Benefits of Using Voice Thread in Distributed Learning

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance students’ communication and learning skills through the use of VoiceThread technology.

The study examines undergraduate students:

- perceptions of the ease of use, and
- quality of work generated when using VoiceThread in a Distributed Learning course.
How It Works

- VoiceThread is an interactive, cloud-based tool designed to stimulate student learning engagement.

- The user is able to communicate asynchronously across the web, present documents and demonstrate learning outcomes via the VoiceThread tool.

- The student records the initial thread using a microphone and/or web camera.

- Once the student records the thread, the VoiceThread system uploads the video and provides a link.
How It Works

❖ The student records the initial thread using a microphone and/or web camera.

❖ Once the student records the thread, the VoiceThread system uploads the video and provides a link.

❖ The student then shares the link with group members.
Why It Is Significant

- VoiceThread gives learners the ability to present a face and personality to the class.
- It is a humanistic blending of teaching, technology and distributed learning.
- VoiceThread meets the needs of different learning styles, while building global communities.
Research Questions

- **RQ1**: Do undergraduate students find VoiceThread easy to operate in a distributed learning course?

- **RQ2**: Does the use of VoiceThread improve students’ perceptions of the quality of work?
Methods

- Semester weeks 1-7 students complete group assignments via written format.
  - e-mail
  - Discussion board
  - Text message
- Semester weeks 8-14 students complete group assignments via VoiceThread.
  - Ability to see group members’ faces for the first time.
  - Ability to hear group members’ voices for the first time.
Sample

- Retailing majors & minors at USC.
- 200 level course related to economic problems facing consumers.
- Students placed in groups.
- 3-4 students per group.
## Sample Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=80 (23.1%)</td>
<td>N=24 (76.9%)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>N=43 (42%)</td>
<td>23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>N=46 (45%)</td>
<td>31 &amp; older</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>N=2 (2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>N=15 (15%)</td>
<td>Native American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bi-racial</td>
<td>N=6 (6%)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Taking This Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia SC</td>
<td>N=94 (91%)</td>
<td>Out of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC, Not Columbia</td>
<td>N=6 (6%)</td>
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</table>
Survey

- Quantitative survey using Qualtrics
- Two main sections measure
  - Experience using VoiceThread
  - Demographic information
- Likert-Scale
  - 1=strongly disagree
  - 2=disagree
  - 3=neutral
  - 4=agree
  - 5=strongly agree
  - 6=do not know
Analyses: *RQ1*

- **Regression analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td>1.20</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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- **Dependent variable =** Distributed learning courses/online courses offer me flexibility with my schedule.
- **Predictor variable =** Learning to operate VoiceThread is easy.
Analyses: RQ2

Regression analysis

<table>
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<th>Mean Squares</th>
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<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)Regression</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>186.19</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
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Dependent variable = It is easy for me to explore Voice Thread options.
Predictor variable = It is easy to complete assignments using VoiceThread.
Predictor variable = It is easy to access VoiceThread.
Discussion (RQ1)

The ease in which VoiceThread is *easy to operate* is a significant predictor of students using Distributed Learning as a *flexible scheduling tool*.

- Ease of operation provides an additional Distributed Learning skill of communication (oral in addition to written).
- Student is able to upload the assignment within a “window of opportunity” (e.g., four day time period). This offers a flexible scheduling tool.
Discussion (RQ2)

The *ease of completing assignments* and the *ease of accessing* VoiceThread are significant predictors of the *ease in which students explore* VoiceThread options.

- The ease in which students are able to explore the different VoiceThread options (tools) greatly enhance students’ educational experiences including:
  - completing assignment
  - accessing VoiceThread
Implications

- Understanding of how to use VoiceThread, ease of use and flexibility in scheduling may significantly influence students’:
  - Propensity to complete assignments on time (i.e., not procrastinate);
  - Spend more time on refining, enhancing and improving assignments to improve grades, and
  - Willingness to take additional Distributed Learning courses.
Recommendations

- Continue to incorporate VoiceThread in Distributed Learning courses.
- Research students’ perceived types of benefits of VoiceThread.
- Examine student success in assignments (i.e., grades) using VoiceThread compared to other forms of communication.
Conclusions and Limitations

- VoiceThread is shown to be a beneficial communication tool in a Distributed Learning course.

- Students are able to easily understand how to use the tool for communication and assignment purposes.

- While students are receptive to VoiceThread, it is not recommended as the only tool for a Distributed Learning course. Multiple communication tools are needed (e.g., e-mail, discussion board).
Benefits of Using Voice Thread in Distributed Learning

Thank you!
Questions?