

## Let's create a podcast!

Daesang Kim  
Department of Business, Art, and Media  
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, USA  
[dkim@smwc.edu](mailto:dkim@smwc.edu)

Daniel Rueckert  
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology  
Indiana State University, USA  
[drueckert@mymail.indstate.edu](mailto:drueckert@mymail.indstate.edu)

Yeiseon Hwang  
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology  
Indiana State University, USA  
[yhwang@mymail.indstate.edu](mailto:yhwang@mymail.indstate.edu)

**Abstract:** The purpose of the paper is to introduce podcasting as a social learning practice for teachers as well as limited English proficiency (LEP) and foreign English language (FEL) students. Podcasting provides a new medium of education that hasn't been used yet to its potential. The study demonstrates an example of how to create a podcast and how it can be used to provide new learning experiences for LEP/FEL students to extend their learning day by having authentic and meaningful tasks, which involve social interaction outside of the classroom.

“More than 22 million American adults own iPods or MP3 players and 29% of them have downloaded podcasts from the Web so that they can listen to audio files at a time of their choosing (Rainie & Madden, 2005).” What is a podcast? “A podcast is a digital media file, or a series of such files, that is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers” (Wikipedia, 2007). In other words, it is a digital media file that is created and shared using syndication feeds (RSS or Atom over the Internet). Listeners do not need to visit the site or blog to get a new podcast if they have subscribed. Although, many podcasts contained audio only, but now they have integrated more mixed multimedia such as audio, graphics, and video. For instance, Apple's iTunes U provides higher education institutions an ingenious way to deliver audio and video content to their students. These multimedia components grab and hold learners' interests, which many researchers believe is important when teaching the video generation (Jonassen, 2000). In other words, multimedia presentations can help students in a visual way that reinforces what verbal or static graphics alone cannot.

Schools often create podcasts to deliver presentations, lectures, demonstrations, debates, or tours. Students can use them to make up for lectures they missed, or to brush up on key concepts as final exams approach (Read, 2007). In the case of LEP/FEL students, the use of podcasts in and outside the classroom allows them to go back through the class and review areas that they didn't understand.

Many limited English proficiency (LEP) students lack access to English speakers for authentic communication, speaking or writing when they leave the classroom (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Carpenter, 2006). How can we help these LEP/FEL students to learn or succeed in their learning? Our earlier study (2007) introduced a wiki as a communication tool for LEP/FEL students in a way that helps them to learn English. This paper expands the focus to how we can help students to participate in social learning experiences through creating a podcast.

### Create a podcast in 3 simple steps

We wanted to provide students with as much information as possible to help them with 3 simple steps: 1) Recording their podcast, 2) Creating their media file, and 3) Publishing their media file using the following instructions.

*Step 1: Recording your podcast: “Find a quiet place to record and then select one method to record your podcast”*  
There are several ways to record a podcast (Tutorial available at: <http://coursedesign.smwc.edu/podcast/step1.htm>):

- Using a voice memo with an iPod: you can record a voice as a lecture, presentation, discussion, or tour without having a computer.
- Using a microphone with Audacity: Audacity is free! You only need to download it from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>.
- Using a microphone with ODESTUIDO’s Web-based recorder: It is free, but recording is limited to one hour

*Step 2: Creating your media file: “Decide a type of file and then select one method to create your media file”*  
There are several ways to create a media file (Tutorial available at: <http://coursedesign.smwc.edu/podcast/step2.htm>):

- Using iTunes: you can transfer the audio recording to Apple’s iTunes (free). The file can be duplicated in MP3 or AAC format.
- Using Audacity: you can easily edit the audio recording and then export it in a MP3 format that is supported by libsndfile (<http://www.mega-nerd.com/libsndfile/>).
- Using Windows MovieMaker: you can transfer the video recording to your computer to edit and produce a video file in WMV format.

We recommend using the MP3 (MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3) audio encoding format to share your file. It is better to choose a bite rate of the audio for reducing file size with an appropriate audio quality.

*Step 3: Publishing your media file: “Decide a place to share the media file”*

Now you need to find a place to store your media file. For example, you can use Ourmedia (<http://www.ourmedia.org/>), a non-profit service that allows you to store media files for free. But Ourmedia’s media files may not be available immediately after upload with the SpinXpress publishing tool. The media file will be hosted by Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/index.php>) and be a free hosted media file (See <http://ourmedia.org/upload>). It’s great news for those who don’t have space to store their files on the Internet. Next, you need to put it in a place that has a unique web feed address, so people can “subscribe” to the feed by submitting the feed address to an aggregator (like iTunes). For example, iTunes will automatically download the podcast to the user’s computer when new “episodes” become available in the podcast. There are several ways to publish a media file (Tutorial available at: <http://coursedesign.smwc.edu/podcast/step3.htm>):

- Using Ourmedia: you can integrate it into a blog with an RSS feed easily.
- Using a school space with a blog: you can use your school space with a blog to share the media file including its feed address. You also create a RSS feed with a text editor based on your media file information.
- Using the ODEOSTUDIO’s space: upload the media file into <http://studio.odeo.com/upload>.

## Method

The primary objective of this study was to see how to help LEP/FEL students to understand how the use of podcasting allows them to go back through the class and review areas that they didn’t understand. In order to do so, we investigated the use of podcasts in three different classrooms such as a University English as a second language (ESL) classroom, An Intensive ESL classroom, and an EFL class.

### *ESL students*

Each participant was originally required to complete a tutorial how to create a podcast with 3 simple steps (<http://coursedesign.smwc.edu/podcast/>) by a trained supporter in the classroom. The students were to create a podcast and post it to an RSS fed blog as outlined in the prescribed instructions. Also included in the presentation was instruction on how to find free podcasts that would be useful to the level and goals of the students and to create assignments that would make them useful for in class as well as outside of class learning activities.



Figure 1. An example of showing how to find a free podcast through the iTunes U in the iTunes Player

*EFL students*

Each participant was required to follow the ESL students' procedure except they visit the blog: <http://daesangkim.blogspot.com/> to listen a podcast which assigned by their English teacher (see Figure 2). The podcast created by investigators for the students based on their learning activity with the teacher. After that all participants were required to complete the survey in their home.



Figure 2. An example of showing a podcast

## **Finding**

All of the participants in this study showed an attentive interest in learning how to use podcasts. Many of the subjects weren't familiar with the term podcast, but were able to understand it when it was introduced to them using the example of obtaining media from iTunes for their iPods. With these attentive and interested groups, the following findings were found.

There just wasn't enough time or expertise on the part of the students to complete the provided framework for producing and sharing podcasts. The students varied greatly in their familiarity with technology. To be able to accommodate the levels of technological skills of all members of the classrooms, the students would have needed much more instruction of the use of each program. The fact that this guide uses multiple programs made it not feasible to instruct students in a one or two hour class period. Working with novice users would require time that may not be conducive to the learning of a language when analyzing the cost of classroom time with the benefit of language acquisition. This could be beneficial however if the class were to be deeply invested in using podcasting as a consistent and integral method in the class. It would not be beneficial however if the use of podcasting isn't integral to the instruction over a prolonged period of time.

In both cases of instruction, the use of free podcasts as study and practice materials was well received. The level of technological savvy needed to find and use a podcast was much lower than that of producing and sharing a podcast. Students were able to easily find podcasts that were suitable to their individual levels of English language proficiency. Students in the more advanced University ESL classroom were able to find lectures from their respective content areas that are used in other universities. They found this to be very useful in helping them to feel more comfortable with the level of language proficiency expected for their university level classes. In a survey that was conducted in each class, the students noted that the availability of podcasts for international students would help them to be able to revisit the classroom lectures and thus afford them the opportunity to listen to parts of lectures that they didn't understand again. They saw this as a very useful tool for providing international students extra help without compromising the equality of instruction to all students.

Students in the intensive ESL program were able to find lower level podcasts. As an activity to complete in class, these students separated into groups and created comprehension questions from a podcast chosen by their group and then gave those questions to another group as an assignment for the other group to complete while listening to their podcast. By doing this, each group had to listen to and understand two podcasts. All who were surveyed found this to be more fun and engaging than simply listening to prescribed passages and answering the same comprehension questions.

The student in both classrooms voiced their approval of using podcasts as a method to provide listening comprehension activities outside of the classroom. They liked that fact that they could listen to lectures that would use vocabulary and concepts from their areas of study as opposed to one prescribed listening activity that is generic to all majors. They expressed their interest in using the podcast lectures even when they aren't mandated by their teachers as a requirement for a grade. This fulfills Kohn's advice to make learning something that is intrinsically motivated (Kohn, 1993). The learners are learning the language because they see the importance of doing so and not just for a grade. This expands the school day by providing meaningful language study by the learner outside of the classroom without prescription.

## **Conclusion**

Podcasting provides a new medium of education that hasn't been used yet to its potential. Adopting this new medium can be useful, but should be kept simple to allow learners to spend their time primarily on their goal of language acquisition. When adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners, it can be a powerful tool to reduce the obstacles in the educational path that is faced by today's LEP students. Beyond the ability to lend additional help to LEP students, podcasts are also able to enhance learning methods to allow a more meaningful and authentic learning experience by extending the social learning of the classroom to their studies at home as well.

## References

Campbell, A. (2003). Weblogs for use with ESL classes. *The Internet TESL Journal*, IX(2), Retrieved August 12, 2007, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html>.

Eash, E. (2006). Podcasting 101 for K-12 librarians. *Computers in Libraries*, 26(4), 16-20.

Fryer, L. & Carpenter, R. (2006). Emerging technologies: bots as language learning tools. *Language Learning & Technology*, 10(3), 8-14.

Jonassen, D. (2000). *Computers as mindtools for schools engaging critical thinking* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise and Other Bribes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Podcasting. (2006). In Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast>.

Rainie, L. & Madden, M (2005). Podcasting. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved August 13, 2007, from [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_podcasting2005.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_podcasting2005.pdf).

Read, B. (2007). How to podcast campus lectures. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 53(21), 32.

Rueckert, D, Kim, D., & Yang, M. (2007). Using a wiki as a communication tool for promoting Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students' learning practices, *The Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education 18th annual meeting*.