HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens

English and Digital Literacies

Unit 4.1: Podcasts and Vodcasts in the FL Classroom

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Podcasts (1/4)

Podcasts are:

- a new type of online media delivery.
- digital audio files distributed over the Internet.

When we create podcasts we are creating and posting an audio file to the internet. These audio files are mostly in an .mp3 file format, although they can exist in other audio file types (such as .wav, .ogg, and .aiff)

Podcasts (2/4)

Podcasts (3/4)

- **Available through download from websites** or through a subscription feed.
- Listen on a computer or a mobile device such as an iPod or an MP3 player.
- Podcasts can be listened to when and where the user chooses to, and they are **automatically delivered to subscribers.**

Podcasts (4/4)

- Podcasting software (iTunes, Juice, iPodder) needs subscription.
- Many of these applications are available online free of charge.
- Subscriptions to podcasts are made possible by software called RSS.

What is a podcast feed? (1/2)

The use of RSS (Really Simple Syndication) means that the user can subscribe to a podcast that will be downloaded automatically every time there is an update or new content is uploaded.

[1]

What is a podcast feed? (2/2)

A podcast feed:

1. is a text file on the internet,
2. contains information about the podcast (e.g. title, description, etc),
3. contains a list of the podcast episodes,
4. has a web address.

Difference from the radio

- You may think of a podcast as a user-created, online, radio program with one significant difference.
- While radio programs are scheduled and made available only at certain times of the day, a podcast can be accessed or downloaded at any time and is made available **on-demand** to the listener.

Podcasts in Plain English

[2]

Watch the video: Podcasting in Plain English

Podcast and images

Some podcasters produce podcasts which include images that display during play. This may be a single image which advertises the podcast provider or, in the case of enhanced podcasts, a number of images to support the audio content.

Vodcasts

- **Vodcast**: was used to refer to podcasts with video rather than audio content, today it is known as **video podcast.**
- Video podcasts are increasingly available. These usually come in m4v format (to be played through iTunes, Quicktime, or some video portable media players), or the more traditional mpeg format.

Why use podcasts in language teaching

- Graham Davies (2005) claims that the single piece of technology that has affected language learning most is the cassette recorder.
- The typical personal media player is no more than a Walkman with digital media files instead of cassettes.
- The delivery of media content online is not new either: audio and video on demand, either as a download or via streaming, has been popular since the 1990s.

What's new about podcasting?

- The ease of publication, ease of subscription, and ease of use across multiple environments (Campbell, 2005, p. 34).
- its popularity which comes from:
  - the ease of access,
  - the increase of broadband users, and
  - the proliferation of portable media players.

What they offer in ELT

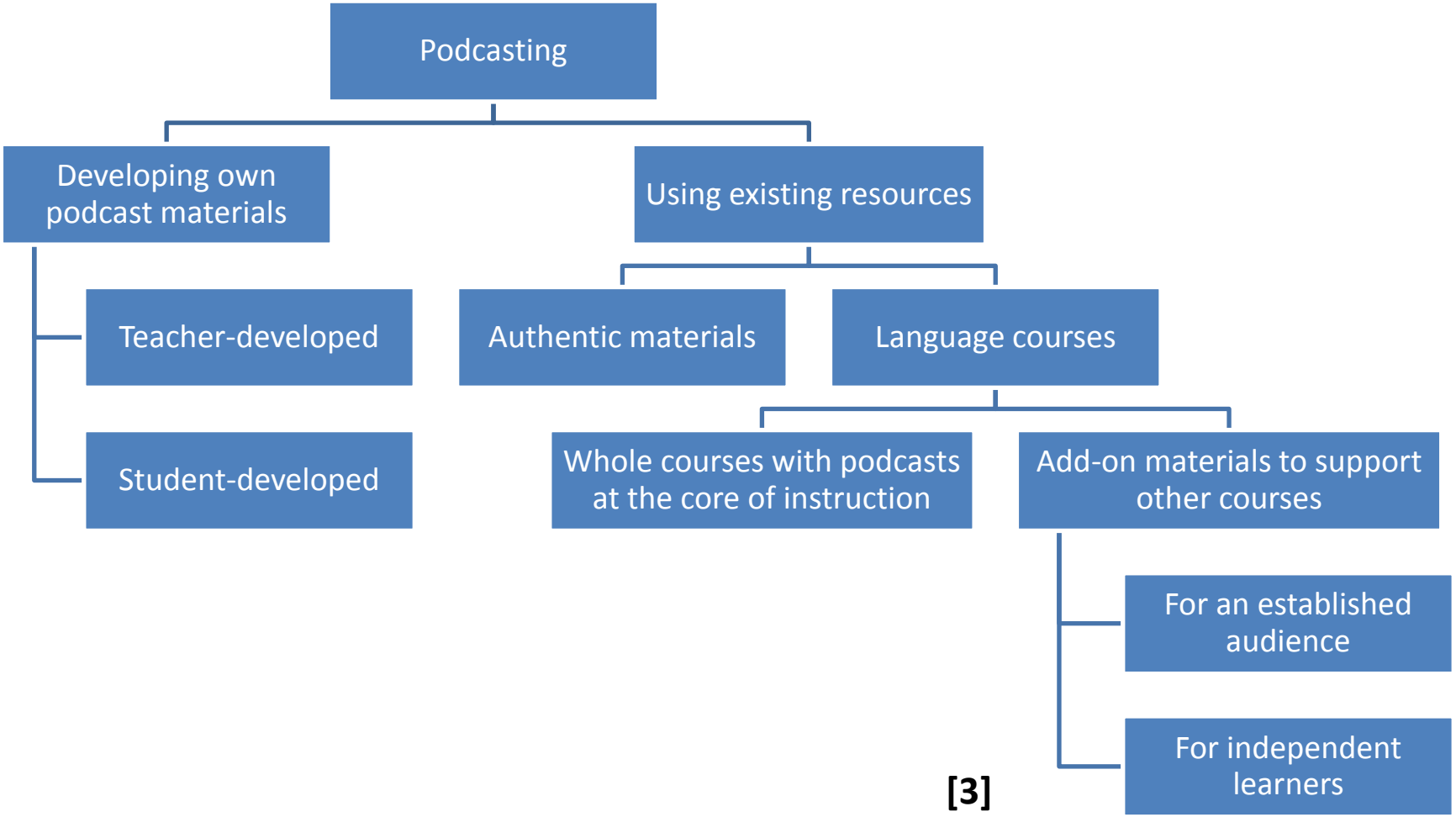
- Use of authentic audio materials with EFL students.
- Encourages creativity and collaboration.
- Teaches effective communication skills.
- Engages students in active exploration, observation, processing and interpretation.
- Mobile learning.

How podcasts can be used in the FL classroom

Teachers may:

- encourage and allow for the option of students to submit assigned work as podcasts,
- explore the possibility of using podcasts as part of project research materials,
- encourage students to interview relatives and develop oral histories,
- ask students to create a podcast to meet a real need,
- create with their students an online radio.

Types of podcasts for ELT



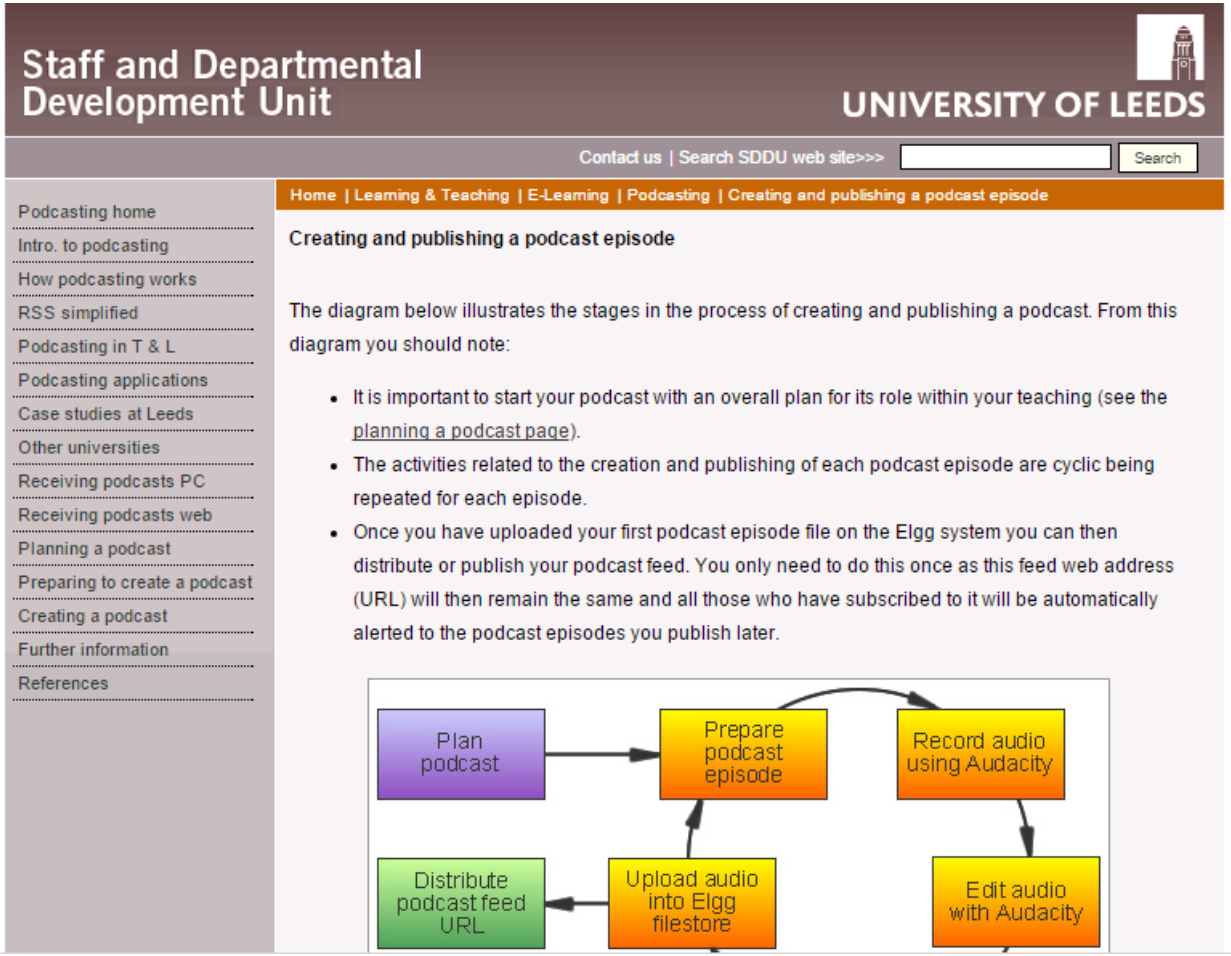
[3]

Teacher-developed podcasts for ELT

Teachers may record and distribute directly to students' MP3 players:

- lessons for students,
- a short introduction about your school or class that new students or parents can listen to and learn from,
- supplementary information (beyond what is covered in the classroom),
- classroom discussions (Meng, 2005).

Examples of teacher-developed podcasts



[4]

Examples of student-developed podcasts

- Student projects.
- Student radio style broadcasts.
- Digital storytelling.
- Student created content (e.g. overviews, reviews etc.).
- Conduct interviews with individuals in the community or school.

Podcasts developed by external sources

- Authentic content provided by native speakers of English primarily to be used by them (e.g. news and radio programming).
- Information from an expert in a given field.
- Supplementary information.
- Free podcasts from universities, colleges, departments of education, and other educational material.

Examples of podcasts developed by external sources (1/2)

Examples of this category of podcasts can be found in the webpages of:

- major television and radio broadcasters,
- broadcasters who place their radio programmes or specially recorded content online,
- performers who wish to promote their material,

Examples of podcasts developed by external sources (2/2)

- film studios who make film trailers available to promote them (both mainstream and independent studios),
- individuals with something they want to say or share,
- educational institutions and teachers who provide learning content on many fields (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007).

Teaching English through podcasting

In the category of language courses we have teaching content specifically designed for language learning.

In this case we have stand-alone courses that strive to operate as virtual classrooms.

Supporting materials for specific audiences

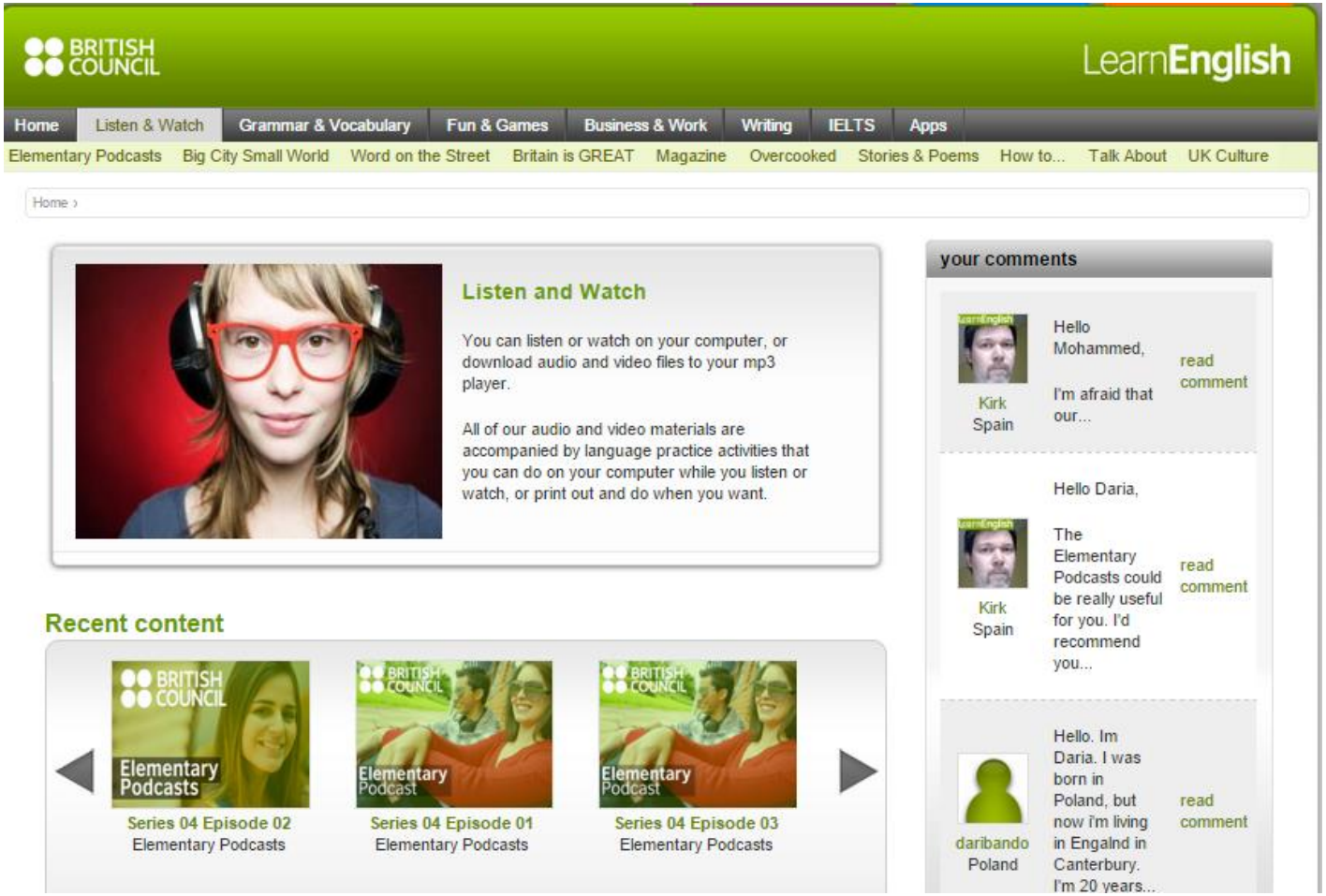
Materials provided by teachers or institutions for their own students: Among the first institutions to implement the introduction of portable media devices to learning were Osaka Jogakuin College in Japan, which was the first educational institution to provide iPods for its students (McCarty, 2005), and the initiative at Duke University, in North Carolina (US), to provide all first-year students with iPods. Their use of the devices was based on the provision of custom-made materials to their own students.

Supporting materials for independent learners

Supporting materials designed for independent learners who are not enrolled on a particular course, delivered as a public broadcast.

Supporting materials for independent learning are materials provided by institutions or individuals who have no particular fixed target audience (at least not in the sense of a particular group of students in the previous category).

British Council LearnEnglish – Podcasts and Vodcasts



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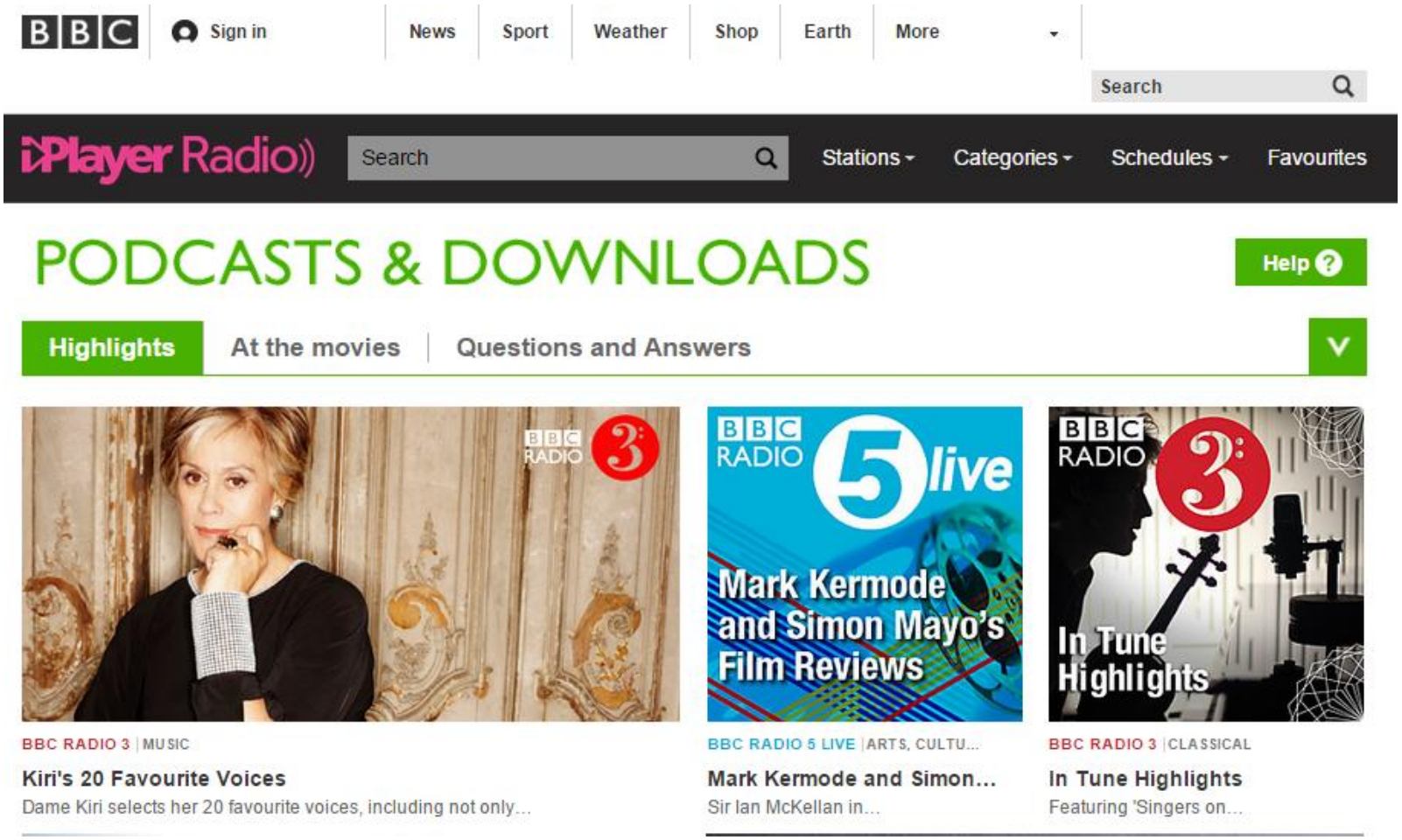
BBC Podcasts



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Australia Network Vodcasts

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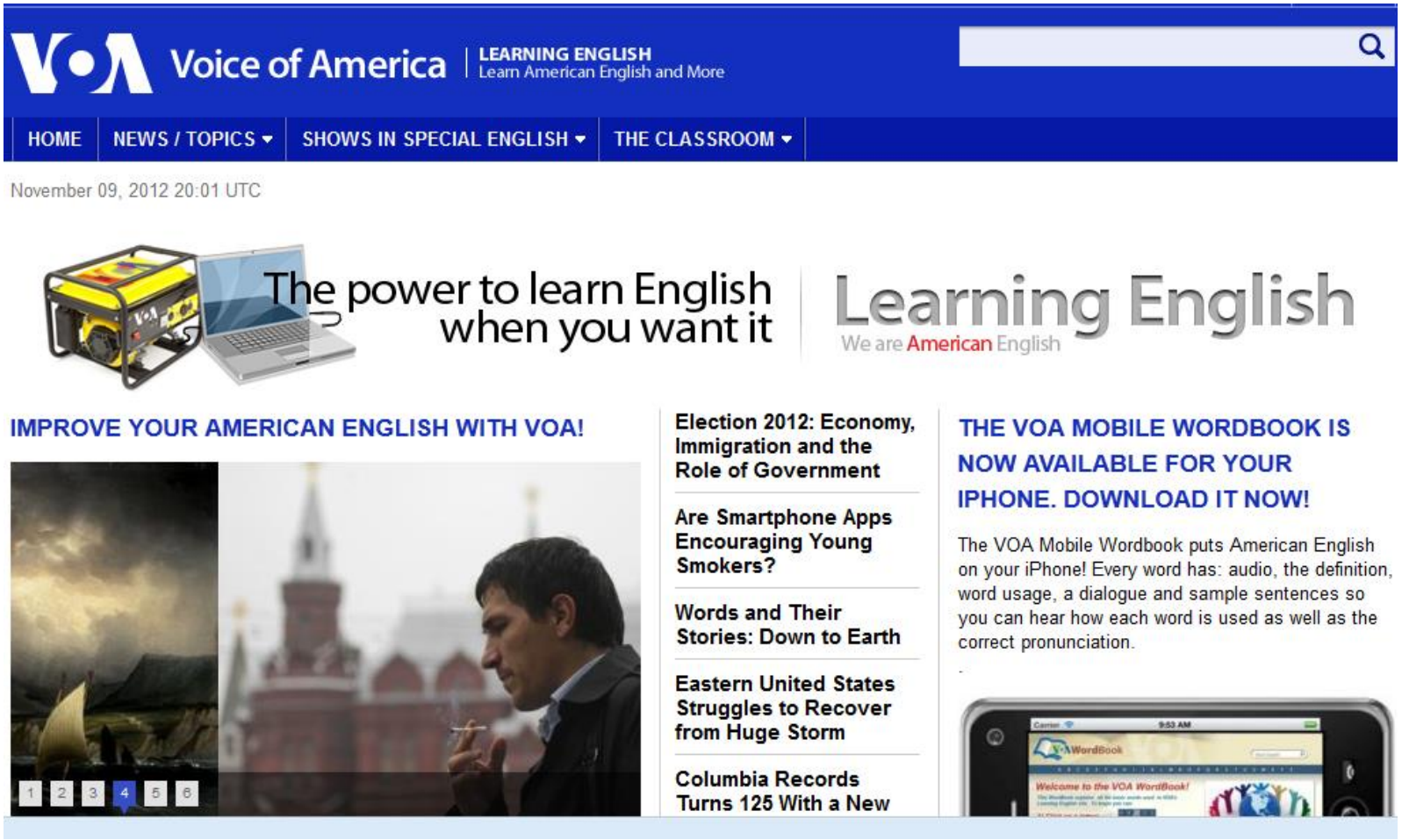
Voice of America Podcasts



[8]

Need to evaluate EFL podcasts

Podcasting can provide access to a large amount of authentic input, as well as to teaching materials of varying quality that have different approaches to language learning behind them (depending on the content provider): from behaviourist to cognitive constructivist and communicative approaches, situated learning, and lifelong learning.

References

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Rosell-Aguilar, F. (2007). Top of the pods—In search of a podcasting "podagogy" for language learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*,*20*(5), 471-492.

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Notes

Note on History of Published Version

The present work is the edition 1.0.

Reference Note

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