combine, and refine the recordings. This process includes adding appropriate background music and sound effects.

The lecturer actively provides guidance throughout the production process.

He observes the progress of each group, provides suggestions for improvement, and helps overcome technical and creative obstacles that arise. This guidance ensures optimal quality of the final result.

Each group holds regular meetings to discuss progress and obstacles faced. These internal discussions help them develop project management and teamwork skills. They also learn to value the opinions and contributions of each member.

Input from the lecturer is given constructively and specifically. He helps the group identify areas that need improvement, provides practical solutions, and encourages student creativity. This guidance is carried out with a supportive and motivating approach.

The groups are also given the opportunity to do trials and revisions. They can re-record parts that are less satisfactory or fix aspects of the editing that need to be improved. This iterative process helps produce quality podcasts.

Learning is not only focused on the end result, but also on the process. Students learn to manage time, divide tasks, and resolve conflicts within the team. This experience helps develop soft skills that are important for their careers.

Each group member is encouraged to contribute according to their respective expertise. Some focus on creative, technical, or project management aspects. Clear role assignments help maximize each individual's potential.

The instructor monitors the involvement of each student to ensure equitable learning. He encourages rotation of roles within the group so that each student has the opportunity to try different aspects of podcast production.

The groups are also asked to document their production process. This documentation includes notes on challenges faced and solutions found. This material is useful for future evaluation and learning.

Picture 6. The groups students document their production process



Source: Primary Data

Throughout the practical phase, the instructor emphasizes the importance of teamwork and effective communication. Students learn that the success of a podcast depends not only on technical quality, but also on the ability to work together as a team.

4. Evaluation Stage:

The evaluation phase begins with a podcast playback session from each group in the class. All students gather to listen to their friends' work, creating an atmosphere of appreciation and shared learning. This moment is a valuable opportunity to share inspiration and experiences.

The class discussion forum becomes a place to analyze each podcast in depth. Students are invited to provide comments and constructive input on the work of other groups. This discussion helps develop students' analytical and critical skills in assessing the quality of a podcast.

Evaluation of technical aspects is the first focus in the assessment. Clarity of sound, editing quality, selection of background music, and placement of sound effects are assessed in detail. This assessment helps students understand the technical standards expected in professional podcast production.

Content quality is the next assessment aspect that is no less important. The relevance of the theme, depth of discussion, story structure, and delivery method are evaluated comprehensively. This assessment pays attention to how each group packages information into interesting and meaningful content.

The lecturer provides detailed feedback for each podcast. He identifies strengths that need to be maintained and areas that still need development. This input is delivered in a constructive manner to encourage a spirit of improvement.

Each group is given the opportunity to explain their creative process. They share the challenges they faced, the solutions they found, and the lessons learned. These presentations help other groups learn from their peers' experiences.

Students reflect individually on their experience in making the podcast. They write down key learnings, difficulties they faced, and strategies they successfully implemented. This reflection helps consolidate the learning that has been gained.

Assessment also takes into account the progress made by each group. The lecturer compares the final results with the students' initial abilities, giving appreciation for the effort and development that has been shown during the learning process.

Evaluation includes assessment of teamwork and individual contributions. Each group member is asked to evaluate their own role and that of their peers in the project. This process helps develop awareness of the importance of effective collaboration.

The lecturer invites students to identify trends and patterns in the podcasts they produce. This analysis helps to identify best practices that can be applied in future podcast production.

The evaluation forum also provides an opportunity to discuss the potential for future podcast development. Students are encouraged to think about how they can improve the quality of their production and explore the possibility of making podcasts a professional platform.

The results of the evaluation are systematically documented. These notes serve as valuable references for future learning program development and can be used as a guide for students who will take similar courses.

The lecturer provides specific recommendations for further development. These suggestions include additional learning

resources, advanced production techniques, and strategies to improve the overall quality of the podcast.

The evaluation session closes with a discussion about the relevance of the skills learned to the professional world. Students are invited to understand how podcast production skills can be an added value in their careers in the digital era.

Finally, students are asked to set personal development goals based on the evaluation results. Setting these goals helps them have a clear direction to continue developing their podcasting skills after the learning program is complete.

CONCLUSION

The student podcast skills development program has successfully achieved its goal of improving participants' digital communication and media literacy skills. This is evident from the significant increase between pretest and posttest scores, where all participants showed progress in understanding and technical skills in podcast production. Through a structured learning approach, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also practical experience in developing digital audio content. The success of this program is also demonstrated through students' ability to produce quality podcast episodes, apply effective communication techniques, and manage the production process professionally. The learning approach involving theory, practice, and comprehensive evaluation has proven effective in building the foundation of skills needed in the digital era. This program can be a model for similar skills development in other educational institutions.

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