

### **Introduction**

This document contains a proposal to evaluate the EME2040 Podcast Project being run at Florida State University. The proposal was written by Jesse Gentile (White Hat Consulting). Its purpose is to evaluate the execution and results of the EME2040 Podcast project as stipulated in the project grant awarded by (not disclosed). As with many grants, there is an interest by the awarding organization that grant money go towards its intended use and produce the return on investment promised by the grant writer.

### **Description of Program**

The EME2040 Podcast Project is built around a series of podcasts intended to help future teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. FSU's EME2040 (Intro to Educational Technology) students receive training on computer applications in a general "computer class" sense but often do not receive instruction on how those tools look and feel when used inside a real public school classroom. The EME2040 podcast project aims to correct this deficiency.

There are three clear goals of the program. *First* the program was designed to address weaknesses in the EME2040 program in the area of classroom integration of technology. By using a motivational medium like podcasting, the primary goal of the project is to make sure students really develop a sense of how to integrate what they are learning in the EME2040 class into future classrooms they teach in. *Second* the podcast program was intended to expose EME2040 students to audio and video technologies since the current curriculum does not do so. Seeing audio/video podcasts used during the course will give them exposure to its uses in education and ideas for how these technologies can be used instructionally. *Thirdly* the podcasts were intended to make up for some of the inconsistencies in school teaching and technology implementation experience among the EME2040 TAs. (Few of the TA's have public school teaching experience).

The program itself is comprised of 10-15 podcasts (15-30 minutes in length) on technology integration topics. The podcasts are designed to be listened to at a rate of one or two per week after a technology topic is covered in a course. The podcasts are hosted on an Apple Xserver and available online for download and consumption using mp3 audio player devices like the Apple iPod. No particular assignments or application of

podcast content by students is required at this early stage in the EME2040 curriculum. The podcasts are for consumption outside of class, and are not part of classroom activities. A curricular unit on podcasting is being designed to teach students how to podcast and is scheduled for implementation in spring 2008. Podcasts can be reused until the content is outdated, and each will be placed on the Florida Distance Learning Consortium's K-20 Digital Repository (Orange Grove).

### **Evaluation Method**

Program Participants: Participants in the podcast program are undergraduate students entering the College of Education. All College of Education students must take the EME2040 Introduction to Technology in Education class graduate from the college. Although they will be minor administrators, the TA's will also be participants in some senses. The EME2040 class TA's will be encouraged to consume the course content along side the students, and note is format of implementation.

The primary administrators of the podcasting program (from greatest to least) include: Dr. Vanessa Dennen (primary program administrator), Jesse Gentile (graduate assistant for the program) and five of the seven EME2040 TA's (facilitators of podcast usage in their sections of the EME2040 course). As creators of the podcasts and administrators of the podcast server, Vanessa Dennen and Jesse Gentile play the primary role in designing and facilitating the program. TA's simply take what they are given and bring it to the students as advised.

Evaluation Procedures: The primary objective of the evaluation is to discern (a) whether students/TA's appreciate the podcasts as a source of instruction, (b) measure how much students have learned about technology integration, and (c) illicit ways to improve the podcasts for the future semesters. To this end the following procedures will be used:

- (a) Students and TA's will be given an online survey (at the end of the semester) to measure their feelings and attitudes about the podcasting program overall.
- (b) All seven of the EME2040 sections will be given a computer based post test.
- (c) Downloading and web statistics from the podcast server will be used to get some idea of whether students are at least downloading the podcasts.
- (d) Online feedback, located on the podcasting website for students to fill in after listening to an individual podcast, will be reviewed.
- (e) A brief focus group will be held with all five TA's to illicit their opinions of aspects of the program.

(f) A brief focus group in the Wednesday section of the EME2040 class will be held to see if students share opinions not caught by the surveys in letter (a).

Evaluation Schedule:

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| <b>Oct 26</b>         | Email and explanatory web video are sent to TA's explaining podcast project and TA's roles. An invitation to contact V. Dennen & J Gentile with questions will be included.     |
| <b>Oct 29 - Dec 7</b> | Students consume podcasts and provide individual voluntary feedback (via form on the podcast webpage online) after listening to individual podcasts.                            |
| <b>Dec 3 - 7</b>      | All sections (including the 2 classes serving as a control group) of the class take a posttest. The five sections participating in the podcast project will also take a survey. |
| <b>Dec 5</b>          | Student focus group, held in Wednesday section of EME2040 class, will discuss the podcast program from the student's perspective.   |
| <b>Dec 10 - 14</b>    | TA's will select a day during final's week to meet. A focus group will be held to elicit their feedback on the podcast program, and the podcasts they listened to.              |
| <b>Dec 20</b>         | Jesse Gentile will compile and review all evaluation data.  |
| <b>Dec 21</b>         | Post program meeting to discuss program evaluation, draw conclusions, reflect on changes for the following semesters podcast program.   |
| <b>Post Dec</b>       | Vanessa Dennen writes and submits an evaluation for granting institution.   |

Data Sources:

(a) **Online survey:** Given after the students have consumed all podcasts for the semester, this survey will be designed to measure students feelings and attitudes about the Podcasting program overall. Podcast length,

level of interest, understandability, website usability, likelihood of listening to podcasts again in the future, and feelings of classmates about the podcasts will be measured.

(b) **Post tests:** Because the program was started mid semester, students will have already gained some information about technology integration from their EME2040 class thus far. This would make any pre-test an invalid measurement tool. Instead, two class sections will be selected to not participate in podcasts and thereby serve as a control group. Five will use the podcasts. At the end of the semester all seven of the EME2040 sections will be given a computer based post test. Scores from the two non participating sections will be compared to the five that did.

(c) **Web statistics:** Because the podcasts are not built into any class assessments or assignments it is possible some students may attempt to skip them. Server statistics will at least reveal how many students are downloading the podcasts, and when they do so.

(d) **Online feedback:** Students most accurate feelings about each podcast will likely follow immediately after each podcast is listened to. Students will be invited to return to the web page, after listening to each podcast, to type out a few anonymous sentences sharing what they thought about each particular recording.

(e) **TA focus group:** this discussion will be held to find out TA's thoughts on the podcast program, students comments/complaints/questions to TA's as well as thoughts about any of the podcasts the TA's actually listened to. TA's will also be asked for opinions on how next semesters TA's could be more effectively involved in the project.

(f) **Student focus group:** while most of the questions asked in this focus group will be asked on the survey, it is plausible and probable that certain comments (not to mention body language messages) will be available that will not be as clearly picked by the survey. Questions asked will be similar to those asked in the survey.

## **Project Personnel**

Dr. Vanessa Dennen: Dr. Vanessa Dennen is an Assistant Professor in the Instructional Systems Program at Florida State University, where she teaches courses in Instructional Design, Learning Theory, Evaluation, and Distance Learning. Previously, she was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Technology at San Diego State University. She received an MS in Instructional Design, Development & Evaluation from Syracuse University and an MS in Educational Psychology (emphasis: Inquiry) and Ph.D. in Instructional Systems Technology from Indiana University. Her research is on the use of asynchronous discussion technologies to support online learning and mentoring processes in both formal and informal learning communities. Dr. Dennen is responsible for

designing the podcast project, winning its grant, as well as for directing all the EME2040 classes.

Jesse Gentile: Jesse Gentile is a third semester masters student in the Instructional Systems program at FSU, where he is focusing on Distance Education. He is also a TA for the Wednesday section of the EME2040 course. As the graduate assistant for the EME2040 Podcast project Jesse plays a key role in podcast design and program maintenance. Prior to his education at FSU, Jesse complete a B.S. in social studies education from the University of South Florida and taught secondary social studies for five years. Jesse also holds a masters degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and is interested in developing online learning for seminaries. His evaluation skills come from prior work as an public school teacher as well as current coursework in instructional design and program evaluation.