

Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities

Episodes 1-6: The Full Series

By Jennifer L. Bowie

Transcript of the Podcast

<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/16.2/praxis/bowie/complete.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 the full series, all six episodes, in one sound file. I have abbreviated the introduction and conclusions to each text, removing repeated information, and put the episodes together in one text. This is for those who want to hear the whole thing in one sitting. If you want to listen to this episode by episode, or not in one sitting, I suggest you listen to each episode, which you can find at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/16.2/praxis/bowie>.

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 first present this series, then introduce podcasting, discuss how it fits in a writing classroom, present the advantages, describe studies I draw on throughout the text, and consider digital divide issues. Without further ado, let us begin Episode 1 “Introduction and Background.”

[Musical transition]

“Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities” is a multimodal text, with two main components: a hypertextual webtext and this six episode podcast series. I encourage you to listen to the podcasts and explore the webtext to experience the full article. This multimodal text is a companion to another multimodal text “Rhetorical Roots and Media Future: How Podcasting Fits into the Computers and Writing Classroom.” In “Rhetorical Roots” I address how podcasting may be used in classrooms to help students rethink the “old” writing concepts we have been teaching, such as audience, tone, purpose, and context—along with the five canons—in new ways and consider how students may bring the lessons they learned from podcasting back to their print text writing. In this article, I focus on the practice of podcasts in our writing classes. I introduce the concept of podcasts and present a short definition of them and list some advantages to podcasts in Episode 1, this episode. I also touch on digital divide and literacy issues. In Episode 2, I present the three types of podcasts to consider incorporating into your writing classroom: teacher-produced podcasts, student-produced podcasts, and externally-produced podcasts. In Episode 3, I begin presenting possible podcast assignments. I provide some basic information on integrating these assignments and having students produce podcasts, and then present three response podcast assignments. In Episode 4, I focus on four media and message assignments. I finish the possible assignments in Episode 5, where I cover two genre-based assignments. I complete the article in Episode 6, with a tip, information on resources, and a conclusion. In Episodes 2-5, I have also included clips from student work, as examples of what students have done with podcasting.

Many podcasters provide ethos in the beginning part of the podcast by telling the listeners who they are. Following this trend, here is my background. I am Dr. Jennifer L. Bowie, a Senior Usability Research Analyst for The Home Depot website. Previously, I was an Assistant Professor at Georgia State University. Inside and outside the academy, I teach and research podcasting, digital media, writing, usability, and rhetoric. I have taught eight classes with podcast components from having podcast “readings” to a podcasting-intensive *Senior Seminar* class. I am also a podcaster, with my own web and digital media design podcast called Screen Space, a “podposter” for the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing conference in 2009, and a forthcoming triathlon, duathlon, and running couplecast with my husband. I have also presented at various conferences on podcasting and have conducted research on podcasting including classroom research, usability research, and interview research with successful

podcasters. This podcast article is based on my experience as a podcaster and as a teacher and researcher of podcasting.

Now that I have introduced the article and myself, let's talk podcasting!

[Musical transition]

“Podcasting is so much more than a technology. It truly is an art form...” Rob Walch and Mur Lafferty

First, I will define what a podcast is, for those of my listeners who may not be familiar. Podcasts are episodic digital media files distributed over the internet, usually through RSS feeds and collected by subscribers through RSS feed readers and podcatcher software, such as iTunes. Podcasts are designed to be subscribed to, so the subscribers will receive the latest podcast episode when it is published, or when their software is next scheduled to check. While podcasts can be a range of files, the most common are audio and video, and it is these two types I focus on in this article.

Podcasting started out as a grassroots collaboration and many of the earliest podcasters were passionate and noncommercial, podcasting for the love of the technology and their topics. Six years later, companies of all sizes, including Fortune 500 companies and many charities, have podcasts. As podcasts become increasingly popular among the grassroots and businesses, those of us in computers and writing may be considering incorporating podcasts into our classes. Since podcasts are a greater departure from typographic-based texts, just as are webpages and blogs we may already include in our classes, integration may be more problematic. Podcasts tend to be visual and/or auditory texts with typographic-based texts as support, such as a transcript or captions. The emphasis changes, but the writing and argument skills still hold true.

[Musical transition]

The Studies

Throughout this series, I will provide some empirical support for the podcast assignments. I draw on findings from two different studies. I conducted survey studies in my Fall 2010 and in my Fall 2008 *Senior Seminar* classes. In both cases, I am providing data from a survey given at the end of class. While the two surveys differ

somewhat, in each I asked how various assignments and class components contributed to the student's understanding and applications of various skills and knowledge related to writing. In the 2008 study, I asked about skills and knowledge in 29 areas and in Fall 2010 I asked about 19 areas. In both classes, the students were senior rhetoric and composition students at Georgia State University and were going to graduate that semester or the next. In my Fall 2010 class, 10 of 14 students took the survey. In my 2008 class, 9 of 10 students took the survey. For both studies, I received IRB approval, and I collected digital version of the surveys. I have included various tables of results on the relevant episode related webtext pages. Both studies are larger than just the surveys and I am only pulling a small amount of data from the surveys. I later plan to more fully analyze and present these studies. I offer the limited survey information as empirical support for my arguments in this podcast series.

[Musical transition]

Advantages

There are several advantages to integrating podcasts into a writing classroom, listed in no particular order:

- **One: Higher Student Achievements:** Researchers Belinda Tynan and Stephen Colbran and also Dani McKinney, Jennifer Dyck, and Elise Luber found that podcasts can lead to higher student achievements.
- **Two: Student Support and Enthusiasm:** Students tend to like using podcasts as part of their learning, as found in five different studies: by Tynan and Colbran; by McKinney, Dyck, and Luber; by Michael Huntsberger and Alan Stavitsky; and by Evans.
- **Three: Time- and Location-Shifted:** The anytime, anywhere option with podcasts is a strong advantage. This advantage is supported by findings from two studies, one by Evan and one by Huntsberger and Stavitsky. I've also had students rave about the advantages of listening anytime and anywhere.
- **Four: Improved Electronic Writing and Publishing Skills:** In the Fall 2010 survey, I asked students how podcasting contributed to their understanding and application of several skills and knowledge related to class. Students either agreed or strongly agreed that podcasts contributed to their understanding and application of 15 skills, including audience, purpose, context, ethos, pathos, and

logos. I will provide a list with these findings in the webtext, so please check it out to see the full list.

- **Five: Costs:** Podcasts are usually free and [Audacity](#), one of the better podcasting programs, is also free. If students have their own microphone, whether it be a USB microphone, an iPod/iPhone or MP3 players that can record, or a \$1000 dollar recording setup with microphone and sound board, then there do not need to be any additional costs. I'll discuss cost further shortly.
- **Six: Learning through Listening:** According to Cebeci and Tekdal learning through listening is more attractive and “less tedious” than reading and it is a primary learning method for people from the beginning. They suggest it may motivate those who do not like reading and is a richer medium for understanding. As Manning states on page 2 “what one hears through the speaker’s intonation, dictation, and reflection conveys a richer understanding not only of the content, but of the speaker. Listeners connect to that voice and may feel less isolated.”
- **Seven: Good Knowledge Distribution Model:** Podcasts are a good way to distribute information with subscriptions. With a subscription, the texts are automatically delivered directly to the students so there is less information retrieval and searching time. Also, the files are easy to share. The copyright issues often associated with fair educational use are less of an issue too, as often these files are distributed free online for anyone interested.
- **Eight: Not “Lost in Time”:** Podcasts also provide a more permanent record than just speaking and allow people to rewind and replay the text.

[Musical transition]

Digital Divide and Technological Literacy

When considering any technology in the classroom it is important to also consider the digital divide and technological literacy issues. As our students may be on either side of the divide, we cannot and should not just add technology into the classroom without some considerations. Access to technology and technical literacy are two key components of the digital divide. While most college students have some access to technology, whether their own laptop or a campus computer lab, the amount and ease of access are serious concerns. If students do not have convenient access to technology, such as at home or even suitable campus lab hours, accessing podcasts, let alone

creating them, can be problematic. Also, if students do not have an MP3 player or a phone that plays MP3s, some advantages of podcasts—such as the time- and location-shifted benefits—are lost. Even when students have MP3 players, some students do not have the technological literacy to know how to download the podcasts on to their phone or MP3 player a single time, let alone set up a subscription. I have found students will tend to listen on their computer or read transcripts rather than learning how to download the files on a portable device. Thus, even access is not always enough and additional information on how to access and download the podcasts may be necessary.

In addition, those on the less digital side of the digital divide likely have less technological literacy than their peers. Podcasts require a certain level of technological literacy to access and more to produce. However, integrating podcasts can in some ways advantage those on the less tech side of the divide. With podcasting, students may develop their technological literacy skills, which is especially helpful for those with lower literacy levels. Since the majority of my students do not have any experience producing podcasts, they start from a similar place. Granted, those with higher technological literacy in other areas may have some advantages, but, I've had several students struggle with other technological components of my class, then shine with podcasting. In fact, I've had those on the low tech side of the divide even helping their peers on the other side of the divide.

Some divide issues can be mitigated in similar ways to how we have mitigated other divide issues since we began incorporating technology into our classrooms. Providing students with in-class workshop time with the technology can help a great deal. Providing the students with information on the other resources they have available—labs, training, and equipment—can also help. I always offer to loan out my USB headsets, which are good for recording and editing podcasts, to students who do not have a microphone and cannot utilize the lab equipment. I've also gotten a special technology grant from a group on campus in charge of the iTunes University initiative, and was able to provide my students with an iPod for the semester. There may be initiatives like this on other campuses. Also, for students who simply do not have access to computers outside the classroom, one workaround for listening to podcasts is to burn the podcast onto a CD or DVD. According to the Consumer Electronics Association, 90% of households in the US have CD players and 84% have DVD players. The teacher could burn the CDs or DVDs or the students could do this during their workshop time.

On a related note, cost is another concern with the integration of podcasts into our classrooms. Money for technology is often a digital divide issue and those on the less tech side often do not have the money to buy the technology. Luckily podcasting is a fairly low cost addition to a class. Software is often a huge expense, but there is good free software. I use [Audacity](#) and recommend my PC students use it too. It is free, has a shallow learning curve for the basics, and is used by many podcasters. Rob Walch and Mur Lafferty also recommend it, stating on page 265 “Audacity is the best and cheapest option.” If the student owns or has access to a Mac, GarageBand is another free option that comes with Macs and is a decent program. As long as students have a computer or access to a computer, the only other piece of equipment they may need is a microphone, and I recommend USB microphones, which run about \$25 and up. Many students already have microphones, some build into their laptops and other have bought them for gaming or chatting by voice. My school also loans out equipment, which some students took advantage of for their microphones. Between school borrowing, previous ownership, my microphone loans, and school labs, I’ve not had a student need to buy a microphone yet.

So, while we should consider digital divide and technological literacy issues, we should not let these issues stop us from incorporating podcasts into our classrooms. There are plenty of ways to alleviate many of the issues with thoughtful planning, information on resources, and possibly loaning out equipment. Of course, incorporating podcasting will enable students to develop a new technological literacy area, and thus may be helpful for students regardless of their literacy levels or location on either side of the divide.

[Musical transition]

Thanks for listening to Episode 1 “Introduction and Background” in the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.” Tune in to Episode 2 “Podcast Types to Consider” where I discuss the three types of podcasts that can be incorporated into writing classrooms.

I do hope you check out the companion piece, also published in *Kairos*, where I discuss how podcasting can enable us and our students to rethink “old” writing concepts, such as the rhetorical canon and other writing skills, in new ways. The companion piece, “Rhetorical Roots and Media Future: How Podcasting Fits into the Computers and Writing Classroom,” is available at: <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/16.2/topoi/bowie>.

[Music fadeout]

Episode 2 “Podcast Types to Consider”

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.” 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 Universityⁱ 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 podcasts 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.

[Music fadeout]

Episode 3 “Podcast Assignments 1—Response Assignments”

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 3 “Podcast Assignments 1—Response Assignments.”

In this episode, I will first present some guidelines I have developed for integrating podcasts and provide three response-based podcast assignments. Without further ado, let us begin Episode 3 “Podcast Assignments 1—Response Assignments.”

[Musical transition]

Possible Podcast Assignments

Like any media, there are a large number of possible podcast projects for writing students. In these next three episodes, I present some project ideas that should work in a variety of writing classes. Many of these assignments I have taught and I will provide information on incorporating them, along with tips and pointers on making these assignments work. In this episode, I will focus on response assignments. In Episode 4,

the next episode, I discuss media and message podcast assignments. I end the assignment discussion in Episode 5, where I cover genre assignments.

First, I will share some guidelines I have developed concerning podcasts assignments.

- ◆ The first one is **Length and Time:** Like any digital project, podcasts tend to take students more time than simply writing a paper. When I replace a paper project with a podcast I keep in mind the extra time it will take my students to record and edit. My general rule of thumb is pages to minutes. If the paper project was 10 double-spaced pages originally, then I consider the podcast equivalent to be 10 minutes. Since most people tend to read faster than a person talks, this means the podcast will have less verbal or textual information in it. So if this is an issue, do adjust accordingly. For more causal assignments, which may take less editing time, generally, you could extend the podcast time more, since you don't expect to edit them as much. In my own recordings, I've found a page of text comprising 12 point typeface, usually Georgia for me, and single spacing text takes approximately three minute of podcast time. This of course varies depending on content, speed, and the addition of things like music, but, it gives you an idea of what to expect.
- ◆ The second guideline area is **Transcripts:** For any formal assignment, I require students to submit transcripts of the podcast. My primary reason for this is accessibility. While audio podcasts will work well for audience members with issues seeing, they will not work well for audience members who have hearing problems. Much of the accessibility programs out there for digital texts are designed to work with typographic-based texts, like websites and blogs, and not audio-based texts, like podcasts. Thus, I require my students to submit transcripts with their podcasts. The transcripts can then be read by those with hearing problems—thus the podcast should be accessible for those with visual or auditory problems. In fact, an audio podcast with a digital typographic-based transcript may be more accessible than a website, and will be accessible for a broader range of listeners/readers. Requiring transcripts for accessibility brings awareness to the issue. The transcripts also give me a place to comment or follow along when grading, which can be helpful. Usually students write out transcripts before they start recording the more formal assignments anyway, so it is often little extra work for them to submit these along with podcasts. For less formal assignments, like their

reading responses, I do not require transcripts because the assignments are too small. Asking for transcripts would just take more time. However, I do ask they include transcripts if they have them, since some students do still write out these more casual assignments.

- ◆ And the third area is **Editing**: The level of sound editing I require depends on the assignment. For shorter and less formal assignments, like reading responses, I require minimal editing. I mostly just want an understandable podcast where the major issues are edited out. For the larger and more formal assignments, I expect a higher level of editing and sound quality in general. If the podcast is their final project I expect it to be clean of sound issues, easy to hear, and have well balanced sound levels. I will mention my preferred sound editing levels for some assignments I discuss throughout the next three episodes.

Those are my three guidelines. Now, let's start discussing some assignments—response assignments.

Reading Response Podcast

In many of my classes, students are assigned once or twice weekly reading responses. In my *Senior Seminar* and in some graduate classes, students have the option to complete these in written or podcast form, often with a requirement of a certain number in podcast form. In my *Senior Seminar* I require three. For many, the podcasts take more time than simply writing their responses out, so I make the assignment short and casual. Their podcasts do not have to be highly sound edited and they should be short (two to five minutes for my undergrads). I do not require scripts for these podcasts. As a teacher, I enjoy listening to these podcasts as I get a better idea, often from their voices and tone, how students are reacting to the readings. I also get to hear them wrangling with ideas in ways I just don't see in their written responses. Plus, students want to make sure they do the reading for their podcast reading responses, as they don't want to "sound stupid."

One primary goal for this assignment is technological literacy, particularly podcast literacy. While students can choose when in the semester they do their podcast reading responses, I recommend they do one, at least, in the first few weeks of class to try out podcasting on a low risk assignment. If they do this then they do not have to figure out how to podcast while doing an assignment that is worth more. I have had many students

thank me for this recommendation, and I have even considered requiring it. I kind of hate requiring something like that, so I haven't yet. Other goals for the assignment include increasing the student's ability to critique, analyze, communicate orally, and analyze their audiences. A key purpose of the assignment is community building, and hearing their peers on their MP3 players does seem to develop community excitement in my classes. They'll often talk to each other before and after classes about what they were podcasting. It's pretty neat to see. I have put a sample assignment description for both my regular reading response and my podcast reading responses in the webtext.

In my Fall 2010 class, students found the podcast reading responses overall contributed to their electronic writing and publishing skills, giving the reading responses a 4.2 of 5. Students found that the podcast reading responses particularly increased their understanding and application of audience and technological literacy, which makes sense since these are often the first podcasts they do in my class and because they are creating them for their peers. Eight other areas received a 4 or higher by the students including purpose, media use and differences, oral communication, and ethos. I put a table up on the webtext for this episode with the 19 areas and the ratings students gave each.

I have included some clips of student reading responses, so you can hear what students have done.

[clips from podcasts]

Peer Review

Peer review of writing is always a tricky topic. Many students do not value their peer reviews, thinking their peers do not know much about writing. However, peers often have valuable advice to impart and the review can be helpful. In addition, writing research, conducted by David Bartholomae and others, has shown that reading aloud one's writing often helps a writer see (or "hear") what needs to be fixed. For instance, John Hedgcock and Natalie Lefkowitz on page 258, point out that hearing their texts allows students to see it in a new way, leads to better analysis, and aids in the construction of an internal representation of the text.

This idea for podcast peer review combines both concepts. In the peer review, the reviewer will read the peer's work in the podcast, commenting on it as she or he reads it. This way the writer will not only hear his or her writing out loud, but they'll also hear

the enthusiasm or confusion of the reviewer, hear where she or he stumbles, and hear what works and does not work. This should make the review more legitimate in the writer's mind and more helpful. In addition, this will give the writer a copy of the review—which is not available in a face to face review. Having the podcast to refer to is especially helpful for ESL students or those with memory or process learning issues. The podcast peer reviews have been quite helpful in my classes so far from a teacher prospective. However, like other types of peer review, it generally seems like the strongest students tend to both give the best feedback and are more willing to value the peer review (especially when done by another strong student). I had students do peer reviews of each other's *Senior Seminar* projects, which could be in a variety of media—print, web, podcast, and more. This made the podcast peer reviews fascinating. One strong peer review of a podcast played the podcast during the review and would pause or talk over the podcast—much like the director's commentary on a DVD. In fact, the student told me that was his idea. He was watching a DVD and got the idea for it. This immediate feedback to the podcast was very helpful to the podcaster. And I actually provide this peer review as an example at the end of the section, if you hear what happened. One student reviewed a website and provided the instantaneous response on opening the page including a rather confused tone, which gave the website designer an additional level of feedback. The students who reviewed written or print texts read them aloud in the review and their stumbling, confusion, and praise of the actual writing seemed helpful. Like they would read a sentence and say “I have no idea” or “Wow, that was really well written,” something like that. One downside to these reviews, however, is they tend to be very time intensive. The students who did a great job spent far longer on their podcast peer reviews than on a written peer review. While some of the students seemed to enjoy it and get more out of it, the extra time may be spent on additional print peer reviews or other things in the limited time of any writing class and semester.

In my Fall 2008 *Senior Seminar* survey, I asked how the podcast peer reviews contributed to their understanding and skills in 29 areas. Students rated the skills on a one to three scale with three denoting significant contributions, two moderate contributions, and one little to no contribution. Twenty-six areas received a two or higher average for the podcast peer critique. For their overall applied rhetorical skills, students rated the podcasts peer reviews as a 2.3 and ten other skills earned scores over this. Students rated the podcast peer critiques as contributing the most to their written communication and their technological skills. Other skills that received above a 2.3 include analysis, critique, tone, delivery, and invention.

Since peer reviews are rather private, I have only included one example, which I received explicit permission from the reviewer and the original author to use. I have included the assignment description for this example in the webtext.

[clips from podcasts]

Teacher Feedback

One of the most helpful podcasts for the students was not a student-produced podcast, but a private teacher-produced podcast—teacher feedback to student work. In several classes, I have provided feedback in podcast (or really just audio) form and students loved them. They enjoyed hearing my reaction to their work and valued this more than a written comment. In addition, they were much more likely to listen to all of my comments, especially since the grade was at the end. In fact, I had students suggest I put the grades first so they do not have to wait through the whole comment to find out the grade. Some students even reported that the feedback in podcast form made it easier for them to revise and improve their writing. For privacy reasons, I am not including any examples here, but these are likely pretty easy for you to envision.

Audio feedback for students is not a new concept. Teachers have been giving students audio feedback from the beginning of teaching. In fact, it was our first form of feedback. Technology, like tape recorders and Norton Connect, have enabled teachers to record the feedback and students to listen to it multiple times and at their convenience. For instance, Chris Anson discusses the use of tape recording student papers in 1997. Anson, on page 106, notes that when he's recoding comments he feels a social dimension and narrative, more personal quality to comments. The recording also allowed him to loop back to earlier comments, explain greater details, refer to class, and show his own reading process. He discovered that students preferred the taped commentary and as a result evaluated his teaching more highly. Richard Beach and Tom Friedrich on 226 stated that oral feedback allows for a “descriptive, ‘reader-based’ feedback” where the readers can discuss how they are responding to the student text. Teachers can more easily express feelings, such as the feelings of being underwhelmed, overwhelmed, moved, puzzled, and they can also discuss what they expect or predict will happen in the student's text. However, as Loel Kim points out, students can be discouraged by the sounds of disappointment, lack of encouraging tones, and even feelings that the teacher sounded mean. They also found the comments could be long, unclear, and disorientating.

[Musical transition]

And this concludes Episode 3 “Podcast Assignments—Response Assignments.” Thanks for listening. Do check out Episodes 4 and 5 to learn more about podcast assignments. In 4, I will discuss media and message assignments, and in 5 I will delve into two genre assignments. These all are, of course, part of the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.”

[Music fadeout]

Episode 4 “Podcast Assignments 2—Media and Message Assignments”

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 4 “Podcast Assignments 2—Media and Message Assignments.” 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 present four possible podcast assignments that focus on media and message concerns: The Week in Review, Media & Message Comparison, Option from List of Various Media, and Regular Individual Podcast Series. I have included many clips from student work as examples. Without further ado, let us begin Episode 4 “Podcast Assignments 2—Media and Message Assignments.”

[Musical transition]

Week in Review

My favorite podcast assignment is the Week in Review podcast, as I have received some of the strongest student podcasts as a response to this assignment. Students in my *Senior Seminar* and in my undergraduate *Electronic Writing and Publishing* classes have completed this project and I plan to incorporate it into future classes. Depending on size and length, I recommend having this be a smaller team collaboration. Two students worked well for me. Since my classes tend to have limited lecture time and are mostly discussion, a “lecture in a box” podcast of the actual class would be hard. So, instead, the students produced weekly review podcasts which they posted on iTunes University. Each team was responsible for covering one week of class. In these reviews, they provide a summary of the content of the class; a reflection on the material covered including the readings; key points for the week; thoughts on what they learned and what they plan to do with it; and additional resources relevant to the topic. In my *Senior Seminar* they designed the assignment as a class. They also chose to require both students to speak on the podcast, a relevant quote, and some connection from the material covered that week to something outside the class. They also set the time to be approximately 15 minutes, with a range of plus or minus two and a half minutes. Other than these requirements, I allowed students to design the podcast however they want—choose their own podsafe music, which is music with correct permission to be used in podcasts, album art, arrangement, and so on. If due to class length or number of students there are weeks not covered by students, the teacher could cover the remaining weeks. This would be a way to connect with the students and even could work to de-center the classroom, as some student-produced Week in Review podcasts may be much stronger or at least more interesting to the audience—the students—than what the teachers produce.

My main goal for this assignment is community building and collaborative knowledge development. Since the class is the audience for these, I encourage students to use the Week in Review podcasts to connect the material to their classmates. While the assignment focuses on providing information, students also use these as a way to entertain their peers—providing music they like, odd accents, jokes, nicknames, and more. I also like to encourage them to draw on the discussions of the week, and students will often quote each other’s readings responses, tweets, and comments made in class. The students become responsible for their peers’ understanding of what was covered that week and they find unique ways to make the knowledge more applicable and interesting. In addition, I encourage students to develop their understanding and

applications of ethos, tone, style, summary, analysis, and critique through this project. In the associated webtext, I have provided a sample assignment description.

In my classes these Week in Review Podcasts are often considered “medium sized” projects. They take much more time than the reading responses and smaller projects, but do not take the effort that I would expect for a final project. In advanced classes, these projects are nice because the students need minimal additional training, beyond training on how to podcast, so I can start assigning them within a few weeks of the start of class.

Empirically, students find this podcast assignment to aid in their development of knowledge and skills. Overall, students thought the Week in Review contributed to their understanding and application of electronic writing and publishing, giving in a 4.3 of 5. Of the remaining 18 knowledge and skills, the average student scores were four or higher for 13 of them including audience, purpose, tone, context, critique and analysis. I will put a table with this information up on the webtext page for this episode so you can see how all 19 skills were rated.

I have included a few clips from some of the Week in Review podcasts my students have completed.

[clips from podcasts]

Media & Message Comparison

For this assignment, which is particularly good in writing classes where genre and media are studied, students compose a short paper and a short podcast about the same topic. It would be possible to include options of other media—a blog post, a webpage, whatever else that would fit. In my *Senior Seminar*, they did two arguments, one in podcast form the other a short print paper form. I also required a reflection, which they could either do on paper or as a podcast (or whatever media they did the other two parts in, depending on the class), where students compare how the two texts are different—including what they did differently and how they considered things like audience, purpose, context, tone and ethos. With this assignment, my students considered differences in genre, media, and rhetorical techniques for the various media, audiences, genre, and so on. Interestingly, many students thought their written argument was stronger, mostly because they have been writing arguments for at least all of their

college education; however, in almost every case the podcast assignment received higher grades and more effectively responded to the assignment (the assignment is included on the accompanying webtext, so feel free to check that out). While this shocked many of them, it also led them to think about what made arguments work and how a written argument for a teacher may not be as persuasive as a podcast with music and accents for an audience of peers.

My purpose with this assignment is to prompt the students into thinking about how to “write” or argue in different media. For my rhetoric students this assignment draws heavily on the ancient rhetorical tradition, allowing them to fully apply the canon and oral argument techniques. By also doing a written argument, I hope students will consider how these rhetorical techniques change with paper arguments, and possibly how rhetoric changed as argument became print. In classes where I have opened this up to other media, I challenge them to analyze how their selected media impacts and even can make the message. With this assignment, I foster media analysis and critical and reflective analysis. I have found the assignment draws heavily on students’ invention, style, and audience analysis skills.

This assignment could be a medium- to large-sized project. I tend to make it a medium sized project and require it around the mid-semester point, after students have covered many of the necessary rhetorical concepts and are ready to try them out. As a medium-sized project, I require 2-4 single spaced pages for the print argument, and approximately 5 minutes for the podcast. For the reflection, I ask for 1-2 pages, single spaced, or 2-4 minutes in podcast form. I have put the assignment description for the podcast and paper Media Analysis Project on the webtext, but feel free to open this up to any media.

I have found this assignment to be highly successful. In my 2008 study of podcasts in a writing classroom, students found that the Media Analysis Project contributed to 25 of the 29 skills. The students gave this assignment a 2.8 of 3 for overall applied rhetorical skills and rated 10 other skills above a 2.5 including written communication skills, arrangement, ethos, logos, critical thinking, analysis, and style, and I’ll put this up on the webtext so you can see all the scores.

Options from a List of Various Media

In classes where I teach several media and genres, I may allow students to select their media for a project from a list. In my undergraduate *Electronic Writing and Publishing*

class, they can choose from one of many different types of media writing we covered for focused projects—including blogs, online help, e-journals, and podcasts—and either do a detailed analysis of the media and/or work within the media. In other classes, such as my *Senior Seminar* and my graduate *Electronic Writing and Publishing* class they can choose to do their final projects in podcast form. The result is often a creative use of the media. One of my *Senior Seminar* students, Ashley Judge, a professional ballerina, did the [Rhetorina](#) podcast series for her capstone project with several episodes focusing on various rhetorical concepts such as ethos, logos, and pathos. Another student, Brett Jones, created a 32 minute podcast argument for progymnastmoda in the US educational system, called *A Progymnastmodcast*. Another student did a podcast analyzing the rhetoric in the last two stays of execution for convicted Georgian Troy Davis, including interviews with one of the authorities on the case and with an Amnesty International abolition coordinator involved with the case. Graduate student midsemester and final “papers” have included a look at blogging in education, a discussion of gaming and literature, a study of the past and future relationship of electronic and print publishing, a podcast book review, a discussion of the fear of changing textual dynamics in hypertext, and an analysis of the design of Saint Maarten websites. I have found that these projects are often interesting and use the media in ways that support and further their arguments and work. I have included a few clips from my graduate classes to further illustrate the range of work.

This project idea is very flexible and can fit myriad instructor pedagogies, purposes, and goals. My goals vary depending on the class. In my undergraduate *Electronic Writing and Publishing* class, I make this a medium-sized project, with the main goals technological literacy and media writing skills. In my graduate classes and *Senior Seminar*, I allow the students to select media that fit their ideas for their project, thus focusing on genre, media selection, purpose, and audience. However, the range of possibilities for this project idea is vast, and I invite other teachers to adopt this assignment in ways that best fits their own pedagogies, purposes, and goals. I have included two different projects on the webtext where students were given a choice of media. One of these was the capstone project for my *Senior Seminar*—a very large and weighty project. The other is a smaller project in my *Electronic Writing and Publishing* class. For this project, students were given a limited choice of three media: podcast, blog, or wiki.

These projects have proven to be successful in my classes. In my Fall 2010 *Senior Seminar* class, students were given the option to select their own media for the Capstone Projects. For those who selected podcasts, they rated this project as contributing at least a 4 of 5 to their knowledge and skills in 15 areas. Student also gave ten of these areas a 4.5 or above, including their overall electronic writing and publishing skills. Other skills areas the students rated high include oral communication, critique and analysis, tone, logos, and purpose.

For those who did not select podcasts, they did not rate their projects as contributing as strongly to as many skills. In my survey I did not inquire about each media type, only podcasts and non-podcasts. Students rated the non-podcast capstones as contributing at least a 4 of 5 to their knowledge and skills in 13 areas. This is two less areas than students rated the podcasts as contributing to. There were only two areas where students rated the non-podcast capstones as contributing a 4.5 or above—overall electronic writing and publishing skills and critique & analysis. This compares rather poorly to the ten areas student found podcasts contributed to. Thus, it seems these students own ratings suggest that podcasts can lead to a richer learning experience than other media, and supporting my own arguments here and in the companion article “Rhetorical Roots and Media Future: How Podcasting Fits into the Computers and Writing Classroom.” It is beyond the scope of this article to examine this in more detail here, but I suggest this investigation as future work in our field.

Here are some clips of what students have done.

[clips from podcasts]

Regular Individual Podcast Series

In classes with a strong focus on podcasts, a regular student-produced podcast series may work well. This topic could be related to class, such as a regular reading review, a discussion of their writing process throughout the semester, or a podcast on the class topic. The topic could also be student selected on an interest, career path, community service of some type (say a podcast for a local charity), or something else. Regardless, a focus on what makes a podcast series and how to develop consistency, audience interest, and topics could be the academic focus of the project. I’ve not had a chance to try this assignment, but hope to try it out in a future class.

So, do consider these four media and message projects: The Week in Review, Media & Message Comparison, Options from a List of Various Media, and Regular Individual Podcast Series.

This concludes Episode 4 “Podcast Assignments 2—Media and Message Assignments.” Thanks for listening. Do check out Episodes 3 and 5 to learn about more podcast assignments. In 3, I provide guidelines for teaching podcasts and present three response podcast assignments. In 5, I delve into two genre assignments. These all are, of course, part of the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.”

[Music fadeout]

Episode 5 “Podcast Assignments 3—Genre Assignments”

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 5 “Podcast Assignments 3—Genre Assignments.”

Genre is an interesting topic in the study of digital media, especially as many media, old and new, remediate other media. In this episode, I will first present some genres that have successfully been carried over from other media to podcast form. I then present two genre podcast assignments. Without further ado, let us begin Episode 5 “Podcast Assignments 3—Genre Assignments.”

[Musical transition]

Genres Transferred to Podcasts:

Outside the classroom, podcasts have been successful in several genres, many of which can be easily brought into the writing classroom.

Education and Information

[Grammar Girl](#)'s Grammar podcast is a great example of this. Mignon Fogarty, Grammar Girl, has been quite successful with her podcasts, starting the whole [Quick and Dirty Tips podcast network](#). Her grammar podcast has ranked as high as #2 on iTunes. Due to her success, she has now written two Grammar Girl books. [Get-It-Done Guy](#), another podcaster in her network, also has a successful print book as a result of the success of his podcast on the network.

Written Word

Written word podcasts, like fiction books and short stories, have also proven popular. [Scott Sigler](#), a science fiction and horror author, was the first to podcast a book and used the audience and hype to get publishing contracts with print publishers. He is now a *New York Times* bestselling author and continues to publish in both print and podcast form. Another example is [Escape Pod](#), a science fiction short story weekly podcast magazine, which now has one of the largest science fiction magazine audiences. While science fiction may not fit many of our writing classes per se, this does show that writing can be successfully podcast and this may be useful especially for texts like the fables and narratives in the traditional progymnasmata.

Instructions, How-Tos, and Tutorials

Podcasts that teach the audience how to do something while listening or viewing the podcast continue to be popular. Often these work better as video podcasts, so people can learn by watching, but audio can work in some situations, such as learning a foreign language. One podcast I often recommend to my students is a podcast on how to podcast. This podcast is called "[Making of a Podcast](#)" and is episode 70 in the *VirginWorlds Podcast*, a podcast series normally about gaming. I have linked to this in the transcript and webtext. As long as the material can be understood orally or both visually and orally for video podcasts, podcasts can make good tutorials, how-tos, and instructions.

Interviews

Walch and Lafferty, on page 63, state that "the interview cast can be one of the most interesting podcasts out there." The five interview cast examples Walch and Lafferty discuss include interviews with podcasters, famous people, the audience, and everyday people. Seal Press was doing a [series of interview podcasts with their authors](#), creating interest in the books, while often taking the books further.

Issues

There are many popular podcasts on various issues and topics, like politics, sports, news, religion, and GLBT. While each of these could be its own genre, and authors like Walch and Lafferty list these as separate genres, they are similar enough in practice and they would relate to our writing classes. These podcasts often combine opinion with facts and argument, much like many of the arguments we have our students write. *Slate Magazine* has several associated podcasts, including ones that cover [politics](#), [sports](#), and [culture](#).

Speeches and Oral Presentations

Arguably, most audio podcasts are oral presentations and some podcasts are actually of speeches. There are podcasts of many speeches and presentations that were recorded and later turned into podcast form. These include the [TEDtalks](#), [President Kennedy speeches](#), and [African American Oratory](#). While not developed only for podcast form, these podcast speeches can be useful in the classroom as examples. Many of the previously mentioned issue podcasts are original speeches and oral presentations of material.

Tech

Since podcasters obviously have some technological literacy, and podcast listeners, especially in the early days, had some technological literacy, many successful podcasts have been done on technology. In fact, Walch and Lafferty state on page 90 that tech podcasts are one of the most popular genres. These include technology specific tutorials, help, and news. Social media is one area that has received a lot of podcast attention recently. These podcasts may be helpful sources for classes that cover social media, as they can provide timely information from experts in an area that is quickly evolving. I'll link to a few social media podcasts I listen to on the resources page with recommended podcasts.

These genres are both a good starting place for exploration of externally-produced podcasts and possibilities for student-produced podcasts. Now, let's discuss two possible student produced podcast genre assignments.

New Approaches to Old Genres

Students often rethink the classic rhetorical canon and writing concerns when podcasting, so why not have them rethink those "old" genres? What would a podcast research paper look like (or sound like)? How would a podcast user manual work?

Podcast instructions? How effective would podcast progress reports be? Podcast memos? Podcast executive summaries? By allowing or requiring students to turn these genres into podcasts, students will not only have to understand the genre, but a new media and how the two can and should work together.

This is another assignment I have not yet had a chance to explore much, although some of my graduate students have taken on the challenge with their projects. As mentioned in Episode 4, one graduate student has done a podcast book review, which was interesting. Many of my graduate students have begun playing with what a seminar paper would “look” or sound like in podcast form and several have attempted this new approach to a well established print-based genre. We have had many class discussions about what differences may be necessary or desired. For instance, how does one cite work in a podcast? Saying parenthetical references is awkward and listening to them is not fun. So, we have discussed how to present this information in mouth- and ear-friendly ways, drawing heavily from my own work podcasting and also their experiences. I share the techniques I developed in my podcasts, which tend to work well. For example, I advise simply writing and speaking everything out in clear sentence form. Saying “According to Smith on page 60 “podcasts rock” is more effective in audio form than “Podcasts rock (Smith 60).”

Podcasters have already done some of this work for the students. Podcasters have already taken several print, TV, and radio genres and developed them to the podcast medium. Podcasters have taken sports shows from TV and radio, advice columns from newspapers, instructions from print, opinion pieces from print newspapers, even definitions of words from print dictionaries. Any of these could be good examples to study for this assignment. In addition, students could study other media transitions, especially print to radio and TV to see how things evolved. Early movies, with their book opening beginnings, can be compared to modern movies that do not need to situate the story in a book. The early web newspapers and the evolution of web newspapers over time could also provide some insight, despite the fact that both are more typographic-based media. Students could also analyze different techniques the AP style manual suggests for print and broadcast journalism. These techniques include everything from different structures of information to different ways to write out numbers if writing a print story or broadcast story.

Rethinking established genres can certainly lead to interesting discussions, issues, and rhetorical choices, and possibly deepen one's understanding of the established genre and the new media they are trying for the genre.

[Musical transition]

Exploring the Podcast as a Genre

Another assignment that may be fitting for advanced undergraduates and graduates is a project where they analyze podcasts as a genre. Much like Carolyn R. Miller and Dawn Shepherd's text analyzing the genre of a weblog, students could investigate the kairos, audience, podcasters' motivations, features and elements, and the rhetorical work of podcasts. This could be done in general or with podcasts as a whole. Or students could examine particular types of podcasts, such as written word podcasts or couplecasts, and explore whether podcasts have subgenres or even several genres. Ken Hyland, in studying EFL/ESL students, argues on page 66 that "teachers have to familiarize students with the rhetorical structures which are an important part of the meanings of texts." He suggests a detailed genre analysis can be helpful, especially something he calls a "categories analysis" that illuminates the structure. While Hyland does the analysis of the argumentative essay in his article, it seems to better fit many of our constructivist and student-centered pedagogies to have the students analyze the genre or genres of podcasts. In addition, such work could respond to David Russell's article "Rethinking Genre in School and Society" and help students analyze how podcasts work within and among diverse communities and prompt students to uncover the depth and breadth of a genre from structure to social practices, related activity systems, identity of the agents, construction of the activity, tools used, production, audiences, and the content. This too would respond to Stephen Witte's theory on writing, in which he focuses on the textual, cognitive, and social, and possibly lead students to a better understanding of text, writing in various forms, and genre.

This is not a project I have tried in my own classes, but one I plan to work into future classes. This project could relate closely to the new genres project I just discussed. Students could first investigate podcasts as a possible genre and then develop a new approach, in podcast form, to an established non-podcast genre.

While I have not taught either of these genre-specific assignments, I have found that incorporating podcasts can help students towards a greater understanding of genre. In my Fall 2010 class, students rated podcasting as a 4.2 of 5 as contributing to their understanding and application of genre. Of the various podcast components, the work where students created podcasts tended to get higher scores towards understanding of genre than those where they listened to podcasts. Students did however find the lectures, discussions, and guest speaker helpful, giving this category a 4.1 of 5. The highest project was the Capstone Project, which received a 4.3 of 5. This is not surprising, as students had to have a firm grasp on the genre of their project to be successful and they also spent more time on this project than any other class project. Students also found the Week in Review contributed to their understanding, giving it the second highest project score, a 4 of 5. Since they were developing their own genre for this project, it is logical that it would contribute to their understanding of genre.

Interestingly, it appears that the Capstone and Week in Review projects also contributed to other key writing and rhetoric skills. Students rated these two projects as contributing an average of a 4.5 of 5 to their understanding and application of audience, purpose, context, ethos, pathos, logos, and tone. This suggests that projects that lead to improvements in the understanding of genre may also lead to improvements in the understanding of these seven skills. Since these writing and rhetorical techniques are often a key part of genre study, the possibility is both interesting and logical. However, my findings are in no way conclusive. Further study is needed to explore this potential relationship more fully.

These assignments are just the beginning of assignments we can develop to incorporate student-produced podcasts into our writing classrooms. There is no reason that students could not podcast anything they can write and we will likely develop additional assignments and genre for this media.

[Musical transition]

And this concludes Episode 5 “Podcast Assignments 3—Genre Assignments.” Thanks for listening. Do check out Episodes 3 and 4 to learn about more podcast assignments. In 3, I present guideline for incorporating podcasts and introduce three response assignments. In 4, I discuss media and message assignments. These all are, of course, part of the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.”

[Music fadeout]

Episodes 6: “Tip, Resources, and Conclusion”

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 Episodes 6: “Tip, Resources, and Conclusion.” 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 first present a quick tip, then introduce resources for incorporating podcasts, and conclude the series. Without further ado, let us begin Episodes 6: “Tip, Resources, and Conclusion.”

[Musical transition]

A Quick Tip

Before I close this podcast article, I have one quick tip for teachers considering adding podcasts to their writing classrooms. The tip is simple: consider asking a local podcaster to come in and speak to your class. I have done this each semester I have taught podcasting and it has worked out very well. Students love the “real” podcaster and often end up quite excited about podcasting afterwards. Each semester I have received thanks for this immediately after the guest visited, in my end-of-semester evaluations, and in

emails after that class period and at the end of the semester. This seems to make podcasts seem more real and legitimate to them and less like yet another assignment. Many podcasters I have worked with or interviewed enjoy talking about podcasting to others. Also, most podcasters seem to just love talking, which makes sense since they podcast. Many podcasters are very enthusiastic and fully believe “everyone” should podcast and this enthusiasm is contagious. Since there are many podcasters out there, finding a local should be fairly easy. Check if your area has a podcamp or if there is a local podcast meetup and consider asking presenters or those who attend the meetup. See if there are local media conferences or science fiction/fantasy conventions, which often have new media and podcasting tracks. If local businesses or organizations have podcasts, consider asking those podcasters. Many universities have non-class podcasts, for alumni for instance, and thus you could possibly even find podcasters at your university. If you know a non-local podcaster they may know some podcasters local to you. Or you could even ask if a non-local podcaster will be in your area and willing to speak. I highly recommend asking a podcaster or two to come in and talk to your writing class. You could even record it and put it online as a podcast for your students to refer to. Chances are the podcaster may record it anyway to possibly podcast it. We tend to do that.

[Musical transition]

Resources

On the webtext component of this multimodal text I have several resources available to aid with the development of incorporating podcasts into your writing classroom:

1. **Recommended externally-produced podcasts:** These are podcasts I have successfully used in some way in my classes. I also offer ways to find more.
2. **Music resources:** Since I have begun teaching and producing my own podcasts I have developed a list of good Creative Commons podsafe music resources. This can be helpful for your students or your own use.
3. **Podcast tutorials:** I have a list of podcasts, books, websites, and white papers on how to make a podcast.

4. **Recommended texts:** I have included a list of recommended texts to use in your classes for teaching podcasting. I have also included a list of peer reviewed articles for reference or for use in graduate classes.

These resources should help you get started.

[Musical transition]

Conclusion

Podcasting is certainly a media we should consider teaching in our writing classrooms. While there are digital divide and technological literacy concerns, many of these can be overcome with thoughtful planning, and in some cases podcasts may be more advantageous than other options. Any of the main types of podcasts can easily be incorporated into our classrooms: from teacher- and student-produced podcasts to externally-produced podcasts. Many writing and composition teachers will likely want to include podcasts in richer and more meaningful ways than having students simply listen to others' podcasts, so I have included several possible podcast assignments for student-produced podcasts. Many of these assignments I have tried and loved teaching in my own classes, such as the Week in Review, and I have included some samples in Episodes 2–5 to illustrate some of the possibilities. If you are considering incorporating podcasts, do not forget my quick tip—invite a podcaster to speak in your class. As a podcaster, researcher of podcasting, and a writing teacher, I highly recommend integrating podcasts into our writing classrooms, especially our digital writing classrooms. As I discuss in the companion piece, “Rhetorical Roots and New Media Future,” I have found that students who podcast reconsider the five rhetorical canons and other rhetorical concepts in new ways and often end up not only creating rhetorically savvy podcasts, but also improving their writing skills in a variety of media. Podcasting is a great fit in our digital writing classrooms.

[Musical transition]

Thanks for listening to Episode 6: “Tip, Resources, and Conclusion” in the multimodal text “Podcasting in a Writing Class? Considering the Possibilities.” If you have not

already, tune in to the earlier episodes where I cover everything from advantages of podcasts to several assignments. This concludes this podcast article.

Do check out the companion piece, “Rhetorical Roots and Media Future: How Podcasting Fits into the Computers and Writing Classroom,” on [Kairos](#) where I discuss how I have seen students apply and reconsider the five canons along with audience, purpose, context, and tone in new and ancient ways and how this has impacted their other writing favorably. I also provide an extended definition of podcasting and a literature review of podcasting in educational areas.

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. 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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Thanks for listening!

[Music fadeout]

Student Podcast Clips From Episode 2:

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 Progymnasmocast*, 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.

Student Podcast Clips From Episode 3:

These clips are listed in order.

Peer Review Clips

Cho, Ian. (2008). Peer Review Capstone for Ashley Judge, for for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 11/24/08 on iTunes University. Peer Review of Judge, Ashley. (2008). Rhetorina Episode One: Introduction, Rhetoric.

Reading Response Clips

- 1) Davis, Ashley. (2008). Nov 17 final response, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 11/17/08 on iTunes University.
- 2) Manfredi, Robert. (2008). Robert Manfredi Oct 29 Reading Response, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 10/29/08 on iTunes University.
- 3) Judge, Ashley. (2008). Heinrichs 23, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 11/18/08 on iTunes University.
- 4) Cho, Ian. (2008). Buck's State of Rhetoric, for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 11/09/08 on iTunes University.
- 5) Johnson, Angela. (2008). Steinem Response ENGL 4320:005:FA08 11/11/08 on iTunes University.

Student Podcast Clips From 4:

These clips are listed in order based on the topic and start time for the clips.

25:09 Week in Review Clips

- 1) Manfredi, Robert. (2008). "WIR: Robert Manfredi," for ENGL 4320:005:FA08 , posted 9/16/2008 on iTunes University.
- 2) Cho, Ian, & Domit. Brian. (2008). "WIR: I Cho B Domit," for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 10/07/08 on iTunes University.

- 3) Woodard, Arch, & Jones, Brett. (2008). "Week In Review Pirate Cast," for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 10/15/08 on iTunes University.
- 4) Judge, Ashley. (2008). "WIR: Judge," for ENGL 4320:005:FA08, posted 11/19/08 on iTunes University.

39:54 Clips from Graduate Students

- 1) Gonzales, Kallen. (2009). "Here Comes Everybody - 8121 MMMP," for English 8121 Fall 2009.
- 2) Sirkin, Austin. (2009). "Podcast1," for English 8121 Fall 2009.
- 3) LeMaster, Liane. (2008). "StoryFlex_1," for English 8123 Spring 2008.
- 4) Williams, Keith C. (2009). "Podcasting Podcast," for English 8121 Fall 2009.
- 5) Donald, Matt. (2010). "No Such Things as Ghosts (In the Machine): Relieving the Fear of Changing Textual Dynamics in Hypermedia," for English 8121 Fall 2009.

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References From 5

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

Links in the Transcript From 1:

- ◆ *Screen Space*, my blog and podcast about users, texts, and technology: <http://www.screenspace.org/>
- ◆ My ATTW 2009 PodPoster: “Shifting Time, Location, and Texts: An Assessment of Podcasting in Our Classrooms.”
<http://www.screenspace.org/Podposter.html>
- ◆ *Audacity*: free sound editing software: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Link in the Transcript From 4:

- ◆ *Rhetorina*, a rhetoric student podcast:
<http://deimos3.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/gsu.edu.2124884021.02124884032.2173554180?i=1925357101> (One sample Rhetorina podcast)

Links in the Transcript From 5:

- ◆ *Grammar Girl* podcast: <http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>
- ◆ *Get-It-Done Guy* podcast : <http://getitdone.quickanddirtytips.com/>
- ◆ *Escape Pod* podcast: <http://escapepod.org/>
- ◆ “Making of a Podcast,” episode 70 in the *Virgin Worlds Podcast*:
<http://www.virginworlds.com/podcast.php?show=1&ep=70>
- ◆ Quick and Dirty Tips podcast network: [Quick and Dirty Tips podcast network](#)
- ◆ *Say it Plain: Great African American Oratory* podcast:
http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/subjects/history_civics/say_it_plain/
- ◆ Scott Sigler: <http://www.scottsigler.com/>
- ◆ Seal Press author interview podcasts:
<http://www.sealpress.com/podcasts.php>
- ◆ Scott Sigler: <http://www.scottsigler.com/>
- ◆ *Slate* Podcasts:
 - *Political Gabfest* podcast: <http://www.slate.com/gabfest>
 - *Culture Gabfest* podcast: <http://www.slate.com/id/2187916/landing/1>

- *Hang Up and Listen* (sports) podcast:
<http://media.slate.com/media/slate/Podcasts/Sports/HUAL1.xml>
- ◆ *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* podcast:
<http://jfkspeeches.podomatic.com/>
- ◆ TEDtalks: <http://www.ted.com/talks>

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iTunes University was reviewed in December of 2009.