

# Podcasting in higher education

## Solving the Global Learning Crisis podcasts

**Intro:** Welcome to this podcast series on solving the global learning crisis. We'll discover how Ethiopia, Nepal and Mozambique are reshaping their higher education programs in response to the changing demands of the 21st century.

**Eila:** Hello and welcome to the podcast.

My name is Eila Burns from the School of Professional Teacher Education at JAMK University of Applied Sciences. Today we talk about the instructions that we should keep in mind when beginning to work on podcasting. With me here is one of our student teachers, Pilvi Kivelä who focused on making instructions for the podcasting project.

**Eila:** At first, could you tell us shortly why you took part in the podcasting project and what your role in it was?

**Pilvi:** I was interested in how podcasting can be used as a part of higher education both as a reporting method and as a pedagogic tool.

At the course, Pedalab, the course aim was to use design-based research method to deepen and focus our learning. Part of my specific tasks was to iterate and formulate general instructions into the form of a podcast

**Eila:** Thank you Pilvi. Next, let's hear what kind of tips you have for us.

First things first, how is podcasting a worthwhile method for sharing information in higher education?

**Pilvi:** Podcasting works for communicating and sharing ideas and experiences like any other media.

However, podcasts can be listened to on your way to work or school. If comparing it to scientific publishing, podcasting offers a fast way to get public and it is possible to reach a wider audience. It also makes your work visible on a more regular basis which may work in your favour when applying for financial support. On the other hand, when compared to video, podcasts don't have such a high demand for space and internet.

**Eila:** Does it demand a lot of work to write scripts and rehearse for the podcasts?

**Pilvi:** If you haven't done podcasting before so that you need to learn everything from the scratch, it requires a good amount of work.

However, the purpose is that recording becomes a natural part of reporting your project process without any extra work. So, whenever you have a meeting - online or live - record it. When you are going to present your topic in a conference, rehearse it and record it. When you write a paper or an annual report, read it aloud and record it. Recording your work benefits even yourself; When reading your text aloud or rehearsing your presentation and then listening to it, you notice if it sounds natural and you have missed some important points. Even written text should be fluent and after modifying it a thousand times people tend to lose touch with their own text, so this can actually help you to keep any produced report understandable.

**Eila: So, just to make sure, for a beginner, you recommend to pre-script the podcasts?**

**Pilvi:**

Yes, definitely. As a student I, myself, did this to gain expertise and - as such - I got familiar with podcasting structures and story writing and scripting and how I can make it sound natural and spontaneous. I worked for a month for the final product. As a beginner, you should get familiar with your topic, you need to think about the structure and what kind of story you want to tell. It requires work. However, what it comes to the final podcast, it should sound natural and spontaneous. You can't read it from a paper. So, you should get so well familiar with your topic and subject that during the final podcasting, you can relax and smile, - shake yourself a little bit to make your body relax - listen to the other people and react like you would do normally - and, at that point, let the topic lead you and be human.

**Eila: Ok, hold on, what do you mean by being a human?**

**Pilvi: Well, you should sound like yourself and be present.**

For someone it may mean that you should express emotions and for another person that you don't need to speak grammatically correct. Both are equally right. From the beginning to the very end of the podcast, listeners can hear if you are present and truly yourself. You need to be flexible and give space for spontaneous reactions and ideas and maybe you end up asking questions that you weren't prepared for. Tiny errors don't matter, those make you more human. What matters is whether you connect with and touch your audience. Be present at the moment: if someone says something interesting, bring it up and ask for more. Be surprised, wonder together, figure it out together. That's what is noticed.

**Eila: Even though you spoke about being natural and spontaneous, you took up story telling. What did you mean by that? We are speaking about the progress of the projects, aren't we?**

**Pilvi: Yes and no. The topic here is your project. However, storytelling is what makes your listeners listen to the podcast to the very end of it.**

If you don't have a story to tell, you'll lose your listeners. So, when scripting a podcast, think about the positive and negative sides. In a scientific paper you can include only the main details of used methods and results and there is little space for human errors or frustration or the birthday cake that your co-worker brought to work. Yet, here you can include all those things and tell what happened in real-life. A funny accident at work is really good material for the podcast series - as long as you don't dwell on the bad things but bring up the good things and solutions as well. What kind of problems did you face, how you solved them, what made you laugh, what caused you to almost give up. All hints, errors, advices for others, tiny moments that encouraged you forward. All those everyday events are important. They touch people. Just remember, don't put too many things into a single podcast - instead, make another one. You shouldn't tell more than just one story in one podcast.

**Eila: Story telling is a good beginning point but did you take into consideration permissions and aspects on what can you actually publish?**

**Pilvi: Good point. That brings us to practical issues.**

In order to publish a podcast we need permission from everyone that is involved in it and can be recognised from it. If you interview someone you have to ask permission to publish the recording. On the other hand, if you are asked for an interview on a local newspaper, tv or radio, ask

permission to get the recording and use it on our podcast page. If some parts are publishable but then there are issues that are private or your project denies getting public with it, you need to let us know about it. The final editing is done at JAMK so that we can remove parts of conversation still after you send it to us. Just, let us know about any permission issues.

**Eila: Now that you took up editing, are there any technical issues that should be taken into consideration during the recording?**

**Pilvi:**

Yes, definitely. In order for us to cut and edit the podcast you need to remember to breath and keep breaks. It helps the listener to follow as well. Another - and probably most important - thing is voice quality. There are several recording devices available from recorders to PCs and phones. Whichever device you use, get familiar with the recording options beforehand. Find out if you need to install a separate package for the recording. Most likely you need a microphone and headset for good voice quality. Also, recording distance is important and depends on the device. Make sure you know how close to the microphone you need to speak so that you can be heard. Also, if your microphone is on a table and records everyone without the need to move - if someone else passes by, it can be heard, too. All kind of background noise makes it hard to hear You. So, make sure the recording happens in a space that is as quiet as possible and there is no by-passers or echo or any other disturbing voices.

**Eila:**

We have now covered storytelling, speaking naturally with breaks, voice quality and making sure to get familiar with your recording device, plus asking permission to publish the recording.

**Eila: Is there still something else you wish to say?**

**Pilvi:**

Oh, there is so much to say and so little time! Just be relaxed and present. Smile when talking. It can be heard. If there are any questions or issues regarding to presenting your topic - or technical issues - or anything at all, ask for help. You don't need to get it done all by yourself.

I wish everyone good luck with podcasting. Remember to enjoy the process! Thank you!

**Eila: Thank you Pilvi for the interview.**

In the next episode we will hear about music branding for the podcast. Stay tuned.

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