

# Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities

## Episode 2: Podcast Types to Consider

By Jennifer L. Bowie

Transcript of the Podcast

<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/16.2/praxis/bowie/episode2.html>

Welcome to “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities” a multimodal project exploring podcasting as a part of a writing class. You are listening to Episode 2 “Podcast Types to Consider.” This is a six episode podcast series with an interconnected webtext published in [Kairos](#): *A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*. A full transcript of each episode is available on the website.

I am Dr. Jennifer L. Bowie, your host for this series and a Senior Usability Research Analyst for The Home Depot website. I am also a podcaster, with a variety of podcasts including *Screen Space*: A podcast about creating usable, accessible, effective, and efficient web, blog, and digital media design for the everyday (and non-expert) designer. This article draws from my experience as an Assistant Professor at Georgia State University. Inside and outside the academy, I teach and research podcasting, digital media, writing, usability, and rhetoric.

In this episode, I will discuss the three types of podcasts that can be integrated into the writing classroom: teacher-produced podcasts, student-produced podcasts, and externally-produced podcasts. Without further ado, let us begin Episode 2 “Podcast Types to Consider.”

[Musical transition]

## Podcast Types to Consider

Individuals with a passion for a topic, Fortune 500 companies, and non profits are not the only ones who can and should utilize podcasting. Podcasts can also be integrated into the classroom for myriad reasons and benefits. However, writing teachers must consider the types of podcasts they want to incorporate. Before I present possible

assignments in episodes 3-5, I first define the various types of podcasts we may want to consider incorporating into our writing classrooms. Two types and subtypes are internally-produced or “classroom” podcasts and one type is externally-produced.

### **Teacher-Produced Podcasts**

Much of the scholarship on podcasting focuses on teacher-produced podcasts, including the studies by Belinda Tynan and Stephen Colbran, Dani McKinney, Jennifer Dyck, and Elise Luber, and Steven Krause. Teacher-produced podcasts can be divided into two types of classroom podcasts.

#### *Lecture in a Box*

The most common type of podcast discussed in the literature of classroom and educational podcasting is the “lecture in a box” style. See, for instance, Tynan and Colbran. This is also a common type found on iTunes University. In a recent review of the main page of iTunes University<sup>1</sup> I found all of the class-based podcasts were podcasts of class lectures. The “lecture in a box” type of podcast is simply a recording of the lecture in a lecture-based class, often the whole class. Frequently these are posted without any editing. In fact, there are programs designed specifically for this, such as [ProfCast](#), which will include slides along with voice. Tynan and Colbran found reduced attendance rates and that students considered the podcast lectures “replacements” for class. However, they also discovered that rarely do the professors see these podcasts as replacements, but as support for those who attended. This style is helpful for students who miss class, who want to have a copy of a lecture but do not want to be distracted during the lecture by note taking, who want to review the lecture, and even for students who are thinking of taking the class. The podcasts may also be helpful for ESL students who may want to pause to look up words, which they cannot do in a lecture. Tynan and Colbran found that students thought this style of podcast helped with exam preparation and assisted learning. However, this style does not work well in classes that are not mostly lecture and may not match the pedagogies of many writing teachers. Discussion or workshop-based classes would not easily work if recorded for a podcast, and many writing classes have workshop and discussion components. Thus, for many of us, “lecture in a box” style podcasts would not work well in our classroom structures or with our pedagogies.

### *Teacher-Produced Podcasts*

Not all teacher-produced podcasts are simply recordings of the lectures. Teachers may produce a variety of podcast types for class that go beyond that. These podcasts should be designed specifically for a class and not podcasts the teacher created for other audiences or reasons. They may be supplemental material, support material, review material, smaller recordings of parts of lecture, or possibly even a major source of the class readings. For example, if a professor was creating a textbook for the class, she could distribute this not in a “print” form, but in podcast form. I have recorded a few key mini-lectures or presentations of material in my classes and podcast them. I selected material I thought the students may want to access in the future, such as a short lecture and demonstration I gave on how to use [Audacity](#). These types of teacher-produced podcasts are also popular in the literature. For instance, Michael Huntsberger and Alan Stavitsky provided optional and supplemental podcasts of reading overviews and Chris Evans studied revision podcasts. In both these studies, the researchers found students were receptive to these styles of podcasts and Evans found that students listened on the go, while Huntsberger and Stavitsky found students would listen to the same podcasts repeatedly. Thus, drawing on these studies, it seems students take advantage of the anytime and anywhere aspects of teacher-produced podcasts to increase their learning opportunities.

Steven Krause presents one example of teacher-produced podcasts incorporated in his writing class. Since it was an online class he opted to record himself giving the lectures for students to access, instead of writing up notes or using another media. He included more information than simple lectures. This material was “new” to the students, and not just a recording of lectures that had already occurred. He also created these podcasts to help develop class community. His results were mixed. He was disappointed that some students did not listen to all or any of the files. But he found the results promising too, because the students who did listen were enthusiastic and because the podcasts helped build a connection between student and teacher. This example shows how teacher-produced podcasts can enrich a variety of class types, especially online classes, but also that podcasts are not a learning activity without some flaws.

### **Student-Produced Podcasts**

The least common type of internal podcast I have found in the literature is the student-produced podcast. These would be any podcasts the student produced for class, often as

a course requirement in some way. These podcasts may be created by a single student, a group of students, or possibly even the whole class. These podcasts may

- ◆ In some way relate to the course content, like a review of the past week's material. Or they may...
- ◆ Be on topics related to the class content, such as a rhetorical analysis of a speech. Lastly they may...
- ◆ Not clearly be related to the content beyond perhaps the development of digital and rhetorical skills. For example, a podcast on a student-selected topic, such as local architecture for a writing class.

The audience will generally contain the students and teacher, but like other writing assignments, could be external to the class, such as certain political groups, organizations, or a niche audience with special needs or interests. There are many possible assignment types for student-produced podcasts. I will present some types I have tried in my classes in Episodes 3-5. As teachers of writing, it is easy to see the advantages of student-produced podcasts over lecture-in-a-box or other types of teacher-produced podcasts. Students often learn more from doing than just reading or listening. I have seen improvements in students applications of the five canons of rhetoric, along with audience, tone, purpose, and context when they podcast, and they often carry these improvements to other types of composition. Some study findings presented in Episodes 3-5 support these improvements. Here is a quick sample of snippets from a few student-produced podcasts in my class.

*[clips from podcasts]*

### **Externally-Produced Podcasts**

The last common type of podcasts is what I call externally-produced podcasts. These are podcasts that may be on a topic related to the class, but are not produced by anyone *in* the class *for* the class. They are thus similar to the books, chapters, and articles we have students read as class texts and textbooks. These could also be produced by the class professor, but not specifically for the class. For example, I have a web design podcast, called [Screen Space](#), and I occasionally have students listen to relevant episodes for part of their readings. As I did not create these podcasts for the class but for my own podcast series, they are externally-produced and not teacher-produced. Another externally-produced podcast I like to use in my classes is [Grammar Girl](#), a fun and short weekly grammar podcast, which I tend to require all of my undergraduate students to subscribe to and listen to for the duration of the class. I have also required or suggested usability podcasts, technical communication podcasts, political “argument” podcasts, and

podcast series of famous speeches such as [\*Say it Plain: Great African American Oratory\*](#), [\*Great Speeches in History Podcast\*](#), and [\*The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy\*](#).

These externally-produced podcasts can be used not only for the students to learn new material, but to analyze the genre of podcasts, discuss class-related subjects like tone, audience, and style, and compare and contrast various media. This type of podcast is rarely, if at all, discussed in the educational scholarship on podcasts, possibly because these are not frequently used or because they are seen as too similar to reading required for class and are overlooked by scholars. Including at least some externally-produced podcasts makes sense in any class that includes the other types of podcasts, especially student-produced podcasts.

These podcasts have the same advantages as teacher-produced podcasts—they are time- and location-shifted learning opportunities and are a way students can do their “readings” while driving, running, doing chores, or in times or places in which reading could be hard. This expansion of learning time especially aids students who have a variety of other time commitments, such as jobs or a family. In addition, even just incorporating externally-produced podcasts introduces some students to a new media and could aid in advancing their technical literacy. Also, as podcasts are generally free, this is a cheaper option than having students buy another book. Teachers can assign a single podcast episode on a topic, require the class to subscribe to the same podcast while in the class, or have students subscribe to their choice of podcasts within a select group or genre. I had one class subscribe to a political podcast of their choice during the 2008 election. I provided a list of options, but allowed them to find other options, as long as they got them approved through me. I found the variety of podcasts led to fascinating class discussions, reading responses, and related assignments in a way that likely could not have been repeated had they all subscribed to the same podcast. The students also liked having the choice.

I have discovered that including externally-produced podcasts enriches my writing and rhetoric classes and provides a certain level of excitement that another print textbook does not. Used in conjunction with print and other digital texts, externally-produced podcasts may work well as texts in a variety of writing classes. On the webtext, I have included a list of externally-produced podcasts that I have found work well as reading and examples.

To summarize, the first type of podcast is teacher-produced podcasts which can be “lecture in a box” podcasts, where the teacher records the lecture, or they can be podcasts that the teacher develops specifically for the course. The next type is student-produced podcasts which, like the teacher-produced podcasts, are internally produced. The students create these podcasts as part of the class, to fulfill assignments. The audience often includes the class, although it does not have to. The final category is externally-produced podcasts, which are podcasts developed by podcasters outside the class and for purposes beyond being used in that class. These podcasts are much like textbooks—they are additional resources for the students. In fact, I often assign externally-produced podcasts as “readings” for my students. While any of these types of podcasts may enrich the student’s learning opportunities, of course, simply adding podcasts to the classroom does not guarantee any of these things. Teachers must integrate the podcasts in pedagogically sound and thoughtful ways and actively engage their students in these components in the same way they do with others. Like any media, podcasts are not magical and don’t instantly make our students smarter, more attentive, and better writers. However, when integrated in sound ways, podcasts can offer much to our classes.

[Musical transition]

Thanks for listening to Episode 2 “Podcast Types to Consider” in the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.” Tune in to Episode 3 “Podcast Assignments 1—Response Assignments” where I present some rules for including podcast assignments and background on introducing podcasts into a writing class. I also present three response-based possible assignments.

This multimodal text was published in [Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy](#). Please check out the full webtext on *Kairos*. Full reference information, transcript, and links are available in the webtext and also in the lyrics field of the MP3. All student samples in this podcast were used with full permission. The music used in this podcast is “6” off *Ghosts I* by Nine Inch Nails, which is available under an [Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike Creative Commons License](#).

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authors. Please give me, Jennifer L. Bowie, and *Kairos* credit, don't make money off of this, and share any derivative works.

Thanks for listening!

[Music fadeout]

## Student Podcast Clips:

These clips are listed in order.

- 1) Judge, Ashley. (2008). Rhetorina episode two: ethos. *Rhetorina*, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08 , posted 11/30/08 on iTunes University.
- 2) Jones, Brett. (2008). *A Progymnasmodcast*, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 12/1/08 on iTunes University.
- 3) Johnson, Angela. (2008). The arguments used in the last two Stays of Execution in the Troy Davis case, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 12/30/08 on iTunes University.
- 4) Lopez, Frank. (2010). Pilon episode1 part 1, for DIGITAL RHETORIC - 005 - Student Work, posted 3/26/10 on iTunes University.
- 5) Wolfram. Laurissa. (2010). Top 10 Traveling Tips and Tricks, for DIGITAL RHETORIC - 005 - Student Work, posted 3/26/10 on iTunes University.

## Links in the Transcript:

- ◆ *Screen Space*, my blog and podcast about users, texts, and technology: <http://www.screenspace.org/>
- ◆ *Audacity*: free sound editing software: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
- ◆ *Grammar Girl* podcast: <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>
- ◆ *Say it Plain: Great African American Oratory* podcast: [http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/subjects/history\\_civics/say\\_it\\_plain/](http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/subjects/history_civics/say_it_plain/)

- ◆ *Great Speeches in History Podcast*:  
<http://www.learnoutloud.com/Catalog/History/Speeches/Great-Speeches-in-History-Podcast/21306>
- ◆ *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* podcast:  
<http://jfkspeeches.podomatic.com/>

## Album Art

Album art designed by Jennifer L. Bowie. Images:

- ◆ Ruhsam, William. (2008). “AKG Perception 220 Microphone.” Posted 8/17/2008 on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bruhsam/3031270525/> with an Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.0 Generic Creative Commons License.
- ◆ Brassey, Anna a. (1878-83). Illustration from *A Voyage in the Sunbeam, our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months*. Image is in the public domain. Artist may not be Brassey, but no other information was available.  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna\\_Brassey\\_438-victorian-woman-writing-jornal.gif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Brassey_438-victorian-woman-writing-jornal.gif)

## References

- Evans, Chris. (2008). “The effectiveness of m-learning in the form of podcast revision lectures in higher education. *Computers & Education*, 50(2), 491–498.
- Huntsberger, Michael, & Stavitsky, Alan. (2007, winter). The new “podagogy”: Incorporating Podcasting into Journalism Education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 61(4), 397–410.
- Krause, Steven D. (2006, fall). Broadcast Composition: Using Audio Files and Podcasts in an Online Writing Course. *Computers and Composition Online*. Retrieved November 14, 2009, from <http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/krause1/>
- McKinney, Dani, Dyck, Jennifer L., & Luber, Elise S. (2009). iTunes university and the classroom: Can podcasts replace professors? *Computers & Education*, (52), 617–623.

Tynan, Belinda, & Colbran, Stephen. (2006). Podcasting, student learning and expectations. *Proceedings of the 23rd annual ascilite conference: Who's learning? Whose technology?, Australia*, 825–832.

Walch, Rob, & Lafferty, Mur. (2006). *Tricks of the Podcasting Masters*. Toronto: Que.

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<sup>i</sup> iTunes University was reviewed in December of 2009.