The AOM IM Division Teaching Committee How to Write Different Types of Cases Series Presents:
"PodClasses" – Design, Production, and Use of Tailored Audio-Content for the Classroom

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In early 2019, Netscape founder and influential venture capitalist, Marc Andreessen, hailed Apple for its latest "killer app" that actually was a piece of hardware – the Apple AirPods. Andreessen was so bullish about the technology because people can – and actually do – listen to content for hours in a row, while in a car, doing chores, or studying. In the first half of 2019, there were around 700,000 free podcasts, and 22 percent of Americans regularly listened to podcasts (Jin et. al., 2019). A substantial portion of the podcast market is educational content although very few creators of podcasts have deliberately built education around audio content. Universities in the US have been offering a eclectic mix of audio content ranging from recorded lectures to produced podcast series. Harvard University has recently moved into the "PodCase" space (https://hbsp.harvard.edu/podcases/). However, the currently available podcases on that platform are often not more than interviews with business leaders.

Following the belief that there is more potential in delivering course content via an auditory medium, a small team of faculty from California Lutheran University teamed up with a serial entrepreneur and podcaster to produce a pilot of a "PodClass" in early 2019. Our PodClass focuses on the topic ofechnology adoption across generations as an issue occurring in many industries, especially those that are disrupted by high-growth technology companies, such as hospitality and tourism. With our PodClass, we sought a better understanding of the challenges that organizations in the sector face and the solutions they have found. We interviewed leaders from four different high-performing hospitality organizations and curated their responses to fit an instructional framework. Following a storytelling approach, we approached them with early assumptions around managing technology integration inside a workforce of employees of multiple generations. Our work revealed many surprising real-world stories and methods. Technology and generational issues were not always as stereotypical as we expected, and many times, our experts revealed to us unexpected twists and refreshingly pragmatic solutions.

A beta version of the first PodClass was tested during Spring Term 2020 in two different undergraduate courses, Information Technology in Hospitality and Managerial Leadership to evaluate student acceptance and student learning (Evans, 2008). The PodClass is available from https://soundcloud.com/clu-podclass/established-strategies-for-managing-technology-deployment-within-a-multigenerational-workforce/s-25wkN.

This document provides instructions and notes for like-minded colleagues who would like to expand on the concept of the PodClass.

1. Start here: Learning Outcomes and Other Objectives

Producing a good PodClass is not different from the instructional design of a new course or the writing of a case study. It always starts with a vision for a certain learning outcome, and it always requires a good story, often centered around a complex issue and frequently rooted in the idea of problem-based learning (Lane, 2007). Our experience in producing audio content has shown that it is beneficial to:

- Work on content that centers around a narrowly defined topic;

- Produce it in the tradition of story-telling;
- Design it as a segment / support material for existing courses;
- Make it applicable across multiple courses and subject areas;
- Feature a multiplicity of voices and viewpoints, including those from practice/industry;
- Keep it short by not making a PodClass longer than 20 minutes.

While we believe that there is a possibility to produce entire courses in the form of an audio-only PodClass, we feel that it is beneficial to build a smaller, more palatable version first.

2. It takes a Village … and Resources

Designing a PodClass requires a very diverse skillset that ranges from those related to teaching and research to storytelling (if not scriptwriting) and to those that are more technical, such as interviewing, hosting, voice recording, and sound editing. We recommend to have the following in place:

- **Producer:** Think of the producer as the director of a movie. The producer puts the team together and manages the production from concept to publication.
- **Editorial Team:** Must include at least the instructor to provide learning outcomes, key messages and key concepts, but ideally also includes a skilled case writer with strong storytelling skills who has the ability to tell a complex story in a simple manner (Gustafsson, 2017).
- **PodClass Host:** A PodClass needs a narrator-moderator who guides the learner through the entire learning experience. Ideally, the narrator has experience in radio or podcasting and the right sound of voice that exudes confidence and invites learners to listen.
- **Production Team:** Both the recording of audio content and the post-production requires serious sound-editing skills, which is why we found it ideal to collaborate with professional sound engineers.
- **Industry Guests:** A PodClass is similar to a radio feature – listeners (students) don't expect a monotonous audio lecture by their instructor, but an interesting story that is told through multiple viewpoints by different contributors or guests that share their experience. Similar to case study research, having multiple protagonists makes the message of the PodClass more convincing (Eisenhardt, 1991).

Naturally, the same individuals can fulfill multiple roles (and, considering resource constraints, most likely will have to…). Unless all resources including equipment and services are provided by your university, the minimum direct cost for the production of a 20-minute PodClass can be significant, even when done on a shoestring and without charging for faculty time:

- Faculty Time:
  - Concept and script development 20 hours
  - Review during post-production 10 hours
- Recording of Interviews:
  - PodClass Host: min. $1,500
  - Sound recording: min. $1,500
- Post Production: min. $1,500

3. Process and Phases

The design of a PodClass should be supported by strong project management that sees the production through the following stages (McGuire & Whaley, 2017):

- **Concept Phase**, in which instructors and case writers produce vision for the topic of the PodClass, including learning outcomes and storyline. It's very important to keep the learner in mind at this stage (Lane, 2007).
- **Planning Phase**, in which a project team of faculty and technical production partners are selected and a rough project plan is established.
- **Instructional Design, Content and Script Development**, in which all partners work on a rough storyboard for the PodClass.
- Production Schedule, during which industry contacts are identified, contacted, and interviews are scheduled.
- **Production and Post-production**, in which audio is recorded, engineered and produced.
- **Beta-Testing and Refinement**, during which the PodClass is tested on students, feedback is collected, and adjustments to the PodClass are made.

4. Using PodClasses

PodClasses can be used in a number of different ways in an educational setting:

- **In-class discussions:** Ask students to listen to the PodClass prior to coming to class (in lieu, for instance, of reading a case study) and lead a classroom discussion around the topic.
- **As a research assignment:** Have students listen to the podcast and interview people in their own network about topics covered in the PodClass.
- **As a method of assessment:** Have students listen to the PodClass and relate the content to extant concepts and theories.

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