

# Podcasting as a Teaching Tool

*Trying Podcasting Doesn't Have to Be Trying*  
NJTESOL-NJBE Spring Conference, May 19-20, 2009

Kristi Bergman  
Susan DePhillippis  
Gwen McIntyre  
*Assistant Professors of ESL*  
*Atlantic Cape Community College*

## Make Your Own Podcasts

### Equipment:

GarageBand/Apple Product (standard w/Mac)  
Blueball Microphone (\$90.00)

### Efficient Approach:

- Think of the software like a cassette tape recorder; it works in the same way with the same buttons.
- Prepare a text and record speaking part(s) first. Remember to speak slowly, clearly, and at a steady pace; distinctly say the ending sounds of words.
- Arranging music and visual media in the podcast is dictated by the speaking part(s).
- For in class discussions and activities, limit the podcast to 5 minutes maximum, so most of the time is available for student interaction.
- Make title slides in PowerPoint or Keynote and export them as JPGs (like a photo). Keep at least an inch free around all sides and use very little type. Remember the whole slide will be only one inch big on the final viewing screen.

## Teaching Uses:

- As a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation with your voice and explanation.
- As supplemental, reinforcement information and study guide outside of class time.
- As small group assignments and discussion group prompts in class using an audio splitter (Belkin Rockstar, up to 5 students can listen per iPod; \$14-\$15.00@), and iPods (one per group). Students bring their own earphones.

## Use Ready-made from the Internet

### Equipment:

Internet access  
One class computer + LCD projector  
Belkin *Rockstar* (\$15.00)  
Audio splitter allowing 5 students to listen to 1 mp3

### Efficient Approach:

- Podcasts – even many quality free ones – are available all over the Internet.
- Pros/Cons of different sites
- For in class discussions and activities, limit the podcast to 5 minutes max, so most of class time is for student interaction.

<http://podcasts.yahoo.com>

[www.pluggd.com](http://www.pluggd.com)

[www.odeo.com](http://www.odeo.com)

[www.apple.com/itunes/store/podcasts.html](http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/podcasts.html)

[www.eslpod.com](http://www.eslpod.com)

[www.teachertube.com](http://www.teachertube.com)

[www.voanews.com/specialenglish/search.cfm](http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/search.cfm)

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

[www.zuguide.com/#home](http://www.zuguide.com/#home)

## **Using Podcasts to Prompt Discussion, Target Language Production and Writing**

Homemade and ready-made podcasts can expose ESL students to specific verb tenses, the context for using specific verb tenses, question formation, wh- questions, do support, SV matching, pronoun usage, modals, American culture, vocabulary, social expectations, etc.

The following list of questions corresponds to podcasts of movie trailers, TV commercials or similar mini-stories. Similar questions can be created for podcasts that have an unusual or unexpected outcome – crazy animal behavior, pranks on people, machinery malfunctioning, weather incidents, etc. Themes of these discussion sessions can also be coordinated with themes of class textbook chapters easily.

### **Sample Questions – Use 2 or 3 for Prompting a Discussion**

*If your students are learning ... then ask ...*

#### **Simple Present BE:**

Who is the “bad guy”? Describe him/her.  
Who is the hero? Describe him/her.  
Where is/are the character(s)?  
Where is/are the money/diamonds/etc.  
(specific to the plot events)?

#### **Simple Present/Past:**

Who needs help?  
What happened?  
Did this ever happen to you?  
Where did this happen?

#### **Present/Past Progressive:**

What’s he going to do?  
What is going to happen?  
What’s “gonna” happen  
(informal speech vs. formal writing)  
what do you think is going to happen next?  
Where is the story taking place?

#### **Present Perfect:**

What has the character done to \_\_\_\_ (specific to the plot)?  
Have you ever been in this situation?  
Has this ever happened to you or someone you know?

#### **Simple Future:**

How will it end?  
How do you think it will end?  
What will happen next?  
Will the hero get there in time (specific to the plot)?  
Who will get the money/diamonds/prize (specific to the plot)?

#### **Modal Verbs:**

What would you do?  
What should the character do in this situation?  
Can the character escape ... save the day .. solve  
the problem (specific to the plot)?  
Can anyone or anything save him/her (specific  
to the plot) in this situation?  
What could happen next?  
What might happen next?  
Could this ever happen in your country?