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King, Kathleen P. & Gura, Mark. (2007). *Podcasting for Teachers: Using A New Technology to Revolutionize Teaching and Learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

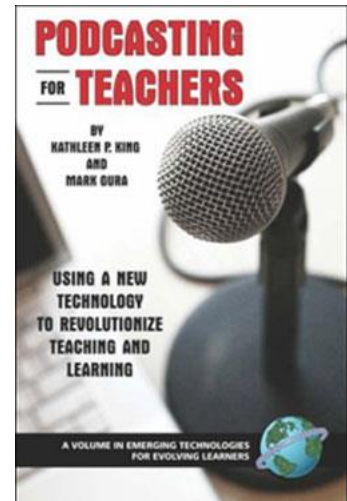
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The number of new technologies based on Web 2.0 is rapidly increasing, and those technologies are usually low-cost (even free), user-friendly, and easily accessible. Although most technologies based on Web 2.0 were originally developed for business use, educational use of these technologies has become one of the most frequently discussed topics among educators, and more and more teacher educators devote to preparing teachers for integrating the technologies based Web 2.0 into classroom teaching, for teaching outside classrooms and professional development. Among those newly emerging technologies, podcast is the latest one, which became widely accepted with the prevalence of iPod and other MP3 players. Podcast shares the same basic characteristics as other technologies based on Web 2.0, and its mobility provides teachers with additional means to teach and learn. According to King and Gura in their book *Podcasting for teachers: Using a new technology to revolutionize teaching and learning*, the value of using podcast is more than to make teaching and teacher learning “accessible and affordable”, and more tellingly, podcast is “capable of radically transforming teaching and learning” (pp.15). The publication of this book clearly indicates the growing educational use of new technologies based on Web 2.0, and the educators’ attempts to transform teaching and learning with new technologies.

The book *Podcasting for teachers: Using a new technology to revolutionize teaching and learning* is a good practice guidance for teachers. The authors provided step-by-step technical instruction for teachers to create podcast, and additional resources were also provided for teachers to develop podcast for special needs. However, the value of this book is more than a practice guide. By illustrating the models, examples, methods, and problems in their podcast work, which involved in six hundred thousand podcast projects, the authors demonstrate that this book is a valuable resource for teachers and educators who seek for content instruction with the assistance of podcast. Its impressive collection of sixteen chapters covers a wide range of topics - from the characteristics of podcast to the basic technical skills of creating podcast for teaching and learning; from the design of podcast-based professional development programs for teachers to that of classroom activities for students; from the inquiry about podcast to the inquiry of instructional technology; from the introduction of cooperating podcast to specific subject areas to the concerns of integrating technologies into curriculum. The authors organize those topics into three parts.



Part I: A revolution in our pockets. The authors begin the first part with the introduction of “Push-me Pull-yi professional development dilemma”, and argue that teachers as learners demand for professional development, but due to the limit of the budget, and the teachers’ unwillingness to spend extra time after work, professional development becomes unaffordable and inaccessible. By using podcast for professional development, according to the authors, the dilemma will be tackled since it will provide teachers with “affordable, accessible and mobile” environment to learn. This new learning environment not only satisfies the teachers’ life-long needs as adult learners but also compels the teachers to insightfully reflect on their practices during the process of creating podcast for teaching. In this part, the author also discussed that students’ learning environment is different from the teachers’, and teachers are required to acquire media literacy skills, helping students connect with the globe, and develop critical thinking and global voice. As argued by the authors, the constant improvement of teaching would eventually revolutionize education.

Part II: Podcasting “how to” basics. In the second part of the book, the authors first introduce that the conceptual framework for their research are project-based learning, action research and reflective practice, and the foundation of their research is “formative curriculum development”. To create podcast for teaching, teachers should take the following factors into consideration: the curriculum needs, students’ needs and interests, resources that podcast mostly fits, the availability of the technology resources, and the assessment of students’ learning. As follows, the authors introduce the technical steps of creating a podcast, the elements of podcast, and the basic and advanced formats (models) of podcast for teaching. In the last chapter of this part, the author emphasized that after publishing podcast, teachers should not stop the work but track the feedback from their audience, and interact with their audience.

Part III: Becoming a podcasting educator. In this part, the authors systematically illustrate the educational use of podcast. Firstly, the authors restate the importance of using podcast to teach, and the skills that teachers need acquire to create podcast. Several examples of podcast-based teaching activities were presented to demonstrate the benefits of using podcast in classroom teaching and professional development. Additional recourses and exemplary podcast series were also provided for teachers to develop their understanding of podcast, to create advanced podcast-based project. In this part, the authors also illustrated the students’ expectation about learning with podcast, and further emphasized the importance of assessing the students’ performance in podcast-based classroom. Moreover, the authors point out that podcast transforms the traditional professional development by “breaking the time barrier” and allowing “repeated, on-demand access to PD materials”. I found the last chapter of this part was especially helpful and inspiring – the authors argued that new technologies have been changing the traditional modes of learning and

teaching from different perspectives, and using podcast for teaching and learning provided a means to help both students and teachers to get ready for the digital age.

The broad coverage of the chapters gives one a good sense of how to use podcast for teaching and learning, and how using podcast will bring changes to traditional teaching and learning. The detailed accounts of each topic indeed depicted a vivid picture of the functions of podcast, the issues related to the creation of podcast, and the curriculum concerns when using podcast. The book is, thus, undoubtedly a valuable source of information for teachers and researchers who expect to learn the functions of this latest Web 2.0 technology, who expect to integrate podcast into teaching, and who have instructional concerns while cooperating new technologies into classroom teaching.

However, the only frustration I felt in this book is that the authors did not do a good job about illustrating the use of podcast in professional development. First of all, among the sixteen chapters, only one chapter focused on using podcast for professional development, and most of the other chapters tended to describe the use of podcast for teaching, though in the book the authors emphasized that podcast would revolutionize both students' and teachers' learning. Even in this only chapter, the authors simply categorized the podcast-based professional development as "reflective discussions", "forum style podcasts", "narrative procedure", and "guest star addresses". Although this kind of categorization can help the teachers better understand the use of podcast and the design of podcast-based professional activities, the foci of professional development vary with the teachers' teaching stage, and simply categorizing all of them in the same group may not satisfy the needs of some groups of the teachers. As adult learners in professional development, induction teachers' demands for professional development are generally different from that of experienced teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). When designing professional development program, teacher educators or teachers themselves should first think about different learning needs of teachers who are working at different stages, instead of giving the teaching or learning tools the highest priority.

Secondly, the authors did not fairly consider teachers as learners when illustrating how to use podcast for professional development. In this book, they emphasized on the demands and benefits for teachers to learn new technologies, but neglected the influence of the teachers' attitudes toward new technologies. The studies indicated that the relationship between the teachers' attitudes and instructional decisions are tightly related (Beck, 1997; Cornett, Yoetis, & Terwilliger, 1990; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Lumpe, Haney, & Czerniak, 1998; Pajares, 1992). In the podcast-based professional development program, or in the program that attempts to promote the integration of podcast in classroom instruction, the investigation of teachers' attitudes toward podcast is the first step to find out the teachers' learning needs and concerns. For example, research showed most teachers did not hold positive attitudes toward integrating technologies into teaching. According to the report of the National Center for Education Statistics, seventy percent of teachers did not feel well prepared to use technologies in their teaching (NCES, 2005). Although pre-service teachers reported that they had acquired adequate skills of new technologies and tended to use them in teaching, they typically lacked knowledge about how to integrate technologies in the routine task of teaching and managing the classroom (NCES, 2001). Therefore, to include the teachers' attitudes toward podcast-based instruction or toward using new technology as professional development tool would contribute to better understanding the teachers' needs, and then designing the podcast-based professional development projects more effectively. Moreover, new technologies developed rapidly, and different attributes of the modern technologies may change the teachers' attitudes toward integrating technology into classroom instruction. The authors did not spend any effort to illustrate how the unique attributes of podcast would influence the teachers' attitudes, and the closer investigation of teachers' attitudes is necessary as far as the time and money invested on designing podcast-based projects is concerned.

Thirdly, the podcast-based projects, especially those advanced projects used in professional development, are not products of a single technology, but products of a group of technologies, i.e., forum style podcasts (pp. 238). The authors also suggested teachers use other information

technologies based Web 2.0 to create interactive learning environment. However, if other new technologies were used, the most appealing characteristic of podcast, mobility, would inevitably diminish, i.e. the blog-and-podcast-based project. And, under this circumstance, how could we justify that it is the podcast not other technology that revolutionizes the teachers' learning?

Additionally, I doubted the authors' statement that using podcast for professional development would revolutionize teachers' learning. On the one hand, podcast could create "accessible, affordable and mobile" materials for teachers so that teachers' learning will not be limited by time and spaces. On the other hand, podcast is a one-way exploration - teachers downloaded podcast online, and whether those materials would contribute to teachers' better understanding about teaching depends on several other factors: the quality of the podcasts, the teachers' cultural backgrounds, the teachers' current understanding of education, the teachers' mastery of certain content knowledge, etc. Moreover, podcast, even a high quality podcast, cannot provide a real-time interaction, and it is fairly possible that the podcast-based materials would mislead teachers. Plus, podcast provides a new means for teachers to extend their knowledge, and may help teachers better understand certain content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). But, the mere cooperation of technologies in teaching and learning is not enough to change education. Rather it is just a way to have potential to change education (Koehler & Mishra, 2005; Carr, Jonassen, Litzinger, & Marra, 1998; Zhao, 2003; Koehler, Mishra, Hershey, & Peruski, 2004). Better understanding may not necessarily lead to better performance, and how to help teachers to practice the knowledge is the crucial key to change education. Unfortunately, the authors spent very limited effort on how the teachers practice the knowledge they gained from podcasts, and this limitation undermine the authors' statement that using podcast would revolutionize teaching and learning.

Overall, with an understanding it does not necessarily cover all aspects of teachers' learning, I feel that this book is a useful and insightful resource for teachers who expect to learn a new technology for educational use, a good guidance for teachers who seek for materials and resources for their professional development, and a nice introduction resource for teacher educators and other parishioners who tend to design professional development activities for teachers. But, to promote podcast revolution in education, more issues concerning how teachers learn to teach should be further thoroughly discussed.

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