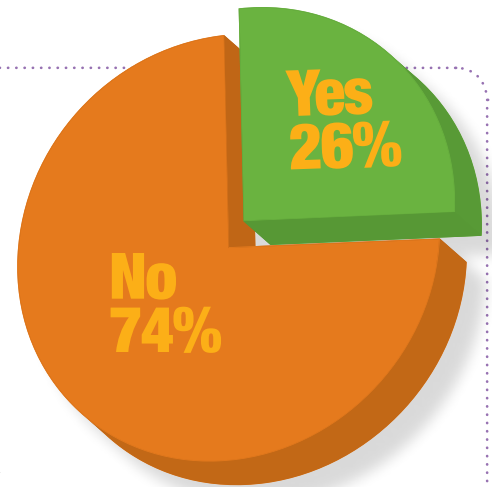


READERS **respond**

POLL RESULTS

Should Podcasts Replace Lectures?

The majority of respondents believe that podcasts can enhance, but shouldn't replace, live lectures.



LETTER

Real Teachers for the Real World

The real world calls for the dissemination of information from an instructor who knows and understands the content well enough to describe it several different ways, place it into the learner's relevant scope of understanding, and then ask and answer questions to make sure that the students understand basic factual information.

*Robert Maninger
Huntsville, Texas
Discussion forum reply from the L&L group
page (www.iste-community.org/group/landl)*

Flexibility and Variety

Podcasts provide flexibility in where and when learning occurs. They can be stored, recycled, and shared. They free up time for more in-depth, conversational interaction in seminars. Enhanced podcasts embed images, graphs, videos, and links to Web sites, and support text and quizzes.

*Michael Vallance
Future University
Hakodate, Japan*

Don't Eliminate Humanity

What happened to seeing that a student is struggling, the puzzled look on the face, or knowing that emotional or other problems are at work? Technology doesn't offer answers to these situations. We have removed too much humanity already. Infusing technology for technology's sake isn't going to get us to the goal that we want to achieve.

*Kelly Campbell
Springfield, Missouri
Comment from the ISTE.org homepage poll*

Before, During, After

Before lectures, podcasts are useful for scene setting and provide base-level knowledge, freeing up the lecturer to digress, clarify, or enhance the lesson material. Side by side with lectures, they are invaluable for auditory learners to take in material more effectively and prepare participants to ask more intelligent questions. After lectures, they allow clarification, help reinforce learning, and provide cramming material for exam preparation.

*Chris Waterman
Presbyterian Ladies College
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia*

Can't Replace Face-to-Face

Most important is the face-to-face interaction that is lost when information becomes a one-way broadcast. The opportunity to interact, interpret body language, and be engaged on a human level can be enhanced, but not replaced, by digital media.

*Lee Kolbert
Palm Beach County School District
West Palm Beach, Florida*

No More Boring Lectures!

Without a doubt, podcasts should replace lectures. How many bad lectures can you take in one lifetime? With lectures via podcasts, they must be good! If they are bad, the party responsible can and will be subjected to punishment via WWW! Both teacher and students are required to perform at their very best.

*Michael Pearce
Teachade.com
Fisher Island, Florida*

Online Education Saves Money

Recent comments have suggested that schools cannot afford to implement online education programs. Nothing can be further from the truth. Many schools have instituted online programs, in fact, on the theory that the programs will save them money. Research indicates, though, that a good program costs about the same as regular education, and real savings come only from slashing costs in ways that are harmful to student achievement.

Still, unless a school wishes to invest significant up-front money in developing its own high-quality curriculum rather than purchasing or leasing it from an existing resource, any school should be able to provide online education to its students without any great financial commitment. Schools across the nation are doing it now, even tiny rural schools out on the distant plains.

*John Adsit
Online Education Consultant
Boulder, Colorado*