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TUNING IN TO STUDENTS' NEEDS:
PODCASTING IN A FRENCH CLASSROOM

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Live as if you were to die tomorrow.

Learn as if you were to live forever.

-Mahatma Gandhi

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Abstract

This qualitative research study documents the observed behaviors and reported experiences of a regular education French Teacher and her class of nine French 3 students engaging in podcasting. The study examines the use of podcasts and music videos and their role in listening, reading, and speaking proficiencies. The study also examines the use of student choice as an important role in providing meaningful and authentic listening experiences to motivate students. The study suggests that explicit instruction and guided practice with listening strategies combined with authentic experiences allows students to use the strategies independently to better listening comprehension. The data also suggested better speaking fluency and reading comprehension as unforeseen results.

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Researcher's Stance

"It takes a certain ingenuous faith - but I have it - to believe that people who read and reflect more likely than not come to judge things with liberality and truth."- A.C Grayling.

Grayling's quotation is descriptive of my life personally and professionally. The waves that move me forward are the same waves that I must sit from a distance and observe with serenity. How could one possibly continue on her path without learning from the past? In order for my life to be lived to the fullest I find that if I don't continue to change and evolve, then I am not the personal best I can be. I have been guided by this mindset throughout my teaching career to date, and this thinking has blossomed profoundly in my time at Moravian College.

During the time I spent working on my undergraduate degree, I had the opportunity to study French abroad in Nancy, France. Prior to that, I'd had 5 years of public school French, and 2 years of college level French courses. I certainly learned a lot in the classrooms, but I truly felt that the time abroad was the most beneficial learning experience I had as a French major. My learning was pushed to immediate relevant experiences. I had to comprehend native French speakers who were right in front of me in order to complete tasks: such

as seeing a doctor or signing up for a bank account. I was forced to sink or swim. Since this time, I have been a teacher whose values are rooted in authentic learning. By design, my classroom becomes a whirlwind of projects, including scrapbooks, a French library, games, quite simply: anything that can emulate an experience abroad within the confines of my public school classroom. I generally find that this increases student motivation and contextualizes student learning.

When it comes to test time, however, students generally find the listening section difficult, and this is a red flag for me. Although I speak a lot of French in class, students seem to have trouble understanding when visual cues are gone, or when the repetitive teacher talk has dissipated. The recordings for the listening assessment are native French speakers; and although I speak French well, I am a native born American- and inevitably have an American accent. Furthermore, I know that as a teacher, being clear about my lesson and my expectations is my first priority. I find myself reverting to English perhaps a few times when I would otherwise prefer to be speaking in French. I do this for many reasons, but mainly because I feel it is *my* responsibility for students to understand, and am committed to being a teacher who will not move on without their understanding. Forcing someone to hear French 90-100% of a class period

becomes an invalid approach for me if the language barrier keeps their learning outside of each student's zone of proximal development.

I remember when I was a student, before I studied abroad, when I also had trouble with listening comprehension. In French, oftentimes letters are silent when spoken, but present when reading or writing them. Entire endings on verbs may not be pronounced, or only some of the letters may be vocalized. Vowel sounds and words run together when a native speaker talks, and there are also liaisons which change the way words are pronounced at intermittent times. This makes the French language sound melodious and beautiful, but also very hard for non-native speakers to master. Students surely run into these difficulties while speaking-but seem to have an easier time remembering more of these differences while they speak because they are, perhaps, self-conscious about their production abilities. When it comes to listening, they seem overwhelmed. I'm not sure if this is because it's a receptive skill. Or maybe, it is because they are teenagers who are constantly being told what to do. Whatever the reason, my students find it harder to form words in their mind and comprehend the meaning.

In class, when the teacher speaks the target language, students use what linguist Stephen Krashen refers to as comprehensible input. Students are given

visuals- words, gestures, symbols- as a support to aid listening comprehension at a level that is just one step above their current level. This gives practice and a supported expansion of the target language to aid in development. When it comes to the test, however, or listening solely to audio (such as a radio), all of that visual support is gone. As I was reflecting upon my practice in order to select a topic for further inquiry, I discovered a weak area in my teaching practice. Why am I testing students this way without giving them enough explicit practice?

When students take my class, I ask them: “What do you want to get out of it?” Most students say, “I want to be able to speak French.” What they really mean is that they want to be able to have an actual conversation with a French speaker. They tend to care less about reading and writing, and simply want to develop the ability to converse with someone face to face. Also, they often say that they want to be able to understand French music or TV. Therefore, the two major skills involved are speaking and listening.

While reviewing some common educational philosophies, I found that my values identify strongly with personal relevance and social adaptation. When reflecting upon my own experiences and those of my students, I wanted to come up with a way to tie in the authenticity of studying abroad while helping students

practice a skill that is applicable to other contexts. How could I make learning personally relevant to my students while providing them with better listening practices? Where could I find some native speakers talking about a topic that would interest my students? Then I had my “aha” moment: My students and I can find it online.

Many of my students live in a virtual online world for hours of the day. Whether it is texting, Facebook, internet, video games, iPods, iPads, electronic readers, etc, they have their connections to others quite frequently through technology. They are the railroads and highways that are changing the way the “goods” are delivered. Why can’t we use technology in the same way to work to our mutual advantage? I don’t know many native French speakers in the local community, but students and I do have this electronic resource at our fingertips to help provide a *virtual* study abroad experience in our classroom.

So, as I looked at the waves I have made in my first 5 years of teaching, I wondered: could podcasts be a good way to promote better listening comprehension for this “virtual generation”? How will students respond to hearing podcasts? I could provide them with varying levels of challenges and different ways of listening: sometimes with a script, sometimes without. I could allow them to choose a topic in which they are interested to listen to. Would this

help them perform better on their listening summative assessments, or will the riptide pull them under? How will podcasting impact their speaking abilities?

In honor of my passion for teaching, my fearless need to reflect and move forward, and my strong beliefs in personal relevance, my research question is: “What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of French 3 students regarding listening comprehension and speaking abilities when implementing podcasts in the classroom?”

Literature Review

Introduction

Today's adolescents are multitaskers who search for stimulation (French, 2006, p.58). They text while listening to music. They do their homework while surfing the web, or talking on the phone. Many of their interests and hobbies involve using technology, including online gaming, blogging, Facebook®, Pandora®, and Twitter®. In fact, students often spend three hours per day on the internet (Niemuth, 2010). In order to help meet the ever-expanding needs of today's students, the educational system can draw upon abilities and strengths that the student may already possess: familiarity with technology.

Furthermore, the promise of accessibility to native speakers via the internet excites foreign language teachers who know that students need many hours of exposure and practice to attain fluency. Rosell-Aguilar of the Open University (2009) concludes that "with the right supplementary materials and environments, podcasting has the potential to bring us one step closer to finally delivering online language learning that can take place anytime anywhere" (p.29). This literature review examines the uses of podcasting in education and the foreign language classrooms, reviews its application to current foreign

language pedagogical best practices, and identifies the advantages and disadvantages of podcasts.

What is podcasting?

Definition, purpose, and terminology

In 2005, the New Oxford American Dictionary declared “podcast” as the word of the year after much growth in the educational and medical fields (Jalai, Leddy, Gauthier, Sun, Hincke, & Carnegie, 2011; Wolf, 2007). Many different definitions of podcasting have emerged as technology is constantly changing. The term “podcast” is a mix of two terms: pod, and broadcast. Pod refers to the popular Apple, Inc. product line of iPods®, and broadcasting referring to a transmission of a program or information (Smythe, & Neufeld, 2010). Wolfe (2007) defines podcasting as, “the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio or video programs, over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on mobile devices and personal computers” (p.49). Prior definitions of podcasting included solely the use of audio, but for the purpose of this study, Wolfe’s definition will be used, which includes the use of audio and video.

Monk, Ozawa, & Thomas (2006) note that the purpose of podcasts is to publish digital audio and video, allowing for transfers of these files, improving on

the quality of prior technologies, such as cassette and VHS tapes. A key characteristic of podcasting is that these files are accessible to anyone, anywhere, and anytime, providing for portability and availability (Gkatzidou, & Pearson, 2009; French, 2006; Smythe, & Neufeld, 2010; Fox, 2008; Rossell-Aguilar, 2007). Podcasts can be listened to on a portable device or on the computer (Fox, 2008). Also, a podcast can be created by anyone using a computer, microphone, and a software program (Ducate & Lomika, 2009).

At times, even to an educated person, technology seems to have a language of its own. Jalai et. al. (2011) explain that, "The term podcast can mean the individual file as well as the entire series of files" (p.742). The term RSS, abbreviated for Really Simple Syndication, is a programming code format for the web in which podcasts can be published and fed to subscribers. If a user subscribes to a podcast, the RSS feed will ensure that he/she receives the most updated podcast automatically (Jalai & al., 2011). Numerous software programs and websites have important terms to know when creating podcasts. Garage Band®, for MAC users, and Audacity® for PC users are software programs that can record a podcast from a personal computer with a microphone. This recording is then saved as a MP3 file, (MP stands for Motion Picture, and 3 being a layer of the audio recording) and can be posted on a number of file hosting

service websites online for publication (Richardson, 2006; Young 2007). Despite the terminology, the ease of creation and quick online accessibility allow the average person to be able to disseminate information about any topic for the world to see and hear.

Types of Podcasts

Rosell-Aguilar (2009) discusses two main types of mobile learning: didactic and discursive. Didactic mobile learning is “learning from mobile educational material... in a way that responds to the potential and the limitations of mobile devices” (p.23). Podcasting falls under the category of didactic mobile learning, as do other tools that provide for only a one way transmission of information: such as do websites, videos, etc. Discursive mobile learning is “based on the interaction among mobile learners” and typically does not involve podcasting because personal media players with RSS feeds are not able to interact in synchronous time (p.23). Examples of discursive learning include those in which data can be transmitted two ways, such as blogs.

This didactic podcasting can be divided into three main types based on their point of creation: teacher developed, student developed, and commercial/community materials (McQuillan, 2006; Rosell-Aguilar (2007).Teacher developed podcasts can be any type of supplemental material

that the teacher records and can tailor to a particular student language level. Student developed podcasts encompass a number of projects and could be used for instruction or assessment. They can even use the files as a way to exchange information, perhaps as audio pen pals. Finally, commercial/community materials are those that are published to the internet by universities, schools, profit and non-profit institutions, and other institutions. These include a wide variety of subjects published by many different authors (McQuillan, 2006, Sze, 2006).

In regards to learning language via podcasts, Rosell-Aguilar (2007) notes there are two different types of language podcasts: authentic material choices and language courses. Authentic materials would be podcasts produced by, and typically, for, native speakers. This could be, for example, a French radio station or a French children's book read aloud. Language courses, by contrast, are meant for direct education instruction. The latter can be distinguished further into two types: whole courses, and supplementary materials. Whole language courses by podcasts serve as their own direct instruction with their own language curriculum. Supplementary materials are add-on lessons, perhaps about a specific grammar topic or set of generally themed vocabularies to support general learning (p.476).

History of podcasting: Educational Roots

Although widely used in today's society, Goodwin-Jones (2005) comments that podcasting originates from a small audience of Mac users, an "esoteric activity by computer geeks for computer geeks" (p. 10). The process commenced being very complex and required scripts that ran only on a Mac (p.10).

In 2005, Duke University in North Carolina, and Osaka Jogakuin College in Japan were the first institutions to report using portable media devices for education. Osaka Jogakuin College provided iPods® to incoming students as audio learning aids to help their students learn English (Dukate and Lomicka, 2009, p.67). Duke University provided students with teacher-made podcasts for a variety of topics. For example, the Spanish teacher recorded oral quizzes, pronunciation work, and audio vocabulary flashcards (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, p.475). Duke found that iPods® could be effective for:

- lectures, and speeches,
- as a recording tool for class discussions and lectures,
- giving and receiving verbal feedback,
- use for projects, interviews, field notes, environmental sounds,
- repeated listening and repetition in foreign language (Monk, Ozawa, & Thomas, 2006, pp 86-87).

Henceforth, other Universities started experimenting with iPods® and podcasting. Old Dominion University received a grant and in fall 2006 started a pilot project for instructional podcasting. This project inspired a follow up project supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), allowing foreign language teachers to use and collect data on a variety of podcasts during the 2007-2008 academic years. The goal of the study was to “examine the effects of podcasting on second language acquisition,” and the data indicated that there were noteworthy differences between classes who used them, and those who did not (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009, pp 78-79).

Currently, many educators in the public school system, in subject areas ranging from ESL to chemistry, are completing research on podcasting in their classrooms in hopes of increasing student achievement. (Smythe & Neufeld, 2010, Bergmann, & Sams, 2009). This thesis study hopes to contribute to ongoing research.

Uses in Education

Full curricular integration versus supplemental material

There are numerous ways that a teacher can implement podcasting in the classroom. Before changing instruction, it is important to understand the

difference between full curricular integration and using podcasts as a supplemental material.

Including podcasting in the curriculum is most effective when it supports the instructional goals of the curriculum (Monk, et al., 2006, p.88). Abdous, Camarena, and Facer (2009), define this appropriate goal setting with podcasts as:

...the planned integration of podcasting into a variety of instructional activities, which include recorded critiques of student projects and exams, student video presentations, student interviews, recorded lectures, roundtable discussions, and guest lectures. (p.79)

A study by Abdous, Camarena and Facer (2009) tested the use of academic podcasting in the foreign language classroom. The study took place in Old Dominion University language classes. Researchers desired to evaluate the overall effects of podcasting, and compare the effects on student learning when integrated verses when used as a supplemental material only. They concluded that students are more likely to use the technology and report the benefits when podcasts are used for multiple purposes. Therefore, integration requires the use of podcasts over time to meet more than one instructional goal.

Supplemental use is the unplanned use of podcasting. Using a podcast for simply reviewing or listening to a lecture would be an example, because the podcast is only being used in one manner, essentially separate from instruction (Abdous et al., 2009, p.79).

Monk et al. (2006) suggest that there should be a “design perspective” for integrated e- learning; the classroom should try to combine different elements and characteristics, tying in the classroom with coherent procedures for the virtual learning (p.88). I will explain the design of my study in the upcoming methodology section.

General classroom uses

Podcasting can be used in any classroom in a variety of ways. Richardson (2006) records teachers using their podcasts for weekly audio episodes, and in some classrooms the podcasts are for kids, by kids. Podcasting could be used as a radio show to inform parents about events inside and outside the classroom. Educators are also sharing best practices with their peers through podcasts (p.55). Podcasts can be used in any educational way that aligns with the teacher’s pedagogical practices. Listed below are common ways that podcasts have been employed:

Teacher generated

- Record/review lecture material, allowing absent students to get missed information or for distance learning (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009, p.68; Abdous & al., 2009; French, 2006, p.58; Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.295; Bergmann & Sams, 2009, pp 22-27; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, p.474)
- Guest lecturers (Abdous & al., 2009, p.79 ; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p.480)
- Discussions (Abdous & al., 2009, p.79)
- Distributing notes or other course content (Wolf, 2007, p.52)
- Giving instructions (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Developing audio/video recruiting brochures with personalized messages (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Archiving and on-demand distribution of oral histories (Wolf, 2007, p.53 ; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p.474)

Student generated

- Projects: students create and publish for a real audience (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; p.68; Smythe & Neufeld, 2010, p.488; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, p.474)
- Student interviews (Abdous & al., 2009 p.79; French, 2006, p.58; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p.474)
- Field notes (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Self-assessment tool (Jalai & al., 2011, p.743)
- Audio diaries (Wolf, 2007, p.53; Sze, 2006, p.123)
- Opinion pieces (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Debates (Wolf, 2007, p.53 ; Sze, 2006, p.123)

- Musical performances (Wolf, 2007, p.53 ; Sze, 2006, p.124)
- Oral book report (Sze, 2006, p.123)

Community created

- Study support (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Marketing (Wolf, 2007, p.54)
- Distributing sporting events (Wolf, 2007, p.53)
- Online phone directory (Wolf, 2007, p.54)
- Radio/Music (Wolf, 2007, p.54)
- Audio books (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.295)
- News and announcements (Wolf, 2007, p.54 ; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p.474)

Second language acquisition theories and foreign language podcasting

Ideas of how to use podcasting in the classroom require the teacher to assimilate this new technology into sound pedagogical practice. How do podcasts relate to existing second language acquisition theories? Let's examine the implications of the podcast's potential.

Comprehensible input

Stephen Krashen's widely accepted view of language acquisition theory states that we acquire languages when we can understand what is being communicated to us, when it is culturally relevant and accurate, and it is

connected to the target culture. Language input must be comprehensible to the listener or learning will not take place. (McQuillian, 2006, p.2) There are many ways to do this: provide important background knowledge, clear up confusions that arise, slow down a script, re-read a text, and learn appropriate coping strategies of extra- linguistic clues (McQuilian, 2006, p.3).

Podcasting may serve as one way to help make spoken language more comprehensible to the learner. In fact, Abdous et al. (2009) concluded that podcasting had a strong effect on listening and understanding in a foreign language. Podcasting can be adjusted to meet the needs of the learner while agreeing with best language practices. Fox (2008) implemented podcasts into an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom and suggests the following strategies for implementing podcasting:

Listening for pleasure with a follow up discussion, listening with a pre-prepared teacher glossary, listening to short chunks for lower levels, listening with a transcript, listening for dictation practice, as part of a distance learning course, and listening to a slowed down version (pp 4-5)

Using podcasting in these ways allows for more comprehensible input, to aid students' understanding of second languages. iPods® and most MP3 technologies can do the following: rewind, fast-forward, "slow the rate of

speech, provide contextual support, use vocabulary on the student's level, and build upon existing background knowledge" (McQuillan, 2006, p.4) to make language more comprehensible.

Authentic use/constructivist/ meaningful opportunities

Language learning tasks should be interesting and challenging for the student. They should provide opportunities to produce the target language and be interactive to a relevant audience. Podcasting can support constructivism in language learning (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, p.476). Many researchers value the idea of using podcasts for student projects because the podcast process provides them authentic practice in the language while creating and publishing their work (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009, p.68; Adbdous and al., 2009, p.79).

Smythe and Neufeld's (2010) use of podcasting in the ESL classroom provides an example of podcasting integration for authentic learning, and meaningful learning opportunities, two important practices in language acquisition. Middle school students were "invited to write a story, turn it into an illustrated book, record it onto the computer, and upload it to a web server for their grade 3 little buddies"(p.10). This use of podcasts actually resulted in the product of a new classroom community during podcast time. Students were using the target language while doing their project and developing relationships

that strengthened the classroom environment. Equally important, students were engaged participants in a project that developed English skills through an authentic context. They were involved in inquiry based learning.

Perhaps one of the best examples of using podcasts for constructivist learning comes from two Chemistry teachers in Colorado. Bergmann and Sams (2008) were looking for a way to provide more hands on, real world opportunities for their students. They changed their class structure; they used video podcasts to distribute the lecture portion of the class and had students watch it as homework. The result was about 40 extra minutes per class for lab activities or guided/independent practice, which allowed for more individual instruction. Inspired by their success, foreign language teachers at their school then began to record conversation and grammar lessons for students to listen to at home.

In the foreign language classroom, podcasts can be used for any of the ways previously mentioned above. Some particular language projects that promote authentic communicative use include:

- “How-to tasks” (Young, 2007, p. 45)
- Interviews of native speakers (Young, 2007, p. 45; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p. 474)

- Brain teasers (Young, 2007, p. 45)
- Scavenger hunts to complete a task (Young, 2007, p. 45)
- Student generated video programs (i.e. television episodes) (Young, 2007, p.45)
- Brain teasers (Young, 2007, p.45)
- Student generated radio casts/news broadcasts (Young, 2007, p.45; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p. 474; Wolf, 2007, p.52)
- Dictations with comprehension exercises (Young, 2007, p.45)
- Cloze tasks with music (Young, 2007, p.46)
- Reading aloud (Sze, 2006, p.123)

A survey on language podcast types found topics on a wide range of subject matter, including: comprehensive, whole lessons, vocabulary, idioms, scripted conversations, jokes, songs, phonetics pronunciation, stories, and listening comprehension (Sze, 2006, pp 118-119).

Rosell-Aguilar (2009) shares a similar constructivist viewpoint of learning about podcasts noting that they provide the opportunity in which students are exploring, processing and interpreting by accessing new podcasts to broaden their knowledge. Furthermore, accessing the MP3 files have the possibility of being student-selected and listened to anywhere, perhaps creating “lifelong learners” (p.22).

Podcasts and memory

Little research exists on the use of podcasts for memory. Foreign language teachers know, however, that memorization is an important part of learning language. Students must retain key vocabularies and sentence structures in order to make progress. How does a podcast affect retention of the content? Does it differ between audio podcast and video podcast?

The Dual Encoding Theory of Paivio in 1986 could give insight into this question. French (2006) examines this theory using Mayer and Moreno's 2003 study of effectiveness of multimedia software, and concludes that: "information received via one sensory channel is not processed and stored as well as information received from two" and that audio only podcasts would not be as effective as audio/visual except in the case of an auditory learner (p.58).

A second study completed by Jalali et al. (2011) used audio/video podcasts with an anatomy curriculum based on the same theory that audio and video are processed separately by the short term memory. They found that, ideally, "a larger volume of new information can be organized and assessed per unit time as the working memory prepares the new knowledge for transfer to long-term memory" (p. 744).

In reference to classroom teaching, language teachers likely have multiple opportunities to see this notion in practice. When reviewing with flashcards, for example, students are likely to retain more when the new vocabulary word is verbally pronounced with the text, or a visual picture. A podcast should work off the same principle; therefore implementing the video podcast may be more effective than audio only.

Listening comprehension

Using podcasts in the foreign language classroom for listening comprehension allows access to native speakers anytime, anywhere, anyplace and provides opportunities to refine pronunciation. Many facets must be examined about listening comprehension with podcasting to afford the best circumstances for students. How do podcasts support best practices?

Ducate and Lomicka (2009) suggest using podcasts to provide specific feedback on sounds and having students listen to their own pronunciation to self-reflect. Stephen Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis connects well with using podcasts for listening comprehension and creation of one's own podcast. His hypothesis states that students self-monitor when they are acquiring a second language: switching rapidly between conscious (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) and subconscious (for communicative purposes) (Wilson, 2010). Having students

listen to native speakers, and then asking them to create speech allows opportunities for students to practice their self-monitoring, which is a key to mastery.

Listening comprehension is one of the least understood skills because it is receptive by nature. However, research has come a long way since the initial theory of developing listening by osmosis in the 1980's (Osada, 2004). Literature related to L2 (language 2) listening provides insights about listening comprehension that are important when implementing podcasts.

Before listening to a recording, students should become familiar with the style of audio. Knowing what type of broadcast will be played helps students to focus. One way of becoming familiar is the use of pre-listening activities. Teachers can help students with pre-listening by reviewing the subsequent questions about the passage prior to listening. This serves as a sort of summary for what students will hear. As students watch, clues are helping to process information. This type of warm-up helps activate a process called "top- down". In the top -down process, prior knowledge is being activated from students' long term memory about common situations and world knowledge. A third pre-listening activity is having students able to make a prediction about the outcome of the dialogue (Vandergrift, 2003, p.427).

Students should be taught directly about how to use different types of clueing systems- such as phonological, semantic and extra linguistic -so they are aware of how their brain processes a second language (Osada, 2004, p.56). When a student runs into difficulties, this allows the frustrated listener to have another tool to help process the language barrier. Phonological clues are about the individual sounds of a word. Semantic clues help to comprehend the overall meaning of the passage. Mc Quillian (2006) defines extra linguistic clues as: “clues to the meaning of the language found in something other than the language itself, such as gestures, pictures, visuals, facial expressions, and so forth” (p.3). During comprehension, students are also using the “bottom-up” process, “building from lower level sounds to words, to grammatical relationship to word meanings in order to arrive at the final message” (Vandergrift, 2003, p.427). Using multiple strategies comes naturally to an abled listener but needs to be practiced in the foreign language classroom. The teacher should also encourage students to rewind and repeat the passage as many times as necessary (Osada, 2004).

In accord with second language acquisition theories, the idea of using captioning for video podcasts proves to be an advantageous support for listening comprehension. Captions, or subtitles, are simply the printed words on the

screen of the oral dialogue. Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko's (2010) study on the effects of captioning videos for foreign language concluded that captions are beneficial because "they result in greater depth of processing by focusing attention, reinforces the acquisition of vocabulary through multiple modalities and allow learners to determine meaning through the unpacking of language chunks" (p.81). They also note an advantage to listening twice to a video, the first time with captions, and the second time without for proficiency. Listening with a script helps learners visualize what they hear, and listening without provides authenticity to real world situations. Important to note was the finding of misusing captions being able to inhibit the development of listening: students should be monitored accordingly (p.67). This data supports and further explains the implementation strategy of listening to a recording multiple times.

Teachers should vary the type of recordings students listen to (Osada, 2004). In authentic cultural situations, we encounter all types of modes of presentation in which we are listening. For example, citizens from Québec, Canada have a different accent in French than citizens of France. Traveling to a foreign country, a foreigner may want to understand a live conversation, a radio broadcast, a telephone conversation, follow someone's directions, and more. Sounds from the speaker, background sounds, level of noise, word choices, and

other variables, vary in any given situation and may affect comprehensibility.

Listening to different types of audio provides practice for real world situations.

Foreign language acquisition theories used to focus explicitly on reading and writing. In fact, they assumed that if one can read and write, then they can immediately transfer that skill to speaking and listening (Osada, 2004). Current linguists, like Stephen Krashen, know this is an untrue assumption. Spoken language is different from written language in many areas and it is important to bring some key differences to light to further understand listening comprehension and help students through frustrating moments. "Spoken language is more personal, with more emotional involvement and less precision" (Osama, 2004, p.59). A speaker can modify sounds using assimilation, elision, and intrusion. Informal and formal speech differs: one key factor being the speed, others such as stress and intonation. Also, in informal speech, people change their sentences to shorter phrases, and the grammar and vocabulary can be slang or colloquial, containing words that are typically not written (p.58). Osama (2004) also notes some linguistic differences, such as hesitations and fillers, false starts, corrections and afterthoughts (p.59).

Phonologically, listeners cannot see word and sentence boundaries as clearly as a reader, allotting for confusion over the conclusion of an idea. They

must, essentially, store in their short term memory prior information while listening to incoming information. This is a “heavy cognitive load on listeners” causing them to lose concentration easily (Osama, 2004, pp 60-61).

Therefore, simply knowing the vocabulary or hearing it in the classroom is not adequate enough to be fully present in these situations. In fact, Weinberg, Knoerr, and Vandergrift (2011) note that skilful teachers make use of “reformulation, repetition, and redundancy” (p.592) while teaching. As students encounter cultural situations, however, they may or may not receive these same luxuries. It is important to provide a learning atmosphere while keeping in mind the end goal.

This brings about the point of striking a balance in the classroom. How much support do we give students? At what point is this taking away real world application? This determination is differentiated per individual by the teacher. However, the benefits of podcasts can certainly provide educational support in some key areas for language learning.

Advantages

Although several studies indicate that more empirical data is needed to fully evaluate podcasting, (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.304; Rosell-Aguilar,

2009, p.23; Young, 2007, p.40; Monk & al., 2006, p.97) common themes in the literature about the advantages of podcasting support its use as a pedagogical tool for three main reasons: the device- related capabilities, benefits of implementation into the curriculum, and the personal influence over students.

Device and network-related capabilities

A key characteristic of the podcast is the ability of time shifting: to stop, pause, rewind, fast-forward, and replay audio/video (McQuillan, 2006 p.5 ; Fox, 2008, p.3 ; Rosell, Aguilar, 2009, p. 18; Young, 2007, p.41). This is advantageous to the learner for comprehension, as one of the major differences between listening and reading is that listening typically takes place in real time processing (Osama, 2004, p.60). It provides the students the opportunity for more comprehensible input through repeated listenings. Also, some portable players, such as an iPod® have the ability of recording (McQuillan, 2006, p.6) which can be used instructionally in many ways.

Similarly, the idea of accessibility and portability of an iPod® or MP3 player are intriguing to the learning environment for the convenience of learning on the go, or structured learning at home. (Fox, 2008; Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Lord, 2008; Smythe & Neufeld, 2010; French, 2006; Rosell- Aguilar, 2009; Young, 2007). This idea of place shifting can possibly open up a whole new paradigm for

education, as expressed by Bergmann and Sams (2008), as previously mentioned, use of podcasts to lecture at home, and use class time mainly for constructivist learning.

This anywhere, anytime, anyplace podcast is also downloadable quite rapidly with the features of today's WIFI internet and 3G/4G provider connections (Wolf, 2007. P.60; Niemuth, 2010, p.27; Young, 2007, p.41) and the downloads are typically free, or very cost effective, including the price of the device itself. Furthermore, podcasting usually is user-friendly and low-tech support is needed (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.18; Abdous & al., 2009, p.89 ; Young, 2007, p.41).

Finally, similar to the idea of a magazine subscription, podcasts are provided over an RSS feed and once the "subscribe" button is hit, new episodes will automatically be uploaded to a computer or handheld device (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.18). This is powerful for users who find themselves short on time, or forget the exact location where they were getting their podcasts. This subscription ensures that the most up to date content is at the users fingertips (Young, 2007, p.41).

Pedagogical implementations

The old adage, “tools are only as good as their user” certainly applies to any new technology implemented into the classroom; the podcast is no exception. The effects that this technology can have on teaching and learning are only applicable when in the hands of well-informed, competent educators. Using podcasting shines light onto three main areas for language learning: differentiation, skill development, and authenticity.

With the belief that all students can learn, an effective teacher knows that he/she must modify for the students. There are numerous ways to do this, and podcasting allows for differentiation of content choice (Fox, 2008, p.3; Jalai & al., 2011, p.746; Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.293 ; Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.14) and pace (Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.18). When a variety of levels are available, students are more likely to find something tailored to their level, and with the independent nature of listening, students are allowed to go at their own pace which helps to keep them engaged in learning (Smythe and Neufeld, 2010, p.489; Young, 2007, p.41).

Podcasts can help meet the needs of a large class (Sze, 2006, p. 122) and multiple intelligences are utilized (Young, 2007, p.41). Auditory and visual learners can benefit; in particular, a visually impaired student will work well with

audiocasts (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.18). Also, podcasts for student projects employ creative outlets for student work (Young, 2007, p.41).

In addition, Ducate and Lomicka (2009) concluded that podcasts help to build aural and oral skills, two key areas for foreign language. And, since podcasts are independent by design, podcasts help develop independent thinking and study skills (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.18), give support to less confident students with its “behind the scenes” nature, and help students pay attention to accuracy (Sze, 2006, p.122).

Perhaps the most attractive advantage is the authenticity that podcasts bring to the classroom (Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.18). Students have access to native speakers, radio, and a global audience (Fox, 2008, p.3) and can also reach back to that audience with self-made recordings. Podcasts help to contextualize drills: for example practicing pronunciation in a real context (Ducate and Lomicka, 2009, pp 66-67) transcription practice (Knight, 2010, p.271), or other oral activities (Fox, 2008, p.5). They are “humanizing and personalized” (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.18), allow students to reach out to an authentic audience (Smythe & Neufeld, 2010), and be interactive (Knight, 2010, p.270). Lord (2008) and Smythe & Neufeld (2010) found that podcasts encourage a sense of authorship and ownership when used for projects.

Personal influence

These benefits of podcasting, such as independent work, student choices, and authenticity lead students to higher levels of motivation (Lord, 2008; Sze, 2006, p.121). In general, researchers find that technology is very appealing to students and they enjoy using the latest novelty (Wolf, 2007, p. 60; Niemuth, 2010, p.24). Certainly, more research needs to be completed, but the possibility of creating lifelong learners through podcasting looks promising (Fox, 2008, p.3).

Disadvantages

“Those enthusiastic about adopting iPods need to consider existing theory, prior research and the possibility of conducting appropriate studies” (French, 2006, p.59). If foreign language teachers are not following widely accepted best practices for students, then teaching students using podcasts will probably just maintain their current classroom results. For example, implementing a new recording without teaching listening comprehension strategies would likely not produce many of the potential advantages above. The podcast is not a miracle tool to cure mediocre teaching.

The number of reported disadvantages was remarkably less prominent than the benefits to podcasting. Many of the issues noted can be addressed and

modified accordingly by the teacher. Here, they are categorized into device/network related, and pedagogically related.

Device/network related issues

- Short battery life (Monk & al. 2006, p.87)
- Small screen size (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.301)
- Difficulty sharing files between iPods® (Monk & al. 2006, p.87)
- File size and slow download times (Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.19)
- Server space/ host sites (Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.19; Lord, 2008, p.375)
- Students in low income areas not having availability of iPods® due to monetary issues/ cost of device (Wolf, 2007, p.57; Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.19 ; (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.301)

Also, poor quality recordings are a huge barrier to listening abilities (Monk & al. 2006, p.87). Rosell-Aguilar (2007) warns that the flip side of publishing being available to everyone is the opportunity for community created podcasts who do not know enough information about teaching or the subject and publish anyway (p.483). Educators need to be aware and selective when deciding upon which podcasts to use in their classroom.

Pedagogical challenges

Among the challenges of using podcasting, Wolf (2007) and Rosell-Aguilar (2007) warn about using podcasting for distance classes. They worry that it can

change the student-teacher relationship when lectures are recorded rather than delivered, replacing the rapport between the professor and the class. They also warn of increase workload for instructors and students who aren't as technologically savvy. "Time spent toward piloting new technology rarely counts toward tenure and promotion (Wolf, 2007, p.58).

Recorded video podcasts that are of the "talking head" variety can be very tiresome for the student to watch (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.296) and have the potential for information overload (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.19). Jalai & al. (2011) note the lack of perceived need by students, and difficulty with those who have a non-auditory learning style. This discord of intelligence style is worsened by the fact that audio cannot be skimmed as easily as, say, a reading. Students must listen to most of the recording before deciding its relevancy (Rosell- Aguilar, 2009, p.19). Weinburg & Knoerr (2011)'s study of using podcasts for synthesizing lectures found that students had difficulty with note taking skills, course specific terminology, and cultural differences brought about in the recordings (p.589).

Lastly, an interesting agreement across different literature notes that although the initial attraction to podcasting was for its use of portability, many students prefer to use a computer (Monk & al., 2006; Abdous et al.,2009) and

portability is less important (Rosell-Aguilar, 2009, p.27). Knight (2010) found in her study that podcasts for phonetics were not used for portability either; as long as students had a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere, they completed the assignment (p.275).

Conclusion

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” –Nelson Mandela. Most American children today are digital natives and can’t imagine their life without technology. Learning is most powerful when it connects personally with students across many areas of life, and the internet is certainly an ample piece. It is the educator’s job of the 21st century to provide students with appropriate, research-based strategies that implement technology and build upon student strengths for highest achievement. Using podcasts in a comfortable environment and in a façon that honors second language acquisition theories and other best teaching practices affords students access to native speakers and practice at listening comprehension. Teaching students the processes of listening helps students better understand the recording. Furthermore, podcasting can be used in diverse ways to meet different instructional goals: in a formative or summative assessment, as an activity, or as a project. It is most beneficial when entwined into the curriculum. What stands

in the way between educators and effective instruction? “You can’t stop the future, you can’t rewind the past. The only way to learn the secret... is to press play” - Jay Asher.

Research Design and Methodology

Setting and Participants

My study was conducted in a small suburban high school in eastern Pennsylvania. It is the only high school in the district and consists of about 750 students in grades nine through twelve. The students in the school are primarily Caucasian (93%), with the largest sub-group as African- American (less than 2%). This demographic is represented in my class: eight Caucasian students, one African-American student, and one student of another minority. The study focused primarily on ten juniors and seniors ranging from the ages of sixteen to eighteen. Interesting to note that before the end of the study was complete, one student dropped the course. All students are regular education learners with the exception of one student having a gifted IEP, and another having a medical 504 plan. Observational data was recorded in my French classroom, as well as in a computer lab.

Trustworthiness

Oftentimes, if we are not careful, we hear and see only what we want to. I realized that this could not be the case as I embarked on my data collection process in fall 2012. I used many techniques as I gathered and analyzed data to

ensure trustworthiness. Before beginning my study I received approval from multiple sources. Firstly, Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board ensured the research design was ethically sound (**Appendix A**). Secondly, permission from my school principal was obtained (**Appendix B**). And finally, I sent home a letter of informed consent to parents explaining the study and giving a choice to allow their child's data to be used (**Appendix C**). A similar letter was also given and signed by the students themselves, as they are of the age where they are capable of making their own decisions (**Appendix D**). All parties were made aware that they could also withdrawal from the study at any time.

My data collection was extensive, and I engaged in prolonged observation within my own classroom over the course of approximately 10 weeks from September to December 2012. There I used multiple data collection techniques as well as continuous, ongoing reflective planning which helped to ensure that my intervention had enough time to have an impact on teaching and learning (Hendricks, 2013). I used peer debriefing throughout my data collection, which means that I discussed my research with other members of my language department, and in-class support groups at Moravian to help see data through new lenses (Mc Niff and Whitehead, 2010).

I was careful to record data accurately in my double entry journal. I recorded information about what worked and what didn't as quickly after observation as possible, while it was fresh in my mind. I separated feelings from observation using different brackets and italic font. With my journal and other sources, I employed data triangulation. This means that any conclusion I reached was based on multiple pieces of evidence. For example, if I arrived at a theme based upon observations, to accept it I must have also seen the same theme in my field notes or rubrics (Mc Niff and Whitehead, 2013). Also, I tried to identify any bias in my field logs, which I did with the help of the aforementioned support groups.

I used member checks to help me uncover a clearer picture. Were my findings accurately representing my students' actions and responses? I regularly asked my students informally about how things were going along the way. Furthermore, to ensure validity, I kept in mind the idea of negative case analysis. Hendricks (2013) explains this as: "data that do not agree with the majority of the other data collected are considered the negative case" (p.1280. These are examples when the intervention is working for all students but one. This type of reflection helped my outcome validity.

I felt it important to bring my predispositions about who I am and my pedagogical beliefs to the forefront by making clear any researcher bias. These beliefs are a part of me, but I must remember that not all learners learn the way I do, nor do all students have a background that is similar to mine. I modified my study in the same way I modify my lessons to meet everyone's needs. In a separate section of my thesis, I provide a thick description of my setting and study including: background information, demographics, a little about my district, etc. I also noted specific student quotes and notations about unconventional days, including snow days and holidays (Hendricks, p.128, 2012).

Finally, I presented results to my students and I received consent to use my data in a public forum so I also ensured that everyone was protected through the use of pseudonyms. I feel competent that I am trustworthy with the strategies mentioned and hope that it will allow future researchers to determine validity for their own classrooms.

Data Collection

To further assure consistent and reliable data, I collected information through many sources, including: pre-and post surveys, reflective memos of continuous class and individual observations in a double entry journal, student artifacts, student interviews (group and individual), and student blogs. I created

a field log which served to keep all of my different data sources chronologically organized and secure.

Surveys (pre- and post-)

Listening is a receptive skill, and since it is difficult to judge comprehension, I relied on surveys as a tool for students to self-evaluate **(Appendix E and F)**. I had taught many of these students for two years, and felt like I knew them well. I was curious, however, about how they would rank their speaking and listening French abilities. The surveys provided insight into how students viewed themselves, which later became an important part to helping to lower my student's affective filters. They provided some surprising answers! I also wanted to know technology related information such as how often they listened to podcasts or used portable devices. Most of the survey was organized in an Interval Scale format with five options ranging from "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree".

Reflective memos of continuous class and individual observations

During the entire study, I recorded written observations in my classroom and in the computer lab of quotes and actions from students that I thought would prove valuable to examine further. The dialogue and questions the

students asked provided much insight for me to reflect upon at the end of the day. As mentioned, I recorded observations carefully in one area and separated these experiences from my personal reflection by using a double entry journal format.

Student artifacts

Student artifacts evolved in many different forms. After each podcasting session, students completed a worksheet that summarized what they listened to, how enjoyable it was, and how well they could understand the podcast **(Appendix G and H)**. Other artifacts include warm-ups, quizzes, tests, and in-class activity handouts. Another interesting student artifact was a paragraph read aloud to judge pronunciation. I had students read a short French passage as I monitored their correct and incorrect sounds. I did the same reading at the end of the study **(Appendix I)**. All artifacts served as formative assessments for my daily instruction and upon their reflection, I ended up modifying the podcast sessions quite a bit.

Student interviews (group and individual)

I truly feel that our students are our best source of knowledge. Particularly at the high school level, when teachers develop a trusting

relationship with students, they are usually honest in telling you what works for them as a learner and what does not. I conducted student interviews formally and informally throughout the process. In particular, I interviewed students in groups during the middle of the study and every student individually at the end. **Appendix J** is a sample of the written interview I gave to all students. I asked questions related to my observations, for member checking, and for formative feedback.

Student blogs

This was not an original data collection tool that I had planned, but was implemented halfway through my study. As students gained more independence with the listening videos, and as I reflected upon an area of weakness in my teaching, I felt it was important to provide students with an online space to share their opinions. I created blogs so students could view what others were doing in a way that allowed them to share comfortably and openly (**Appendix K**).

Field log

All data collected sources were placed into my field log and were analyzed during and after the time of the study. My entire log was re-read and assigned codes to help me search for the “big ideas”. Next, I grouped these

codes (key terms) into bins (categories) to help me group like and important categories. Finally, using the bins, I recognized patterns that emerged throughout and was able to summarize my key findings in theme statements.

This Year's Story

My Classroom is an Ocean

My classroom is an ocean
An exciting adventure aboard
We cast off to new sights and sounds together
No student is ignored.

My classroom is an ocean
Sometimes stormy, sometimes smooth
I never know what weather to expect:
Are they happy? Or will they brood?

My classroom is an ocean
Winds of change are always blowing
our vessel is safe and steady
Adjusting sails to keep us growing.

My classroom is an ocean
I'm immersed deep, with much to explore
And my tools for understanding
lie within our rapport.

My classroom is an ocean
and I'm designated Captain
But sharing navigation seems wiser
to involve all talents and passions.

My classroom is an ocean
And as I safely give up my helm,
My students chart their own courses
in their independent realm.

My students, you are my beacon
I know one day you will hit shore

May our journey forever guide you
My heart fulfills as you find what you search for.

A Tough Crew?

I'm nervous; so I sit on a student desk in front of the class. Any other day, I probably wouldn't be, but today's the day I break the big news. It's the middle of September and it's time to have "the talk". I look at my small group of French 3 students and wonder how they will treat my new idea for the year. Like so many other "brilliantly creative" ideas I had come up with in prior years, sometimes they enjoy them and sometimes they won't even attempt them. Some days they want to be playing games and others they want to just take notes and do what needs to be done. They are so dichotomous; I have no idea which attitude they will have this morning, but I'm silently praying they will at least be open enough to *try* podcasts.

A small part of me doubts choosing my moodiest class as being a good idea while I'm introducing our upcoming adventure. I mean, I have a strong inkling of how this study would have turned out with my French 4 honors students. They probably would have enjoyed it and done what I asked them to do. I picked my French 3 class because I honestly wasn't sure of the outcome and hoped to uncover some interesting data along the way.

I tell my students about my academic life as a graduate student and a little bit about a thesis research.

“So you picked US?” someone called out.

I grin shyly. “Yes, I picked you. I want to make more of a connection with you guys.”

“So, we are pretty much guinea pigs then?” Keef asks. I assure him that they are NOT guinea pigs and I have read a substantial amount of research and completed an entire literature review.

“Does this mean we have to do more work?” says Stewart.

“Not more work,” I say. “Just different work. Better work. No EXTRA work.”

“How are you feeling overall about this?” I ask toward the end of our conversation. Interested?”

“Yeah” piped in some students. Some didn’t respond.

“.. and a little anxious I guess” says Paige.

I give them my researcher's stance at the end of the period. "This is optional if you want to read it. You don't have to, but if you want to find out a little more about why I picked what I did, you may enjoy this."

"Yeah, you can throw this out. I'm not reading it. You don't have to give me one" says Stewart honestly.

"I really want to read it. I remember Mrs. Venanzi's thesis and I thought it was valuable" says Paige. She ends up reading my whole document before the bell rings for lunch.

Two days later, a student who typically does not do his homework, and who I assumed would not read the stance surprises me. Paul says to me: "I actually read your stance. I really liked it Miss Farrell."

Students have mixed opinions but are open to the idea of trying something new. I count this as a success for today.

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I've got to do something to keep them interested I think a few days later. I introduce my students to the letters of consent and cross my fingers hoping that they will all want to be a part of the research. After all, this is a super small

class. I've got to find a way to rope them all in otherwise I will need to choose a different class. *Why not let them pick their own pseudonyms?*

Students are telling me one-by- one in a round robin fashion what name they want. They are extremely talkative and getting louder with each new name they choose. They are excited, and I love seeing them like this so much that I let them run their course. But, I'm starting to get overwhelmed. I can't hear when more than one person talks at once and there are so many side conversations that I'm on overload.(In retrospect, I should have been more structured with this!)

Me: "Ok, Calmez-vous. One at a time."

They begin to pick some really weird names. The first student decides upon "Meek". Then he wants to change it to "Whale". The next student decides upon "Keef".

Oh my god, are they crazy? I'm thinking. What are people going to think when they read this final document? With each extravagant name being called out ,I'm becoming unsure that this is a good idea. My readers are going to think I made up the classroom or that I don't even teach in America!

I remind them that perhaps it is a good idea to pick a name that can inform the reader of their personality. I tell them of a Caucasian student who is say, a dancer with brown hair. “For example, I’d call her something like Ashley, or Lauren. It helps the audience to get a sense about whom they are reading.” Some of my students see value in this and others prefer to be wild. This is an important glimpse into their personalities: these students are very creative, expressive, and fun when given the opportunity to be themselves.

Here is our class:

Joëlle: A bright but chatty young woman who loves to read. She often inquires about my home life and is a romantic at heart.

Keef: A senior who is a bit shy, but is hard-working and has gorgeous handwriting.

Olivia: A very bright, respectful, and honorable young woman. She typically receives A’s on everything and smiles every day.

Paul: A senior who doesn’t flourish in a traditional school setting. Very polite but often doesn’t complete assignments

Paige: A gifted student, dancer, well-behaved, and an inquisitive person. She is someone who, quite honestly, will be successful at everything she desires. She has an intellectual maturity above most of her peers.

Nixon: A young man who is always smiling but never wants to do something because he is told to. He LOVES to read, and is very smart.

Juliette: Very kind, shy, and does not like to speak. However, she will tell you when you are out of line or annoying her!

Isabelle: A petit African-American that sometimes struggles through hardships in her home life. She is very helpful in class and volunteers when she knows the answers.

Kellin: A young man who also has faced medical challenges and has become stronger. Although often absent from school and falls behind, he is very capable and respectful.

Stewart: I have yet to totally figure him out! Stewart loves doing anything that HE comes up with and hates being pushed outside of his comfort zone. He is compliant but will complain.

The Forecast

Since this is my third year teaching most of these students, I feel as if I know what they can do. However, the long summer leaves me questioning: *How many skills and how much information did my students really retain?* I think that I know, but it's always better to assess than assume. I've learned that the hard way a few times. My plan is to gather information using my pre-survey, pre-reading speaking task, and a few observations before I implement podcasts.

My pre-survey (**Appendix E**) is the first formal layer I peel back to gain information about my students' opinions. While I'm reviewing their responses, my suspicions are confirmed: all of my students have an iPod/iPhone or some type of portable music player and use it frequently. I'm excited. "Students can listen to French podcasts anywhere- like at home!" I dream.

I ask students about their opinion about podcasting. They are neutral in their general opinion about podcasting, but more than half find podcasts relevant to French class. *Is this because they trust me as their teacher?* I wonder. All students have a positive attitude toward French class when asked "Do you enjoy French?" (I wipe the sweat off my brow), but the class was divided (almost in half) as to if they would enjoy listening to a French podcast at home.

The pre-survey also helps me identify opinions and beliefs that students have about their French speaking and listening abilities. When asked to self-

assess their listening abilities, most students respond *“OK”* or *“Pretty Well”* in reference to being able to understand: simple questions, what people say or ask, polite expressions, telephone conversations, and the main idea of what is being said. *“Great!”* I think. I feel as if they all fall under the category *“Pretty Well”* and a few *“Very well”*. Most students respond that they are able to understand what the teacher says *“Pretty Well”* or *“Very Well.”* (Another sigh of relief).

In contrast, students are not as confident about their speaking abilities. They note *“Ok”* or *“Pretty Well”* for abilities such as: asking and answering questions, introducing themselves, talking about themselves or family, but *“Not so Well”* or *“Ok”* for harder abilities such as: telling a story, describing something, telling facts about an event, supporting someone’s opinions, explaining in detail or participating in formal conversations. Again, I believe they are more capable than their response. I do believe that this group of students is stronger in listening than in speaking; this particular group also doesn’t seem to enjoy speaking French as often as I’d like them to. As I thought about change for this group over the summer, I knew I had to choose an area where students felt comfortable: this is one of the reasons why I chose podcasting. I believe that the best way to help someone achieve is to play to their strengths. After all, didn’t I

get to choose a career to honor my strengths? And isn't that what I want for their futures?

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One of my hopes is that listening to podcasts will better the students' pronunciation and fluency when they speak. A daring and brave undertaking must happen in order for me to measure this: the Pre-Reading (**Appendix I**).

Knowing how nervous some of my students get when speaking French, or being put on the spot, in this moment I am very unsure if all of them will independently pronounce these two paragraphs aloud. As I introduce this activity to them, it's possible that I am even more nervous than before! I mean, I'm asking a LOT for some of them. I'd had instances in French one and two where a few of them refused to do certain communicative activities. At first, I had taken it as disobedience, but when I started to look deeper, I realized there is more behind it, even though I couldn't quite completely figure out what it is.

I inform them of their task and peer into their body language for analysis: will they do it? They are hesitant, but unvocal about it. They are hard to read, as always, but today they come along for the ride! *YES!* I think.

Juliette

Oh my god, is she seriously going to ask me to do this? UGH, I hate this. I don't even like speaking in English, yet alone in French. I know why she's having us do this but I don't want to. I mean, what if she tells me she can't understand anything I'm saying? What if I don't improve when I read this again at the end? I know she says she's not judging us and everything we do is okay, but it's not to me. Well, I signed up for this study so I guess I'm gonna just get it done and over with....

Paige

This makes me a little nervous but seems like a good challenge! I hope I get close to reading all of these right because I should know them!

Stewart

I do not want to do this. I'm not even going to think about it. I'm just gonna read what she asks so I don't get in trouble, and be done really quickly. This is so stupid! Whatever. Ugh, she's calling me over now. Miss Farrell...

They approach my desk, one by one, and sit down. "Here are two paragraphs. I want you to read them the best you can. I won't stop or correct you. I'm going to note any sounds that would seem off to a native speaker. You can correct yourself if you notice something seems wrong and I won't mark it.

Most of these words are words you know, but there will be a few you haven't seen. Do the best you can."

They come to my desk one by one and read aloud. Most students have trouble remembering the silent endings (such as ends of verbs and plurals) and they pronounce them instead. As they read, I also note that they have trouble with sight reading nasal sounds. I highlight errors and thank each student when they are finished. Paige and Olivia are excellent at this task, Paul and Stewart have the highest number of errors, and the other students have a few more errors than I'd hoped. *Today's victory is the ATTEMPT*, I realize. I am so proud of them in this moment.

--

It is now late September and I've been observing my students in an attempt to try to understand their uniqueness. A few days ago, I played them a French music video to start the day. I started doing this toward the end of last year, and attempt to do so each Wednesday; we call it "Musique Mercredi." I enjoy it because it is a way for me to bring in some current culture into my curriculum, and I noticed that my students enjoy this also- particularly this French 3 class. During this sacred time, no one talks, and I have almost 100% attention.

Later that day they watched a second video clip. In our chapter, we were learning about a French- Caribbean Island called Martinique. Their culture is famous for a salsa style dance called the Zouk. Each year I play my students a video that teaches them the four basic steps. In prior years, my students loved it, and typically they get up and dance and learn the steps with the video. It's fun and easy and they are allowed to get a little goofy with it. After all, dance connects all cultures.

This group of students did not want to dance! They refused to leave their seats. I reassured them that all my other classes have done it and it is fun. Still, no dancing happened that day.

When I reflect upon this, it furthers my belief that my students are not big risk takers. Many are not kinesthetic learners- they often do NOT enjoy getting out of their seat. *Do they have low confidence?* I wonder. Typically, people that shy away from dancing are those who, perhaps, are still trying to find their footing.

As September comes to a near close, I watch them while they work on a brochure project. The brochure asks students to apply their learning of vocabularies and grammatical structures through their writing.

“You can use your textbook, a dictionary, or partners” I tell them. “But I will not give you exact words or correct your grammar. I’d like to see how you do without me.”

I’m curious to see how they feel about this. Last year, I often would correct their rough drafts for them. I would sit next to them, and identify areas that needed fixing. If they couldn’t do it, I would show them how. It gave them comfort because their grade was close to perfect on the final draft. I would then average the two drafts together for the final grade. This is one of my first testing moments of my handing over control. After all, if students are feeling insecure about their abilities, then the end goal is to empower them. *What better way to empower them than giving them the tools they need and stand by with a life preserver?* I think. They will never succeed until THEY struggle and grow (a little at a time).

Some students are working independently and some are working together. Stewart is working with Kellin and seems to use all of his resources: bombarding me with questions, asking his partner, and using a dictionary. He tries to rope me into giving him exact words and phrases and I tell him where to find them instead.

Nixon is working alone and also seems to prefer support. He's giving me the *I hate you* eye as I tell him I'm not going to correct his errors.

Keef and Paul are socializing while working. Actually, Keef is working, and Paul is not really.

"Paul, do you understand the assignment?" I question him.

"Yes" he says.

"Do you need some more structure with it, or some hints? You seem to be having a hard time getting started" I prod.

"No, I'm just hungry Mademoiselle. I didn't have breakfast this morning."

I'm taken aback. I thought for sure his attitude was being ruled by lack of motivation. He is an honest young man and has admitted in past instances if he just doesn't feel like doing it.

"Wow" I say. "How many people in here didn't have breakfast this morning?"

At least half of the students raise their hand. It's really hard to think, yet alone communicate in a foreign language when you are hungry. *My students have some unbalances in their lives* I note mentally. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

says that food is the most basic, physiological necessity. It looks like I may end up breaking a school rule if I hope to have my students achieve self-esteem or self-actualization. I feel torn, but secure, because I know that for me, at least, humanity comes before rules.

--

As noted in my stance, one of the reasons I chose podcasting is because this group has difficulty with the listening sections of the test. In class, we often practice listening activities to develop key skills, such as identifying key terms, summarizing key information, and inferring meaning from spoken text. I have a CD of a native French speaker that is an auxiliary tool from the textbook company and we use it to practice. These are themed recordings that match the vocabulary and grammar being studied. It's a great tool. In the past, these students were constantly asking *me* to read it to them instead of playing the CD so they can understand it easier.

I want to observe my students as they are attempting listening activities before introducing podcasts. Today students are listening to someone talk about their daily routine. The task is to put the 5 pictures in order according to what is said. The students listen to the clip once.

“Do you want to hear it again?” I ask. This is typical for most of my classes, and actually, two listens are supported by current foreign language acquisition theorists for best comprehension. Typically after the second time, my classes will be able to pick out the information.

“Yes” they say and nod as a group. We listen again.

“Better?” I ask. “A third time?” A few of them sort of groaned. It looks to me like they had enough. I know what they need. “How about if I read it to you?”

“Yes, please.”

I read the dialogue using my teacher speed which is slower and has somewhat more exaggerated emphasis.

“Better?” I ask.

“Much easier” they say, and tell me the correct answers to the exercise as we go over it.

“Why was it easier?” I ask.

Based on their answers it seems as if students just need some more time to process the language. This is why my pace helped them to complete the task.

If this is true, then the podcasts will have some effectiveness because they will be able to rewind them. This is good news! Unless, of course, students want me to make it easier for them because they are lazy. In this case, they won't have motivation to rewind podcasts multiple times. I'm curious and nervous to see which it is. My heart tells me they DO want to learn and they just need the scaffolding. I'm looking forward to December to see how this activity will go after the podcast intervention.

Casting off to Uncharted Waters

September is turning into October and it is time to begin podcasting! As a fresh class period begins, the warm up today mentally prepares us for podcasts. Students are given a slip on the way into class that asks, "What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages to podcasting?"

As we have our conversation and share informally, students seem to be self-conscious of what they are saying. They are actually volunteering answers (sometimes they never do) and almost seem to be careful about *how* and *what* they are saying. *This must be due to the study; they know this is an important observation* I think. But, that's okay! Sometimes people are their best when they know they are being studied, and if it puts them at their best, then so be it!

Figure 1. Pastiche of student perception on advantages and disadvantages of podcasting

Advantages



It allows more listening practice

You can learn the culture

Understanding another accent

YOU GET USED TO UNDERSTANDING FRENCH FROM NATIVE SPEAKERS

Understand more words/vocab

Learning new words/phrases by hearing them with words we know.

You can see them speak French

You get to hear new voices

Disadvantages



Not seeing the speaker or their facial expressions

Harder to understand/not understanding every word or able to make meaning of it

If you don't know what they're saying, you can lose focus easily

UNINTERESTING TOPICS

We won't be speaking back

Losing track of what is going on

Getting confused due to vocabulary

Unable to do it if the internet is out

The students recognize the same positive affects that I noted, such as exposure to new accents and vocabularies. I love this! However, for my students,

the concerns seem easier to point out than the benefits. This further confirms my suspicions of their self-doubt. Some of their answers show me that they don't realize that podcasts can be videos, and that you *can* see the speaker as they are talking. Perhaps they don't really know enough about podcasting yet. The students reflect much deeper for the category of disadvantages and can easily identify issues in accord to what I found in the research. I hope that by allowing them to choose their topics that they will stay focused and enjoy it.

We continue our conversation by talking about the process of listening. We share why listening is so hard for anyone learning a foreign language (handout **Appendix L**). The written justifications seem to help my students relax a little about their abilities. They begin to see that there are many different brain functions occurring at once, and the reasons for difficulties on the handout are valid and everyone, teacher included, identifies with these reasons for difficulty.

--

Another telling moment has arrived: it's time for the first podcast. I decide to implement it in a group setting in hopes that it eases us into it. I choose what I think will be an easy podcast for them and give them a CLOZE activity to complete. This type of activity has the written French script of what is

being said in the podcast and omits words for the students to write in as they hear them. It is effective for identifying vocabulary without a visual and using context clues to guess what the word might be if you are having difficulties. The podcast we are listening to today does not have a video, only audio. *This will go smoothly* I think optimistically. *This should be easy!*

Best teaching practices have taught me that it is important to teach students *how* to listen as well as giving them the practice to listen. I think this is one of the key pieces I was missing in my past. No one ever really taught me *how* to listen. They just kept telling me to rewind it.

So, we learn about the process: What to do before, during, and after listening (**Appendix M**). Students listen and seem ready to go. I give them the handout activity and the goal. I hit play on the recording and we set sail!

“This is hard!” Joelle calls out. Everyone is looking at each other after the first listen. They are kind of peeking around to see if everyone else wrote down what they were supposed to. “What the heck was that?” says Stewart. “I didn’t get like any of that” says someone else, frustrated.

Oh my god I think. *This was a very short podcast on a French 1 topic. How did they not get that? That was supposed to be so easy!*

“It’s okay” I finally say aloud. “Let’s remember our strategies. Relax, and know that you will not get every word. What is this podcast about, again?” I prompt them to think. Use your context clues, read along as they speak, and let’s play it again.”

We listen again. Students get a bit more information this time but they are still not where I hoped they would be. I don’t let them see that I am disappointed, because I’m not disappointed in them- they did their best. I’m disappointed in me. Whenever my intended results are this far off, I feel as if I can only blame myself.

“Was that difficult? Why?” I ask them.

“Sort of. It just went REALLY quick” they tell me. “And I kept losing my place with the dialogue on the paper” says someone else.

“I needed *more time* to picture what word they were saying and spell it on paper” says Paige.

I nod. “You’re right” I say. I love my students’ honesty. It is one of my favorite traits about this particular class. I remind them that they will be able to rewind the recording when they listen on their own and hope that I haven’t

turned them off to podcasting already. I'll need to think about this feedback tonight.

--

It is mid-October now, and we head down to the computer lab for our first independent listen of podcasts.

"I just want to remind you of why we are doing this. It's so important that you have time in which you are in charge of your learning. I could present a million vocabularies to you, but if I never give you time to process all the hard work you do, you will forget it all. When we go to the computer lab, I want you to pretend you are in France. You create the experiences you want to have. There are many different podcasting sites, and numerous topics of podcasts to choose from. I will assign you a website for the day, and you will decide which recordings interest you. Not all learning happens in front of a chalkboard; I want you to feel empowered and learn through discovery. Are you excited?"

"YES! I'M EXCITED!" says Keef.

"Me too," says Paul.

"Is it time to go down yet?" asks Nixon.

“Fabuleux!” I say. “Remember that the pressure is off. I will give you a handout to complete so I can glimpse into what you did (**Appendix G**), but it is not graded. Also, if there are any other activities online that go with the podcast, try them and print them. If you experience difficulty with the podcasts, note that on the paper for me as feedback. Your grade will not change, ok?”

“Is it time to go down *now*?” asks Nixon again. He is ready for a change of pace.

“Oui! Allez-y ! » I say.

I prompt students to start and students appear to be on task. A few minutes later, I look over at Stewart. He has an English paper on his screen. I remind him that this is French time, not English time, and he needs to close the document. He asks me if he can print it. *Perhaps he doesn't have a printer at home* I assume. I tell him to print it quickly and get back on task. He does.

Paul and Keef are sitting together and they did not pay attention to the directions. They are on the wrong website. I help them access the correct link and get them on task. As they get to the podcast recording, the media player doesn't work. It needs to be updated. *UGH! Technology!* I'm frustrated that our

time is being wasted with these issues, and frustrated with myself because I should have seen it coming.

I check in with the students periodically to see how they are doing. Many are completing CLOZE activities (similar to the one we did as a group the other day) and finding it difficult.

“If the activities are too difficult for you, try just writing down the words that you DO know,” I say to modify the task a little. A few students decide to do this and seem less stressed. The bell rings; the students hand in their data sheet and head to lunch.

That night, I analyze for clearer feedback. I’m having the students use the stop-light technique to tell me how difficult or easy the podcast was. A green sticker tells me that it was very easy to listen to and they understood most of it. Yellow means they understood some of it and there are also parts that they do not understand. Red signifies a podcast that was too difficult and barely any of it was understood. After our first session, all students are in the yellow and red categories and noted that their enjoyment level was low to neutral. All students had the support of a script while listening and every student rewind the podcast at least 3 times. As I look at my feedback, the group podcast session is starting to make more sense. The CLOZE activity, although a good listening tool,

is not the tool that is helping. The CLOZE activity is asking them to pick out very specific words. I realize that students are coming across difficulty because they don't understand the general meaning when looking for something so detailed.

The podcasting will need a change of pace. Students are becoming even more nervous that they don't know every vocabulary word due to the activity that I picked! This is the opposite of what I want. I want them to have confidence. "UGH, this is totally my fault," I realize. I want my students to feel confident without knowing every word. This is much better of a skill to develop to help them in real-life future situations.

--

Let's try this again! We are listening to podcasts every Tuesday and Thursday. Round 2 of independent podcasts is today. I let things fall into place how they will, and make it a point to tell my students that they do not need to do the CLOZE activities.

"How's it going?" I ask to the class as I walk around them one by one.

"This one is much more enjoyable today," says Paige "because it's a dialogue between two people and it allows me more time to comprehend what they are saying."

“This is hard. I think I prefer the book disc now” says someone from across the room.

“I don’t like podcasting” says Nixon. My heart sinks.

“Why not?” I ask him, without leading him on to my emotions.

“I dunno” he says. I decide to do a quick interview to see if I can get more out of him.

“The audio quality is bad and it’s really fast. And I just don’t want to do it” he tells me in the hallway.

“Okay” I say. “Well, no one else seems to have trouble with the audio quality. Why don’t you try another website and see if it helps. Please give it a shot, you may enjoy this.”

He sits back down and tries another site, but I’m left with a gut feeling that there is more to his feelings than he is leading on. I let it fester for a bit to see if I can figure it out, and head over to talk with Stewart who was off task last time. He is podcasting and trying his best.

“I overheard your conversation with Nixon, Miss Farrell” he says. “I don’t like it either.”

OH MAN, this is going south quickly, I think, and I am seriously beginning to question my intervention. “Why not?” I ask.

“I don’t know, it’s hard to understand the words. They talk too fast and it’s hard to understand every word.”

Stewart is frustrated. He forgets that he does not need to translate everything to comprehend the overall meaning. He is placing a lot of pressure on himself to catch every word and to listen with full comprehension, and I can hear his self-perception of failure in his tone of voice. It crushes me to hear him unhappy. I remind him of a few listening techniques, and reassure him that each time he listens it will get a little bit easier.

Meanwhile, I have been thinking about Nixon, and it’s the end of the class period now. When I reflect upon his personality, I realize that he was giving me a cookie cutter answer earlier, and that it wasn’t how he really felt.

“Nixon, do you not like podcasting because it is something I told you to do?” I question him.

He gives me a half grin and recognizes his defeat. “Yeah” he admits.

Students hand in their data sheets and head off to lunch. This time, the data reveal that students are beginning to enjoy it slightly more and can

comprehend slightly more French, but not enough to really make me feel confident. They are still giving full effort and rewinding the podcasts multiple times for best comprehension. If I can find a few that are easier, perhaps I can build their confidence. I, the eternal optimist, am realizing that it is not making a difference for these students in any of the areas I'd hoped. Not yet, anyway. "Do we need more time for this to work? Or do I need a new path?" I'm left questioning.

Adjusting the Sails

The following Tuesday I begin to let go of some control. I'm forced to question my true goals of the study. *What is really important?* I ponder. All students don't seem to be enjoying the podcasts as much as I'd hoped. *Do I want a relationship with my students that is the Freiren "oppressor-oppressed" dynamic?* No. I want Nixon, Stewart, and everyone else to find authentic and relevant choices. Those which practice listening and keep their interest and abilities in mind. My Dewian perspective on learning begins to shine through when times get difficult. My original plan was to pick one website for the week and allow them to choose podcasts from that specific site, so we were all on the same page. However, instead of picking the website for the day, I make a change and allow students to choose any podcasts on *any* of the nine websites.

It's also time for another talk with Nixon.

"I want you to get the most that you can out of this time. If the podcasts aren't really your thing, I was thinking that maybe there is something else you would be interested in doing during this time?" I offer to Nixon.

His face lights up. "Really? Could I read the news?" he asks excitedly.

"Well, that won't work. I know you aren't enjoying the podcasting as much because you prefer *reading* to *listening*. But, the end goal of my study is to focus on bettering your listening skills, and we must honor that. If you can find something that meets that goal, that is authentic French, then I would be ok with you doing that" I explain.

In this moment I'm really proud of myself. I feel like I let go of a lot of teacher control, but kept appropriate boundaries. *This is differentiation at its best* I think and mentally pat myself on the back. *I hope this works!*

"If you like the news, why not try this news site? It is spoken in slower French and should be right at your comprehension level" I suggest. "Or, France 24 is an authentic site that the French use. They have newscast videos. Maybe you'd like that if you are looking for an extra challenge."

He seems to like one of the suggestions enough to explore it, so I leave him alone for a bit. All other students are exploring the different web pages and podcasts as I suggested at the beginning of the period. They seem to be finding more that they like.

Stewart has overheard what I said to Nixon.

“Can I listen to French music videos then?” He asks. This is the most excited that I have ever seen Stewart about French.

“Yes you can. If the video/song is in French and you can pull the lyrics up, I don’t see why not” I say, agreeing that his idea meets the goals of my study.

“YESSSSSSSS” he says very loudly. “I’m listening to Je Suis Beau.”

“Okay, no problem. You pull up the lyrics and I’ll give you my flash drive.”

“Je Suis Beau” is a song that the class had listened to this semester for Musique Mercredi. Earlier this week, a few students asked me to make a whole lesson out of translating the song. I did not have time in my lesson plans to do so, and decided to save it for a different day- perhaps a day where maybe they were feeling blue or unmotivated. Joelle and Stewart had asked me multiple times, “When are we doing the lesson on Je Suis Beau?”

Why wasn't I listening when my students were telling me what they wanted? I was so busying pushing my agenda that I didn't give their voices any power. *Perhaps I should have done this lesson sooner*, I thought. *And perhaps, I should be a better listener of my students*. I don't notice, but today is a catalyst, and from this point forward everything changes.

The data from my students' handout show me that more students are in the "green" and "yellow" zones, and some are beginning to comprehend some podcasts without looking at the French script. *I let go of some control and got good results* I reflect, and feel fairly secure about it.

Winds of Change

It is the fourth session of podcasting and the word about music videos has spread like wildfire. Joelle, Stewart, and Kellin all decide to learn through music videos today, in particular, Je Suis Beau. Nixon is still listening to news casts, and Keef, Olivia, and Paul are all on the same site from the first session. Paige has ventured off and is listening to an extremely advanced podcast – a recording of a wedding- and struggling a little. I'm really proud that she is challenging herself so much and I know she won't give up on comprehending it. The energy in the room is buzzing alive with happiness and I am relieved to be experiencing a very enjoyable day. I don't even need to look at the data to know

that most students are comprehending, enjoying themselves, and rewinding the podcasts often.

I start allowing students to use different formats to inform me of their daily progress- they can write summaries, they can identify key vocabulary, they can write down words they don't know and look them up. I let them know that whatever they want to hand in to show me that they are using the listening strategies we learned about is okay.

Juliette is succeeding while listening to a podcast today on the topic of "Kids and Pets". She has gone above and beyond with the strategy of identifying vocabulary that she knows.

Figure 2. Student Work-Juliette

Français	Anglais
Deux filles	2 daughters
la plus grande	oldest/biggest
la plus petite	younger/smaller
Deux sœurs	Two sisters
elle s'appelle Lena	she is called Lena
La Première	First
très bien	very good
Comment est Jane?	how is Jane?
Petite copine	little friend
occuper vos filles	occupy your daughters
l'école	School
la semaine	the week
nous avons l'école	We have School
les devoirs	homework
Mercrèdi	wednesday
fait du vélo	to be riding
Se promener	walks
la campagne	counrty
à la maison	at home
un petit chat	little cat

Because students are working well independently today, and the first marking period is coming to a close, I use this time to individually conference with each student about their marking period one grade. I divide the grades into four sub-categories so I can see how my students' skills are progressing in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The division is new for this year; I want to see specifically what areas podcasts are affected, if any.

As I search for strengths and weakness of the students, I notice that speaking seems to be an area of strength. *This doesn't seem to be right* I think. But, when I analyze deeper, I realize that this is because I only graded them on

one speaking assessment the whole semester! I certainly found something that I can improve on in my teaching. My students dislike communicative activities and speaking and I'm not pushing them hard enough!

I am anxious in particular to conference with Paul, because he is failing for the semester despite many attempts on my behalf. I very clearly remember a conversation from a few weeks ago when Paul opened up to me about his learning.

Paul

I have ADD and I can't focus in class. I love to look out the window and regular class has NEVER worked for me- ever. I learn everything by computer and I don't learn any other way. I like to look everything up and then create something. I've been like this since elementary school. And yes, I'm failing my other classes too. I like French, Miss Farrell, and I like you. You're so nice to me but I just am so done with school. I dunno, I feel bad. Even when we do activities in class where we get out of our seat, all it makes me want to do is leave this place even more. I can't succeed here. I need to drop French, Miss Farrell, so I can focus on passing English .I didn't take French last year and I forget so much of it now. If I don't do this research paper and pass English then I don't graduate high school.... And I at least want to do that. I'm sorry.

Although I encourage Paul to stick with it and to come in for extra help, his decision is out of my hands. He can drop the class and I have no say in this.

Me

My heart is sinking as you talk about your school experiences and the classes you aren't enjoying. I know that you could do anything you put your mind to. I actually thought podcasting would benefit you the MOST, because you can go at your own pace and listen to podcasts that are a fit for you. This type of learning fits you best- if only you would allow it. I wish I could keep you here and prove to you that you can succeed when your teachers care, when they know you, when they empower you, and when they aren't afraid to break the mold. But in the end, you will do what you feel is best, and you are an adult now. I can't even imagine what is like to fail instead of flourish for so many years and how that has affected your self-worth. I can tell that you don't even want to try new things that are associated with school because you think you will fail. Paul, you are very bright, and as you find your footing in life, I hope you find the strength within to know that you ARE a success, and in the end, know that school has failed you- NOT the other way around.

Today's energy is no different from any other day in our French 3 class from the omniscient eye. We are a moody bunch; up one day and down the

next. Luckily, today everyone in the class is very alive and full of energy- loving this new way we are learning French. The inquiry-based learning approach proves personally relevant to everyone. Everyone that is, except Paul.

Oftentimes, I feel that our spirits are connected to nature and you can connect human tendencies with the seasons when you begin to look for patterns. For example, every spring I am overly busy, and much personal growth happens around April as the grass begins to grow, new flowers bloom, and I age yet another year. In the winter I am dormant, still, and reflective like the snow. This fall is no exception: two days after this class, Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast and we missed a full week of classes. Literally and metaphorically it was a storm that brought changes. It brought positive changes to the spirit of learning in our classroom, and the destruction it left behind was for Paul. He dropped French class the week we returned.

--

“Questioning traditional roles can make both teacher and students a little uneasy, but it can also allow everyone to shift position occasionally to examine those roles” (Maclean and Mohn, p.134, 1999). The more I listen to my students the more clearly I am beginning to see their needs.

With each new group of students, I assess their learning style with a multiple intelligence test- typically in French 1. For this group, I couldn't remember the results of their test, or if I had tested them at all. At the beginning of this year, I knew I would be studying them and tested them. At the time, I had looked over the results but had kind of put them on the shelf. I decide it's time to take another look at their strengths.

My class's top three strengths regarding their learning style are musical, verbal and visual. These are all three tied for first place. After that, the class is very divided in their styles.

This data supports why my students wanted to watch music videos instead of podcasting. Why hadn't I looked at this closer at the beginning? Although I was very perceptive with the verbal aspect, I completely ignored their musical strengths. Why was I not using my own assessment to drive my instruction?

With this information, and the data from the podcasting sessions thus far, I am able to begin changing other areas of my instruction in hopes to better meet the needs of my learners. I'm overjoyed that the hard work I am putting into researching my students is beginning to navigate me in the right direction.

--

We are ending the first week in November, and in class the students and I are reviewing the past tense. I decide on an activity to honor their intelligences: a song. We use the song and lyrics to “Je Suis Venu pour Elle” to help them identify instances of the past tense verbs in an authentic French song.

As I’m setting up the song, Paige says to me, “Oh, Miss Farrell, I wanted to tell you... I was watching the Da Vinci code. I didn’t really like it; but, I wanted to tell you that I could understand the French in it!”

“That’s awesome!” I say. I’m relieved, and thinking that maybe our podcasting is paying off!

We translate the lines of the song together and listen. The students successfully met the objective of the activity but weren’t as interested as I’d expect. Was my data wrong? Am I not in tune with what they need? *After all*, I think, *it is an odd day*. It is our first day back from the hurricane, and typically the first day back is always hard. *Am I just telling myself what I want to believe? Let’s try this again on other day.*

--

The next day we experience another student-chosen podcasting day. Five students decided to choose another site that was not part of the original plan. They have now found their own French music website! *How creative and resourceful they are if they want to be!* I note mentally. Our mood is positive again today for pretty much everyone except Nixon. Nixon still wants to read the news but practices listening when re-directed. There are also a few technology issues but we get the computers working.

Olivia, Stewart, Joelle, and Kellin have formed a new row and social group. They are bonding together with their French music videos, and are listening to one band in particular called PZK. They are commenting and bouncing ideas off each other and are smiling. Stewart in particular has begun to listen to his music SO loud that I'm worried about repercussions. He also is bobbing his head to the beat and dancing in his chair. I can't help myself from smiling because it makes me happy to see him so happy.

Olivia giggles and says, "Miss Farrell, I now know how to say *I want more money* in French. I'm going to remember that, this is very helpful and could come into use later!" My students are finding key phrases that are relevant their lives. Although very minor, this is one of the things I was hoping would happen. Success!

They are getting more and more into the learning as the period progresses. They are excited; their dialogue building as their speech gets faster and louder with each comment:

Stewart: "I'm going to download the rest of the album!"

Olivia: "Oh, I want a copy!"

Joelle: "ME TOO!!"

Me: "Oh, can you make one for me also?"

Stewart: "I have a disc burner, and I can print out the picture and make a real cover for it!"

Joelle: "I can print out the picture and we can put it on tee-shirts and put "Je Suis Beau on the front!"

Olivia: "YES!! I have the iron-ons. We can do it this weekend."

Me: "Nice! And then you can wear them when we go to Quebec in June."

Joelle: "Yeah Miss Farrell, we are making you one too!"

Today is such a good day I think, and I close my eyes and take a mental snapshot of this moment, of this feeling, even though I already have it all written

down. I'm grateful. After two years with these students, today I get to see them intrinsically motivated to learn and to apply French culture to their home life. Days like these make me glad I stay a teacher.

--

In class, I attempt learning-through-song activity in hopes that it was just the days off that had put my students in a funk a few days ago. I tried to also pick a song that had more "teenager relevance". It works, the students are genuinely interested and students are attentive and volunteering answers! *My insight was right* I assure myself.

--

The next day, we watch a cultural video about Martinique that is entirely in French. This is very difficult for a French three student to do because there are subtitles but they are in French, not English. I prepare the students for the video and give them an assignment. I ask them to complete a few tasks: 1) record three things that they hear in the video that are linked to our current vocabulary and lesson. 2) Summarize in English their comprehension. 3) Rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 for comprehension, and 4) Predict what your

comprehension would be, using the same scale if you had watched it without any subtitles.

The data I receive after the activity tells me that students are at an average comprehension level with subtitles. I find this data reassuring. We are halfway through podcasting, and I feel as if students have grown from below average to average in that time. Looks like clear skies ahead!

--

Our sixth podcasting session proves successful- all students reporting “green” and “yellow” comprehension, however their attitudes are dull. They look tired as I greet them, so I ask them, “What’s up? Is something wrong?”

“A Thursday, nothing special, you know. I wish it were Friday. I just don’t feel like doing anything” says Joelle.

“Why not?” I question further.

“It’s just one of those days” she says.

Today we also are having more technology problems, and it makes me a bit frustrated. Flash players need to updated, software installed, and we are not allowed to do any of this. It wastes some of our podcasting time today.

Olivia, my saving grace, my always smiling sweetheart, says at the end of class: "This one was about school so I understood a lot of words in it!" She noted strong comprehension on her assignment sheet today after only one rewinding:

Figure 3. Olivia's Podcast Sheet

Nom Olivia date 11/8/12 118



Le Podcast

1. Title (titre)/Topic: School Boy - P2K

2. Web page used (page de l'internet): Paroles - musique.com

3. Length (longueur): 3:40

4. This podcast included a script YES or NO
4b If yes, circle: in French or English

5A. This podcast included another type of visual support YES or NO
5b If yes, describe briefly

6. How many times did you rewind the podcast/ were parts reword? 1

7. How enjoyable was the podcast?

1. not at all
2. a little bit
 3. no preference
4. enjoyable
5. very enjoyable

8. Were you able to understand the podcast?

1. not at all
2. a little bit
 3. about half of the time
 4. most of the time
5. almost the whole time/ all of it

en fait perdre école
pourquoi toujours billets
Après les cours

Allez
tout le monde rentre
envie d'écrire
s'il vous plaît
aujourd'hui
sortez
des profs
le weekend
ils veulent
garçon
J'ai la musique
Les cours d'sciences
Physics
les filles
mauvais

It is mid-November and we are still on our journey. I decide to check in with students with another listening activity. Today, students are listening to two native speakers have a conversation about a vacation. My task is to have students identify who completed certain activities: Olivier or Angèle. This task asks students to identify key information from the passage.

Most students receive a 4/6 or higher. The class average comes to a 77% comprehension. This is on-target, and a bit above average (an improvement from last time!) The class seems content with only one rewinding of the CD and they don't complain about needing more time. I ask them to correct their own answers, but I do not make this a formal grade.

Figure 4. Nixon's responses successful responses on listening activity

5-3 Angèle meets her friend Olivier in front of his house. Listen as they talk about their vacations. Then choose either **Olivier** or **Angèle** to complete each of the sentences below.

	Olivier	Angèle	
✓ 1. _____	✓	✓	a visité la Corse cet été.
✓ 2. _____	✓	✓	a passé ses vacances à la Martinique.
✓ 3. _____	✓	✓	a passé des vacances formidables.
✓ 4. _____	✓	✓	s'est vraiment ennuyé(e).
✓ 5. _____	✓	✓	a vu son grand-père.
✓ 6. _____	✓	✓	a fait beaucoup de promenades.

6/6

Stewart, however, has difficulty with this. He is frustrated after the first listen, and is verbal about it.

“I give up. I don’t know. I can’t tell at all, and I don’t know what they are talking about!” he says, exasperated. “Forget this.”

I try to calm him, and encourage him to finish the activity, but it was obvious that he felt it was too hard for him, and he let his mental mind block get in the way. In the foreign language field, we call this type of shut-down an “affective filter.” I immediately recognize this for what it is, and realize for the first time, that Stewart does not have enough self-confidence to thrive today. *Do other students have this issue?* I question. This is a key moment and a huge piece of data that I will recall later.

Figure 5. Stewart’s responses to listening activity

5-3 Angèle meets her friend Olivier in front of his house. Listen as they talk about their vacations. Then choose either **Olivier** or **Angèle** to complete each of the sentences below.

	Olivier	Angèle	
1.	_____	_____	a visité la Corse cet été. <input type="radio"/>
2.	_____	_____	a passé ses vacances à la Martinique. <input checked="" type="radio"/>
3.	_____	_____	a passé des vacances formidables. <input type="radio"/>
4.	_____	_____	s'est vraiment ennuyé(e). <input checked="" type="radio"/>
5.	_____	_____	a vu son grand-père. <input checked="" type="radio"/>
6.	_____	_____	a fait beaucoup de promenades. <input checked="" type="radio"/>

3
6

Don't Hand Me a Line: Interviews

When I introduce the idea of interviews, students are excited. I interview some people in groups, and some people alone. I call over Joelle, Stewart, Olivia, and Kellin first. I want to learn more about the music videos. They give me so much information and are talking so quickly I scramble to make as many notes as possible!

Q1: What made you want to find videos instead of the regular podcasting?

Stewart: "It's more interesting, and it's easier. I prefer music to dialogue of people talking."

Joelle: "Cause we are handsome"

Stewart is definitely telling me about his musical learning style! *I'm right on the money with that* I think. Joelle says that they are handsome because it is the title of the song.

Q2: How did you find the website for the songs? Who found the websites?

Stewart: "That was me! I just googled the title and found them, and worked from there."

Q3: Why do you think the music videos are easier for you?

Kellin: "Because there is a beat. It keeps me awake. I don't know maybe because they are instruments in the background. It helps me pay attention."

Q4: What listening strategies are you using to understand the videos?

Olivia: "Writing down words. In music videos I can recognize more words. It seems to be more *common* vocabulary"

Perfect, I think. She is making connections to prior knowledge to learn new words! This is exactly what I'd hoped for!

Q5: You've been mentioning that you are doing things at home related to French culture? What are you doing at home?

Joelle: "We are making hats, t-shirts, and a CD. We want to wear them in Quebec!! We also follow the band on Face book and Twitter. Wouldn't it be cool if we could see them in Quebec?"

Q6: Really?! Wow!! Do they Twitter in French?

Joelle: "Yeah"

Q7: And you can you read it in French?

Joelle: "Yeah. I can read it in French"

Oh, I wonder if the listening is impacting her reading abilities? I love that she is experiencing French outside of class and is happy about it!

Q8: Is there anything else on their web pages?

Joelle: photos!! And their videos

Q9: How do you like to listen ? Script? No script?

Olivia: "I watch the video and look at the French script."

Joelle: " I watch the video and look at the English script."

Stewart: "I watch the video and look at the French script."

Q10: Do you feel like you are gaining anything from this? How is it helping your skills?

Olivia:-"It's helping me put sentences together." And, I really enjoy the School Boy video because it has a lot of words that I know that we learned.

Stewart:"I'm learning and recognizing slang"

Joelle: "I'm learning a lot about French culture. Like, *real* culture, of what people my age like and do."

This group is making connections and finding authenticity with music. *And*, they are highly motivated.

Next, I interview Stewart and Juliet about speaking. I'm curious, because they hate speaking or doing communicative activities.

Stewart's interview:

Q1: Why do you hate speaking?

"I dunno, it's complicated. It's hard to pronounce and the sounds are hard."

Q2: Do you feel pressure on yourself?

"Yeah."

He seems uncomfortable and isn't giving me body language that says he wants to discuss this further. Self-doubt and lack of confidence hold him back; In this moment, my suspicions are confirmed about his affective filter.

Juliette's interview

Q1: Why do you hate speaking?

"Because if I don't have a [true French] accent there is no point."

Me: "Ok, I understand. But, also, it's a double edged sword. You don't see the point in speaking because of your accent. On the other hand, if you never practice speaking, your accent will never get better. See how that is?"

"Yeah" She replies honestly.

Me: "Also, I just wanted you to know that when I started out my accent was very "American" and not good at all. The French people could still understand me. It takes time."

Q2: Do you feel pressure or doubt about your speaking abilities?

Juliette: “No, I just don’t like talking even in English, in general.”

Her personality type puts her in a paradigm that she must break through in order to be successful. I always encourage her and let her do this at her comfort level. She has been volunteering more in class lately, and I hope that this talk helps her.

Isabelle and Paige have been giving me solid, successful feedback, and are doing well working independently. They both have strong work ethics and ask me if they need anything. I decide my last interview today is with Keef.

Keef’s interview:

Q1: How are you feeling with the podcasting so far? Are you frustrated at all?

“I like it. Frustrated? No, not really.”

Q2: What do you do when you come across some harder podcasts? What skills do you employ to help you?

“I use context clues. I look at the transcript. I go word by word and I guess on words I don’t know.”

AMAZING! I think, these are wonderful listening strategies.

Q3: So you feel like the podcasts are in your comfort zone?

“ Yes.”

Q4: Do you think they have helped you improve? If yes, how?

“Yes, because I can understand native speakers better. Instead of the American accent, I’m getting better with real speakers.”

I’m feeling like today’s interviews went great. I received some positive reinforcement and it looks like my students are achieving. *I should allow them student choice more often* I realize. Their motivation is higher and they are finding some very interesting ways to apply the listening techniques.

“Enforced quiet and acquiescence present pupils from disclosing their real natures. They enforce artificial uniformity. They put seeming before being” (Dewey, p.62,1938).

Forging Ahead

The interviews leave me wishing that the other students in the class might also drift from the pre-determined list of podcasts and try music videos as well. *All students should have a spot to at least SEE what the rest of the class is doing* I think. Since everyone is working so well, and all are working on different podcasts, they could really learn a lot from each other! *How can I make these students comfortable enough to open up about their learning?* I ponder. Then, I remember a co-workers successful thesis study about blogs. Students are often more comfortable and honest when able to hide behind the screen. Let’s try a blog! **(Appendix K)**

I tell the students not to complete the typical podcasting assignment sheet today. After all, they don’t really need it anymore. All students have figured out how to work in a zone that is comfortable but challenging, and they are finding music videos and podcasts of interest. I tell them that they will be sharing what they did today via a blog, and I tell them why.

I ask them to complete three tasks in their blog entries: 1) Share a specific link from podcasting time that you have found valuable so far. 2) Summarize your “podcast”- what is it about? And, 3) Give your opinion on it. Was it hard? Easy? Why?

Students complete the task as asked and give quality responses.

Figure 6. Pastiche-Highlight of Comments in Blog Session #1

You can learn new words and slang words

I liked it because it was actually interesting

This site is helpful because it goes really slow and you already know what topics they cover



You can learn different ways to describe personalities

It's beneficial because we are hearing words we already know combined with other words, so it makes it easier to figure out what the new words mean and what they are trying to say

I love these comments! In particular, Paige has found a podcast that helps her slow down the recording so she has more processing time while

listening! This is one of the key reasons why listening used to be so hard in class.

Bravo!

This group of students rarely is open and honest with each other. I was really proud to see them share so willingly and honestly on the blog. It leaves me inquisitive for more: *Will the blog help them become less why about communicative activities in class? How else can I use the internet to raise their affective filters?*

--

In class, we are completing another listening activity. The skill asks them to listen (with no scripts) and summarize in English. Students are listening to telephone voicemails left on an answering machine. I grade the students using the stoplight method that we have been using for self-grading: green, yellow, red. After the activity, two students are in the green zone, six students are in the yellow zone, and one student is in the Red zone. Joelle is in the red zone and was not working to her best on anything today. I classify this data as achievement and we forge ahead.

--

A few days later, we have a test. Part of the test includes a listening assessment which is similar to activities we have practiced in class. When after I hit play on the CD, something very interesting happens. The students listen to the recording. Then I ask, "Ok, do you want to listen again?"

No one raises their hands or asks for another listen.

"Are you sure? Do you want it again?" I ask.

No one says yes, they shake their heads no and continue on to the next part of the test. I'm super shocked that they do not need a second listen. I have never had a class turn this down!

After the test, a few minutes remain and I notice two students reading. Next, two more begin having a conversation with me about books they have read/ are reading. Then, I recall Nixon asking me a few days ago if he could read in class. I had told him no, of course, and thought it was just him that preferred to read. *I have just stumbled upon some powerful data* I realize.

As I grade the assessment, I look closely at the listening average and the reading average. The listening average is only a few points lower than the average for the first marking period (but achieving close with only ONE listen is incredible), and the reading section is almost a full letter grade higher than the

marking period one average. *Wow, these podcasts are helping their reading skills too, I think.*

--

Time is running short and we have only a few more podcasting sessions left. I decide to change the worksheet that students fill out after their session. I felt I needed one that was more specific. Now, students are: 1) Identifying known vocabulary, 2) indentifying and translating new vocabularies, and 3) summarizing, in English, their recording (**Appendix H**).

It is the day before Thanksgiving break and morale is low. Students are generally exhausted and ready for their break, but Stewart is still bobbing his head to music.

“MADEMOISELLE, come over here! I found the next Musique Mercredi!” yells Stewart. He teaches me a new website of French pop music. He also continues to make sure the vocabularies that he writes down on the assignment sheet are translated correctly by checking with me. *He is still unsure of himself.*

--

After Thanksgiving break, I implement some phonetic (speaking) practice. Now that I am beginning to understand *why* students hate speaking (their self-

doubt) I can begin to remedy it. Pronunciation plays a key part in speaking a foreign language. Perhaps if they feel more confident in their pronunciation, they will want to speak more. This may help them improve in listening, reading, and writing as well.

I teach them about seven basic phonetic sounds, giving them examples, having them repeat the sound, and having them come up with example words that contain these sounds. They participate and understand the connection it has to speaking French well.

We spend the second half of the period podcasting in the computer lab. I decide to ask my students about their love for reading.

Nixon asks, "Can we have a whole day of just reading?"

"In French?" I ask, very excitedly.

"No, in English" he says. Other people are kind of nodding as if to say they think it's a good idea. Times like these make me wish I were these students' English teacher. I invite everyone to answer my next question.

"Why wouldn't you want to read in French?"

"It's easier in English" says Stewart.

“And, it’s like, we can only read on a second or third grade reading level in French” remarks Olivia. I nod, beginning to understand.

“Yeah, and there are usually corny books, or children’s books for your vocabulary base. This is another reason why America needs to start learning languages in the Elementary schools!” I comment in agreement.

I begin to daydream about how advanced my students would be if they had started French in say, third grade.

--

Our next podcasting session, I ask students to comment on the blog again. Our session passes successfully, like the others, and students leave appropriate and helpful comments on the blog. I invite them to visit and read the comments from our last blog session, and some students do.

--

The final day of podcasting for this study has come. We are having a good day; students are positive and engaged in learning. They are even sharing with me stories about their home lives- their parents and siblings are now listening to this French music! Stewart has even found a French YouTube station.

I'm beginning to receive praise and am surrounded by positivity that takes me by surprise. Last night, I ran into Olivia's mother while I was picking up Chinese food. She said she was so glad she ran into me, and wanted to tell me that Olivia "adores me, loves class, and talks about it all the time."

Even Nixon, who hates listening, has jumped onto the PZK train and is watching music instead of his usual newscasts.

On December first, I walk into my classroom and it is covered with streamers and there is an award on my desk. I have won the first ever Teacher of the Month Award at my work. Life is good.

Hitting Shore

"When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of the leader of group activities" (Dewey, p.59, 1938).

We are winding down our journey, and it's time to check in with my students via post-reading, interviews, and post-survey so I can look at clear results. Please note that exact data and further explanation on results can be found in the two following sections: Data Analysis and Findings.

--

The post-reading proves successful. All students except for two have fewer errors when reading the same reading from the beginning of the study. My students have improved; in fact, Stewart has improved more than 50%! Stewart, Kellin, and Joelle showed the biggest gains.

Another surprise was that overall, the students' fluency was better. Their reading sounded more similar to a native speaker and was less choppy, even if they made pronunciation errors.

Juliette's affective filter is still strong and she tells me as she comes over to do the post-reading that she still hates speaking. *I have some more work to do* I think.

I'm also noticing that this activity, reading and pronouncing, needs to be done more often in class. *I should teach phonics and pronunciation more explicitly and structure more activities around that so these students become comfortable.*

The post survey (**Appendix F**) also proves successful. Students remark that they enjoy podcasts / French music videos and French class in general more as a whole. Students rate their own abilities *higher* on their overall listening and

speaking. Wow! Success! Interesting to note, however, is that students still do not want to create their own podcast.

To end the study, all students were asked six interview questions **(Appendix J)**. The exit interviews also proved positive, with most students remarking that they are able to listen to a native speaker more easily and think their listening skills have improved. Most students do NOT think that their reading skills have improved in connection with their listening (Hmm!). They feel that in general the podcasts/music videos helped them in French class. Finally, they seemed very excited for my next idea, which is using that time to allow practice for any of the four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Students are excited to read French news, listen to more music videos, watch French movies, and read French news!

--

My classroom journey of podcasts has taught me more about my students and my practice than I thought I would learn! I have always been a teacher that is reflective and sensitive to student needs. However, while my students were busy listening to podcasts and music videos, this study forced me to write down and observe more than I had in the past. Turns out, my students ended up teaching me too! Choosing my most difficult class to study proved

highly valuable. Observing my students allowed me to understand *why* they are so hesitant to speak in French in a way that I could not relate to before the study. A new layer of awareness and has been uncovered, and I feel secure in my practice from this day forward, that even with the moodiest group of teenagers, I *can* make a difference- with podcasts, but more importantly, when ***I listen***.

Data Analysis

Data Sources

To assure consistent and reliable data, I collected information through many sources, including: pre-and post surveys, reflective memos of continuous class and individual observations in a double entry journal, student artifacts, student interviews (group and individual), and student blogs. I created a field log which served to keep all of my different data sources chronologically organized and secure.

Surveys (pre- and post-)

The pre-survey (**Appendix E**) and post-survey (**Appendix F**) were given to participants in September and December 2012 respectively. Students self-rated their abilities about listening and speaking in French, as well as their opinion on podcasting and French class in general. Table one compares responses between pre- and post- survey data about student perception on podcasting and French class.

The data suggest a positive opinion for almost all categories listed. In September, the majority of students had a neutral opinion on podcasts, and in December, the majority felt positively about them. Likewise, students were

unsure about the usefulness of podcast in September, but in December more students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement that they were useful in French class.

Positive trends continue as we analyze the statement “French is important because I may use it in my future.” Although in December, one student changed his opinion and *disagreed* with the statement, the overall percentage that noted *agreed* is higher.

Table 1. Student Responses to Pre- and Post- Survey Regarding Podcasting and French Class: September versus December

Survey Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>I enjoy podcasts</i>					
September			89%	11%	
December	11%	11%	22%	33%	22%
<i>Podcasts are useful in French Class</i>					
September			44%	33%	22%
December			11%	55%	33%
<i>French is important because I may use it in my future</i>					
September			33%	44%	22%
December		11%		77%	11%
<i>I would enjoy listening to a French podcast at home</i>					
September	22%	22%	33%	22%	
December	11%	33%	44%	1%	
<i>I enjoy French</i>					
September		33%	44%	22%	
December		22%	22%	55%	

Students note that they did not change their overall opinion about listening to podcasts at home, but ten percent more of students enjoyed French class more after the podcasts.

Another important analysis regards listening and speaking abilities. Did my students feel they find listening in French easier after podcasting?

Table 2. Students' self- evaluation of their listening abilities.

Average of self- ratings of Listening	Not well	Ok	Pretty Well	Very Well
<i>September</i>	11%	<u>43%</u>	33%	13%
<i>December</i>	8%	<u>35%</u>	<u>35%</u>	22%

These students' self-perception increased. In September, 46% of students thought their listening comprehension was pretty well or very well. In December, this figure raised to 57%. Although this is not a large increase, 11% is still valuable. Also, when looking at the lower two categories, it's obvious that students progressed: In December, 11% less students are in the *not well* and *okay* categories as compared to September.

How about speaking?

Table 3. Students' self- evaluation of their listening abilities.

Average of self- ratings of Speaking	Not well	Ok	Pretty Well	Very Well
September	36 %	<u>42%</u>	18%	4%
December	17%	36%	<u>40%</u>	8%

This data suggest another increase regarding self-perception of speaking abilities. The class average changed categories from *ok* to *pretty well*. In fact, there was a 32% increase into the *pretty well* category when comparing September and December, a 16% decrease in the *not well* category.

Reflective memos of continuous class and individual observations in Field log

By the end of my study, I had typed up and inserted 32 different reflective memos into my field log. I recorded written observations in my classroom and in the computer lab of quotes and actions from students that I thought would prove valuable to examine further. I also wrote reflections on other data that I collected: such as the pre and post survey, the pre and post reading, marking period one grades. I analyzed these data from my viewpoint as well as through the viewpoints of the founding fathers of education: Paulo Freire, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and a modern educator, Lisa Delpit. The dialogue and questions the students asked provided much insight for me to

reflect upon after our time together. It was because of these observational data that I was able to narrate our story so fully for the reader to get a glimpse into my classroom and to see change occurring.

Student artifacts

Student artifacts evolved in many different forms. After each podcasting session, students completed a worksheet that summarized what they listened to, how enjoyable it was, and how well they could understand the podcast (**Appendix G**). I changed this worksheet about three-quarters of the way through my study (**Appendix H**) because I no longer needed feedback about if my students were enjoying or learning from the podcasts. I changed it to be a tool to help students learn *more* from their podcasting time. Other artifacts included warm-ups, quizzes, tests, and in-class activity handouts.

At the end of marking period one, I analyzed data concerning the students' graded listening and reading abilities. Students had had about five weeks of podcasting at this point.

Table 4. Average percentages of marking period one listening and reading capabilities.

Student	Listening overall %	Reading overall %
1. Joelle	86.6 B	92.8 A
2. Paul	73.3 C	47.6 F
3. Kellin	80 B	76.1 C
4. Olivia	93.3 A	90.4 A
5. Juliet	86.6 B	85.7 B
6. Stewart	80 % B	80.9 B
7. Paige	86.6 B	90.4 A
8. Nixon	93.3 A	71.4 C
9. Keef	73.3 C	85.7 B
10. Isabelle	73.3 C	76.1 C
AVERAGE	82.6 % B	80 %B

The data recorded seemed pleasing and well above average. I had expected my students to average about 75% on their listening assessments, so 82.6%

was higher than I'd expected. We began the podcast intervention about halfway through marking period one, so to see growth related to the podcasts, I compared their next assessment (which took place in late November) to their average.

Table 5. Comparison of quiz chapter 5.2 to marking period one averages

Ability	Mp 1 average	This quiz
Listening	82.6 B	78 C
Reading	80% B	89% B

I was shocked when I saw the results. The quiz's

average for listening was a little bit lower but did not alarm me because they only listened to the recording *one* time, where as in all other assessments the

recording was played *twice*. This in itself showed a lot of growth. Being able to comprehend 78% percent of what you heard only one time is fantastic for a French 3 high school student. Furthermore, their reading abilities raised almost an entire letter grade- nine percentage points to be exact. This was a red flag for me and I began to question whether this was due to podcasting. After all, the listening strategies that we had been practicing are very similar to reading strategies since they are both receptive skills.

Another interesting student artifact was the pre and post reading paragraph read aloud to judge pronunciation (**Appendix I**). I had students read a short French passage as I monitored their correct and incorrect sounds. I used the same reading at the beginning and end of the study.

Table 6. Pre and post reading comparison

Student	Pre-Reading Errors	Post- Reading Errors	Changes
Stewart	46	21	-25
Juliette	22	19	-3
Isabelle	18	20	+2
Nixon	17	10	-7
Joelle	22	16	-8
Paige	5	5	No change
Keef	28	25	-3
Olivia	8	2	-6
Kellin	26	17	-9
Averages	23	15	-8

This table reveals rich changes to students' pronunciation

after podcasting. Stewart showed the most improvement by far. He improved by twenty five phonetic sounds, Kellin improved by nine, and Joelle improved by eight. Paige had only five errors both times and showed no improvement between tests. However, with only five phonetic sounds to correct, it doesn't leave much room for growth. Isabelle, unfortunately, was the only one who did not show improvement with speaking and had two more errors. However, two errors is not much of a marginal difference and there could be other contributing factors- such as how she was feeling that day. Olivia showed the lowest number of post errors, only pronouncing two sounds incorrectly!

Overall, the class's average amount of errors was reduced by eight. This definitely signals improvement, although I was looking for a little bit more. The biggest piece of data I noticed during this assessment was the change in fluency. I noted that in the post-reading students read less choppy and more closely to that of a native speaker even when making pronunciation errors. I saw the benefit in this activity and noted that I need to do this more often with the students to give them feedback on their pronunciation and make them more comfortable.

In general, all student artifacts served as formative assessments for my daily instruction and as I reflected, I ended up modifying the podcast sessions and later my classroom activities quite a bit!

Student Interviews (group and individual)

I truly feel that as our time progressed together during podcasting, the more I interviewed and allowed the students' voice to shine through, the better data I received. They quickly and vocally told me what they liked, and what they didn't. I could tell what was authentic and what was not very easily with their verbal feedback. Particularly at the high school level, students can easily tell a trusted teacher what works for them as a learner and what does not. I conducted student interviews formally and informally throughout the process. In particular, I interviewed students in groups during the middle of the study and again with every student individually at the end. **Appendix J** is a sample of the written interview I gave to all students. I asked questions related to my observations: for member checking, and for formative feedback. All interviews are documented word for word in my field log and their direct quotes are part of the narrative. Students confirmed my suspicions that finding authentic listening recordings would prove motivating and in turn would help students achieve.

Student blogs

This was not an original data collection tool that I had planned, but was implemented halfway through my study. As students gained more independence with the listening videos, and as I reflected upon an area of weakness in my teaching, I felt it was important to provide students with an online space to share their opinions. I created blogs so students could view what others were doing in a way that allowed them to share comfortably and openly (**Appendix K**). We ended up blogging twice before the study was over. The data I received from the blogs further confirmed my knowledge that students were applying the listening strategies and were able to understand the recordings.

Field log and Coding Process

All of the aforementioned data collected were placed into my secure field log and were analyzed during and after the time of the study. At the end of the study, this log ended up being about two inches thick in my three-ring binder! Due to the extreme length of the log, I re-read it to analyze further, and assigned codes on the margins of the pages to help me search for the “big ideas”. Next, I created a table in which I could list each code alphabetically, link any related codes together, and created a running record of page numbers of where each code could be located. I grouped these codes (key terms) into bins (categories)

to help me group similar and relevant categories together so I could see important data trends emerge (Figure 7). Finally, using the bins, I further recognized patterns that emerged and was able to summarize my key findings in theme statements (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Coded Bins

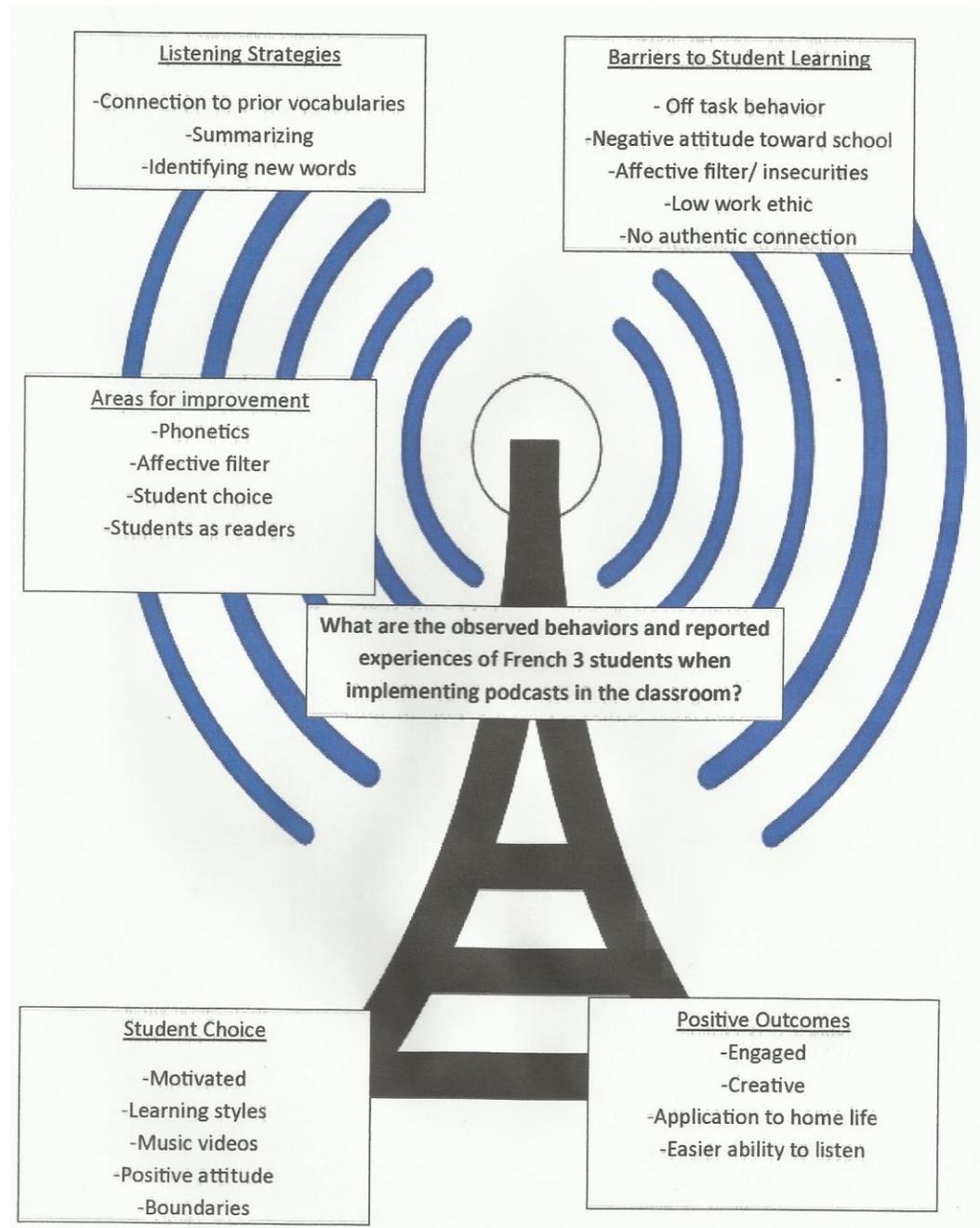


Figure 8. Theme Statements

Preliminary Theme Statements

1) Listening Strategies

Explicit instruction and guided practice with listening strategies allows students to use these tools independently to connect sounds into meaningful vocabularies to aid in the aural understanding of native French speakers.

2) Positive Outcomes

Employing listening strategies while engaging students in authentic audiovisual activities ameliorates speaking fluency, pronunciation, reading comprehension, and encourages some students to apply French to their home lives.

3) Student Choice

Allowing students to choose how to best meet the needs of their listening development provides engagement, motivation, and authenticity to their practice when guidelines are provided by the teacher.

4) Barriers to Student Learning

Self-doubt, frustration, insecurities, and influences outside of school can interfere with language acquisition. Teachers can lessen a student's affective filter by dialoguing with their students to build rapport and discover new insights, and by focusing learning tasks to encourage the student's strengths.

5) Areas for Improvement

Student's pronunciation will not improve drastically by listening to podcasts. Instruction with phonetics and authentic in-class opportunities for communication may connect receptive skills, such as listening, to productive skills, like speaking, for better sound production.

Findings

Listening Strategies

Explicit instruction and guided practice with listening strategies allows students to use these tools independently to connect sounds into meaningful vocabularies to aid in the aural understanding of native French speakers.

Podcast practitioners and educators have noted the uses for podcasts in a variety of different ways. These uses fit into three main categories: teacher generated, student generated, and community created. Throughout my study, my students used podcasts to access new recordings of native French speakers and clips of French music videos. They did not create their own podcasts (they had no interest!) nor did they use podcasts that I created or recorded from class notes. Therefore, this study supported and exercised the use of community created podcasts.

Some typical educational uses of community created podcasts include: study support (Wolf, 2007, p.53), distributing sporting events (Wolf, 2007, p.53), radio/music (Wolf, 2007, p.54), audio books (Gkatzidou & Pearson, 2009, p.295), and news and announcements (Wolf, 2007, p.54; Rosell- Aguilar, 2007, p.474).

In our classroom, it was particularly important that we used community created podcasts to ensure that students were listening to native French

speakers and that all materials were authentic to French speaking countries. After all, the main goal was to immerse students into an abroad-type of experience. This was achieved with the use of podcasts, newscasts, and music videos from the French community.

In class, students were instructed on best practices for listening in a foreign language. They were given a handout (**Appendix M**) that they could refer to throughout their podcasting time. This helpful sheet reminded students of strategies that they could employ before, during, and after listening to aid comprehension while lowering the overwhelming feeling of not being able to understand. Next, we employed these strategies together during a group podcasting session. I strongly believe in the “I do, we do, you do” model, which slowly assumes responsibility to the students. Students learn to find their footing after having already learned about the skill from the teacher and practiced it in a social context to receive peer and teacher feedback.

Also, to further build confidence and lower affective filters, we had an in-class discussion about why listening is so hard in a foreign language (**Appendix L**). Osada (2004) notes that there are many brain processes, cultural understandings, and sound interferences with the recording that can contribute to a misunderstanding or lack of understanding in the second language. The

more aware students are of how to learn a second language, and how to learn the skills they need, the easier it is during independent practice.

Throughout the study, I could see students using these tools during their podcasting sessions. On the podcasting worksheets, students showed evidence of using these listening strategies, such as identifying known vocabularies and translating unknown vocabularies. Students proved that they could then understand the recording by summarizing it in English. Also, students rated after each podcast with a green, yellow, or red start (modeling a stoplight) to signal how easy or difficult the podcast was for them and how well they understood it. By the end of the podcasting sessions, most students reported being in the green zone, and only a few in the yellow zone. By monitoring the website, I could tell that they were not choosing easier podcasts, which suggests that the comprehension was becoming easier as time and exposure to native speakers progressed. Furthermore, their listening comprehension showed gains on summative assessments as the semester increased (see table 5 where students achieved a similar grade with less rewinding of the recording).

This quantitative feedback combined with qualitative feedback to further lead me to my theme statement. When I interviewed students, they told me that they were finding French speakers easier to listen to, and by the final

interview they said their listening skills had progressed. In fact, they noted on their post surveys an 11% self-perceptive increase in their listening abilities (see table 2).

After reviewing multiple sources of data, it was obvious: the explicit instruction of listening strategies combined with independent practice and exposure to authentic French language did, in fact, help my students overall aural comprehension of native speakers.

Positive Outcomes

Employing listening strategies while engaging students in authentic audiovisual activities ameliorates speaking fluency, pronunciation, reading comprehension, and encourages some students to apply French to their home lives.

Including podcasting in the classroom is most effective when it supports the instructional goals of the curriculum, and is used as more than a supplementary material (Abdous, et al., 2009). During the podcasting intervention, I was careful to connect podcasting time with other instructional objectives so that students could understand its relevance. Students were not using podcasts as an *extra* task, but rather as a contribution to the larger part of the curriculum that aims to better their listening abilities and speaking skills.

These are two of the main goals of foreign language curriculum; the other two are reading and speaking proficiency. Students listened to podcasts twice a week for a total of almost two hours a week. This is a large amount of instructional time. The initial design perspective of how I wanted to implement podcasts, as suggested by Monk et al. (2006), was substantial and coherent by connecting in-class activities with the podcasting sessions. For example, students quickly saw the relevance of podcasting as time progressed because the in-class listening activities mirrored the same goals as the podcasting, and it became easier.

Fox (2008) suggests best strategies for learning second languages with podcasts, such as, “Listening for pleasure with a follow up discussion, listening to short chunks for lower levels, listening with a transcript, and listening to a slowed down version (pp 4-5).

In our classroom, all of these suggestions were utilized. Students listened and participated in oral class discussions as well as online blogging discussions. They listened to shorter podcasts when it was difficult and used a transcript in French, English, or both to help make the podcast more comprehensible. They also could slow down many of the podcasts and students did note on their data sheets that they rewound them often.

Using these strategies provided an interesting and challenging task for the students that affected speaking fluency and pronunciation. As noted during their post-reading, students averaged less pronunciation errors when reading the same paragraph in December that they had in September (see table 6).

The free dictionary describes fluency as “able to express one’s self readily and effortlessly; flowing or moving smoothly or gracefully.” In a foreign language, this refers also to the pace of one’s speech, the pitch, the intonation, and the phrasings. During their post-reading, I noticed that their fluency was much more similar to one of a native speaker. It was a faster pace, and much less choppy and American sounding. Also, in class I noticed student’s pronunciation getting better during times when they volunteered answers.

A surprising effect that podcasting had was a connection to students’ reading comprehension. I initially didn’t even think of looking to see if it would change their reading abilities. However, after a few comments that my students made, I began to realize that listening strategies are very similar to reading strategies. They both search for the learner to understand a receptive skill- which is a skill that is *not* producing language. Listening and reading are receptive because one cannot view the comprehension explicitly; writing and speaking are productive because you can see or hear the product at the end.

Chapter test 5.2, which took place toward the end of the intervention, revealed a nine percentage point increase in reading comprehension as compared to the marking period one average (see table 5). A few student interviews also supported these data. At the final interview, students were asked, "Do you think your listening comprehension strategies help you to be better at reading comprehension? Why or why not?" Some students noted that the two were related, and others did not see the connection between listening and reading.

Regardless of what students saw, I realized that the main brain processes involved in listening- such as decoding words, sounding out the phonetics, identifying known and unknown words, and summarizing were involved in both processes- reading and listening. Students begin to use these strategies subconsciously on the reading because they were used to practicing them for almost two hours a week via listening.

Finally, the third part of my theme statement noted that (some) students began applying French to their home life. I was quite excited to learn about this. The students that did this were mainly the students that ended up listening to the music videos- Stewart, Joelle, Kellin, and Olivia.

My observations and interviews during our podcasting session revealed rich data of students telling me about how excited they were to do French activities at home. Students were mentioning doing activities that related to the bands that they were listening to- such as making t shirts and hats. They also talked about listening to their music at home, and following them on twitter. In fact, I remember one day Joelle came in very excited because she could understand a French tweet that the PZK band wrote. She even begged me to sign up for twitter so I could see it myself and tweet with her.

Furthermore, I ran into Olivia's mother one evening outside of school, and she couldn't help but tell me about how much Olivia loves French class and loves listening to the music at home. Joelle even mentioned that her mother and sister now listen to the French music also.

I am excited to report these results for speaking, reading, and home life application. The speaking results I had hoped for, but the other two were proud bonuses!

Student Choice

Allowing students to choose how to best meet the needs of their listening development provides engagement, motivation, and authenticity to their practice when guidelines are provided by the teacher.

My original design for implementation was to allow student choice of podcasts through a list of 7 pre-selected (by teacher) podcast sites. Each of these sites had numerous podcasts, possibly even a thousand. The design allowed for student choice so that students could pick what topic they wanted to listen to within the pre-selected list. The sites were preselected based upon what level I knew was appropriate for a French 3. I hoped that this would provide the right amount of support while still challenging students and involving student interest while they pick their own podcasts topics.

The first week, I had everyone explore the same website so that we had organization and coherence in the class, and so that I could help guide them more specifically as needed. Students chose podcasts within that site. In my observations, I noted that for some students this worked out well, and for others they got bored with it quickly. We tried it one more time, and some students were telling me that they were becoming uninterested.

An important part of developing listening skills is the desire of the participant to do so. Much practice and many rewinds of the recording are needed to understand a dialogue more deeply. I knew that my students' motivation would be low if they were not interested in the recording they were listening to, or if it were too difficult. After all, if students hated sports, why

would they want to continually rewind a sportscast (in a foreign language nonetheless)?

The more understandable the recording is, the less difficulty and frustration one will encounter, therefore motivation to continue working will be higher. Using captioning, subtitles, or scripts with podcasts, was another way I could provide support to make the recording more understandable and motivating. Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko's (2010) study about the effects of captioning videos in a foreign language concluded that they are beneficial because "they result in greater depth of processing by focusing attention, reinforces the acquisition of vocabulary through multiple modalities and allow learners to determine meaning through the unpacking of language chunks"(p.81). Osada (2004) also suggests varying listening practice with and without subtitles. This allows students to process the language in different ways, which is how real life is.

In our podcasting sessions, we followed the suggestion of Winke, Gass and Sydorenko. At times we used subtitles and scripts and at times we did not. Sometimes they were in French (more difficult to understand), and sometimes we followed along in English. After the first two weeks of podcasting, the observations showed that students were finding a comfortable but challenging

zone. Students reported these data to me by rating their opinion on the podcast on a scale of 1-5, and by attaching a Red, Yellow or Green star to indicate difficulty. This is the stoplight feedback system: the green star meant the podcast was very easy to comprehend, yellow meant it was challenging but not overwhelming, and red meant it was very difficult.

After the first week of podcasting, I noticed that some students were becoming uninterested and reporting that they had neutral or unfavorable opinions about the podcasts. I thought that my design had allowed enough student choice, but I was wrong!

Around the beginning of week two, a few students began to ask me if they could do something else. This was a red flag for me. For some reason, what I had picked was not authentic or motivating enough for all of my students. I knew I needed to modify the study but I knew I couldn't change it totally.

I went to my professor, Dr. Shosh, for advice. He helped me see the path I needed. He asked me to reflect upon the goals of my study. "Are there other ways your students can meet the goals of your study but do something different?" I reminded myself of these goals. The next day, I talked to a few students about modifying the study to honor their interests, and they knew right away what they wanted to do: Listen to French music videos.

I agreed with their request, and quickly realized that this change was exactly what some of them needed. The same goals of listening comprehension with and without scripts/subtitles were applicable. Students were engaged in an authentic listening assignment. It was a win-win.

They quickly found this motivating, and once they listened to music videos they did not turn back. In fact, they embraced the culture and began applying it to their home lives (as discussed in prior theme statement). Without student choice, I don't believe that my study would have had as much success as did. Informing students of the goals of my study and providing them the opportunity to meet their learning needs allowed my classroom to be more student centered and successful!

Barriers to Student Learning

Self-doubt, frustration, insecurities, and influences outside of school can interfere with language acquisition. Teachers can lessen a student's affective filter by dialoguing with their students to build rapport and discover new insights, and by focusing learning tasks to encourage the student's strengths.

In my story I mentioned that I chose this particular group of students because I wanted to understand them better. I knew that choosing my French 4 honors class would make this much easier and they would do as I asked. I

wanted to use my study as an opportunity to get feedback to help struggling learners, and this theme statement exemplifies some of the insights I received.

Through intense and prolonged student observation, the difficulties that my students encounter when learning French became clearer. Their home life and self-esteem often have much to do with persevering through the difficulties of learning. On one of my observations in class, one of my students told me that he couldn't focus because he was hungry. He didn't eat breakfast and it was 11:30am. When I asked the rest of the class who else had skipped breakfast, most of them raised their hand. When basic needs are not met, it is quite difficult to learn.

Another example is Paul, a student that ended up dropping my class. He was not a traditional learner and his learning styles had not been valued through his twelve years of schooling. He was very intelligent and had many skills, but his self-worth was so devalued after the experiences he encountered that he did not want to apply himself in the classroom anymore- even in my student-centered classroom where I regard students as the most important part of learning. His negative attitude toward school blocked him from learning French.

Stewart is another one of my favorite examples of a student who works hard, tries his best, but carries baggage as he grows through adolescence.

Stewart enjoys learning and enjoys learning French, but in many of my observations last year and this year, I noted that he completely shut down when a task stretches him just a little bit too far outside of his comfort zone. For example, we completed listening activity in class, and Stewart was having so much difficulty with it that he just scribbled on his paper from his irritation with his abilities (figure 5). Throughout the study, I honored his need to let him grow at his pace, on his time, when he is comfortable. I allowed him student choice, and I truly believe that this avenue helped him. It was evident in his post-reading. His pronunciation improved by twenty-five phonetic sounds. This was the largest increase in the class and shows incredible growth. If I had not modified my study to allow student choice, I strongly feel that Stewart would have repeatedly felt inadequate and frustrated as he has in the past. Instead, I allowed him to find his zone of comfort and worth within it, and it showed growth.

A third example is Juliette. In my observations I noted many times when Juliette experienced similar frustrations to Stewart. Juliette also loves to learn, but is very self-reliant from her home life and is still developing her self-confidence. She expects perfection from herself so she will feel secure in what she is doing. This combination leads to outbursts of frustration, anger, and a complete shutdown at times of growth. There are many times in class when if

she thinks if an assignment is too hard for her, she won't even attempt it. She will tell me, respectfully, that she's just not doing it. She dislikes speaking French aloud so much that she rarely does it. It showed great courage for her to even complete the pre and post readings. I would like to report that the study has changed this for entirely her, but barriers are still there. At the post reading, she read it the best she could and then immediately shut down. She was very frustrated and said, "See, this is why I HATE speaking, ugh", even though she improved her pronunciation by a little bit and fluency as well.

Talking with the students about their frustrations, learning styles, and their needs helped them achieve success with listening this semester. I truly believe that my most valuable data was qualitative. After all, it is my philosophy that I don't teach a subject; I am a humanitarian and I teach *students*. As my students were tuning into podcasts, I was tuning into how to best meet their needs. As I began to really listen, I modified my study to include music videos to keep students engaged. I furthered the rapport we had from last year by valuing their wants and needs. If I had not addressed my student's needs, I strongly believe that they would not have showed the gains they did for listening, speaking and reading on their assessments.

Areas for Improvement

Students' pronunciation will not improve drastically by listening to podcasts. Instruction with phonetics and authentic in-class opportunities for communication may connect receptive skills, such as listening, to productive skills, like speaking, for better sound production.

With every task I finish, be it professionally or personally, I deem it important to reflect on areas of improvement. I was too hopeful in thinking that students' pronunciation would dramatically improve simply by being exposed to native speakers. This is certainly the case in a real immersion situation where the student is hearing French every waking hour of the day. I was hoping that this would be so by listening to podcasts, but it was not.

While completing the post readings, I noted that the students' fluency improved with this study greatly, but their pronunciation only somewhat. The data I received showing that students achieved higher on tests and quizzes, and the survey data tells me that podcasts/music videos are an important *piece* of acquiring better speaking proficiency, but it is not the entire puzzle. Also, the connection I discovered between the receptive skills of listening and reading has showed me that I will need to implement something different if I look to cross the boundary between receptive skills and productive skills.

Students were taught (and used) core listening strategies in combination with the authentic, student chosen opportunities. This façon in which students practiced listening proved successful to better listening abilities. These data suggest using this same method for speaking proficiency. The core knowledge and strategies of speaking, such as phonetics and circumlocution, combined with authentic in-class activities could ameliorate students' pronunciation and speaking fluency (and possibly other areas!)

If that were successful, the combination of the two could prove extremely powerful for language acquisition. Perhaps as students became better speakers their listening comprehension would become easier as well. Connecting all four skills- reading, writing, speaking, and listening- in a way that honors students' needs is essentially the end goal of every foreign language curriculum, and with the data collected in this study, I am one step closer to being the best educator I can be for my students.

Next Steps

Podcasting has been extremely helpful by exposing my students to a world that they cannot find in America. When my students listened to podcasts and music videos, they had access to native speakers and authentic French culture at their fingertips. They enjoyed their time podcasting, but before the study was over, I already knew what I wanted to implement next.

Throughout the study Nixon really did not enjoy the podcasting. It's not that he doesn't like French, or French culture, but rather, I quickly figured out that listening was not his forte. He is a reader. It is his personality type. He is always carrying around books that are three or more inches thick. In fact, when I started asking my class about reading, I noticed that most of them were readers too.

My study taught me to be more in tune with my students, and to allow student choice with appropriate teacher set boundaries. In my classroom, after the study, I decided to implement what I call "my time" once a week in place of the podcasting time. "My time" is an adaptation of podcasting. Instead of forcing students to work only on their listening skills, I decided to allow for even more student choice.

One of my most powerful realizations was that I needed to start honoring students' strengths, and allowing my students to work from a place of power, instead of me identifying and trying to fix weaknesses. In my personal life during the time of this study, I have been going through emotional changes that have affected my perspective on life. My father is quickly becoming more and more physically disabled from Lou Gehrig's disease. There is no cure; it is terminal and he will probably die within a few years. As I honor him in the last years of his life, he teaches me that keeping a positive attitude and focusing on abilities that he *can* still do are the only way to get through this tough time. After all, what good does it do to dwell on everything that we cannot do?

I've realized that the same is true for my French 3 students. They don't like dwelling what they can't do. In fact, many of them are very self-conscious as it is! They are much more productive when valuing what they *CAN* do. After all, when they are grown, graduated, and looking for their career, they are going to emphasize and honor their abilities in a field that uses their strengths and is something they are interested in.

Why should school be any different? My philosophy is one that honors students' strengths *now*. "My time" is a time where students work in their area of strength- listening, speaking, reading, or writing- once a week. They then turn

in a worksheet that tells me how their time connected to prior knowledge and what new information they learned.

We are finding this much more meaningful. Many students continue to work with French music videos, but others are looking at French websites, reading French news, and reading fairy tales.

There are two more things I would like to implement in my next steps. The first is that I would love to get a blog up and running so that students are always sharing the authentic web pages they are finding. I think the information that my students find is so amazing and so helpful to others in the class, and to future classes to come. I would like to find a way to implement a blog on a more permanent basis or perhaps as a way to communicate over the summer with some fun assignments for students to keep up with their French abilities.

The second which I'd like to implement is some explicit phonetic work into my classroom time. I want to begin doing more direct instruction with the sound combinations and helping students uncover what spelling combinations connect with which sounds (it is so much more complicated than just learning the alphabet). We do some of this now, but not nearly enough. The study has helped me realize this! I feel that with the knowledge and practice of these sound combinations, students will be more comfortable and less worrisome

about speaking up in class. My hope is that they are also more willing to do speaking activities!

Podcasting and allowing student choice has made a big change in my classroom. It's important that teachers provide access to authentic French speakers and cultures if they want their students to communicate proficiently. Also, allowing students to make choices (within limits) about their learning provides the most relevant and rewarding experiences in a foreign language classroom.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

This form must be completed for any research activity involving human participants. All researchers must read the Moravian College Human Subjects Research Policy found at **p:\hsirb\MoravianCollegeHSIRBPolicy.doc**

Part I: RESEARCHER

1. Proposer: Sarah G Farrell	2. Department: Master's of Education
3. Mailing address: ***Northampton St Easton, Pa 180**	4. Phone: 484-635-**** (cell)
5. E-mail address: Sfarrell17@gmail.com	
6. This is a (circle one) <u>a. New Proposal</u> b. Resubmission of a rejected Proposal c. Renewal d. Request for modification	7. Research Start/End Dates: Sept 2012- Dec 2012
7. Title of Proposal: Making Waves in a French 3 Classroom With the Implementation of Podcasts.	

Part II: SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Incomplete documentation will delay the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) review of your research proposal. Submit **all** of the following:

1. This Human Subjects Internal Review Board Proposal Form
2. A copy of your Informed Consent form and/or other evidence of Informed Consent to voluntary participation [See HSIRB proposed Policy #MC.116 & MC.117. Can be viewed at <Public/hsirb/>]
3. A copy of your instruments (surveys, tests, etc.)

Submit electronic copies of complete proposals to:

hsirb@moravian.edu

Questions: contact

Virginia Adams O'Connell, Co-Chair HSIRB

Department of Sociology

voconnel@moravian.edu

(610) 625-7756

Part III: SIGNATURES

PROPOSER'S Signature:	Date:
For Student Proposals	
I am the Principal Instructor for this student. I have examined the procedures in this study and approve them as described.	
INSTRUCTOR'S Signature:	Date:
INSTRUCTOR'S Name (Type or Print):	

Part IV: PROPOSAL

1. This research involves ONLY the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude or achievement). (Circle one.) Yes | **No**

2. This research collects interviews or surveys ONLY of elected or appointed public officials or candidates for such. (Circle one.) Yes | **No**

3. This research involves ONLY observations of public behavior. (Circle one.) Yes | **No**

4. This research involves ONLY existing data, documents, records or specimens.
Circle one.) Yes | **No**

5. List the research funding sources, if any.

None

6. The results of this research will be published. (Circle one.) **Yes** | No | Uncertain

7. Summarize the Purpose of Research, including a. objectives, b. procedures, c. design, d. what is required of subjects, and e. procedures to reduce risks to subjects. Attach additional pages as needed.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to increase high school student's French achievement. I am going to improve listening comprehension and speaking abilities through the use French native speaker podcasts.

Objectives

Students will be able to use listening strategies to comprehend native speakers by listening to podcasts and responding to comprehension questions.

Students will improve their speaking abilities after exposure and practice with native speaker.

Students will have exposure to authentic French audiovisual materials.

Procedures:

Time of study: 10 weeks

Week	Procedure
1	Students will complete a pre-survey about podcasts. Class will have a discussion about general podcasting.
2	Class will be shown how to record themselves in computer software program of Audacity . Students will complete a pre-test for speaking, in which they read aloud and record a French paragraph. A lecture will be given to show the podcast sites that students will be using during their time in the computer lab.
3	General listening comprehension strategies will be reviewed. Podcasting will be listened to as a whole class, with listening comprehension activities twice this week.
4	Students listen to their choice of podcast from “I E languages” podcast and “frenchpodcasts.com”, individually in multimedia lab. They will fill out an assignment sheet to measure listening comprehension
5	Students listen to their choice of podcast from “News in slow French” podcast, individually in multimedia lab. They will fill out an assignment sheet to measure listening comprehension. Also, They will listen to news in slow French episode #72 and fill out the corresponding assignment sheet to ensure listening comprehension.
6	Students listen to their choice of podcast from “Walk, Talk, and Learn” French podcast and “dailyfrenchpod.com”, individually in multimedia lab. They will fill

	out an assignment sheet to measure listening comprehension
7	Tongue twister podcasts: students will listen to these podcasts and record themselves pronouncing French tongue twisters.
8	Students listen to their choice of podcast from list, individually in multimedia lab. They will fill out an assignment sheet to measure listening comprehension
9	Students create their own podcast through an assignment. Podcasts are graded with rubric on speaking abilities.
10	Post-test of original reading is given. Post-survey is given to students.

Research Design

Throughout the course of the study, I will be using a double entry journal to record and observational data, including direct quotes from my students. Another way I will gather data is by surveying the students. In week 1 of the study I will give them the pre-survey and week 2 I will be giving them the pre-reading as a base test. I will use a similar survey at the end of the study to determine if anything changed as a result of the podcasts. During weeks 3- 9 I will be collecting data from students in the form of classroom assignments graded by rubrics. As a final means of collection, I will interview students at the end of the study during week 10. The interviews will allow the students to elaborate on what they liked and didn't like about the study, as well as what they thought was effective or not effective for them.

What is required of subjects

The primary requirement for subjects is to simply participate in all classroom instruction, tasks, and activities. Subjects will also be asked to respond to surveys and interviews.

Procedures to reduce risks to students

- 1) Subject's names will not appear in written reports of the research. Instead, pseudonyms will be used.
- 2) The pseudonym key as well as any written data will be stored electronically on a password-protected computer to which only I have access. Any hard copies of these documents will be stored in my private home in a locked filing cabinet.

3) The pseudonym key, field notes, and other research materials will be deleted/ shredded upon the conclusion of the study.

4) Participants will be permitted to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and will be made aware of this on the consent letter.

8. This research involves the following GROUP(S) vulnerable to risk. (Circle all that apply.)

- a. **Subjects under the age of 18**
- b. Prisoners
- c. Pregnant women
- d. Handicapped or mentally disabled persons

If you circled any or all of 8a through 8d, explain why you need to use the group and the methods you will use to minimize risk.

I need to include subjects under the age of 18 in this study because I teach 11th and 12th graders in this course, and the average age of an 11-12th grader is 16-18. To minimize risk, the procedures in question 7 will be followed.

9. This research might affect people with special vulnerabilities (for example, pregnant women, people with allergies, people taking some medications, etc.) (Circle one.) **Yes** | No

If Yes, explain the methods you will use to minimize risk to these people.

My research project may include student participants who have IEP's for 504 plans. To minimize risk to these students, I will make sure to follow all accommodations specified on their plans.

10. Describe your subject pool including a. the intended number of subjects and b. characteristics.

a) The number of subjects will fall between thirteen and twenty five, the number of students in the typical classroom in my building

b) Characteristics of the subjects will include the following:

- **11th and 12th graders enrolled in a French 3 class**
- **Ages ranging from 15-18**
- **Mix of males and females**

- **Racially, ethnically, and/or socioeconomically diverse**

11. Describe the methods you will use to recruit your subjects.

Subjects will consist of the classes/students assigned to me for the fall 2012-2013 school year by my building principal and guidance counselors.

12. This research involves deception of subjects. (Circle one.) Yes | **No**

If Yes, describe the nature of the deception and your debriefing procedure.

13. Explain by whom and how the subjects will be informed of the purposes of this research project. [Make references to HSIRB Policy #MC.116 & #MC.117.].

As their classroom teacher, I will explain to all participants the purpose of my research project.

All participants will also receive a copy of a consent letter outlining the purposes of the project as well as the procedures I will use to minimize risk to the participants in the study. This consent letter must be reviewed by subject's parents/guardians, who will ultimately decide whether or not their children will participate.

My building principal will also receive a consent letter explaining the plan for the project and its purpose. I will secure his permission before beginning research.

14. This research collects information, which (Circle all that apply.)

- deals with sensitive aspects from the participant's point of view.
- identifies the subject by name or number codes.**
- might place the subject at risk of liability if made public.
- might place the subject's financial standing or employability at risk if made public.

If you circled any or all of 14a through 14d, explain the methods you will use to

- safeguard the data you collect
- inform subjects of available support services, and
- minimize the risk to the subjects.

Data will be safeguarded and it will be stored only on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked filing cabinet at my private home. Data will be considered confidential and, with the exception of my Moravian faculty sponsor, will not be shared with anyone.

Subjects will be informed of available support services by means of the informed consent letter. They will be made aware of my availability as well as the availability of my faculty sponsor at Moravian should they have questions or concerns about my study at any time. Students will continue to have all of the available resources that the school has to offer them. I am not restricting their learning in any way.

Risk will be minimized to subjects by the researcher referring to subjects by pseudonyms in written reports of the research, storing research materials in secure locations, and destroying all written materials/field notes upon the conclusion of the study.

Appendix B

July/August 2012

Dear Mr. Martuscelli,

As you know, I am working toward my Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The program at Moravian assists practicing teachers in implementing the most effective teaching strategies to maximize student learning. A major requirement of the program calls for me to implement a research-based strategy in a teacher action research study (thesis). As a result I will be conducting a study of my own classroom teaching from September-November.

The focal point of my study is the use of podcasts of native French speakers into the classroom and its effect on listening comprehension and speaking abilities. Providing the opportunity for students to listen and comprehend to authentic French speakers is a goal of our language curriculum and highly valued among leading foreign language education researchers. This will improve not only their listening abilities on varying topics, but their French communication skills as well.

Students will be listening to podcasts of native French speakers on a variety of topics. Some will be short video podcasts, others are news clips, and dialogues that are pre-recorded. These podcasts are chosen by me, are on-level for French 3, and have a variety of topics to incorporate the student's interest. Some podcasts will explore the exact topics studied for the test, and others will be on other topics to advance the general student's listening experience.

All students will complete pre and post surveys that deal with their opinion concerning their French abilities and podcasting. They will record a reading of a speaking of a French story at the beginning, and again at the end as one means of data. In addition to listening to the podcasts and completing written comprehension assignments, students will also be recording French tongue twisters, and at the end, create their own podcast for other French learners. Aside from the student's work, I will also be collecting information from

my own classroom observations. I truly feel this is an exciting opportunity to incorporate technology that has an authentic application to learning French.

While the results of my study will be published in my thesis paper at Moravian, all information revealing the identity of students involved will be anonymous. Students will be given pseudonyms, and I will only use information from students who have permission from their parents/guardians. Any child may withdraw from this study at anytime without penalty.

My faculty sponsor at Moravian College is Dr. Joseph Shosh. If you have any questions about this study, you can contact me, or Dr. Shosh at (610) 861-1482, or by email at jshosh@moravian.edu. If not, please sign and return this letter. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Sarah Farrell

I attest that I am the principal of the teacher conducting this action research study and I have read and understood the consent form. Sarah Farrell has my permission to conduct this study at Wilson Area High School.

Name (please print)

Signature

date

Appendix C

August/September 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In addition to being your student's French teacher, I am also a graduate student working toward my Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College in Bethlehem. The program at Moravian assists practicing teachers in implementing the most effective teaching strategies to maximize student learning. A major requirement of the program calls for me to implement a research-based strategy in a teacher action research study (thesis). For 10 weeks I will be adding podcasts of native French speakers into the classroom in hopes to increase listening comprehension and speaking abilities. The study and period where I will be collecting data will take place from September- November. All students will be receiving the same instruction; this form gives consent for me to use student data for my research.

What will we be doing in class? Students will be listening to podcasts of native French speakers on a variety of topics. Some will be short video podcasts, others a news clip, and dialogues that are recorded. These podcasts are chosen by me, are on-level for French 3, and have a variety of topics to incorporate your student's interest. Some podcasts will explore the exact topics studied for the test, and others will be on other topics to advance the general student's listening experience. Studies show that exposure to native speakers and providing opportunities to access authentic materials is important to language acquisition.

All students will complete pre and post surveys that deal with their opinion concerning their French abilities and podcasts. They will record a reading of a French story at the beginning, and again at the end. In addition to listening and completing assignments about the podcast, students will also be recording French tongue twisters, and at the end, create their own podcast for other French learners. Aside from the student's work, I will also be collecting information from my own classroom observations. This is an exciting opportunity to incorporate technology that has an authentic application.

Is the research confidential? Yes. While the results of the study will be published in my graduate paper, all material related to your child's identity will be kept strictly confidential. He/she will be given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

What if I don't want my child's data to be used? Please know that you are under no obligation to sign the consent form or have your student participate in the research. Students may also withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Because podcasts/listening exercises are a part of my curriculum for my classes, all students will complete the same work whether or not they opt to serve as research participants. A "Yes" on this form simply allows me to use the data in my thesis paper.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or our principal, Mr. Martusceilli. You may also contact my advisor at Moravian College, Dr. Joseph Shosh, at (610) 861-1482 or by email at ishosh@moravian.edu.

Once again I thank you for your co-operation! I'm looking forward to a wonderful school year. My contact information is below.

Sincerely,

Mademoiselle Sarah Farrell
Sfarrell@wilsonareasd.org
Wilson Area High School
484-373-6030 ex 6099

French Podcasting

I attest that I am the child's legal guardian and I have read and understand the consent form. (Please check the appropriate box and sign below):

I give permission for my child's data to be used in this
 study.

I do NOT give permission for my child's data to be included
in this study.

Student's name (please print)

Parent/Guardian signature

date

Appendix D

September 2012

Dear Student,

I am working toward my Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College in Bethlehem. The program at Moravian assists practicing teachers in implementing the most effective teaching strategies to maximize student learning. A major requirement of the program calls for me to implement a research-based strategy in a teacher action research study (thesis). For 10 weeks I will be adding podcasts of native French speakers into the classroom in hopes to increase listening comprehension and speaking abilities. The study and period where I will be collecting data will take place from September- November. All students will be receiving the same instruction; this form gives consent for me to use student data for my research.

What will we be doing in class? You will be listening to podcasts of native French speakers on a variety of topics. Some will be short video podcasts, others a news clip, and dialogues that are recorded. These podcasts are chosen by me, are on-level for French 3, and have a variety of topics to incorporate your student's interest. Some podcasts will explore the exact topics studied for the test, and others will be on other topics to advance the general listening experience. Studies show that exposure to native speakers and providing opportunities to access authentic materials is important to language acquisition.

You will complete pre and post surveys that deal with their opinion concerning their French abilities and podcasts. They will record a reading of a French story at the beginning, and again at the end. In addition to listening and completing assignments about the podcast, you will also be recording French tongue twisters, and at the end, create your own podcast for other French learners. Aside from the your work, I will also be collecting information from my own classroom observations.

Is the research confidential? Yes. While the results of the study will be published in my graduate paper, all material related to your identity will be kept strictly confidential. You will be given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

What if I don't want my data to be used? Please know that you are under no obligation to sign the consent form or have your student participate in the research. Students may also withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Because podcasts/listening exercises are a part of my curriculum for my classes, everyone will complete the same work whether or not they opt to serve as research participants. A "Yes" on this form simply allows me to use the data in my thesis paper.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or our principal, Mr. Martusceilli. You may also contact my advisor at Moravian College, Dr. Joseph Shosh, at (610) 861-1482 or by email at ishosh@moravian.edu.

Once again I thank you for your co-operation! I'm looking forward to a wonderful school year. My contact information is below.

Sincerely,

Mademoiselle Sarah Farrell
Sfarrell@wilsonareasd.org
Wilson Area High School
484-373-6030 ex 6099

French Podcasting- Student form

I attest that I am the student and I have read and understand the consent form. (Please check the appropriate box and sign below):

I give permission for my data to be used in this study.

I do NOT give permission for my data to be included in this study.

Student's name (please print)

Student signature

date

Appendix E

PRE-Survey: Podcasting

1. I have an iPod, iPhone, or other MP3 player device? Yes
 NO

If no, skip to question 6.

2. How often do you use your portable device?

1 never 2 rarely 3 sometimes 4 often 5 very
 frequently (daily)

3. What types of tasks do you do on your portable device?

4. Have you ever downloaded a podcast? YES
 NO

5. Have you ever used a podcast for class? YES
 NO

Please use the 1-5 scale to rate the following statements, putting an X in the box:

Statement	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
6. I enjoy podcasts.					
7. Podcasts are useful to education.					
8. Podcasts are useful to French class.					

9. I would enjoy creating my own podcasts.					
10. When listening to a French speaker and unable to comprehend I get frustrated easily.					
11. French is important because I may use it in my future.					
12. I want to incorporate French in my life outside of class.					
13. I would enjoy listening to a French podcast at home					
14. I enjoy French					

For 15+ 16, Rate your current French abilities on a scale of 1-10.

Very bad---→ 1,2,3, ---→-5- in the middle--→- 6,7,8--9, 10 ---→- great

15. French listening comprehension (in general)_____

15 b. Listening to someone with a French script of what they are saying _____

15 c. Listening to someone with no script of what they are saying _____

15 d. Listening to someone who uses French at time and English at times _____

16. French speaking (in general) _____

Self-assessment: listening

Think about how you use language. Decide how well you can do what is asked in French. Put an X in the box

When LISTENING, I can understand:	Not so well	OK	Pretty well	Very well
17. Simple questions				
18. What people say				
19. What people ask me to do				
20. Polite expressions				
21. Telephone conversations				
22. Announcements				
23. Newscasts				
24. The main idea of what is said				
25. What the teacher says in class				
26. Presentations my classmates give				
When LISTENING, I can understand:	Not so well	OK	Pretty well	Very well
27. Plays				
28. Music				
29. Someone's opinion				
30. Jokes/puns				
31. Someone reading aloud				

Self-assessment speaking:

When <u>speaking</u>, I can:	Not so well	Ok	Pretty well	Very well
32. Ask questions				
33. Answer questions				
34. Introduce myself				
35. Make a request				
36. Talk about myself				
37. Talk about my family				
38. Apologize if I do something wrong				
39. Complain when something is not right				
40. Tell a story				
41. Describe something				
42. Tell facts about an event				
43. Discuss something of personal or public interest				
44. Support someone's opinions				
45. Explain in detail				
46. Participate in formal conversations				

Appendix F

POST Survey: Podcasting

Please use the 1-5 scale to rate the following statements, putting an X in the box:

Statement	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
6. I enjoy podcasts.					
7. Podcasts are useful to education.					
8. Podcasts are useful to French class.					
9. I would enjoy creating my own podcasts.					
10. When listening to a French speaker and unable to comprehend I get frustrated easily.					
11. French is important because I may use it in my future.					
12. I want to incorporate French in my life outside of class.					
13. I would enjoy listening to a French					

podcast at home					
14. I enjoy French					

For 15+ 16, Rate your current French abilities on a scale of 1-10.

Very bad---→ 1,2,3, ---→-5- in the middle--→- 6,7,8--9, 10 ---→- great

15. French listening comprehension (in general)_____

15 b. Listening to someone with a French script of what they are saying _____

15 c. Listening to someone with no script of what they are saying _____

15 d. Listening to someone who uses French at time and English at times _____

16. French speaking (in general) _____

Self-assessment: listening

Think about how you use language. Decide how well you can do what is asked in French. Put an X in the box

When LISTENING, I can understand:	Not so well	OK	Pretty well	Very well
17. Simple questions				
18. What people say				
19. What people ask me to do				

20. Polite expressions				
21. Telephone conversations				
22. Announcements				
23. Newscasts				
24. The main idea of what is said				
25. What the teacher says in class				
26. Presentations my classmates give				
When LISTENING, I can understand:	Not so well	OK	Pretty well	Very well
27. Plays				
28. Music				
29. Someone's opinion				
30. Jokes/puns				
31. Someone reading aloud				

Self-assessment speaking:

When <u>speaking</u>, I can:	Not so well	Ok	Pretty well	Very well
32. Ask questions				
33. Answer questions				
34. Introduce myself				

35. Make a request				
36. Talk about myself				
37. Talk about my family				
38. Apologize if I do something wrong				
39. Complain when something is not right				
40. Tell a story				
41. Describe something				
42. Tell facts about an event				
43. Discuss something of personal or public interest				
44. Support someone's opinions				
45. Explain in detail				
46. Participate in formal conversations				

Appendix G

Le Podcast

1. Title (titre)/Topic: _____

2. Web page used (page de l'internet) : _____

3. Length

(longueur): _____

4. This podcast included a script YES or NO
4b If yes, circle: in French or English

5A. This podcast included another type of visual support YES or NO

5b If yes, describe briefly _____

6. How many times did you rewind the podcast/ were parts rewound?

7. How enjoyable was the podcast?

1. not at all
2. a little bit
3. no preference
4. enjoyable
5. very enjoyable

8. Were you able to understand the podcast?

1. not at all
2. a little bit

3. about half of the time
4. most of the time
5. almost the whole time/ all of it

Appendix H

Podcasting Sheet 2 ☺

Title of podcast _____

Website _____

1) 5 words I know already:

<u>Français</u>	<u>Anglais</u>

2) 5 words I wanted to learn and looked up:

(www.wordreference.com is a great site)

<u>Français</u>	<u>Anglais</u>

General summary of what I listened to: _____

Appendix I

Pre and Post Reading

Chat ou Chien ?

J'aime bien les chiens parce qu'ils sont fidèles à l'homme, parce qu'ils montrent qu'ils sont contents. Ils sont contents quand ils sont avec le maître. Ils sont contents... contents quand ils jouent avec le maître. Ils sont contents de faire n'importe quoi avec le maître.

J'aime bien aussi les chats parce que les chats sont indépendants, et que ce sont des félins et qu'ils sont jolis à regarder. Je parle des chats qui sont pas gros parce que je sais que mon chat est gros et qu'il ressemble beaucoup moins à un félin. Mais j'aime quand même bien les chats.

Appendix J**Interview questions:**

1) When we first listen to our group podcast, the majority of the class felt that the speaker talked so fast that it was almost incomprehensible. Do you feel that your ability to listen to the pace of a native speaker has improved now that we have been listening?

Circle: Yes

No

Why/why not?

2) Do you feel as if your general French listening skills have improved since we started our study? How so/ or not so? What are you better at?

3) Do you think your listening comprehension strategies help you to be better at reading comprehension? Why or why not?

4) Do you feel as if the podcasts/music videos/other French videos of native speakers help you in French class in general? How so/not so?

5) If we were to continue with a type of French immersion day once a week in the computer lab, what would interest you? (ex: read French web pages, news (yes it must be in French))

6) In your opinion, what can I do to help make my classes more comfortable speaking in French?

THANK YOU!! MERCI!!

Appendix K

mademoiselle Farrell

Mademoiselle Farrell

Le Professeur

- French 1
- French 2
- French 3
- French 4 Links
- French 4 Documents
- Lessons! All French Classes
- Annonces/Annoncements
- FAQ
- Supply List
- Cool Links
- Documents pour la Classe
- Photos
- International Club
- For Parents
- ESL Beginner Links
- ESL ADVANCED links
- ESL Intermediate
- Podcasts
- BLOG (re Podcasting)



BLOG #1

Nov 12 Tuesday, 11/13
 POSTED AT 02:18 PM
 2012 Due by Wed 11/14 at midnight.

We can learn so much from eachother. I'm asking that you share some of the knowledge from your podcasts so far with the rest of the class. You may do this in English so it is easier for you. The purpose is not to practice French language but to share with our class your insights, instead of sharing them with just me.

Please complete the following:
 1) Share a specific link from our blogging so far that you have found valuable.
 2) Summarize the "podcast". What is it about? (2-10 sentences)
 3) Give your opinion on it. Was it hard? Easy? Why? What can one learn from this "podcast"? (3-10 sentences)

7 Comments
[Add a comment](#)
[Edit](#) [Delete](#)

Olivia

http://www.ielanguages.com/listen_routine.html
 This podcast is about a daily routine. I thought it was perfect since we learned daily routine words recently. I thought that the podcast was easy since I knew so many of the words. It was simple to figure out what they were saying for the most part. It's beneficial because we're hearing words we already know combined with other words, so it makes it easier to figure out what the new words mean or at least what they're trying to say.

11/14/2012 8:28:59 PM | | 64.121.138.247 | Delete

le Languages . com is a great site. you can listen to videos while looking at the script. Its helpful and gives nices pics to get an ideo of what the podcast is about.

11/15/2012 10:31:50 AM | | 208.59.37.65 | Delete

Juliet

www.bbc.co.uk/.../summary.shtml
 Video B: The podcast is a mother talking about her two daughters. Their names are Lena and Jane. She talks about their age and their personalities. Also talks about activities they all do together. I believe the podcast was fairly easy but some words confused me. You can learn different ways to describe personalities.

11/15/2012 10:35:25 AM | | 208.59.37.65 | Delete

Joelle

<http://www.paroles-musique.com/paroles-Pzk-lyrics,a1702> << good website fo PZK songs... It also has lyrics and translations in both french and

ab.com/BLOG/PA/WilsonAreaHighSchool/MademoiselleFarrell/2/blog.aspx?Post=27107bff-bb...

Mademoiselle Farrell

PZker english.

11/15/2012 10:38:51 AM | 208.59.37.65 | Delete

paige

<http://www.newsinslowfrench.com/>
This podcast gives a news report every week on current issues. For example, the last one I listened to was about the 2012 presidential election results. This site is helpful because it goes really slow, and you already know about the topics they cover. I thought it was an easy podcast, because it provides a script and translates some of the words for you.

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Isabelle

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/mafrance/flash/#. The podcst was about how people order flowers and why they would order them. Also about the different places she goes to deliver the flowers. I kinda liked it because it was actually interesting and because there are so many different reasons why people order flowers.

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stewart

www.paroles-musique.com/paroles-Pzk-La_Loi_De_La_Jungle-lyrics.p130400
this podcast is about what life on the wild side is like and how it is a jungle. i think this podcast was alright and kinda hard because there were words that we havent learned. you can leatn some new words and slang words.

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Appendix L

Spoken language versus written language:

Why is listening in French so hard? Is it just me?

Anxiety is often common when completing listening tasks. It springs from fears that you will not catch every word and that you cannot slow down the recording to gain control.



In spoken language....

- Different speakers have different accents
- Background noise
- You cannot refer back to it
- There are hesitations, filler word "uh" and multiple/false starts, corrections and afterthoughts
- There is slang
- It is more personal with emotions involved
- You must recognize what sounds are making up one word
- You must recognize what words are making up a sentence- where it starts/stops
- You must store prior information heard while trying to make sense of new information at the same time
- Easy to lose concentration (unless you find passage interesting!)
- You have a limited vocabulary
- You may understand the surface meaning of the word but not the whole meaning
- You may need better listening strategies or more experience to help you through
- You may not have the cultural knowledge to know what the speaker is discussing

Source: Osada, N. (2004). Listening Comprehension Research: A brief review of the past thirty years. *Dialogue* (3) pg 53-66.

Appendix M**Listening Skills****Before:**

- *Become familiar with type of audio and topic that you will be listening to
- *Pick a topic that interests you
- *Listen to the same podcast with a friend! People learn better through social interaction
- *If there is an activity/questions that goes with it, read through them before you listen. These are more clues about what you will listen to
- *Make a prediction on what you think it will be about. "I think this will be about....."

During:

- *Rewind the passage as many times as necessary.
- *Use captions or scripts (if available)
- *Switch your focus: you will be listening for individual sounds making up words, words making up sentences. Then, you will need to *COMPREHEND* what you heard. These are 2 processes.
- *Try to remember what you hear previously and connect it to new knowledge being currently listened to.
- *Keep a positive work ethic. Everyone has trouble. No one gets it on the first try. This is why we are all students, we are learning.

After:

- *Summarize key information about what you heard. Use the sheets to guide you.
- *Take inventory of abilities. Was it hard? Easy? On level? Talk to partner about what you listened to. Give your opinions. Discusses where you had trouble with the podcast and where you were feeling strong.

Appendix O

Podcast Choices:

<p>1) http://www.french-podcasts.com/ Podcast dialogues. Transcripts available in PDF format! Difficulty: on level</p>
<p>2)  Learn French by Podcast: intermediate, no script http://www.learnoutloud.com/Podcast-Directory/Languages/French/Learn-French-by-Podcast/19444 6 minutes, updated twice monthly Difficulty: hard</p>
<p>3)  http://www.learnoutloud.com/Podcast-Directory/Languages/French/Walk-Talk-and-Learn-French-Video-Podcast/30633#3 Video podcast, interactive, with small lesson About 10 minutes Difficulty: on level</p>
<p>4)  http://www.dailyfrenchpod.com/ Transcript NOT available through PDF file: a cost associated. Lesson/vocab explained at end of dialogue.</p>

Difficulty: varied. Sort to "**Beginner**" on the left side.

5) News in Slow French

<http://www.newsinslowfrench.com/>

New episode weekly. Provides transcript with translation of unfamiliar vocabulary when mouse is over the blue word. Great!

Difficulty: on level

6) <http://www.ielanguages.com/frenchlistening.html>

Has podcasts with video

Has MP3 with scripts and cloze activities.

Difficulty: Easy

7) Ma France (BBC)

Interactive video cast

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/mafrance/flash/#>

Has subtitles, able to be rewound. Has vocabulary, grammar and activities/quizzes for each part. 24 Units

[Syllabus](#)

Difficulty: on level

8) Frenchpod101.com

Must enter an e-mail address and select **beginner**. Quick registration. When you follow the link to confirm from your e-mail, do not buy the product they sell. Click "no thanks" at bottom.

Audio and video lessons

Difficulty: varied