



TRC-Toyota USA Foundation Partnership



TRC Podcast Network

Project Description

With funding from the El Paso Corporate Foundation, the Texas Regional Collaboratives completed a pilot study at the Region 19 Science Collaborative (May 2006 – April 2007) to determine the feasibility of using podcasting as a professional development support tool. Based on the results of this pilot study, the TRC is embarking on a project to expand the use of this new communication medium to establish a statewide science and mathematics professional development **Podcast Network** to support TRC professional development programs. The TRC Podcast Network will provide an effective infrastructure for communication and is a component of our master plan for online expansion. Using the TRC Podcast Network, content in the form of text, audio, or video will be “broadcast” online from the originator to either specific groups or to our entire science and mathematics education community. Once established, we believe this new communication infrastructure will find many innovative applications. Applications of the Podcast Network will include connecting the classroom educator with content and professional development experts, follow-up mentoring after face to face professional development workshops, delivery of organizational announcements, and increased cross collaborative sharing of effective practice.

Implementation Sequence in Two Phases

In the 2007-08 project year, Cohorts 1 and 2 will receive training and begin implementation. In the 2008-09 project year, two additional cohorts will receive training and begin implementation. To successfully leverage this online media distribution system, it is important to establish a cadre of Collaborative **Podcast Specialists** throughout the state, at least one per collaborative. These Podcast Specialists will be expected to provide **Podcasting for Professional Development workshops**, reaching a minimum of 25 teachers during the project year. These workshops will address the skills for accessing podcast content.

The TRC will fund the travel and lodging for the Project Director or designee to attend these professional development academies. While recipients of podcast content can participate with any online computer, we know that the most frequent users of podcast content prefer to do so from a mobile device. To make sure our podcast specialists can include support for use of these mobile devices, we will equip attendees with an iPod (one per collaborative). In addition, we will remove a primary barrier to publishing by hosting podcast series published by Collaboratives on our TRC server.

The Professional Development Academy

This hands-on training opportunity for Podcast Specialists will:

1. Equip attendees with the knowledge and skills required to be consumers of podcast content for science and mathematics education professional development and with the use of workshop materials to provide this training at the regional level to science and mathematics teacher.
2. Introduce basic concepts of planning and authoring podcast content for regional support of their professional development programs.

By supporting regional training in the use of podcast content by our statewide professional development community, we will ensure this new communication infrastructure will be accessible to TRC teachers as educational leaders.



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Which Project Year Should Your Collaborative Participate in?

Will you participate in Phase I (2007-08) or Phase II (2008-09)? We know that each of our Collaboratives might be at different stages of readiness for online publishing based on the technology resources and skills locally available. There is not an expectation that every Collaborative will participate in our initial expansion of podcasting by offering training or by authoring content.

In Phase I, the 2007-08 year's efforts will definitely involve some problem solving and extra work to define the most effective tools for training and processes for authoring. In attending Phase I training, you are indicating you are ready to show a high level of interest, involvement, participation, and willingness to be an active member of a podcasting cohort. To allow for maximum benefit and one-on-one assistance in the training, each of the Professional Development Academies will be limited to 20 participants. Participants will be accepted on first come first served basis as reflected through an online registration.

Ongoing Support by the TRC state office

To ensure the success of TRC Podcast Specialists, the state TRC staff will establish several online tools to provide ongoing support and to foster sharing of effective practice. These will include:

1. A podcast covering tips for managing workshops and authoring of content.
2. An email list serve with announcements.
3. An online discussion forum for podcasts specialist.
4. An index of podcasts authored by participants.
5. Hosting for podcast series authored by participants.