

# Interactive Learning Modules Based on PowerPoint™

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Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article by Esquela-Kerscher et al. on the value of interactive learning modules generated using PowerPoint™ [1]. The authors have independently re-discovered aspects of this software that most educators fail to appreciate or utilise, so their message is well worth bringing to the attention of readers of *Medical Science Educator*.

My colleagues and I first described the use of PowerPoint™ to create interactive modules, without formal programming, in a paper published in 2001 [2]. Unfortunately, the early issues of that health professional education journal are not readily available online (full text of articles is only available from late 2003 onwards) so it is unsurprising that Esquela-Kerscher et al. were not aware of the earlier article on the subject. Nevertheless, the similarities in the approach are striking. We both used the software in “browse at kiosk” mode, with action buttons and hyperlinks, and employed the modules we created to supplement as well as replace material delivered in other ways. We both relied heavily on case-based learning

and on quizzes with feedback, which the authors correctly emphasise as crucial to reinforcing learning. In both settings, student satisfaction with the modules was high.

In our modules, we also added a menu system with loops and branches, provided a large number of illustrative images (essential for teaching Pathology) and explained these using hyperlinked-embedded audio commentary. Again, this was not difficult using PowerPoint™, requiring only that the educator put some thought into the design phase. In the same vein as the current authors, we pointed out at the time that PowerPoint™ “... offers an easy and familiar setting, allowing the educator to concentrate on the content and structure of the module.” That remains true and is a good reason for readers of the journal to investigate the utility of the approach.

It is also worth emphasising that modules generated in PowerPoint™ can readily be converted to HTML5 web-deliverable modules using appropriate software such as iSpring Suite™. We have converted a series of biomedical science modules for senior medical students using this approach, which are now disseminated via the university’s learning management system. The additional potential of such modules should be self-evident.

## References

1. Esquela-Kerscher A, Krishna NK, Catalano JB, Lundberg PS, Kerry JA. Design and effectiveness of self-directed interactive learning modules based on PowerPoint™. *Med Sci Educ.* 2016;26(1):69–76.
2. Kumar RK, Velan GM, Dziegielewski M. Interactive multimedia without programming: computer-assisted learning modules in PowerPoint®. *Focus Health Prof Educ.* 2001;3(3):57–9.

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