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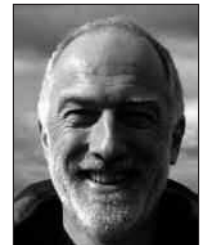
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It's a Wired World

By Nicky Hockly

In her previous column dedicated to technology and the teacher trainer, Nicky Hockly looked at how teacher trainers can use WebQuests with their teacher trainees (Vol. 21 No.2). In this column, she examines how teacher trainers can use Podcasts in their training.

Pod-What?

Although this may sound like something from a science fiction movie, **podcasts** can in fact have a direct and useful application to teacher training. A podcast is an audio (or video...see below) file, which is stored on the Internet, and which you can then subscribe to, and regularly download to your computer. From there, you can move it onto any mobile device, such as your mp3 player – and listen to the content on the bus on the way to work, if you like! Think of it like a virtual newspaper – you subscribe to a podcast (for example from BBC Radio), then every time you open your subscription programme on your computer, it goes along to the BBC site, and downloads the latest version of the BBC radio programme you are subscribed to. This means that you can subscribe to lots of podcasts, from a variety of sites, but you don't need to go and visit these sites to get the latest episodes – they are 'delivered' to your computer. These days there are also 'vodcasts' – or video podcasts – two vodcasts made by EFL

teachers living in Japan are recommended below.

The word 'podcast' comes from 'iPod' (an MP3 player developed by Apple) and 'broadcast'. (Of course the original meaning of pod is 'a long seed vessel' as in 'a pod of peas'). Most podcasts are free, but some you need to pay for. I usually recommend free sites to teachers and students, of which there are many excellent ones (see below)!

Podcasts in Education

There are several ways to use audio and video podcasts in teaching and training: you can recommend professionally-made podcasts for teachers to *subscribe* to, you can use audio or video podcasts in your own training sessions, and you can get your trainees to *make* their own podcasts. Let's look at these options in turn:

1 Recommend podcasts for trainees to subscribe to

This the quickest and easiest way to get yourself and your trainees into podcasting – you simply find a series of podcasts that you think will be useful for your trainees, and ask them to subscribe to the podcasts. You will first need to ensure that trainees have 'podcatching' software on their computers, such as iTunes. Another popular podcatcher is 'Juice'. This free software is what

then handles your podcast subscriptions: it goes out, 'catches' the latest podcast episode from the website, and brings it back to one place - your computer. The BBC website has a very clear and useful description of how to go about subscribing to and listening to podcasts here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/waystolisten/podcasts/>

Recommended podcasts for trainee teachers:

- **Absolutely Intercultural:** A series of regular podcasts aimed at language teachers, and which explore different areas of interest for those who want to start using technology in their teaching, as well as intercultural issues for teachers. Episode 35, for example, has several interesting podcasts on podcasting for teachers!
<http://www.absolutely-intercultural.com/>
- **ELT Podcast –the Teachers' Lounge:** These podcasts are produced for language teachers, and cover a range of teacher training topics such as classroom management, evaluation, using course books etc.
<http://www.eltpodcast.com/archive/lounge>
- **ESL Teacher Talk:** Podcasts which provide tips and ideas for English language teachers. The podcasts often include additional resources such as games to print out, or links to extra resources on the topic.
<http://www.eslteachertalk.com/>
- **Fordham University Podcasts for teachers:** Regular podcasts for teachers, covering a wide variety of issues in education.
<http://www.podcastforteachers.org/>
- **Bicycle Sidewalk:** Very entertaining and nicely-made vodcasts from a teacher living in Japan, in which he looks at aspects of life in Japan. You need to have the Quicktime media player installed on your computer to watch these.
<http://www.bicycle-sidewalk.com/>
- **The Daily English Show:** Another series of vodcasts, from another teacher in Japan, this time aimed at students of English. Well worth taking a look at, to see what a teacher can achieve with vodcasts.
<http://www.geocities.com/thedailyenglishshow/>

2 Use video podcasts (vodcasts) in your training sessions

There are vodcasts of teachers teaching classes freely available on the Internet, which can be taken into training sessions for trainees to observe and analyse. A search for 'teaching videos' on YouTube (www.youtube.com) will throw up a mixed bag of videos, some of which may be useable, but another source of teacher videos can be found on Teachers' TV (www.teachers.tv/). Here you will find a series of video podcasts you can subscribe to, and once these have downloaded to your computer, you can burn them onto a DVD and take them into your training sessions to show trainees. Some excellent ideas on how to use these Teachers' TV vodcasts can be found in Richard Cooper's article 'Resources for teacher trainers: Podcast teacher observation' in TTTJ Vol 21 No.1 pp.7.

3 Get your trainees to make their own (audio) podcasts

This is another very effective way of bringing audio podcasting into the training room. Once you and your trainee have learned how to record audio podcasts (see below), they can produce a series of audio podcasts on any training related topics, or the trainer him/herself can produce regular podcasts summarising topics covered in training sessions, or providing further information on topics. Although this might sound daunting, it's not – podcasting software freely available on the web is simple and easy to use. I recommend you try Podomatic (www.podomatic.com) or Wild Voice (www.wildvoice.com), both of which allow you to record yourself and upload the recording to a web page, with no specialist technical knowledge or previous experience required!

A more complex piece of free software is Audacity, which allows you to record audio files in MP3 format, and the sound is of excellent quality. This requires a little more experience though, so if you are new to technology, then the Podomatic, or Wild Voice options above are the best places to start making your own recordings.

How to get started with making podcasts with your trainees?

- The first thing to do is to choose one of the free Internet-based Podcast softwares above, and to make a sample podcast episode yourself, to get used to the technology. You could try recording some useful points from an input session, or simply give instructions for some trainee homework.
- Once you are comfortable yourself with how to record and upload your podcast episodes, you can get your trainees to do the same, for example in pairs.
- Trainees could be asked to research a short topic related to their training, and to record a summary on this, for a podcast episode. Pictures, photos and text can accompany the podcasts. For how one teacher has used podcasting as additional input for training primary teachers, see <http://rhymes-for-teachers.podomatic.com/>
- Once you have a good range of podcasts available, you can even use your own, or your trainee-produced podcasts, as resource material for subsequent training courses!

Nicky has been involved in EFL teaching and teacher training since 1987. She is Director of Pedagogy of *The Consultants-E*, an online training and development consultancy (www.theconsultants-e.com). Nicky is also co-author of the new Longman title 'How to Teach English with Technology' (2007), which looks at the use of Podcasting with learners, as well as at other ICT tools in the classroom. Nicky's training company The Consultants-E also runs a two-week online course on Podcasting.



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