

## Podcasting in the Classroom: A Roundtable on the Humanities Podcast Network's Teaching Manual

Transcribed by Eric Detweiler

[*Rhetoricity* theme plays]

Eric Detweiler [ED]: Hello hello, *Rhetoricity* listeners! This is Eric Detweiler. You're going to hear me introduce myself twice because I've got a kind of episode-within-an-episode for you today, a tofuducken just in time for your holiday feasts. What follows is a roundtable conversation with members of the Humanities Podcast Network's pedagogy working group, of which I'm a part. That conversation opens with another prepackaged intro from yours truly because it's meant to be dropped in the podcast feeds of other members of that network as a way of promoting a new open-access resource we've created for teachers interested in integrating podcasting into their courses. I just wanted to pop in here at the start to say that if you're interested in redistributing this conversation via a podcast that you run, you're welcome to do so! Just drop me a line at [eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu](mailto:eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu) and I can share the audio of what follows for you to recirculate as you see fit! Also, a quick note that this will be the last *Rhetoricity* episode for a few months. I've got a few interviews lined up this spring, but it'll be a little bit before I can get them all edited, transcribed, and posted. At present, I anticipate getting the next batch released in Fall 2024. Alright, that's it for me. Take it away, past Eric!

[Ketsa's "I Hear Echoes" plays in background]

ED: Hello, listeners! This is Eric Detweiler. I'm a member of the Humanities Podcast Network's pedagogy working group, and I wanted to take a quick second to introduce what you're about to hear. Over the past few years, the members of that working group have been developing a manual for folks in the humanities who are interested in integrating podcasting into their courses. Earlier this year, we finally published that manual, which is entitled *Teaching Students to Podcast* and is an open-access resource available through the Humanities Podcast Network's website. If you'd like to check it out you can find it at [humanitiespodnetwork.org/teaching-manual](http://humanitiespodnetwork.org/teaching-manual). Again, that's [humanitiespodnetwork.org/teaching-manual](http://humanitiespodnetwork.org/teaching-manual). It's also available via another network called Humanities Commons, which you can find at [hcommons.org](http://hcommons.org). The following recording is a roundtable conversation between many of the people who created the manual, recorded in August 2023 to celebrate its launch and provide some context and background for those who find it a potentially useful resource. We hope you enjoy the discussion, and as we note near the end, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Humanities Podcast Network or any of the folks who are part of this conversation if you'd like to learn more or get involved. One last introductory note on the way out: the music you're hearing in the background here is "I Hear Echoes" by Ketsa, available under a Creative Commons license via the Free Music Archive.

[music fades into foreground, then fades out as roundtable discussion begins]

ED: My name is Eric Detweiler and I'm here as part of a roundtable discussion with some other folks who have contributed to a new resource: the Humanities Podcast Network's teaching

manual on podcasting. So we just wanted to take some time here to talk through what exactly this manual is, how it came to be, how we're hoping that folks who teach podcasting as a part of various humanities disciplines might be able to make use of that. But for now I'm going to toss it to Beth Kramer, another person who's really been taking the lead on coordinating a lot of this process, just to give us a little bit more background on uh the Humanities Podcast Network and the manual itself.

Beth Kramer [BK]: Thanks Eric. Yeah, so the Humanities Podcast Network was founded a couple of years ago now, and their goal was really to think through the use of podcasting in an academic way, and also the kind of way that it was being introduced in terms of research and the humanities more broadly. So once the Humanities Podcast Network was founded, they charged a few working groups and we became part of a pedagogy working group that I was chairing, and we decided as our first joint project we would make a teaching manual for helping other educators work with podcasts in the classroom, and the project kind of evolved from there. We really decided that we wanted the manual to be practical, to be drawn out of lesson plans that educators at all different levels of comfortability with podcasts could use, and convened a group of educators that became dedicated to this project and put together the final product that we have today.

ED: Thanks so much for that context, Beth. I appreciate that. So you've heard from a couple of us already, but before we get into the conversation, we wanted to take a moment to introduce all of our participants here, how we got into podcasting, how we got into teaching podcasting in particular and also just kind of introducing ourselves where we are and what our affiliations are here. So as I mentioned already my name is Eric Detweiler. I am an associate professor and director of the Public Writing and Rhetoric major at Middle Tennessee State University just outside of Nashville. And Beth, I'll toss it back to you first.

BK: So my name is Beth Kramer. I'm a senior lecturer at Boston University in their rhetoric department, and I have been teaching podcasts for almost a decade now in my courses. And I became interested in teaching podcasts probably back in 2014, '15 with the rise of the *Serial* podcast that was infiltrating a lot of different aspects of pop culture at the time, and I tried that year pairing it with a David Foster Wallace essay in my classes and was amazed at the interest and energy and excitement, and since then I've been integrating podcasts as text into my classes and moved into podcast creation from there. So it's become a big part of my teaching and also my research where I work on digital and multimodal learning and ways to improve the composition classroom.

Harly Ramsey [HR]: My name is Harly Ramsey. I'm an associate professor of technical communication practice at the University of Southern California. I teach in the Engineering and Society programs, so I teach humanities to STEM majors. I got into podcasting by teaching podcasting. So I taught first and now I do it--a little backward. But as a teacher of engineering students in particular, I wanted to reconceptualize my team project. The oral presentation component was just them standing at the front of the class with PowerPoint slides that they would read, and usually one student would dominate, so I found by using a podcast assignment, it gave all students more agency and they were all more comfortable because they felt they could edit if they didn't like what they said and re-record, and so that was key for that

student population that was a little bit more reluctant as public speakers. But a second reason I liked it and I chose to teach the podcasting assignment was it also reconfigured teamwork for the students because nobody had done it before. I started this five years ago, and at the time only about 10% of students in my class had even listened to a podcast, so this was almost like one of those reality TV shows, throwing them on an island, seeing if they survive. Like, nobody knew what they were doing, and so that really brought different team dynamics to the fore. So I got the bug through teaching it and now I host a podcast with engineering students.

Ulrich Bear [UB]: So my name Ulrich Baer. I'm University Professor at New York University, and I teach a wide range of classes. My original disciplines are comparative literature, English, German, and photography, and I started teaching podcasting to get away from the standard essay assignment in freshman seminars. Most of my students are not humanities majors. They're mostly STEM, premed, or data science. And I echo what Harly said: the benefits for me were that I was able to work in small teams. All students work in teams, on rotating teams. They have to carry out each function. In the beginning, about five years ago, I taught podcasting as a very technical thing. I had engineers come in, I did sort of a session on sound design, and now my students just walk in the class and they have a phone and they can actually edit really well. And I give very short assignments which are really complex questions that they have to answer--complex in the sense of there's not one answer, and it's as if they're writing a short, maybe four-page paper, but they're doing that orally. I feel the students are much more engaged because then the work is presented in class and discussed and they get the feedback from me and their peers rather than a grade on a piece of paper, so it becomes a process where it's integrated into the class discussion rather than this thing that happens that they submit and then it goes into a kind of void and they get a grade from me. So for me, the most positive aspects have been that the students seem more engaged to produce content that they actually have to share with their peers. They take very easily to this medium because most of them know how to edit things on TikTok or Reels or Threads or other social media, but they also I think grasp intuitively and right away that they can do something very serious and meaningful and actually present really challenging opinions in a format that they usually use for entertainment and just communication. So they're using a tool that they have. And to be frank, I'm not convinced that every student needs to learn the kind of conventional essay writing structure, and I don't have that assignment in my courses. My courses are more, I think, to learn how to think critically, as we like to say somewhat grandiosely. This is a very direct approach. And the other thing I have to say: it's totally energized my teaching. I have a lot more fun, I think. I find it much more interesting because the students have a lot of leeway. In the beginning, I was very structured and now it's very creative. And we can talk about what kind of formats of podcasts I assign.

Emmy Herland [EH]: Hi, everyone. I'm Emmy Herland. I'm an assistant teaching professor in the Spanish department at the University of Colorado in Boulder. I got into podcasting when I was in graduate school. The library at my graduate school, University of Washington, was running some digital storytelling workshops for grad students to sort of encourage us to present our research in sort of new ways. So there was one on podcasting that I really enjoyed doing, but kind of almost immediately knew this was going to be something I was going to use in teaching more than for presenting my own research. So I actually do not podcast on my own at all. I just now use it exclusively in my classes. And for a language classroom, for Spanish classrooms, I find it really useful to get the students speaking. But then also, like Harly mentioned, to give them the

opportunity to re-record, to build that confidence with their speaking. I do make them listen to themselves, which is somewhat uncomfortable at first for all of us, but I find really helps them hear what they're doing well and what they're wanting to work on in terms of their pronunciation and their self-expression. So it's been really successful in a wide range of Spanish classes from sort of early or intermediate classes all the way up to my more advanced levels.

Robin Davies [RD]: Hi. Robin Davies, and I'm chair of the media studies department at Vancouver Island University, and I came to media studies and to audio from music because my background is in music technology. But I was thinking back--I first started teaching podcasting in 2006 when the hardest part about podcasting was that you had to sort of manually write your own RSS feed, and no one has to think about that anymore. But so I came to podcasting from a very tech point of view in terms of recording and production, and also the web aspect of it, which I think we forget sometimes is like a very key part of the podcasting work that we do. But I think I came to podcasting as kind of a champion of the audio medium. I'm always super excited that people are suddenly using audio in all the ways that I've been excited about using it for for a long time, and I think we sometimes forget that we've got a lot of possibility for not just voices, you know, as Emmy has said, but all of the other sounds that we get in there as well. So I teach a lot of audio production classes, and it's helpful for me to be able to provide content to my students who are practicing their production skills. You know, I've always been getting students to produce content for the radio and sometimes they're comfortable making their own content and doing all the production, but sometimes they're not comfortable speaking or they're not comfortable sourcing the content or doing the interviews, but they might be very comfortable as producers. So we've always produced content for the radio, but I started reaching out to colleagues in my department, but also in other departments and in other disciplines and saying, "Hey, how'd you like to do some podcasting?" You know, Beth talked about how podcasting became sort of extra hip in 2014, but lots of people want to try this, and I think one of the things that our manual does is take advantage of that excitement and all of that interest. And so it's nice to be able to collaborate with other colleagues who are excited about the content but are maybe lacking some of that production background, and I think we're going to get into some of the challenges with podcasting later, and certainly one of them is that technical aspect of it. But it's nicer just to be able to not have to worry about that at all. So, you know, Harly, you mentioned the teamwork, and this is teamwork, not within classes but with multiple classes and multiple disciplines.

ED: Thanks everybody for that context. And I'll try to put a little bit of a bow on the first part of this conversation by talking about how I got into podcasting in a way that will segue into the manual a little bit more directly, which we'll get into in just a second here. So as listeners have heard at this point, we've got folks representing a whole lot of different disciplines, a whole lot of different kind of paths toward this medium represented in this conversation. For me, I essentially washed out of an audio engineering program when I was a freshman in college back in the day, switched over to English, and as I mentioned very briefly earlier, ultimately ended up in rhetoric and writing studies. But when I was in my graduate program, in my PhD program down at The University of Texas at Austin, around 2011 2012 or so, there was a moment where podcasting really started to pick up a lot of steam in some ways. It was sort of through like the syndication of programs like *This American Life* and *Radiolab* that were being released through iTunes other platforms like that at that point through RSS feeds, as Robin mentioned a moment

ago, and you started to have a lot of academics who were thinking, "Okay, well, how can we share what our discipline does, the work our field is doing through this new medium in a different way than journal articles, monographs, edited collections let us do?" So I was working in a place called the Digital Writing and Research Lab at UT-Austin at that time, and basically because of my one measly year of undergraduate audio engineering experience knew just enough to to head up a small team of graduate students who created a podcast on the intersections of rhetoric and technology. So I ran that for a couple years and then basically, once I was approaching the end of my time in grad school, thought, "Well, I guess I should get a digital humanities project of my own that I can take with me when I'm going on the job market." I started a podcast called *Rhetorcity* that I'm still running today, and then also kind of alongside that started incorporating podcasts into my courses as a way of helping students think about how writing happens in other media, largely because my conviction--and this I think is something that Uli touched on a little bit in terms of essays--is that it's really difficult if not impossible to talk about writing in the way that we ask students to do it at this point without also thinking about the digital technologies and media that are facilitating that writing--and the fact that writing at this point doesn't just move through the world in the form of books or print articles or materials like that, but, you know, social media posts, podcast scripts, video essays, all these other kinds of platforms. and so I really wanted students early on, when I first started teaching podcasting, just to be able to experiment a little bit with what it meant to write for the ear, to write scripts, and the way that that differed from writing things that were meant to be read silently. What different moves, what different, rhetorical strategies work in those different kinds of contexts, and use that as kind of a comparative opportunity for students. Like, take this paper you wrote--now let's turn it into a podcast script. What do you have to change; what can you keep? And then ultimately since then, I've had the opportunity to develop some full-fledged podcasting classes that are still writing classes, are still English classes, but where the focus across the board is really on the storytelling and narrative principles that that guide podcasting at this moment and that students can make use of even if their background is more in writing and English and not so much in like the technical aspects of audio production. So that's the thing that for me I really ended up focusing on in the section of the manual that I contributed, was kind of an across-the-board look at this podcasting class, how students can learn the different little pieces of podcasting, how to conduct interviews, how to edit interviews, how to tell compelling audio stories, how to craft soundscapes that ultimately pay off with those students collaborating on a podcast that they create as a class with, you know, a handful of actual serialized episodes at the end of that course. So I think for all of us, we've come to this work from slightly different angles, we're doing it in slightly different though often overlapping disciplines, and the thing that, as Beth mentioned earlier, we're really trying to capture in this manual are just some sort of practical everyday lesson plans that provide examples of what this actually looks like in our classes. Not so much big abstract best practices for teaching podcasting, but just some on the ground ground descriptive strategies of what this looks like for us. So I've talked enough in the last couple minutes. I want to kick it back to you all and really just give you an opportunity to tell us a little bit about your sections of the manual, the lesson plans that you all contributed, what you cover, what it represents about what you see as the key possibilities or challenges involved in in teaching podcasting.

UB: If I can add one thing, or deepen what you said about narrative and storytelling and presentation: my podcast is basically dialogue or deep conversation, and what I tried to convey to

my students that this is not a news program, and this is not a kind of chat room just like a radio talk show where they just have opinions, but this is actually a place where they will present let's say two or three possible takes on an issue. They will not be able to resolve this. And they have to use a couple other components: they're always required to use music, which is usually a great assignment for them because they have to agree on something which they usually don't agree on, they have to set a mood, and they have to come up with something that's not a conclusion. I'll give you two examples of what I do; they're very short examples. So, one: is it okay to consume fast fashion, to go shopping at ZARA or any of the stores of the time, or Shein or something like that. And in some ways that question generates for NYU students a lot of emotion right away: is it okay to buy a T-shirt every other day or not? Then they go kind of deep, and I try to make them do two things: first of all, they have to sort of lay out the obvious arguments: yes it's okay, no it's really bad for the environment, for labor, etc., etc. They have to come up with some research on that to back that up, and then they have to represent these positions in a coherent way, not in a polemical way, and I try to let them feel rather than explain that this is not about polemics, this is not about just scoring a point or eliminating your opponent's point of view, but actually deepening your understanding. And so the final component, to be very concrete, so the students produce this piece--let's say three students are speaking--and they usually, after the first or second assignment, second or third assignment, they have to find an expert. I often recommend somebody. I say, "Here's a professor in the business school, or here's a student activist," or they actually oftentimes go to H&M, ZARA, and try to interview a sales associate, which is really tricky, which is usually really powerful and they talk to a 22-year-old who's selling stuff at one of those stores and I say, "Incorporate that in the same way you incorporate your own contributions." So give equal weight to the expert opinion and to your own opinions because they're informed opinions, you've done research on it. It's not just how you feel about something. And this produces, let's say, at the end should produce a 4-minute podcast. The hardest thing is, I'm sure all of you can confirm, to keep it at four minutes, it doesn't become 12 minutes. Editing down is really difficult, but I think the students feel afterwards they really had to spend a surprising amount of time, sometimes hours, discussing what they want to convey about an issue that can't be resolved and compressing that into four minutes. And I think that experience is really what I'm aiming for. You know, when people look at the teaching manual, I do a kind of storyboarding, but I'm pretty light on that. They just have to sketch out the question, give me the two positions, and indicate who is doing it. I don't need to have an entire script that they're speaking.

BK: In some ways my podcast does a lot of similar things in that I really want students to think beyond traditional essays in my course. In the second semester, where I situate an ethnography research podcast, it's a very collaborative six-week intense semester for the students when they're traveling abroad, so part of the design of my lesson plan was to incorporate visual analysis and traditional research in a packaged form that utilizes those techniques of being in a foreign place or a place where you're not as comfortable and learning to use some of those observational and visual skills as part of your analysis. To Uli's point, though, I think editing and getting students to really think about a final product that has a lot of framing is something that's really important to my lesson plans, and I try really hard to scaffold my assignments, so I tried to build each stage of the podcast design as something that is very manageable for students. And by the time they're kind of deep into their research and their observations and learning, some of the technology that they need to utilize, they don't feel overwhelmed by it because each of those

parts kind of build to the whole. So I've evolved the podcast over time, and I do an ethnography podcast, and I sometimes do a digital age podcast where they research aspects of the digital age, but they follow that same sort of scaffolding model that I really wanted to preserve in the manual so that someone coming into teaching podcasting that maybe doesn't have as much experience can understand how those smaller parts and exercises eventually get students to that final stage. So that's something I hope that our practical manual captures--not just the final product, which a lot of manuals I think sometimes try to position, but also the steps like that. How do you get to that final part that students feel good about?

EH: Yeah, I did something similar with my podcasting unit design. So the sort of lesson planning that I have in the manual is from a course I teach that is essentially like a Spanish language media course where we look at sort of the history of Spanish language media in the US but also abroad and talk about the use of Spanish language media today by Hispanic and Latino populations in the US as a large part of it so a big part of what I try and do with that podcasting, or radio and podcasting, unit is have students listen and imitate what they're hearing to a certain extent and find a podcast that they enjoy in Spanish and then sort of look for the conventions there, but we also save--this is a class that meets three days a week--every Friday we save for workshopping, and that changes throughout the unit, where we start off by talking about what are some of the conventions we've noticed as we're listening to the radio and listening to podcasts to sort of define in very broad strokes what is the genre that we are creating in, and then we move on to adding different pieces, so talking about storyboarding and the option of scripting for students who want that security of being able to read rather than speak spontaneously in a second language. We talk about music, we talk about recording and some of the more audio production elements, though we don't go super deep into that because it's not an audio production class, and that tends to stress them out if they think they're going to be graded on how good their microphone sounds. But we do talk about it because it's an important element of the product that they're creating. So I've built that in where every week of this unit, we have at least one day where we are talking about the form and having them listen to a lot of examples that they can then sort of create their own guidelines, and they build their own rubric for this class as well, which I think is kind of a fun thing to do--to think about how do you judge a podcast and how do you think your podcast should be judged. It gets them involved in a certain way in the creation of the assignment in a way that's different from a lot of the more traditional essays that they're writing for other classes.

HR: I love that having them build their rubric idea, Emmy. That's really neat and I'm, with your permission, going to steal that next semester.

EH: Absolutely! I do it for all the assignments in this class because they're all meant to be public media, so if you're going to share a podcast with the public, we should collaboratively as the public decide what are the criteria there.

HR: Well, that speaks to a really key point too, and that's that I think the medium, and at least my students' understanding of the medium, is evolving. It's just changing and growing every semester and when I look back on my section now, I feel that it's very dated. It reflects where I was, you know, four or five years ago when I started teaching podcasting, and I would say it was defensive--that I had to defend that I could do this as an assignment when they're supposed to

have  $x$  number of pages written or a traditional team presentation that my students might actually do in the workplace. So that's why my solution for that was to approach it as a genre lesson because that's still tied to the background of rhetoric, of composition, of reading, and now I don't even need to do that because students are consumers of podcasts now. So they know these genres, they know how to tap into them. So in that way my section is dated, but what I was hoping to provide was what I wanted: the how to do it, and that was one simple wedge into it. What I also provide, which is what I wanted myself, is a rubric, a grading rubric--which now I'm gonna take Emmy's idea. But what I wanted in the grading rubric was that I had to also clearly say "this is not a course in"--we have Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism where they make podcasts, and that's not what this is. I can't teach editing, I don't teach editing, but I expect the intention and the knowledge if not the execution. And so that's how I framed it in the rubric. And like Beth, I use a lot of scaffolding assignments to sort of get them there. One is a storyboard, and I think I have that in my section. But as part of also writing my section, Uli gave me the great idea of doing a focus group, and that's what I do now, because now instead of leaning into genre, teaching them that, I teach them what I'm hearing from others here: it's like audience awareness. And so having a focus group--I always have them pitch two ideas and I force the focus group to pick one that they like better. Otherwise they're always vacillating--"I like every thing." So they pick one, and then they tell why, and I say you're not having the focus group vote on your topic, but you listen to the reasons if they liked one idea or pitch because it was relevant to their daily life. If you like the other topic, you know, space exploration, make it relevant to their daily life. So you take the wise from the audience. And I guess my last point, then: so the challenge then for me of teaching podcasting is that it's evolving, but that's also the possibility, and so with audience now we have made *Engineering Moment*, a podcast that's available on Spotify. It's only been four episodes, but the point is now the students see it as something real.

RD: It's really lovely in a conversation like this to hear a lot of the things that we've been discussing actually happening. So Ulrich talked a lot about conversation as being a key part of of podcasting, and that idea that we're creating and we're developing ideas and we're doing it live so everybody gets to hear that thought process. And I like when Harley says, "Oh Emmy, I love that idea; I'm going to steal that idea," and then you work it into your next iteration of the project. And so it's it's great that we can illustrate, oralize exactly how this podcasting process can work and be effective in this conversation right now. Just hearing those thought processes at work. One thing we've heard a lot too is this idea of the public's perception of the research that we're doing, the content that we're producing, thinking a lot about the audience and how they're going to receive our work. And it's never just "I'm writing this paper and my prof is going to read it"; it's, "I'm making this thing and I'm excited about it and I'm invested in it because my collaborator is going to hear it, my classmates are going to hear it, we're going to put it online and it's going to be shared with lots of people or it's going to go on the radio." And I've always been a really strong advocate for my campus community radio station, and even prior to doing a lot of podcasting, I was suggesting that students get their content on the radio, and so that idea that, "Oh, other people are going to hear this and I need to, when I'm performing it, I need to think about how they're going to hear it," this is all sort of wrapped up in the in the idea of podcasting. So the the knowledge mobilization piece is I think a key thing that I'm really excited about when criminology students are doing public service research, and they're working with media studies students to really shine up what that research is going to sound like and what that information is



going to sound like. Then we get something that's really exciting to listen to and engaging to listen to. There's one little clip that I want to share that's a collaboration between some criminology students, Emily and Jessica, and a media studies production student, Jeanvieve, and the topic was prison nurseries. And so the content looks at moms and infants and their relationship when those moms are in prison, and one of the things I challenge the criminology students to do and the production students is to think about external content that can be included that's not just their voices, so media clips, news clips, sound effects, music, and this clip I want to share really combines all those things together amazingly in a one-minute clip.

[clip begins]

News Anchor: Walk into a women's prison today and among the drug dealers and the thieves there could be a baby. In Canada there are controversial programs that allow convicted mothers to keep their babies with them in prison. [sound of prison door closing]

Student #1: We keep seeing the same pattern of a mother arrested, the child being removed from her custody and placed in a stranger's care. Meanwhile the mother is expected to rehabilitate in a prison setting while subjected to a new form of trauma: that of losing her child and experiencing incarceration. [quiet electric guitar music plays in background]

Student #2: Prison nursery programs are nurseries set up within a prison setting in a separate unit of the jail, designed to house and facilitate incarcerated mothers and their new babies. [sound of woman and baby playing and laughing together] In many cases, mothers are incarcerated while pregnant and give birth while incarcerated and transition into the prison nursery program.

Student #1: The prison nursery program model is designed to foster hope for a better future and to protect the integrity of the mother-child bonding process.

[music fades out, clip ends]

RD: When I was presenting this research about collaborations between classes to some of my colleagues back this spring, I thought, well, not everybody who wants to do a project like this has a media studies department handy or a radio production department handy or whatever, but I think that these collaborations between different kinds of students can be made possible in a number of different kinds of ways as well. Fundamentally, I think it's helpful if we have somebody who is a newcomer to content paired with somebody who is an expert at that content. And Ulrich, you talked about this a little bit as well: you know, taking a student who's really passionate and going to talk to somebody who's in the field who's actually doing the work and showing that conversation between them and what comes out of that. In my case, I'm really fortunate that I've got a lot of students who are creative with their technology paired with researchers, but it doesn't have to be production students. It could be public speaking students, it could be theater students paired with STEM students, perhaps, and so then you've got someone who's thinking about performing and whose work it is to engage and entice audiences paired with someone who has a lot of content and has a big story to tell but needs someone to help them kind of handle that information. But ultimately, somebody who is a producer or maybe kind of an external reviewer paired with somebody who is a content developer, and if those pairings are

within a class, that's fantastic, if those pairings are within a department or if they're cross-discipline or even reaching out to another school somewhere else--maybe it's not within your institution, maybe it's with elsewhere in the world--I think those kinds of pairings can always be really important in terms of multiple sets of ears on the same content and the mobilization of the information that comes from that and the fun that comes from that.

UB: Yeah. Robin, I want to add one thing: when I said what you just described, when I asked my students to ask an expert, which is often another faculty member or it's actually sometimes really kind of a journalist or someone rather important, I try to make them understand they have to really over-prepare and they have to really find out who that person is. They can't just skim Wikipedia; they're supposed to really know what this person thinks, and this moment is the moment where I follow kind of Beth more closely. They have a script, and I go over that what questions will you ask them, how do you know you're going to get the answers, and in some ways I think they learn that you can really respect deep knowledge and what you're saying, Robin: sometimes that knowledge has to be translated into another way of presenting it so people can get it or get a bigger audience. But I also want them to understand this person is an expert, has worked for so long on something, you cannot just jump in and say, "Hi, can you explain to me the complexity of fast fashion in the economy of Asia?" That's not okay. So they have to really know who this person is, what their field is, why they investigated this, and that is a really big step for freshmen. But I also think it's something that is really amazing to happen because there are freshmen in the university and they're realizing, "I'm surrounded by this, and I may be able to access all these different things and different people, and that is a skill I can develop," rather than, "Oh, there's a lot of smart people and I just got to read all their papers." But this part, it's a very sensitive part, in a way, because I also say, "You cannot just approach a name I give you, one of my colleagues, and sort of say, 'Oh, I'm going to show up in your office hours and put my iPhone in front of you, and can you now talk and give me your wisdom?'" So that human kind of dimension of how to approach somebody I think is a really vital part of what I try to teach because it's otherwise too quickly that they're kind of extracting some sound bite and they're moving on. And that's also useful to advance your own argument if you already know your argument, but if you don't really know your argument, it's better to I think go deep on that level.

RD: And absolutely: that idea of creating a script and being prepared is fundamental in that conversation situation, but I think also the ability to be a novice, but then to be able to demonstrate your curiosity and be able to improvise when it seems like your script is not going to be helpful, or your script is not going to provide you with something useful, or you suddenly get very excited about the comment that was just made and you'd like to follow up on that, please.

ED: I was wondering if maybe we could use that to to wrap back around to something Beth mentioned earlier in the conversation. Beth, you had mentioned earlier that this is in some ways a really process-focused manual more so than a product-focused manual, so it's not like, "Here's some exemplary projects and now let's do a rhetorical analysis of what really makes these great student podcasts work." It's much more about the steps that all of us go through on our classes, and Robin and Uli, you both have hit on planning and preparation in the comments that you were just making. And I was thinking, you know, that was something for me that was key in the

manual as well--to go, like, how do students plan a multi-episode podcast in class, what does that work look like? Because of course if you're doing an individual writing project in an English class or rhetoric class, that still takes a lot of careful organizational thinking, but that really goes to another level where you're doing something like conducting an interview that is going to be what you have recorded to work with for good to be able to plug into a podcast project. It's really tricky to go back and just ask that person later because you want them to put a point differently, and when you're doing a serialized multi-episode podcast, there's question of, "Okay, what order are we doing these in?" So to pull all that back together, the next thing I was going to ask is essentially what are the things that you really hope that people who teach podcasting, are interested in teaching podcasting are able to take away from this manual, and maybe sort of key concepts or key pedagogical terms or something we can use to pull that together? So if maybe preparation and planning is one of those things that we've been talking about here, are there other key steps other key elements of that process--as you put it, Beth--or other key concepts that are the things you really want to call attention to, that are what we hope people who turn to this manual make use of it in their teaching and their teaching preparation can really pull away from it?

BK: Yeah, thanks for pulling that together, Eric. I would say one thing the manual does really well that I'm proud of us for doing is that we found a lot of interconnectivity between the different parts. So for instance, even though you can take, let's say, my lesson plan and follow it step by step if you want to do a research-based podcast, other things you can do are look at some of the intro sections, which have some tips about interviewing and it will take you to specific parts of my lesson plan and Uli's lesson plan and Harly's lesson plan that talk about interviewing or those type of things too. And I think it's a way that you can use the manual in both a specific way to follow something you want to spend a lot of time capturing exactly, and other ways that you could use it a little bit more theoretically or to even troubleshoot, like, "I really want to understand storyboarding, I want to see different examples of storyboards or rubrics." The manual is hyperlinked in a way that you can find those keywords or find those key terms, especially in our added resources, and I think that's a way that people at all different levels can potentially use it.

RD: I was trying to think of specific challenges to podcasting. It's interesting too that at a technical level, there actually aren't that many anymore. One comment we heard earlier was that it used to take the studio, and you have to have microphones, you need to pay attention to various things, and now I tend to sort of send students with their phones into their closets or under their duvet to record, and I like that it can be that simple. And I think one of the nice opportunities that podcasting provides is a bit of a place to play and a bit of a place to have fun, and there's an experimentation there because the medium is still relatively new and certainly relatively new to students, and definitely relatively new to academic dissemination of knowledge. So it means that we get to go in and explore and see what's possible, and if that challenges us to connect with new people and challenges us to frame our work in new ways and to prepare our work for new kinds of audiences and new kinds of formats, then that's often the most exciting part about what we do, so there's a lot of different places in this manual, you know, as Beth was suggesting, that that we can find ways into podcasting, different kinds of ways into podcasting, whether it's bringing in external content, whether it's generating it ourselves, whether it's thinking about our own performative capabilities, or whether it's thinking about collaborating with others. And it's nice

that this manual allows you to kind of dip in and grab different bits and pieces of content and not have to start at the very beginning and work all the way through it, and that kind of like a la carte access, I think, is very helpful to teachers, especially when they're thinking, "Hey, I've got a class coming up in a month. I'd really like to be able to do a little bit of podcasting, please," and here's a wide array of possibilities about how that might work backed up with actual experience and actual testimonies from some of the students who've done that work.

EH: One of the things that I think is kind of interesting that's not in the manual is a lot of very specific technological instruction. Because like Robin was saying, the barrier now to creating a podcast, the sort of technological barrier, is really low, so I think that's one of those things that maybe we imagine as more of a barrier than it actually is. And I remember having these conversations early on about deciding not to explain how to use Audacity, for example, in the manual, but focus on the tips about recording in general, and our students really understand a lot of these technologies in a way that we as faculty don't have to be able to do everything and explain how to do everything in order to give them the tools to figure it out. I think one of the things that I sort of see as a strength of the manual is its focus on the more general, or on how to conceptualize the project from the point of view of someone who's planning and preparing that project for the class rather than how to actually go through step by step and create the product.

HR: I guess what Robin was saying was about podcasting can expand the way we teach. That's how I look at it now. It's like, I want to revise not just my pedagogical approach but learning outcomes, learning objectives, digital literacy that wasn't a learning objective for upper-division writing when I started this, and now it should be. And I'm championing that effort at my home institution, but it's like this is constantly evolving, and it's expanding what we do and how we do it. So I would say approach the manual that way--as a springboard for whatever somebody wants to do.

UB: I would underscore the group-based aspect. I rotate my teams all the time. They're never in the same group with the same students, and they all have to do specific tasks. And I would emphasize that also at a moment when there's a lot of anxiety around tech, AI, et cetera, that the students realize really quickly this is actually something they can gather around and collaborate on and it does not alienate them from what they're doing any longer. It's actually the thing that brings them together, and the thing I had to really rethink and retool that now my assignments have to be processed in class and I don't have that where I read the papers at home and give them back the grade. So I have to actually schedule that, and it sometimes takes the entire class period. I have three-hour seminars and I can easily do three hours of the four group presentations, and we talk about them, we do a critique, but I think students really get really quickly that here, technology brings them together and actually requires them to work together outside of the classroom. And I think also for other instructors, the great thing about the manual is what Beth said: you can just pick and choose, do one. Do one assignment and see how it goes with your class. In most cases, the class will be light-years ahead of all of us just generationally in terms of how they take up the medium and some of them feel it's very natural to them to do it, and I think you can feel an energy in the class that's hard to match in other ways. And I think for people who are not sure, the last thing I would add: I also assign podcasts that I find useful, and I give students a very detailed listening guide to the podcast. I say, "this is what you're supposed to listen to," and this is where I'm really detailed--say, "At minute 10:54, the person said this. What

was the point of that? In minute 14, they actually contradict themselves, or they said something different." So actually there are no trick questions, I said, "You can listen and get a lot of information from this podcast, so they understand the medium is really, a truly deep resource. It's not just a superficial thing you do while you're doing the dishes or you're going to the gym.

ED: You know, we've gotten a little bit into the challenges, the possibilities for where podcasting is now through, I think, Emmy and some other folks' points about some of the ways the technological barriers are maybe shifting around, certainly look a lot different than they did 10, 15 years ago. Anything that you're seeing now, even since we finished up the manual--because this stuff changes so quickly--in terms of what's new, on the horizon, that's exciting, that's maybe going to be challenging in terms of what's involved in teaching podcasting in these kinds of classes?

BK: Yeah, that's such a great question to think about, Eric, because on one hand, I'm glad we've been talking about the way this field is evolving because that was one thing we really had in mind intentionally with the manual: that this would be a living document. We planned to update it quite often and revise lesson plans, add lesson plans, and, to Emmy's point too, we really didn't want to get too much into the weeds with the technology, because it's evolving so quickly, and kind of keep this a lot more about the educational aspects of teaching content. So I'm glad about those aspects. I mean, in terms of my own thinking about the challenges, I've been thinking a lot about AI because it's been a conversation among educators, especially in rhetoric and writing fields, lately, and what I've been hearing a little bit is that the kinds of DME assignments like podcasting sometimes give you a more authentic voice or more difficult voice to replicate. And I think more and more we're going to see podcast-like assignments become more accepted in mainstream academia. And I think AI might be pushing it that way, and I think there's sort of the promise of that, and also the the potential challenge in that: how will AI change editing? How will it change content and research and all kinds of things that I think we're going to have to adapt to? So that's one thing I've just been spending a lot of time thinking about as someone who teaches podcast creation. I don't know if any of you have been feeling that that as well.

ED: Yeah. I know that's been a double-edged sword a little bit as I thought about podcasting too because one of the big, big parts of this work that we haven't talked much about in this hour, but that comes up in the manual, is accessibility, and specifically transcripts. And if you're not doing podcasts that are scripted in advance, you know, some of the more conversational stuff that that Uli's been talking about, if you want to make sure that those podcasts are accessible, having well-put-together transcripts is such an important but also time-consuming part of that labor, whether for academics who are making podcasts or for students who are making them as class projects. And so on one hand, it has been nice to see not necessarily AI, but at least machine learning tools and algorithms that help generate transcripts--of course, that also displaces people who have done the work of transcription and gotten compensated for that work for a long time, but that has in some ways made the the final steps of of podcasting accessibility, and just the time and effort that goes into that, a little bit easier, even as on the flip side you've of course got big challenges in terms of--or maybe questions in terms of how long will it be before we have some kind of AI-generation tool that can host a two-hour discussion show all by itself.

UB: I think for the moment, Beth's point is really useful. It for the moment may be a more authentic way of getting students' voices into the classroom, and because there is that dimension of actually presenting your work in front of your peers versus putting a piece of paper in a mailbox or sending it as an attachment, there may be a bit more hesitation actually to put something out there that's not yours. For me, that's a big shift: that the grading now happens through presentations in class where I write extensive notes, and then I write them notes afterwards. What I heard from the others, from their peers, from myself, et cetera. That shifts something, and that removes one aspect of the whole discussion about AI and writing that's locked in, because you get one document, and you have to sort of assess that versus a group document where they're all responsible for it and they're doing it in front of other people.

RD: I love being able to provide assignments for students where they can't go and simply Google the answer. You know, tasks that require them to work and to think and to experiment, and then show the results of that experimentation, or you talked about adding in music and how that's a fun challenge. And there's a lot of debate around which music, and when should it start, and when should it finish. I haven't heard an AI-generated podcast. I'd love to hear one where the system has been able to go in and choose the appropriate audio, additional audio to fit in the background and then be able to rationalize why it starts at the this point and why it finishes at that point. That's just a layer of thinking and a layer of creativity that is so human and that is so organic, and if that's part of what we're evaluating and the justification for that is part of what we're evaluating, then I feel like we're in the clear. Fingers crossed.

ED: A nice, relatively hopeful note potentially to end on there. I will say if anybody's interested in digging into the strange and horrifying possibilities of AI-hosted podcasts, there is *The Joe Rogan AI Experience*, an AI-generated podcast that was created by a fan of Joe Rogan, which was written up in *WIRED* a few months ago and is not something I ever hope to listen to again but does exist if people want to--

UB: Could be better than Joe Rogan! Hey, there could be improvement. I'm an optimist.

ED: Well, thank you all for being a part of this conversation. We really hope this manual will be a useful resource, again, to folks who are already teaching podcasting, who are new to it, who are even just tentatively interested in potentially adding it to different humanities and liberal arts classes, and if you have any questions about this project, feel free to reach out to the folks mentioned both in the episode description and in the intro at the start.

[*Rhetoricity* theme fades in and plays]