Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for
advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Good Teaching Practices

The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education
(Chickering & Gramson, 1987)

1. Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.

2. Good practice encourages cooperation among students.

3. Good practice encourages active learning.

4   Good practice gives prompt feedback.

5. Good practice emphasizes time on task.

6. Good practice communicates high expectations.

7. Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of knowing.

Are you practising these seven principles of Good Practice?

Good practice encourages active learning and cooperation. This might be accomplished with the help of technology. Web 2.0 tools can assist us in enhancing teaching and learning in higher education. In the last issue of Teaching Tips we looked at wikis and in the previous issue we looked at blogs. This month the focus is on podcasting.

What is Podcasting?

In the simplest sense, Podcasts are audio or video recordings which are usually done in MP3 or MP4 formats for distribution over the web or on handheld devices. The term Podcasting is a blend of two words, **iPod and Broadcasting**. A misconception exists that students need to own an iPod to listen to Podcasts. Since Podcasts are really just audio MP3 files, **anyone who has an MP3/MP4 player**, computer, or mobile device that plays MP3 files can listen to your Podcasts.

Podcasts can be interviews, talks or lectures that have been recorded using a digital voice recorder. Podcasting involves both the creation and distribution of these audio files. The Education Podcast Network (http://epnweb.org) has a variety of education related Podcasts as well as suggestions about ways in which Podcasts can be used in schools. Podcast listeners can receive information about new Podcasts that have been posted to the Web by subscribing to an RSS feed. We will talk more about RSS feeds in a subsequent issue of *Teaching Tips.*

How can I use Podcasting?

Imagine a busy student listening to your class notes while riding in the car, jogging at the gym, waiting in the line at the restaurant or walking to your class. Lecturers in higher education can use podcasts in a number of ways to make teaching and learning more enriching and fulfilling for students. By recording and publishing audio recordings of information related to the areas being explored, students can access these anywhere and at anytime. In addition, by combining audio with other presentation modes, learning may be enriched and enhanced. Podcasts can be used as a type of educational radio in the higher education classroom for airing issues or addressing areas of interest to both the teacher and students.

Lecturers may also ask students to create their own podcasts as part of the class activities, assignments or projects. These can be shared with other students or with persons located in cyberspace. By creating their own podcasts, students can contribute to conversations in their field. More and more students are coming to universities with Podcasting skills, both in production and use. They are already "tuned in" to Podcasting. Providing short snippets or entire lectures in podcast format will be easily embraced by students who are already downloading and listening to MP3 files.

The ideas for the use of this type of content delivery are endless!!

How familiar are you with the latest *Technology* buzz words? Test your skills by completing the technology word match below:

Technology Word Match

Mashup	1. A web application that combines data from multiple sources into a single integrated tool.
RSS	2. A contraction of the words *Web* and *log*, this is an online journal or diary which includes regular entries of commentaries or a place for expressing your thoughts.
Wiki	3. A social networking website.
Blog	4. A new generation of the web tools that allow users of the web to collaborate, publish, edit, develop content, share information, foster social activities etc. via the web
Web 2.0	5. A web page or a collection of web pages that allows persons with access to easily modify or edit the content within these pages
MySpace	6. A web format that provides users with a way of keeping up with changing content on the web

Answers next month

Creating a Podcast

Creating a podcast is as easy as 1,2, 3. The following steps will show you how to create a basic voice Podcast. Creating a podcast with video and graphics is a little more complicated but we will look at that in another issue.

Step 1: Write a script

Although you will not need to write a very sophisticated script that is typically done by professional broadcasters or follow the script verbatim, a good first step to creating Podcasts is *to plan what you have to say*. Depending on how comfortable you are with a microphone and hearing your own voice, the script can be a simple outline of what you will say or a word by word description from which you will read in the recording phase.

Step 2: Record and Edit the audio

In recording your audio, try to eliminate as much background noise as possible to improve the quality of your audio recordings. You should find the following tips useful:

- Choose a quiet location to record the audio for your Podcast
- Use a desktop computer where possible. The sound cards on desktop computers usually produce better quality recordings than those on laptops.
- Do not use the built-in microphones on your computers. By adding an external microphone, the quality of your recordings will be greatly enhanced.
- Choose a free audio recording software such as Audacity to record your files. Audacity allows even the novice user to easily edit audio files, add music, effects and so on that will add life and energy to your Podcast.

Step 3: Export the file as MP3

Always ensure that you export your file in MP3 format to facilitate portability. Most computers and handheld devices will recognize and allow this format.

Your Podcast is now ready for your listeners. Post it to your blog, wiki or in OurVLE for your students to have access to it.