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ABSTRACT

The vast majority of first-year undergraduate students are millennials, who have different learning habits compared with their previous cohorts. Thus, teaching foundational microeconomic concepts to millennials could be very challenging. This paper proposes an attractive method to improve millennials' learning experience by projecting short YouTube movie clips (3 minutes on average) in the classroom. The clips were not specifically uploaded to YouTube for a microeconomics lecture; they were already available on YouTube as movie scenes. The objective of the apparent absence of connection between the clip and the lecture is to inspire students' interest, which helps to involve millennial students in the lecture by giving them a real-world emphasis and they can improve their understanding. This short break in the lecture contributes to engage millennials by giving them a focus using social media. The results of a student self-assessment survey support the expectations of the literature that the use of YouTube clips would improve students' assimilation of economic concepts by helping them realize how economics is applicable to the real world, enhancing their internalization of those notions, and recognizing the relevance of economic ideas to their lives. Links to be used by other instructors are provided.

More than most other academics, economists should recognize that is important to consider alternatives when they decide how to teach.
W.E. Becker and M. Watts. *American Economic Review* (2001).

1. Introduction

The terms “millennials” (Howe and Strauss, 2000), “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), the “net generation” (Tapscott, 1997), or “generation Y” (Paul, 2001), are applied to the generation born after 1982, in a period when digital technology and the Internet developed. People within this cohort are considered the most technologically oriented out of all other demographics (i.e., baby boomers, generation X). They have grown up with computers and the Internet and are said to have a natural aptitude and high skill levels when using new technologies (Jones et al., 2010).

It has become difficult to teach millennial students, who are the majority in college classrooms nowadays (Berk, 2009b; Merlino and Rhodes, 2012). Millennials have been raised in a culture of expression, engagement, and learning through online interactions using technological devices. They present different habits compared with previous student cohorts. They request a varied range of resources to which they are accustomed in their social lives, but suffer a lower attention span due to the range of activities constantly offered to them (Clifton and Mann, 2011). In addition to these generational characteristics, the field of economics has historically

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lagged behind other disciplines in applying new educational technologies to its teaching strategies (Watts and Schaur, 2011). Therefore, alternative methods are needed to improve students' understanding of economic concepts. The aim of this paper is to propose an attractive way to improve millennials' learning experience using short YouTube movie clips to teach foundational microeconomic concepts.

YouTube, the popular video-sharing site, was launched in 2005. According to Al-Bahrani et al. (2015), YouTube is one of the most popular social media sites among economics students, after Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Social media is a central part of millennial life (Junco et al., 2010). Additionally, Kuh (2009) suggests that the frequency of social media utilization by students might facilitate out-of-class engagement when used appropriately, which may ultimately increase academic success. Early results by Lowe and Laffey (2011), Miners (2010), and Rinaldo et al. (2012) suggest that social media use by academics can increase student engagement, grades, and overall academic success.

This paper presents a complementary activity to engage first-year undergraduate students and help them in their understanding of new microeconomic concepts. The novelty of this activity is that the short movie clips (3 minutes on average) shown in the classroom were not specifically uploaded to YouTube for a microeconomics lecture; they were already available on YouTube as movie scenes. This apparent lack of connection between the scene and the subject of economics is intended to provoke students' curiosity. Millennial students may be fascinated by something apparently not directly related to the concepts explained in the classroom. Furthermore, this short break in the lecture helps to engage millennial students by giving them a focus using social media. Some evidence of the effectiveness of the activity is provided based on a student self-assessment survey. The findings support that this method has contributed to students' understanding of economic concepts by helping them realize how economics is applicable to the real world, enhancing their internalization of economic concepts, and recognizing the relevance of economic concepts to their lives.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents a literature review. Section 3 details the implementation of the activity using links to the short YouTube clips. Section 4 shows the survey findings. Section 6 concludes.

2. Literature review

Some authors have already pointed out the use of social media in academia (e.g., Miners, 2010; Lowe and Laffey, 2011; Rinaldo et al., 2012; Al-Bahrani and Patel, 2015; Al-Bahrani et al., 2016). More specifically, YouTube use has been documented in a meta-analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings published between 2006 and 2009 by Snelson (2011), who found that 188 articles contained the word "YouTube" in the title and 30 of them came from the field of education. YouTube has been utilized in several areas of higher education such as nursing (Agazio and Buckley, 2009; Clifton and Mann, 2011; Skiba, 2007), management (Roodt and De Villiers, 2011; Roodt and Pier, 2013), education (Berk, 2009a; Burke et al., 2009; Duffy, 2008), or sociology (Tan and Pearce, 2012). In these experiences, YouTube was used to support pedagogical resources tailored by the instructors or prepared for educational purposes. However, in this paper, the short YouTube movie clips were not specifically uploaded to explain microeconomic concepts. The objective of this apparent absence of connection between the movie and economics is to inspire students' interest, which helps to engage millennial students in the lecture by giving them a real-world emphasis and they can improve their understanding.

Berk (2009a) suggests the use of video clips embedded in multimedia presentations to improve learning in higher education classes. He notes that videos can have a strong effect on the mind and senses and provides a list of 20 potential learning outcomes to consider when using videos in the classroom. These include using videos to grab students' attention, focus students' concentration, generate interest in the class, draw on students' imagination, improve attitudes towards content and learning, and make learning fun. Berk (2009a) considers that video has the ability to create anticipation among students and increase memorized content, among other potential outcomes. Videos also have the ability to inspire students to create comparable video projects of their own. Berk (2009a) determines that video is a vital tool for learning and instruction because it utilizes both hemispheres of the brain. The left hemisphere of the brain processes language thereby enabling learners to process dialogue, lyrics, and plots. The right side of the brain is used to process nonverbal input such as visual images, color, sound effects, and melodies. Video also taps into the human brain's core intelligences, which are verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, and musical/rhythmic. These intelligences encompass all of the ways that the human brain learns. Humans learn verbally and linguistically by listening and reading. Humans also learn visually by seeing and imaging. Visual images, written text, dialog, sound effects, and background music would then appear to be the ultimate learning tool to stimulate the brain. The use of short YouTube clips would benefit from these positive learning outcomes.

Gardner (1993) and Armstrong (2009) note that learning improves when different sensory modalities are utilized, e.g., watching and hearing. The combination of these two modalities could produce better results than just one modality alone. Myers (2013) points out that psychology recognizes that movies are able to increase comprehension and retention given that they are somehow like short case studies. Movies deliver a visual connection between theory and real-world situations, thus providing the essential background understanding for the topics. Price (2009) found that millennial students prefer a learning environment in which the instructor incorporates a variety of teaching methods. Therefore, short clips of movies can be used as a bridge from economic theory towards the students' real world by complementing the traditional classroom material in an attractive way for millennials.

Movies can be utilized to reinforce students' understanding of economics. The use of videos in this area as a teaching instrument started at least with Bogan (1984). As Sexton (2006) points out, well-selected clips that integrate economic concepts with everyday life can deliver a good framework for students to retain concepts. Some scholars have explored movies as a way to stimulate student interest in economic issues. For instance, Formaini (2001) presents a nonexhaustive list of films about free markets. York and Norwood (2013) and Meseguer-Martinez et al. (2017) explore YouTube videos in the teaching of Economics. Leet and Houser (2003) offer a list of films and documentaries related to economic concepts. Additionally, Mateer (2004) provides a book to teach economics

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