

create **PODCASTS** to enhance student learning?

What is Podcast?

Podcast is a digital audio file that can be downloaded, shared, and heard. In recent years, podcasts have been increasingly used in educational contexts. This guide specifically introduces how teachers create podcasts in comparison to using existing resources (such as [Teaching in Higher Ed](#) and [The EdTech Podcast](#)). Of course, students are also often engaged in creating podcasts to facilitate learning, but this guide centres on teachers.

What are the benefits of using Podcasts?

- **24/7 availability:** Podcasts offer great convenience and portability. They can be accessed by students anytime anywhere with little efforts, such as on a bus or train.
- **Maintaining attention:** Research shows compared to reading and writing, students tend to spend more time listening to podcasts. Contents may take on new life when presented in a different mode.
- **Individualized learning:** Students may listen to the content as many times as they wish. They may study the topic at their own pace.
- **Saving teacher efforts:** Complicated concepts may benefit from being explained in spoken messages. Compared to writing guides, it takes less time for teachers to produce a podcast.

What are the potential limitations of using Podcasts?

- **Technical issues:** Teachers need to ensure students know how to access and download podcasts.
- **Relevance to learning:** Some teachers and students fail to see the connection between podcasts and learning.
- **Suitability:** Not suitable for subjects that depend much on visual/graphic aids (e.g., geometry).
- **Passivity:** As most podcasts are recorded, students do not get chances to interact with teachers and ask questions real time.
- **Search capability:** Although with podcast, students may listen to the content many times, but there is no search capability to find specific points that teacher made.

How can we create Podcast effectively?

A. Equipment

Traditionally, four tools are essential to get started: headphones, microphone, computer, and audio recording/editing software. Some mobile phones nowadays also have great built-in recording and editing functions. For software, the most widely used is [Audacity](#), which provides a free platform to record and edit sound files.

B. Content and Focus

- **Narrow the focus and relate to learning goals:** it's important that you select a relatively 'narrow' topic in each podcast that relates well to your course outcomes (e.g., *talking about 'Famous world literatures' vs. 'Pioneer Poets in the Romantic Period 18th century'*). This ensures that your podcasts are not overwhelming.
- **Duration and frequency:** think in advance how long the podcast is going to last and how frequently you will update new ones – communicate this to your students. 5-10 minutes' podcast is a good choice, but it can be shorter/longer based on the actual content.
- **Prepare a script:** you do not need to write down every word you will say in a podcast, but a structure is needed to help you stay focused and avoid rambling in a way that disinterests your students.

C. Presentation

- **Engaging students (questions/stories/jokes):** as podcasts do not allow real time interactions, simple lecturing may bore your students. Thus, use questions to help students reflect on certain concepts (e.g., *although the concept is widely recognized ..., but is it really beneficial to...?*). Sharing personal stories/jokes may also help 'spice up' your content.
- **Quiet place and clear voice:** find a quiet place to record. Make sure your voice is clear and enunciate important concepts.
- **Wrapping up:** provide a brief conclusion of each podcast at the end (e.g., *in today's podcast, I introduce the development of ... in the 17th century. Specifically we...*).

D. Review and Edit

- **Review:** Listen to your podcast all the way through. Note down places where you make mistakes or wish to revise. Edit them with the software. (See <https://manual.audacityteam.org/index.html#using> for using Audacity to edit)

- **Music:** Add background music where necessary to highlight your contents and make the podcast more engaging.
- **Summary:** Provide a brief written summary and title about each podcast so students can locate it quickly.

E. Feedback and Publish

- For the first few podcasts, it would be good to play them to several students to double check the content, the tone, speed and clarity of delivery. (See Resource for a [Podcast Worksheet](#) below to self-check)
- Students need to be first briefed about the “whys” and “hows” of using podcasts.

What can be included in a Podcast?

There are not really any rules as to what can be ‘podcasted’. Some common topics include:

- Recordings of an entire session/lesson
- Explanation of key concepts/theories/terms
- Feedback to a cohort of students
- Supplementary course materials (e.g., news briefing; exemplary use of spoken languages; interviews with industry experts)
- Introducing course expectation and assignments
- Concentrating on areas of common misunderstanding
- Teachers’ reflection about the course

Good Practice Case Study

Below show some cases of how podcasts are used in practice to enhance student learning:

- **Increasing student engagement using podcasts- University of New South Wales**
<https://lto.unsw.edu.au/increasing-student-engagement-using-podcasts/>
- **Integrating Podcasting into a Masters’ distance learning programme in Applied Linguistics and TESOL – University of Leicester**
<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/beyond-distance-research-alliance/projects/duckling/Podcasting%20for%20TESOL.pdf/view>

Resources and Further Reading

Podcast guides:

- Seven things you should know about podcasting:
<https://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7003.pdf>
- Podcast Worksheet:
<http://higherelearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Podcasting-in-Education-Plan.pdf>
- Educational Podcasting (University of Surrey):
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/cead/resources/documents/E-Learning%20Podcasting%20Brochure.pdf>
- How to start a podcast: every single step for 2020:
<https://www.thepodcasthost.com/planning/how-to-start-a-podcast/>

Existing podcasts to inspire you:

- Teaching in Higher Ed:
<https://teachinginhighered.com/episodes/>
- The EdTech Podcast:
<https://theedtechpodcast.com/edtechpodcast/>

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