

THE SOUND OF CHANGE: HOW CAN PODCASTS BE USED TO INSPIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION?

Session: A, Breakout Room #3

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Communication plays a key role in education – especially when it comes to educating about the importance of environmental topics. As podcasts continue to grow in popularity and become a more common form of media, we must better understand their structure if they are to be used as an effective tool for encouraging environmental action. The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices for using podcasts to impact environmental behavior change. To accomplish this task, I helped the University of Washington Bothell and Cascadia College produce a mini-series for their sustainability podcast. Additionally, I conducted interviews with podcast creators to learn about their own methods for using podcasts to educate and inspire. Both these methods gave me first-hand knowledge and experience on the importance of communication in environmental education. Based on my research, I found that the use of stories and anecdotes is one of the best ways to encourage individuals to take action. While the structure and content of podcasts play an important factor, individual behavior change must also be taken into consideration. Podcasts also have the potential to be used in classroom settings to educate and inspire children to take action from a young age. Although there are many benefits to current podcast structures, the inclusion of stories – as well as a consideration of individual behavior change – must be adopted to best use this mode of communication to inspire environmental action in the future.