**The Use of Podcasts in the Learning Environment**

The situated learning I experienced during Module 2 allowed me to experiment with Web 2.0 tools that I had not used before. Learning within a community of practice offered assistance from peers as well as an opportunity to share new knowledge and understanding. Having only recently started branching out into web tool use, I was reminded of advice I was once given. The learning of new web tools is often 70% tenacity and 30% success. Success with many tools, at least for me, comes about through the ‘try, try again’ method. Module 2 offered a new way of learning. This meant that through collaborative and situated ways I was able to achieve success more quickly and easily.

Creating an audio file was something that I thought I would not be able to do. As a teacher I have often taught students that prefer audio instructions rather than having to read. In considerations of designing learning materials online in Module 1, I knew that incorporating the use of audio would be an important element.

Learning to create an audio file started with listening to instructions. This prompted me to incorporate a audio tool instructions for future online learning modules that I would develop. This would assist students in creating podcasts and audio devices as part of their assignment completion by having a tool page to refer to in completing any given module.

I recently read ‘iPod! uLearn?’ ([Laing, Wootton, & Irons, 2006](#_ENREF_1)) that summarizes key elements to consider in designing podcasts for educational use. In producing the podcast, Laing, Wootton and Irons encourage the creator to not read from a script. They explain that it is important to be informal, personal, passionate about the subject in order to enthuse and motivate the audience. It was beneficial during the learning task to receive comments about my voice and to listen to the range of styles from peers. I had to re-create my podcast a few times due to poor quality or because there were too many unnecessary pauses. This became a time consuming task that would need to be perfected if I were to incorporate podcasts more readily into learning design. I have since begun listening to more podcasts realizing how important the quality and content of the podcast is in the success of using this tool in education.

Lain, Wooton and Irons ([2006](#_ENREF_1)) provide suggestions on designing the content. An effective podcast style that I prefer incorporates interviews and dialogues. The combination of different voices breaks up the monotony of listening to one voice. I participate in my local Toastmasters club and considered the elements of good speeches. A podcast started with a scenario or introducing a problem would be an effective beginning. Story telling to convey messages would also be an effective way to deliver content.

I watch my two teenage daughters in how they use their iPod. Mobile learning will be a way of accessing educational information in the future. After completing my initial podcast for this course, I realized that successful podcasting for educational use targeted at today’s teenagers needs to be designed and integrated well into the learning environment. A benefit of podcasting certainly lies in the fact that it can incorporate synchronous and asynchronous learning. What will need to be considered is the environment that the podcast will be listened to in. I am interested in researching the teenage podcasting listening environment to ensure that podcasts are a useful learning tool.

***References***

Laing, C., Wootton, A., & Irons, A. (2006). iPod! uLearn? *Curent Development in Technology-Assisted Education* 514-518.