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Claire Giefer
University of Missouri

Whitney Henderson

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Abstract

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Keywords

Learner-generated podcasts, learning styles, reading compliance

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Claire Giefer, OTD

Whitney Henderson, OTD, MOT, OT/L, FAOTA

University of Missouri

United States

ABSTRACT

Research suggests that reading compliance among higher education students is low, warranting enhancement of educational practices to support reading, especially for students enrolled in health professional programs. Researchers used a cross-sectional study design to explore the effects of a learner-generated podcast assignment as a reading supplement in occupational therapy education using two different survey instruments assessing student perceptions and learning styles. Forty-three Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) students participated in this study. Descriptive statistics indicated positive attitudes towards creating and preparing the podcasts but remained mostly neutral towards listening and watching podcasts. Tukey's HSD test for multiple comparisons detected tactile learners on average completed less readings (40%) compared to visual and auditory learners (60%-70%), with a significant difference (0.05) between visual and auditory learners. Learner-generated podcasts present an opportunity to enhance student learning, but further research is needed to determine the best educational practices.

In the current higher education landscape, approximately 60% of graduate students reported they procrastinated on completing weekly reading assignments (Rahimi & Hall, 2021). Evidence suggests reading is an important part of the learning process due to its association with enhanced class participation, improved performance, and increased retention of information (Sharma et al., 2019). Therefore, there is a need for educators to address reading difficulties in higher education. Students often experience challenges complying with readings due to involvement in various work and leisure activities in addition to their school obligations (Sharma et al., 2013). Therefore, students must decide how to spend their limited time, requiring them to make conscious decisions

about whether to read course materials (Maguire et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2013). Unfortunately, many students perceive that reading assignments do not immediately provide benefit; therefore, readings often rank low on students' priority lists (Hoeft, 2012; Maguire et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2013). Students also report additional challenges impacting their completion of reading materials, such as poor time allocation and management, disinterest, and difficulty with comprehension (Maguire et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2019). Despite low reading compliance, students are still responsible for acquiring the knowledge necessary to understand course concepts to perform well on exams and succeed in their future careers.

In healthcare professions, "reading comprehension is essential to acquire the knowledge base for effective clinical decision-making that is required for the provision of safe, quality care" (Fontaine et al., 2021, p. 1076). For students enrolled in occupational therapy (OT) programs, reading is often an integral part of didactic coursework. When OT students read before class, they have a chance to learn foundational knowledge to prepare for in-class active learning focused on applying content to real-life scenarios to develop professional reasoning (Henderson et al., 2017). As educators experience challenges with the need to cover more content in less time, OT students will need to engage in the lifelong skill of acquiring knowledge through reading. In addition to teaching skills related to clinical knowledge and expertise [e.g., "hard skills"], OT educators must also instill the competencies of communication, collaboration, and critical thinking [e.g., practice ready "soft" skills] to help prepare students for entering the dynamic, diverse, and fast-paced world of healthcare (Wang et al., 2023). Lack of reading comprehension among OT students could negatively impact their ability to critique, integrate, and evaluate information which are essential skills needed in their professional settings (Fontaine et al., 2021). Due to challenges in completing reading assignments in higher education, OT students may not be obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful and proactive in their education or professional practice. Therefore, OT educators may need to seek out alternative learning activities to support assigned readings. Due to the challenges associated with reading compliance in higher education and the emerging evidence supporting podcast use, we aim to investigate the following research questions: 1) What are student perceptions of the use of a podcast assignment to support assigned readings within an OT course, and 2) are preferred learning styles associated with student perceptions of a podcast assignment and completion of course readings?

Technology Trends in Health Professional Education: Growth in Podcast Use

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and advances in technology, many undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate health professional education programs have shifted towards incorporating the use of various digital media in place of traditional paper-based learning materials (Fontaine et al., 2021). Health professional educators and students can utilize technology to facilitate learning since "online learning has provided an efficient means for knowledge acquisition so that student/faculty time can be more productively spent in higher level functions of interpretation, reasoning, and team skills" (Thibault, 2020, p. 692). Occupational therapy educators regularly use technology to manage grades, homework submissions, and lecture materials, but may

not utilize many technology-based instructional tools, such as blogs, online journaling and audio/video podcasts at a high rate (Briand et al., 2021; Gee et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2017). According to Gee et al., (2017) “occupational therapy entry-level education may be on the back end of the e-learning and IT [instructional technology] movement” (p. 5), indicating OT programs may not be adequately delivering educational content to students who expect e-learning methods. Therefore, to support completion of course readings, OT educators should consider how technology can be integrated into the curriculum to ensure instructional methods are the most effective (Gee et al., 2017).

Podcasts represent a technology-based instructional method OT educators can utilize to enhance and support completion of course readings. Podcasts are digital audio files that are regularly “made available online for downloading to computers or portable media players [smartphones]” (Pegrum et al., 2015, p. 144) and have become increasingly popular within recent decades as another form of media to enhance student learning (Briand et al., 2021; McCarthy et al., 2021; Oslawksi-Lopez & Kordsmeier, 2021). In addition, literature suggests podcasts are beneficial for teaching and learning due to their accessibility, portability, versatility, autonomous listening, and low cost (Briand et al., 2021). Occupational therapy educators may use podcasts as an alternative or supplement to readings which may be an advantage for students with learning disabilities, low levels of literacy and comprehension, or different learning styles (Briand et al., 2021). Traditionally, students use podcasts to acquire informational content through listening, but recent educational trends highlight learner-generated podcasts, where students create their own podcasts (Lee et al., 2008; Pegrum et al., 2015). Learner-generated podcasts turn students into “knowledge creators” rather than passive learners, leading to deeper learning and understanding (Pegrum et al., 2015). In addition, when students work with peers to create podcasts, it promotes the development of the previously mentioned student competencies of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and technology skills (Briand et al., 2021; Pegrum et al., 2015).

Currently, OT educators utilize “a limited repertoire of instructional methods” and evidence is lacking for which instructional methods are best for OT education (Henderson et al., 2017, p. 15). Research conducted by Henderson et al. (2017) explored the effects of participating in experiential learning activities for developing clinical reasoning skills in OT education. Findings from this study “suggest occupational therapy educators must embrace the role of facilitator and continue to explore a variety of effective instructional methods” (p. 1). For students enrolled in OT programs, engagement in early collaborative learning activities can support academic and social contexts important for learning (Asbjørnslett et al., 2022). An understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of occupation and how it impacts health lies at the center of the OT curriculum (Asbjørnslett et al., 2022). By engaging in the occupation of podcasting, an activity that combines creativity with learning, OT students may feel more connected to their curriculum and peers (Asbjørnslett et al., 2022). Occupational therapy educators can expand their understanding of active and collaborative learning

activities to support student learning, and learner-generated podcasts may provide a means for students to engage in their curriculum beyond traditional readings and lecture-based instructional methods.

The Potential of Learner-Generated Podcasts in OT Education

In addition, learner-generated podcasts may provide students with another way to obtain informational content that may better support their learning style. Historically, learning styles and preferences have been highly debated regarding their relevance in higher education. Learning styles can be defined as "the notion that individuals have a preferred modality of learning and that presenting to-be-learn[ed] material in this modality results in optimal learning for them" (Toulomakos et al., 2023, p. 197). Due to advances in technology, Millennial and Gen Z students expect to utilize technology in education, which may influence perceptions regarding their learning styles (Rickard et al., 2023). Since technology has expanded educational practices, students may want to explore how technology can aid in their learning. Despite criticism, identifying learning style preferences among OT students may give educators a better understanding of how to create effective learning experiences that support various types of learners (Lowdermilk et al., 2017). Increasing awareness about learning preferences may equip students with "the tools to embark on a life-long journey of learning and the integration of knowledge into clinical practice" (Lowdermilk et al., 2017, p. 74). Therefore, due to the multi-modal properties of learner-generated podcasts, incorporating podcasts into OT education presents an opportunity to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills important for OT practice.

There is current, but limited, evidence examining podcast use in higher education; particularly in OT education (Briand et al., 2021; Gee et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that learner-generated podcasts support deeper learning and understanding, which can lead to increased student confidence and participation during various course activities (Lee et al., 2008). The available evidence also indicates that having students participate in creative podcasting supports the development of skills important for collaborating with others (Pegrum et al., 2015). Research suggests low reading compliance and podcast use in OT education to support this important educational practice is limited to nonexistent (Briand et al., 2021; Gee et al., 2017).

Methods

Research Design

Researchers used a cross-sectional survey study design to explore the effects of a learner-generated podcast assignment to support assigned readings in OT education. Researchers obtained Institutional Review Board approval at the University of Missouri for this study.

Participants

Researchers used a convenience sample method to recruit 43 full-time first year students in their second semester of a three-year occupational therapy doctorate (OTD) program. We sent a recruitment email at the beginning of the semester that provided participants with information about the study purpose, risks, and benefits to establish

informed consent. Researchers sent a follow-up email near the end of the semester as a reminder of participation in this study. Students voluntarily participated in this study and could refuse to participate at any time without penalty. By participating in the surveys associated with this study, students implied that they read and understood the information included in the recruitment email and voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. If students did not want to complete the surveys, they could opt out by verbally informing the course instructor they do not want to participate or by simply not filling out the surveys. In addition, the course instructor assured students that participation in this study would not affect course grades. Also, students were only graded on recording their own assigned podcast, not for listening/watching their peers' podcasts.

Procedures

Researchers completed this study during the Fall 2022 semester embedded within a Principles of Assessment course. A professor in the OT department served as the primary researcher and course instructor in this study. A second year OTD student within the same OT program served as the secondary researcher and assisted in the data collection and analysis process to reduce bias. Researchers administered two different surveys to a cohort of OTD students at predetermined time points during the semester, one measure at the beginning and the other measure at the end of the semester. Researchers did not analyze students' podcasts for research purposes, only the data collected from the surveys. The participants completed both surveys in a paper and pencil format during class time. Each student was assigned a unique identifier number, and names were not used to ensure student privacy. Researchers stored surveys in a locked file cabinet behind a locked door while any stored information online was password protected.

Course Description

Principles of Assessment was a 3-credit-hour course that met twice weekly for 1.5-hour in-person learning activities during the second semester of the OTD program. This course was a fundamental component of the OTD curriculum because it introduced foundational knowledge regarding the role of the OT within a healthcare team and how to complete the OT evaluation process in professional practice. The course instructor (primary researcher) and students used an online learning management system to track course modules, assignments, and quizzes.

Reading Podcast Assignment

The primary researcher assigned students to work in pairs to complete a reading podcast assignment summarizing key points from course readings to increase understanding and enhance class preparation and participation. Each pair of students created one, 8–10-minute podcast summarizing the readings for the date in which they were assigned. Students had freedom to present material in creative ways (e.g. acting as a client and OT, applying it to a movie character, etc.). In addition to the podcast, students created a one-page document that briefly summarized key points from the readings. Students submitted their podcasts and summary sheets to TORSH ®, an online learning platform that allows students to upload, share, and discuss videos for educational purposes. Students uploaded podcasts to TORSH ® 24 hours prior to class

so peers could review the podcasts and summary sheets in advance. Researchers encouraged, but did not require, students to watch each other's podcasts outside of class time as a reading supplement prior to class. The instructor assigned various readings including textbook pages, research articles, webpages, and videos related to course topics. Throughout the semester, two podcasts were uploaded weekly, with one podcast associated for each class period and each podcast was completed by a different pair of students.

Instruments

Barsch Learning Style Inventory (BLSI)

Students completed the Barsch Learning Style Inventory (BLSI), a 24-item questionnaire consisting of behavioral statements rated on a 3-point Likert scale (often, sometimes, seldom; Barsch, 1996). The BLSI examines learning preferences categorized among three senses: visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. Researchers have used this questionnaire in previous educational literature to examine relationships between learning styles and educational variables, with an established reliability coefficient of 0.81 (Khan et al., 2019; Touloumakos et al., 2023; Wismath & Orr, 2015). Researchers administered the BLSI prior to students' completion of the podcast assignment at the beginning of the course to reduce bias.

Principles of Assessment Reading Podcast Survey (PARPS)

Researchers developed a survey (PARPS) to determine students' perceptions of the reading podcast assignment. The survey consisted of demographic data (e.g., age, gender, level of education, race/ethnicity) to characterize the sample and four sections assessing the following areas: Creating and Preparing, Listening and Watching, Summary Sheets, and Time. There was a brief qualitative portion included at the end of the survey where students could provide any additional feedback, but it was not required. Researchers used current literature to create the survey, and pilot tested the survey with a prior cohort of OTD students who completed a similar reading podcast assignment in another course. Results from pilot testing favored creating of podcasts, rather than listening and watching, which led to modification of the tool by adding in the "Time" section. Researchers wanted to better understand if other variables beyond the course influenced perceptions of the assignment. The PARPS underwent a thorough expert review process by a distinguished professor within the same OT program who provided rigorous feedback. The survey consisted of a 24-item questionnaire rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Scores range from 1, "Strongly Agree", to a 5, "Strongly Disagree". Additional items on the survey consisted of questions with 2-answer options where students could circle their answer ("Yes" or "No", "Prior to" or "After"). Students also answered the percentage of podcasts they listened to, the percentage of readings they completed, and whether they found the summary sheets helpful.

Data Analysis

Researchers analyzed demographic data using descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, median, percentages) to characterize the sample of participants. Researchers also calculated descriptive statistics for perceptions of the reading podcast assignment,

usage of the podcasts, and preferred learning styles. Researchers conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with follow up testing to identify possible differences (i.e., Tukey's HSD test for multiple comparisons) to analyze differences among the podcast perceptions and preferred learning styles.

Results

Researchers administered the two survey instruments (BLSI and PARPS) to gain insight on student learning styles and student perceptions of learner-generated podcasts to support assigned readings. From a cohort of first year OTD students, 43 students participated in this study. Researchers collected demographic data which is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	3	7
Female	40	93
Race/ Ethnicity		
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1	2
African American/ Black	2	5
Caucasian/ White (Non-Hispanic)	40	93
Age		
20 or younger	1	2
21-25 years	40	93
26-30 years	2	5

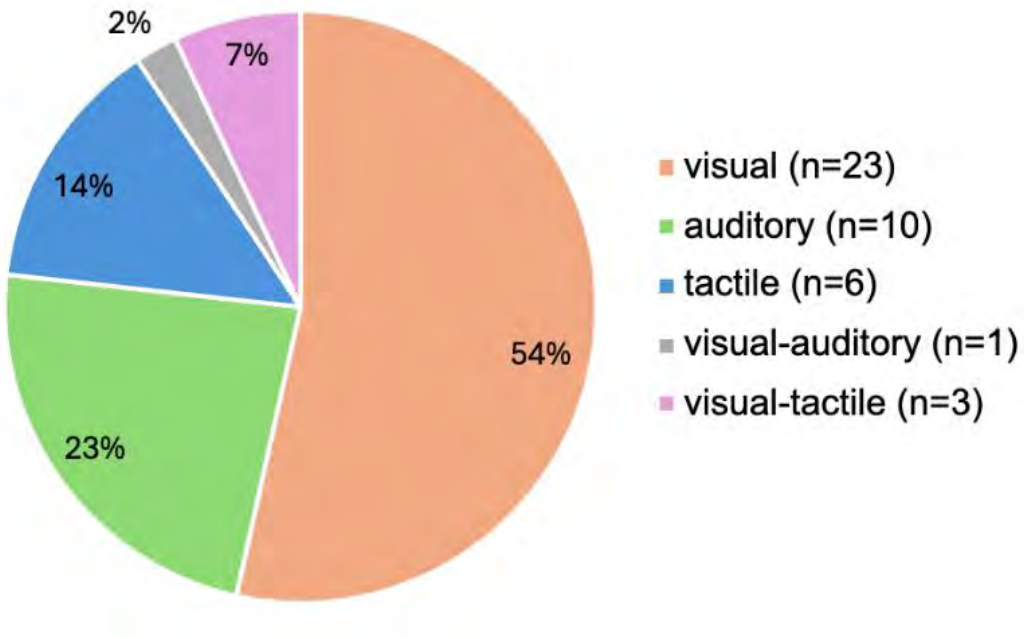
Note. n = 43

Learning Preferences

According to the BLSI, most participants (54%; n = 23) reported preference towards visual learning followed by auditory learning (23%; n = 10) and tactile learning (14%; n = 6). Four participants (9%) demonstrated combined learning preferences (3 visual-tactile and 1 visual-auditory; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Results of BLSI



Student Perceptions of Podcasts to Support Readings

Overall, participants agreed that creating the podcasts allowed them to understand how to summarize the readings and provided them with an opportunity to work on communication and collaboration skills. In general, participants felt neutral to positive feelings towards listening to the podcasts to support their understanding of readings and promote class participation. Yet, participants disagreed with the statement that they would listen to podcasts over completing readings, suggesting they still completed the readings in addition to listening to the podcast. The participants agreed that the summary sheets facilitated their understanding of the readings and rated summary sheets slightly higher than podcasts in this area (see Table 2). Participants reported completing an average of 65% of course readings, listening to an average of 32% of podcasts, and reviewing an average of approximately 65% of the summary sheets. Overall, participants favored the summary sheets compared to listening to the podcasts to prepare for course activities (see Table 3).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Select PARPS Survey Items

Survey Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Creating the podcast allowed me to understand how to summarize the readings.	4.186	0.699
Creating the podcast allowed me to work on my communication and collaboration skills.	4.116	0.823
The podcasts were helpful in gaining further understanding of the readings.	3.628	0.874
Listening to podcasts better prepared me to participate in class.	3.465	0.909
I would often use the podcasts over reading the articles.	2.884	1.417
The summary sheets facilitated my understanding of the readings.	4.256	0.953
I usually complete the course readings one day before class.	4.209	0.861

*Note. S*cores were averaged from a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree).

Table 3

Mean Percentages of Readings, Podcasts, and Summary Sheets Reviewed

Survey Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Approximately what percentage of readings did you complete?	65.279	25.250
Approximately what percentage of podcasts did you review?	31.674	27.544
Approximately what percentage of the summary sheets did you review?	64.674	34.500

Comparison of Learning Styles to Reading and Podcast Use

Researchers found no statistically significant differences in perception of podcast assignment and usage according to learning styles. However, they did detect meaningful differences among tactile learners on survey items about completion of course readings. Tukey's HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that tactile learners completed the least amount of course readings at approximately 40% compared to auditory and visual learners who completed approximately 60%-70% of course readings (see Table 4). The combined learning style group each contained a visual component (visual-tactile or visual auditory), however, due to the very small number of students (n = 4), this group was excluded from analysis. Additionally, comparisons did not yield significant differences among the groups when including the combined group. In addition to completing less readings, tactile learners reflected different perspectives regarding other learning activities, and indicated that they felt as if they had less time available to complete course readings due to engagement in other academic activities. Lastly, tactile learners were more likely to agree with the statement that they do not have enough time to complete readings than the auditory or visual learners.

Table 4

Results of Tukey's HSD Test without Combined Group

Approximately what percentage of readings did you complete?			
	N		
		1**	2***
Auditory	10		71.3000
Visual	23	67.3478	67.3478
Tactile	6	40.0000	
Significance		0.05*	0.934 [ns]

* Indicates a significant difference at the p< .05 level
** The comparison of visual to tactile learners
*** The comparison of auditory to visual learners

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions of a reading podcast assignment embedded within an OT course. The secondary purpose was to determine if student learning style preferences were associated with reading completion or podcast use. Overall, results from this study indicate positive student perceptions towards the reading podcast assignment, with most students expressing increased benefits from creating the podcasts rather than listening to the podcasts. These results are consistent with current literature exploring the educational purpose of podcasts, which characterizes podcasts as beneficial for topics that are difficult to read and/or comprehend. Therefore, podcasts may best serve as a reading complement to other learning modalities (Briand et al., 2021). In our study, even though students had the option to listen to podcasts instead of reading, most students reported that listening to

the podcasts did not replace completing course readings. These results are consistent with literature suggesting that creating rather than listening may be more beneficial when considering the use of learner-generated podcasts as a reading supplement in higher education (Lee et al., 2008; McCarthy et al., 2021; Pegrum et al., 2015). Research by Oslawksi-Lopez and Kordsmeier (2021) found similar results indicating that although podcasts increased student engagement, reading yielded a stronger contribution to improved exam performance. Although the current study did not examine the correlation between test scores and podcast listening and/or creation, the students created summary sheets in addition to podcasts, which may serve a similar purpose as a podcast transcript. When "students read podcast transcripts (either in conjunction with listening or not) [they] were more likely to answer exam questions correctly" (Oslawski-Lopez & Kordsmeier, 2021, p. 344).

Among this sample of 43 first year OTD students, results from the BLSI identified most students (54%) as visual learners, with a small number of students representing combined visual learning styles (visual-tactile and visual-auditory; 9%). Overall, students reported positive attitudes towards reviewing the summary sheets associated with the reading podcast assignment, which is consistent with the high percentage of visual learners. Since visual learners learn best when information is presented through writing, pictures, and diagrams, completing course readings and reviewing summary sheets would be beneficial for this group of learners (Barsch, 1980). Similar results reported by Lowdermilk et al. (2017) found that Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students and associate degree Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) students displayed a greater preference towards visual representations of information but were balanced across other learning dimensions. The second highest category of learning styles in this sample included auditory learners (10%). According to Wismath and Orr (2015), students with preferences towards auditory learning may prefer to collaborate with others and talk about their ideas, which may support the use of learner-generated podcasts for this group of learners.

Due to the "hands-on" nature of OT education, researchers hypothesized that OTD students would have a preference toward tactile learning (Stamm et al., 2021). Tactile learners learn by experiencing and practicing different situations (Barsch, 1980). Occupational therapy programs typically include various instructional methods throughout the curriculum, including more hands-on approaches, such as experiential learning, problem-based learning, and simulations (Henderson et al., 2017). The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) represents the accrediting body responsible for ensuring minimum educational standards are met in occupational therapy programs (ACOTE, 2023). ACOTE ® emphasizes that students must be able to "demonstrate, perform, and modify to define student competence in areas of OT related to hands-on demonstrations of learned concepts" (Stamm et al., 2021, p. 4). While creating and preparing the podcasts allows for a tactile learning experience, listening to the podcasts and completing the readings provides more auditory and visual learning experiences. Compared to auditory and visual learners, tactile learners completed far less readings and felt that other academic activities consumed more of their time. These results are consistent with current literature

discussing the influence of time on reading compliance in higher education. If students believe reading will not benefit them compared to other course activities, then they will not prioritize completing course readings (Sharma et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2013). A pilot study conducted by Calabrese (2023) compared active learning with traditional lecture-based learning with a sample of first year OTD students. Results indicated "that students perceived they learned more using active learning strategies" (p. 13), which supports that tactile learners in this study may have prioritized learning through in-class activities and discussions rather than completing pre-class course readings or listening to podcasts, since active learning may provide an immediate opportunity to apply course concepts (Calabrese, 2023).

However, the first year OTD students included in this sample were only in the second semester of their graduate education and had spent most of their undergraduate education learning online or through other modified formats, which may have influenced their learning style preferences. In spring 2020, the higher education landscape was greatly impacted by efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus by shifting from in-person to online learning. Stamm et al. (2021) specifically examined the perspectives of OT students that self-identified as kinesthetic (tactile) learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers found that OT students that prefer hands-on learning, "needed to adapt quickly due to the unexpected change in content delivery method" (Stamm et al., 2021, pp. 1-2). In addition, the OTD students were likely still adjusting from the transition from undergraduate coursework which focused more on a "sit and get" format to graduate level coursework which focused more on active learning and application of knowledge (Calabrese, 2023). For OTD students, "the initial year can be a particularly sensitive period where students become accustomed to the student role in higher education, develop their academic identity and adapt to a series of new learning activities" (Asbjørnslett et al., p. 2, 2022). Creating the podcasts may have provided a novel learning opportunity where students collaborated and actively engaged with one another while also utilizing technology-based learning methods, which may have been beneficial for all types of learners. Referring to Calabrese (2023), researchers concluded that utilizing a mixed approach to instructional methods is best for course instruction to support "[OT] students in developing their understanding of concepts, comprehending relationships between concepts in didactic courses and the profession, and enhancing the application of learning using student-centered learning approaches" (p.15).

Strengths

The main strength of this study is that the implementation of technology-based learning methods, such as learner-generated podcasts, represents a relevant topic within OT education. OTD students involved in this study were familiar with technology-based learning methods due to remote learning, and easily adapted to using new technology to create the podcasts. In addition, the study design was easily embedded within an already existing course within the OT curriculum, thereby capturing the use of learner-generated podcasts within the natural context of an OT course.

Limitations

This study included several limitations. First, this study was limited due to its small sample size and the homogeneity of the sample. The use of a convenience sample may contribute to bias with the results. In addition, this study lacked a control group. Therefore, researchers were not able to compare the effectiveness of learner-generated podcasts within this sample. Also, due to the nature of the OT curriculum students were enrolled in several different courses at once. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if other external elements, such as additional coursework and group involvement influenced students' perceptions regarding the creation and use of podcasts. Another limitation was that students were not required to listen and/or watch the podcasts as part of the podcast assignment, thus students had to make the conscious decision to consume additional course content. Furthermore, the course instructor also served as the primary researcher in this study, which may have influenced how students perceived the reading podcast assignment. Lastly, although researchers tested and developed the PARPS, reliability and validity of this outcome measure has not yet been established. Larger, multisite studies are needed to reveal more details about the most effective teaching and learning strategies for graduate students with various learning styles.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study contributes to the current gap in research regarding the use of learner-generated podcasts in OT education, future studies are warranted. Future studies comparing OT cohorts across different years and programs could enhance results by determining if differences exist between different levels of education. Researchers should also consider further revisions to the reading podcast assignment or the PARPS to potentially support tactile learners in completing readings and/or podcasts to enhance their learning. Similar studies examining the development of alternative learning methods to supplement reading and support learning styles can lead OT educators in advancing the understanding and development of the hard and soft skills essential for OT practice.

Implications for Occupational Therapy Education

Researchers in educational literature have investigated and reviewed learning styles extensively with varying results. There is debate within educational literature regarding the relevancy of learning styles but understanding learning styles and preferences remains important for developing effective instructional methods. Regardless, healthcare educators must provide a combination of instructional approaches to best meet the unique needs of diverse students and clients they will encounter in practice (Calabrese, 2023; Lowdermilk et al., 2017; Touloumakos et al., 2023). Results from our study imply that learner-generated podcasts and/or summary sheets present an opportunity for increasing completion and understanding of readings for some students engaged in OT education. Our results also indicated that tactile learners may complete far less readings, which emphasizes the need to better understand and design how to best support these students in this important educational activity.

Conclusion

Overall, creating podcasts was more beneficial than listening and/or watching podcasts for this sample of OTD students. Therefore, learner-generated podcasts present an opportunity to enhance student learning by supporting reading completion or obtainment of knowledge, but further research must be conducted to determine the best educational practices for implementation of this educational method within the OT curriculum. Results from this study indicate that the true potential of learner-generated podcasts is through podcast creation, rather than passive listening and/or watching, due to the active and collaborative nature of this learning activity.

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