

Podcasting in Education

El Paso-Texas Regional Collaboratives Partnership



Project Summary

The Podcasting in Education project is a pilot. The Jund Texas Regional Collaboratives for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching. The study is funded by the El Paso Corporation, a TRC statewide corporate partner, and supported by the Region 19 Collaborative in El Paso, TX. The study involves the state TRC office, staff at the Region 19 ESC, and twelve middle school science educators.

Project Goals

- Determine if podcasting can be an effective tool for supporting TRC science and mathematics education professional development programs.
- Define online support tools that will insure participants are successful in accessing podcasts.
- Identify content formats which are most beneficial for classroom teachers.
- Explore the tools and processes which will make it practical for authoring of podcast content by TRC staff and classroom teachers.
- Make informed decisions regarding the expansion of this online resource statewide.

Chronology of Project Activities and Results

Initial planning meeting: May 11, 2006 at Region 19 ESC

- Determined objectives, participants, and timeline

First hands-on training session for participants: June 28 - 29, 2006 at Region 19 ESC

- Project defined for participants
- Training in the use of iTunes to manage podcast content
- Distribution of one video iPod for each participant and hands on training for setup and use

Second hands-on training session for participants: October 31, 2006 at Region 19 ESC

- Participants shared technical presentations
- Participants received extensive materials to support their mentoring other educators in the use of podcasting in education. (PowerPoint slide show, handouts, online resources, and a presentation outline)
- Each teacher authored a podcast (all participants received audio capture software and a USB headset for recording high quality audio)

Executive briefing for El Paso Corporation, April 24, 2007

Online Project Collaboration

- Project Blog established
- Email List Serve
- Announcement and content podcasts
- Online project web resource
http://thetrc.org/podcast_ed/



PROJECT SPONSOR: EL PASO CORPORATION

A TRC Statewide Corporate Partner



Podcasting in Education

El Paso-Texas Regional Collaboratives Partnership



Tools Purchased or Provided for Participants

- QuickTime Player for easy recording of audio content
- Logitech headset, a USB audio recording tool
- Audacity for Windows or Mac capture and editing of audio content (free)
- 80 gig audio/video capable iPod
- Charging doc and AV cable to make it possible to project iPod video in the classroom
- The ESC has had access to an iMac, video camera, wireless and wired microphones for podcast authoring

Project Products

Online presenter's toolkit with:

Presenter's guide

PowerPoint presentation

Numerous handouts for the audience

http://thetrc.org/podcast_ed/Workshop_Materials.html

Podcast in education online resource guide tailored for science educators

http://thetrc.org/podcast_ed/

Project Results by Goal Statement

Determine if podcasting can be an effective tool for supporting TRC science and mathematics education professional development programs.

As a result of the study, staff has observed the knowledge and skills required for a science educator to become a consumer of podcast content using both the free application iTunes and the iPod for portable access. Staff has specific observations from the participants on the utility of these tools for podcast management.

Define online support tools that will insure participants are successful in accessing podcasts.

Staff has located, indexed, and authored resources which can insure educators will be successful in the use of podcast content for their professional growth.

Identify content formats which are most beneficial for classroom teachers.

Staff has defined format specifications for podcast content and tested these specifications with our participants. These formats include audio only, audio with synchronized slides and web links, and video.

Explore the tools and processes which will make it practical for authoring of podcast content by TRC staff and classroom teachers.

Staff has identified and mastered specific Windows and Macintosh tools for authoring podcast content, including: Audacity, QuickTime Player, Garage Band, iWeb, Profcast, and Mac OS X Weblog.

Make informed decisions regarding the expansion of this online resource statewide.

Staff has a plan for expansion of the use of podcasting and can offer support for the project directors who wish to publish podcasts as well.

Conclusions

Based on the exploration of podcasting with a limited group of educators, staff can now confidently expand the use of this new communication medium to support a larger science professional development community. The experiences will enable us to make informed decisions about support requirements and support tools which will be required for both podcast consumers and content authors. Staff has mastered the authoring tools which allow them to post new content frequently in all formats. The TRC has already established a Podcast Index on their web site with several podcasts which were authored during this study and expect to grow that list in the near future. The TRC found a greater interest in authoring by the participants than had been expected, and now understand that more users of our podcast content will result if authoring is supported to the degree it is practical.

Next Steps

1. Provide training for interested Collaborative directors or their appointees. This training will be in two phases. In phase one, the TRC will equip participants with personal knowledge and skills required to be consumers of podcast content for professional development and with the use of instructional materials to re-deliver this training locally to science teacher mentors (STMs). In phase two, we will train directors or their appointees with the skills to author podcasts.
2. Expand online support tools to support new podcast users in mastery of the technology.
3. Capture content at on going face-to-face professional development which can be used as podcasts, thus extending this training to a larger teacher audience and providing follow up access to content experts for attendees.
4. Promote training on podcast use through the Collaboratives to insure there is an audience for the content.