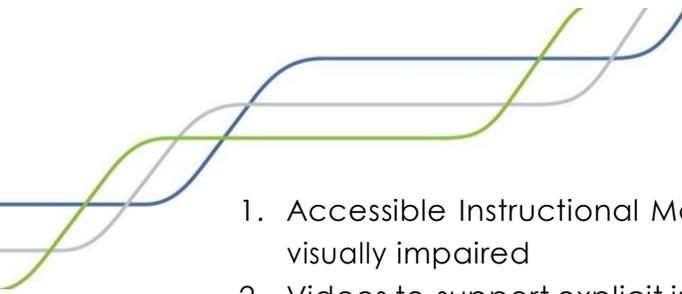# Dyslexia & Dysgraphia: Here Comes Pod/Vodcasting

Students experiencing dyslexia (difficulties reading) need more time to sound out letters and recognize words—time that is taken away from text comprehension and understanding. For those experiencing dysgraphia, the difficulty lies in moving thoughts and ideas into the written word—time invested in spelling out words and compiling sentences takes away focus. The key to both learning experiences is the need for a medium to facilitate the reading and writing processes. One way to make the reading process easier is to make educational materials readily available via audiobooks or **podcasting**; the writing process can be facilitated with the use of apps or via **vodcasting**.

Podcasting goes back to the 1930s in the form of radio shows. The term was coined in 2004 by Ben Hammersley in an article published by *The Guardian* about how the iPod was making the *Audible Revolution* possible. In the article, Ben discussed how the Internet had made audio production cheap, or even free. This new boom in amateur radio needed a new name, and Ben suggested **audioblogging**, **podcasting**, and **GuerillaMedia (1)**. **Podcasting** got mainstreamed because it easily merged the then recently released iPod with broadcasting. To podcast is to broadcast series of audio files, programs, video, or PDF files over the Internet. Users can subscribe, download, and stream shows, lectures, and online programs to a computer, smartphone or tablet. If you add video to a podcast, you have a **vodcast**!

Why use podcasts/vodcasts in the classroom?

The use of **podcasting/vodcasting** in the classroom opens up learning opportunities for "non-writers," auditory learners, homebound students, and students with physical and functional cognitive disabilities. Podcasts/vodcasts are also great alternatives for delivering content and/or lessons to students who need remedial or extended support. The use of voice and video for content delivery allow teachers to reach out to a student population born in the digital age. These digital natives are comfortable using the Web to access information, keep in touch with family and friends via email and instant messages, and to access educational content.

In the classroom, teachers can use **podcasting/vodcasting** to create:

1. Accessible Instructional Materials (AIMs) for the deaf/hard-of hearing and visually impaired
2. Videos to support explicit instruction for students with physical and functional cognitive disabilities
3. Audio assessment of students' reading fluency or foreign language pronunciation activity
4. Flipped classrooms where audio and video files are made available offline
5. Archive of lessons for reference and/or clarification on a subject
6. Stimulate learning and give direct access to information
7. Assign group projects that require incorporating audio/video to interview each other, tell stories, create newscasts, hold debates, or run radio shows

Podcasting/vodcasting can also be used as a community outreach tool to:
1. Keep in touch with parents, share students' work, and keep absent students up-to-date with class lectures, homework assignments and handouts
2. Create classroom instructions for substitute teachers
3. Create school announcements and post them on their website

What is in it for students?
The consistent use of podcasts/vodcasts increase students' focus and develop independent learning skills, promote the use of alternative technology/tools to access and deliver information and content, and create alternative ways to communicate with school, family, and the community at large.

Creating podcasts/vodcasts
The creation and production of a podcast/vodcast involves a wide range of technology related skills and increased content mastery. For the production of a podcast/vodcast, students use and develop various skills:
1. Improve listening skills and enhance learning by targeting each child's interest
2. Develop collaborative skills for easy sharing of information
3. Become active visual learners through videos and PDFs, and auditory learners through audio clips
4. Develop researching, writing, and speaking skills to effectively deliver content and information
5. Solve problems, manage time, investigate and choose attention grabbing images and vocabulary

Getting Started

To use podcasting/vodcasting effectively and efficiently, all you need is a microphone, audio recording software and a platform to publish your product.

1. **Record it:** It is important to record the podcast/vodcast using *MP3* file formatting because it is widely used and produces good audio quality. To record a podcast, you will need an application or an open source like Audacity or GarageBand; to create videos, you will need iMovie or Windows Moviemaker.
2. **Upload it:** Submit the podcast/vodcast to educational directory services such as iTunes Music Store, Education Podcasts, GoogleDrive and SchoolTube.

Copyright Issues

Copyright covers intellectual property—that includes authorship of any literary works, tables, photographs, sound and video, broadcasts and software. In the creation of your podcast/vodcast you **MAY** use materials without permission **IF:**

1. Work is licensed under the Creative Commons Agreement:
   http://search.creativecommons.org/
2. You have created the work yourself.
3. Use of a link to a third party webpage (but not the web page content itself)

Royalty-Free Music

Students like to add music to their work, be it a short story, an essay, or a short documentary. The following sites offer copyright free music. Make sure, however, to give credit.

1. **ccMxter**: Tons of music that falls under the Creative Commons license,
2. **Public Domain 4U:** All music that is in public domain has an expired copyright. Public domain music, video and other content can be used in your podcast/vodcast.
3. **Musopen:** Like **Public Domain 4U**, this site offers music with expired copyright.
4. **Incompetech**: Music that is free to use for video soundtrack.
5. **DanoSongs**: is a composer site. You can use the songs for free **IF** you place a link to the site or credit the composer in your podcast/vodcast.
6. **Free Soundtrack Music**: Royalty-free to use in multimedia productions. Some of the music is "FREE" and can be easily downloaded and added to your podcast/vodcast.

Selected sources:

Audible revolution *The Guardian*:

http://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia

Educational Technology Network:
http://www.edtechnetwork.com/index.htm

EdTech:
http://blog.simplek12.com/education/5-classroom-uses-for-podcasts-plus-real-life-examples/

Educause: http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7003.pdf

Podcasting, Vodcasting, & Video Hosting:
http://www.emergingedtech.com/category/podcasting_vodcasting_video_hosting/