

From Pen to Mouse: Teaching and Learning Italian with Technology.

Multimedia Blackboards.

Roundtable I

Presented at the AAIS Annual Conference 2007 in Colorado Springs, CO

<http://faculty1.coloradocollege.edu/~drenga/aais/>

“Are we ready for podcasting? The help of podcasting in the teaching and learning of Italian language, culture and literature.”

@ Jacqueline Samperi Mangan

In my short presentation I would like to first briefly explain what podcasting entails and how it works, then I present to you my experience in class and finally I will show you the results and some suggestions on what works well with this technology.

The term *podcasting* is an amalgamation of two other words: *iPod* the popular digital music player from Apple, and *broadcasting*. Podcasts can be subscribed to and downloaded by listeners via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and can be accessed on a variety of digital audio devices, including a computer.

The portability and on-demand nature of podcasting are key components that allow listeners to catch up on audio content without having to sit at a computer and while completing other tasks. It is very interesting because of its *mobile learning* capability. *Vodcasting*, the video equivalent of podcasting, is a growing trend and has a future mobile learning potential. In my research, I have used both vodcasting and podcasting.

I have been working on two distinct but parallel researches on the use of iPod in teaching and learning at the Université de Montréal.

The first research, with the *Interdisciplinary Research Center on Emerging Technologies* (CITÉ) in partnership with the *Centre d'études et de formation en enseignement supérieur* (CEFES) of the *Université de Montréal*, is exploring the uses of podcasting in university teaching, and especially the uses of the iPod by students. The project looks at the relation youth have with information technologies and the way they integrate them in their studies. The teachers' perspective towards new technologies is also looked at. The research helps also to understand the notions of mobility and freedom that are associated with mobile digital multimedia devices, and the practices and interactions that they encourage in students' daily lives.

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The *Interdisciplinary Research Center on Emerging Technologies* (CITÉ) at the University of Montréal is a new center at the Faculty of Arts and Science that is breaking fresh ground by bringing together, from different disciplinary horizons, leading researchers in emerging technologies and multimedia.

The *Centre d'études et de formation en enseignement supérieur* (CEFES) at the University of Montréal is a research center dedicated to the study of learning and performance. It forms, assists, council and develops teaching for faculty members.

The *Comité local d'intégration pédagogique* (CLIP) at University of Montréal is a program open for researches on the integration, bettering and valorizing of the teaching of professors on contract.

The second research, with the *Comité local d'intégration pédagogique* (CLIP) is an exploration project on the podcasting as a teaching support in foreign languages. The project committee is exploring the use of the podcasting as support for the teaching of German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. Since the University of

Montréal is focusing on the internationalization of its studies, the podcasting offers to the foreign language students many authentic contents from various cultures and countries, and increases the material and time of the lessons.

Let me tell you now, how I have organized my Beginner's Italian 6 credits 90 hours course. The podcasting has been introduced in the second half of the course, because this is when the researches have started. And as a matter of fact, it was just perfect, because the students had a 45 hour language base to rely on, before starting with these projects. I have tried to offer a variety of different materials to download on their borrowed iPods or Zen audio-video machines. In it there are:

- All exercises and readings in audio form from the book
- A love story on audio *Storia d'Amore*
- A thriller story on audio *Delitto in Piazza del Campo*
- Pop songs
- Opera songs
- Video clips from *Dall'Italia Rai International*
- Oral presentations of some students

The students were offered bonus points if they would use the podcasting, instead of being penalized for not using it. All course material, information and technicalities have been added on a class blog which the students could access from the internet:

<http://web.mac.com/jacqueline>

<http://web.mac.com/jacqueline.samperi/iWeb/ITL1951/Blog/Blog.html.samperi>

My primary objective was to discover which kind of podcasting the students would prefer and how they would use the extra material on their iPod to help themselves to learn Italian.

At the end of the course the students could put their oral presentation on podcasting with audio and video.

An other objective was to present authentic material to students and add to the cultural aspect of learning a language by showing video clips of Italy and the regions. And finally, I was hoping that with their iPod the students would listen to readings and stories over and over, and practice their understanding and reading skills.

Repetition is "crucial" to learning a new language, but it is even more true when the student has a hearing impairment or a mental handicap. This was the case for a student in class who has a mental handicap and found it particularly beneficial to hear the lesson several times more than a regular student.

Learning takes place both in and out of the classroom. Language learning is a process. It takes time to acquire those language skills. The iPods combined with the class time has helped students become fluent more quickly.

At the end of the course I have given my students a questionnaire to fill with questions on the iPod and Podcasting.

Some questions were:

- What do you think about the iPod and Podcasting as a tool of learning?
- The new possibilities of learning using the podcasting have helped you in your learning the language?
- What have you appreciated best in the possibilities of learning with the iPod and the podcasting?
- What did you appreciated least in the possibilities of learning with the iPod and podcasting?
- Would you have added material to the podcasting? What would you have added?
- For what did you use your iPod most?

Etc.

Most students found the use of the iPod for the course very useful, but would not appreciate to have the entire course on podcasting, but only as extra material to help them study Italian. Most students found that the technical aspect of it was hard at the beginning. For example, they did not know how to download from

the server, or they had problems with it. At the end of the course though, some students were able to put their own oral presentation on podcasting and that means they were able to produce themselves a podcasting for the class to see on their iPods.

And finally I would like to end by saying that even the press was impressed by our research and here are two articles about our class and our project.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20070209/CPSOLEIL/70209271&SearchID=73273540325196>

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20070211/CPACTUALITES/702110564&SearchID=73272342706337>

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20070306/CPSOLEIL/70306248&SearchID=73274421881724>