

Developing Models of Podcasting

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Project Title	Developing Models of Podcasting to Improve Oral Presentation Skills and Metacognition Among Rural/Regional Students in Science, Mathematics and History
Project Team	Catherine McLoughlin (SiMERR ACT), Anthony Chan (Charles Sturt University)
Period	October 2007 - September 2008
Funding Agency	SiMERR
Organisational Base	SiMERR ACT

Description

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The project investigated the use of podcasting to deliver and teach academic content in Science, Mathematics and History to improve the learning outcomes of students in Wagga High School (yrs 7-10). The research focus was on the creation of models of podcasting that can be integrated into the teaching of a range of subjects to foster improved oral and metacognitive skills. In addition, the project is intended to enhance the digital literacy skills of teachers and students involved in the project.

The project aimed at improving the learning outcomes of regional students across a range of key learning areas by using ICT in innovative and creative ways that are both relevant and appealing to rural and regional students. It involved: three days of professional development in ICT and the creation of podcast episodes for teachers of maths, science and ICT; training for students in scripting, editing and recording podcast episodes; mentoring of staff in designing lessons to incorporate podcast episodes; and, a pilot run of student created podcasts, and innovative lesson designs to ensure student self-direction in the creation of podcasts.

Participants

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Matthew Brown (Acting Principal, Wagga Wagga High School), 4 staff and 75 students at Wagga Wagga High School from Years 7 to 10.

Findings

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Students and teachers enthusiastically embraced podcasting in the classroom, as evidenced in the production of both teacher and student podcasts for history, science and mathematics. Podcasts of the student generated content developed during the study have been made available other students in the school. A binder of how to prepare, develop and maintain a server for electronic podcasts has also been prepared. This "e-binder" is in the form of an electronic document stored on the school server which may be freely downloadable. The pedagogical transformation achieved through the use of the podcasting project has included:

- The adoption of pedagogies to enable students to 'capture' the central concepts of the chosen topics, including their reflections on learning and expressing their views in their own communicative style
- The use of podcasting to improve oral skills and metacognition of students teaching and learning processes. Teachers reported that pedagogical change was supported by the professional learning activities. The professional development sessions introduced teachers to digital skills and allowed discussion of innovative ways of teaching with Web 2.0 tools, and discussion about modification of their own teaching practices.

Outcomes

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Refereed publications

- Chan, A., & McLoughlin, C. [forthcoming] (2008). Where are we up to? A preliminary survey of the usage of Web 2.0 tools in a regional high school. Paper presented at the Where are you in the digital landscape? Proceedings of the International ASDCILITE conference, 2008, Deakin University.
- Chan, A., & McLoughlin, C. (2007). Choice, communication and learner autonomy: The development of social competence skills using podcasting technologies. In R. Atkinson, C. McBeath, A. Soong Swee Kit & C. Cheers

(Eds.), ICT: Providing choices for learners and learning. (Proceedings of ascilite Singapore 2007, pp. 132-134). Available online at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/procs/chan-poster.pdf>.

- McLoughlin, C., & Chan, A. [forthcoming] (2008). Choosing to learn on the move: The development of social competence and communication skills using podcasting technologies. Paper presented at the Australian Council for Computers in Education, University of Canberra.
- McLoughlin, C., Lee, M. J. W., & Chan, A. (2007). Promoting engagement and motivation for distance learners through podcasting. In A. Szucs & I. Bø (Eds.), Proceedings of the European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) 2007 Annual Conference: New Learning 2.0? Emerging Digital Territories, Developing Continuities - New Divides. Naples: EDEN.

Conference presentations and posters

- McLoughlin, C. (2007). Implications of new learning technologies and social software for 21st Century Learning. Paper presented at the ICT Leadership for Learning in the 21st century.
- McLoughlin & Lee (2007) The Development of social competence skills using podcasting technologies. Poster session presented at the Summit of the National Centre for Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia, Canberra.

Impact

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The project resulted in significant outcomes for teachers and students at Wagga Wagga High School, and the entire school community was very supportive of the project. Teachers developed greater awareness and new IT skills as a result of professional development days offered in the use of digital recording, podcast creation and editing of audio segments. They also extended their skills in the integration of podcasts into their lessons, and began to adopt more innovative pedagogies. This is an important aspect for sustaining pedagogical change beyond the end of the project. The project was also a stimulus and challenge for student participants, who created several recorded episodes for peers, and also learnt skills of editing and recording podcasts. The practice of recording and planning short episodes for peers enhanced communication and metacognitive skills among students.

An indication of the success of the project is the ongoing communication and liaison with the school, and school community who continue to integrate research findings into the school environment, and seek collaborative partnerships with both ACU National and Charles Sturt University in order to develop innovative approaches to pedagogy and technology integration.

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