

“Podcast Scaffolding”

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“Recasting Writing, Voicing Bodies: Podcasts across a Writing Program”

# Podcast Scaffolding:

## Week 1

<p>Monday</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Introduce Aims, Methods, and Materials (see below) and then listen together to part of 99% Invisible’s “<a href="#">Ten Thousand Years</a>” podcast. Have students listen for Aims, Methods, and Materials, and then reverse engineer how the podcast works to ask questions about a place/topic. How are the podcast’s materials working? What are the podcaster’s methods? How do questions drive this podcast?</p> <p><b>Classwork: Assign and Work Through:</b> The podcast assignment. Talk about the genre, the ways in which it’s connected to questions that come out of “So what” of the Review assignment, and point out the way it’s scaffolded for them in the 5 parts.</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Developing Good Questions Workshop.</p> <p><b>What’s Next:</b></p> <p><b>Please Read:</b> Instructional Screencasts on how to use <a href="#">Garage Band</a> and <a href="#">Audacity</a>.</p> <p><b>DUE in class:</b> Qualifying Your Topic/Angle.</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Qualifying Your Topic/Angle.</p> <p><b>Please Read:</b> Instructional Screencasts for how to use Garage Band and Audacity.</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Working from a “So what?” toward a framing question(s) for your podcast.</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Listen together to former student podcast “<a href="#">Pay No Attention: Staring</a>” and “reverse engineer” how it works, paying particular attention to the way it moves from questions, to details, to reflection. Have students explain what the podcaster is doing in the example and think about how the podcaster incorporates dialogue, music, and sound effects. How do questions drive this podcast?</p> <p><b>What’s Next:</b></p> <p><b>DUE in class:</b> Very rough script that begins to structure your podcast.</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Very rough script that begins to structure your podcast.</p> <p><b>Classwork (bring your adventurous spirit):</b> “Perform” your script as it is so far with others, practicing improv and getting feedback from each other.</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Revise and rewrite your script.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> How to work with your sources, both textual and verbal, in your script. Introduce citation practices, and play example clips of citations in podcasts.</p> <p><b>What’s Next:</b></p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Revised Script.</p> <p><b>Bring to Class:</b> Any recording equipment you might have (e.g., your phone, small digital recorder, laptop, etc.). We’re not making the podcast, we’re practicing transforming written language into recorded language.</p>
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## Monday:

### 1. Aims, Methods, Materials (AMM)

Introduce what **Aims, Methods, and Materials** are (you probably want to write a shorter version of these questions on the board). Shorthand: What’s the writer’s aim or purpose? What stuff is the writer using? How is the writer using the stuff? The shorthand is good for understanding AMM, but what we’re trying to get at are these bigger questions:

- What is the writer trying to do in this text? What is the writer’s angle? What are the writer’s aims or intentions in writing this piece? What’s at stake for the writer in this text?

- What are the particular questions the writer is trying to answer or figure out?
- What are the key words and concepts that the writer uses repeatedly to illuminate his or her thinking?
- What material is the writer working with (texts, statistics, images, personal experience, etc.)?
- How does the writer use his or her materials? What methods does the writer use? Examples? Illustrations? Stories? Arguments? Questions? Self-reflections? How are these methods combined and connected?

It can be easier to pay attention and hook into ideas when we have something to listen for. So, use AMM as the questions your students are listening for and answering while the podcast is going (they should take notes while listening!).

Another useful way to help students think about AMM is to use the analogy of a recipe. One of our GTAs introduced it with the example of cooking mashed potatoes.

**Aims:** Making mashed potatoes—the purpose or overall goal of the project.

**Methods:** The recipe—how you cook the food, or what you do with the ingredients (materials).

**Materials:** Ingredients—what information or artifacts do you need? (The higher quality of the “ingredients” the better “mashed potatoes” you have—the better your Aim turns.)

## 2. Classwork: Listen to a Podcast Together. 10-15 minutes

Get the popcorn out and listen to 99% Invisible’s Ten Thousand Years (just the first 10–15 minutes): <http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/ten-thousand-years/>

- **Fastwrite:** Have students select one Material from the podcast (stories, stats, other people’s voices, even music) and then consider how does the podcaster use the material? Was the use effective? Why might the podcaster have chosen to use it that way?
- Debrief AMM in the podcast, and discuss how the podcast uses questions to develop its ideas.

## 3. Assign and Work Through the Podcast Assignment

### 4. Working to Develop Good Questions

- It’s difficult to develop good questions right off the bat. Often the first questions that come up can simply be answered with yes/no, or they’re overly broad questions that are difficult to work with. So we want to spend some time practicing how to develop and *revise* questions before students get into the podcast project.

Developing good questions is exactly what the Qualifying Topic/Angle is all about. In that assignment they have to know what questions they are chasing down in their podcasts AND if those are good questions.

Questions in podcasts often complicate our initial thinking or make us think differently about something. These are questions you want to chase down and keep thinking about, but they don’t always lead to new, stable answers. Podcast-like questions can also be underlying questions that are not asked outright. For example, one podcast I really enjoy called *On Being* works with the underlying question “What does it mean to be human?” and while this question doesn’t often get vocalized—and it’s can be kind of annoying when it does—it drives the podcast. These ideas about questions will most likely be new to students. Questions for the purpose of exploration are quite different from questions for the purpose of proving or supporting a point.

- Questions tell us about the writer, so some things to keep in mind:
  - **Assumptions:** Does this question make assumptions? What is problematic about assumptions? (Assumptions are often based in our judgment or evaluation, and they're often incorrect—especially our initial assumptions. The kinds of questions we want to work with work to explore other ways of being and thinking that go beyond our initial assumptions.)
  - **Context:** Is the question overly broad or general? Does it attempt to take on a big topic in a specific way or is it too broad?
  - **Word Choice:** Does the question use general wording or is the language precise? Does it contain potentially confusing words?
- One thing I like to do when asking students to develop and revise questions is to start them off working with bad questions I've come up with. In groups, they work to revise questions with overly general wording, or perhaps explain the assumptions behind a question and revise, or work to specify and narrow a question's context. Some potentially bad questions:

Why are so many podcasts bad?  
 How do our past experiences shape the way we see the place?  
 To what extent does this place relate to Bellingham?  
 Does a podcast's topic make it good or bad?

I first model what I want them to do in revision by showing an example I revised:

**Question:** Why are so many podcasts bad?

**Assumption(s):** Podcasts are bad; all podcasts are the same; there is a reason why so many of them are bad.

**Context:** What podcasts is the writer referring to? Are they podcasts produced by primarily “professionals”? What work is the podcast trying to do? What is the podcast's purpose or project?

**Word-choice:** Overly general—what podcasts? What do you mean by “bad”? Does that mean explicit/offensive? Or poorly written or produced? If poorly produced, what do you mean? As in sound quality? Sound effects? Fade-ins and fade-outs?

**Revised Questions:** If most podcasts about relationships are produced by younger writers and producers, then to what extent can we evaluate these podcasts against their genre requirements?

Give students about 10 minutes to work in groups to revise one of these questions (or come up with different ones). Then have students put their revisions up on the board and explain their thinking. Workshop all of the questions as a large group with other groups offering feedback and suggestions. The point is to demonstrate that good questions don't just happen, nor do they happen in first drafts.

- Fastwrite: Have them think back to the podcast you listened to together. How do questions drive this podcast? What role(s) do the questions play in the podcast?

# Wednesday

## 1. DUE: Qualifying Topic/Angle

It's useful to have students upload this to Canvas because you need to pretty quickly respond to it. They need to hear what you think about this as quick as you can get to it, so Canvas's Speed Grader is useful.

## 2. The Instructional Screencasts

I don't think you need to spend much time on these. Tell them that these are just a couple that you like. But as they work on their podcast, they can Google their questions and almost always somebody has made instructions that speak directly to what they want to do.

TECHNOLOGY CANNOT BE WHAT STOPS YOU FROM WORKING. YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO ENGAGE WITH IT. IT'S A CRUCIAL PART OF 21ST-CENTURY LITERACY, AND FOLKS WILL JUST EXPECT THAT YOU CAN USE SOFTWARE EVEN IF THEY CAN'T.

## 3. Classwork: Turning a "So what?" into a few Good Questions to Chase After

- Fastwrite: Have them consider work from the Qualifying Topic/Angle: What's the question I really want to explore? *Why does it matter for others?*
- Put students in groups or pairs and, working from their fastwrite, have them come up with two sub-questions that emerge from their initial thinking. You might want to demonstrate this first, talking yourself through a connection between a "So what?" and your possible questions. Remind them to keep in mind the work with developing questions you did together on Monday while they're writing their questions. (Is their language specific and precise as possible? Are they aware of the assumptions that inform their question?)
- Have a few of them share their questions with rest of the class. The class's job is to say, "Yes, and you could ask..." or "Yes, and that question will mean \_\_\_\_\_ for your podcast." Remind them that the "Yes, and..." move requires they build on what the writer already has, so this activity is a bit different from the revision workshop you did with questions on Monday.
- Fastwrite: Pause and say something like: Right now, what's the question you most want to chase after in your podcast? Why?

Here you are surfacing a rule of improv and showing them how the "Yes, and..." can help them invent new and interesting directions to move forward. (By the way, "Moving Forward" is also a rule of improv, and a pretty good one for writing, too.)

## 4. Classwork: Get the popcorn out and listen to a former student's podcast "Pay No Attention: Staring" (<https://soundcloud.com/logarithmicbasstern/sets/pay-no-attention-the-podcast>)

- Reverse engineer this podcast, stopping the podcast every couple minutes and having students fill out 3-Column Script template to think about how dialogue, music, and sound effects are working together in the podcast.
- See below for explanation of parts of this podcast I like to point out to students:

- Listen to 0–2:05: How does the intro mash-up of voices work? “I have a confession to make...”
- 2:40–3:10: Questions
- 3:15: Introduces podcast: Pay No Attention
- 3:50–4:30: What you might think about staring, your previous understandings. How does he work to get you to question what you previously might have thought about staring?
- Move to evil-eye: Background and explanation; Starbucks story; how does he work with the interview and voiceover? What does the mash-up do?
- 8:00: Drums following story. What does that silence/sound effect to music do?
- Stop: 11:20: Mash-up of how people feel when they’re being stared at—what does the reversal do here?
- Interview with “experts”—voiceover interview (12:00): What does this move do?
- Story and then reflection. 14:00: Tells you what the story means! Balance of story/reflection.
- 16:00–final reflection: What does staring mean? What’s significant about it? Points out the difference between our expectations and often the intentions behind the stare.
- Reflection, and then moves to music (17:50)
- Exit: music fades out

## Friday

1. **DUE:** Very rough script that begins to structure your podcast (See Podcast Assignment).

2. **Classwork: Perform Your Script as it is Now.** (It’s nowhere near done so this will take some improv. They’ll have to improvise what’s not there. Remind them of the rules of improv).

- Put students into groups. You want an active, engaged student in every group. Put yourself in a group that you can abandon after doing an example session for everyone. Your group will go first, doing a kind of “read through” of what is on the script so far. Your big job here is to show them how the rest of the group might improvise from the rough script. You’re putting together the podcast together on the spot; it’s a kind of collaboration like a Google doc. They won’t have much written, which means everyone will have to imagine what else might be said and then say it even if it’s not there. The big difference between this exercise and a more traditional peer-review is that you’re not stopping at the comment, “here, you do X,” or “here you could do X.” We want them to actually do X. To say the the thing or idea that they are suggesting.

For example, in a script about the dining hall, rather than suggesting that a writer should talk about how weird it is that people stand really close to you in line and you’re not supposed to turn around, actually perform or say, “and then there’s that moment when people weirdly rub against you from behind. And you want to turn around, but are you supposed to turn around?” It’s about getting to the actual language—performing, making it come alive in the room.

- Have other groups do the same thing you just modeled.

- This can be really relaxed. It doesn't need to be full of energy and "fun." (It can be that too, of course). But it'll probably be clunky and kind of awkward. That's fine. It's all about invention and thinking about what else is possible in the script. You'll probably hear lots of things like, "Then you should do X," or "Did you think about doing X?" Your job is to continue helping students actually "perform" their suggestions and examples.

### 3. Revise and Rewrite Scripts

- Move right from the improv exercise to some revision work. New stuff happened that the students can capture right now.
- Ask students to first add/rewrite/reorder their script based on the exercise. Here they can write new ideas in the margins.
- This is a great place to talk about how *style* works one way in speech and another way in writing, too.
- Fastwrite: Have them write about: What revisions are you now thinking of making/what are you going to add that you hadn't thought about before? Why? What purpose or action are you after?

### 4. Discussion: How to Work with Sources in Your Podcasts

- Like essays, podcasts make use of sources and although it's not an alphabetic text, the Citation Practice is very similar.
- It works well to demonstrate the party metaphor.
  - Introduce the source (be polite)
  - Quote the source, which means reading with a particular voice or having the source talk themselves.
  - Explain what that source is saying in terms of your big point. What do we learn from them about the place or issue that you, dear podcast maker, would like us to learn? Frame these people's ideas for your listener. (Think, too, about improv's #3 rule: making your partner look brilliant. This is a nice way to frame tone when using sources.)
    - Below are a few examples where Radiolab does a great job building a solid citation practice by being "polite at their party." They (1) introduce the person they're interviewing in interesting ways, (2) let them speak some, and then (3) frame what that person is saying for what the show is about—why what they're saying matters to us listeners.
      - [Example 1](#): Minute 2:30 or so
      - [Example 2](#): Minute 2:50 or so
      - [Example 3](#): Minute 1:15 or so
      - [Example 4](#): Minute 11:50 or so

# Podcast Scaffolding:

## Week 2

<p>Monday</p> <p><b>Due in Class:</b> Revised Script.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> How have your topic and angle shifted as you've been scripting?</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> "Listening" to written language. Group up and pick two good size segments of your script to try and record.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> After you've recorded and listened to parts of your script, what's got to change and why?</p> <p><b>What's Next:</b> <b>DUE:</b> Final Script WITH annotations.</p> <p><b>DUE:</b> Lists of the questions you're chasing in the podcast, the concerns you still have (that are something other technical), and what you are finding most exciting.</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p><b>Due:</b> Final Script WITH annotations</p> <p><b>DUE in class:</b> Lists of the questions you're chasing in the podcast, and questions you still have about the project.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> Revisit and review Cohesion Practices in terms of spoken language and sound effects</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> Revisit and review making good use of sources.</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Mapping out presentations and idea paths. Help students plan their presentations in terms of telling the story of their podcast.</p> <p><b>What's Next:</b> <b>DUE:</b> Presentations on where your podcast is going and what questions you're exploring. You need to answer the questions on the Podcast Presentation Assignment in 2-3 minutes. (Have notes! <b>And make sure your podcast teaser is uploaded to our discussion board.</b>)</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p><b>Due:</b> Presentations. Bring Post-It Notes to class so students can respond to each presentation with a Post-It of feedback answering their favorite part of the podcast teaser or what they're most excited about in the peer's project, and one helpful suggestion or question they have about the project and how it might come together.</p>
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### Monday

#### 1. Discussion: How have Your Topic and Angle Shifted?

- The purpose here is to model the *why* behind revision, talking about the difference between writing a phrase and saying a phrase **into a mic** (not just saying a phrase aloud). You could do some modeling from your own experience podcasting, and show examples of written language that's recorded verbatim to get at these differences.

- Then ask specific people to answer very specific questions about what has changed for them as they scripted. (e.g., “Hey, Barbara, how is the 1st floor of our library [that’s her place and you know that] starting to look different to you now? Did you ever think you would be thinking so much about the library? :) What do you think scripting is doing to you and that place?”)

### 3. Classwork: “Listening” to Written Language

- Have students get into groups of four, and ask them to get out their recorders.
- Their job is to record a big section of their text. If there is dialogue, they can recruit each other to help. The point is just to get some rough written text transformed into recorded (not spoken!) text.
- When they’re done, they need to play it for the group and together everybody works toward answering these questions:
  - How is the pacing? Are you speaking too slow/fast? Why do you think so?
  - Does it sound “scripted”? It probably does because it is. So where can you adjust your script to sound more conversational, as if there is a real person talking to the listener rather than someone reading to the listener. This is tough; it’s about style. And it’s deeply related to pacing.
  - Will music work under this voice recording? Why? Why not? What kind?
  - This section is really working because of \_\_\_\_\_, and it would be *even better if* (EBI) you\_\_\_\_\_.

### 4. Discussion: What’s Got to Change and Why?

- Run a quick whole class discussion that centers on the changes they are starting to envision for their script and podcast. What are some of them going to change and why?
- Make sure to cover here how the questions they’re chasing after are driving the whole of the podcast.

## Wednesday

### 1. Due: Final Script with Annotations

### 2. Due: Lists of Questions, Concerns, and what You’re Finding most Exciting

- Start with having everyone read two quick things from their list.
- Then have a brief conversation together that’s grounded in their questions and concerns. This is a short inventive exercise designed to foster collaboration and answer lingering questions.

### 3. Discussion: Review and Practice Cohesion in Terms of Podcasting

- Have a set of numbered sentences on the overhead that are all from the same paragraph but are out of order. Ask students to group up and reorder the sentences so that they build a cohesive paragraph **about one point**. Just make sure that the paragraph makes good use of the Known/New and/or Aligning the Subjects. (It’s pretty fun to set this up as a kind of timed competition).



- Fastwrite: Have them write about: How do cohesion methods like these impact podcasts like the one I'm making? (This question may stretch into music, tone of voice, and pacing. That's awesome. Your job is to also help them see that they can use these methods to organize wandering bits of monologue in a way that really helps listeners.)
- Hear from a few of the folks about what they came up with in their fastwrite and ask "why?" a lot.

#### **4. Discussion: Revisit and review making good use of sources.**

- How do citation practices change when they're spoken? What count as effective sources?

## **Friday**

### **Presentations!**

I like to have students write feedback for each on Post-It Notes. It's a manageable size, and it goes quick enough. I had students respond with their favorite part of the podcast teaser or what they're most excited about in their peer's project, and one helpful suggestion or question they have about the project and how it might come together.

# Podcast Scaffolding: Week 3

<p>Monday</p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Good draft of nearly complete podcast! Please have it uploaded to Canvas so we can listen in class today.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> We are going to hear as many podcasts together as we can today. Bring the popcorn and a collaborative spirit. It's a day to celebrate your work so far, and get more feedback on what you'll continue tweaking and revising for the final podcast.</p> <p><b>What's Next:</b> We'll keep listening to podcasts and workshopping each other's podcasts in preparation for the final podcast on Friday. Bring back your collaborative spirit.</p>	<p>Wednesday</p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Good draft of nearly complete podcast! We'll listen to the podcasts we didn't get to from Monday.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> On different kinds of language in writing and podcasting. What are you noticing works in podcasts differently from writing on the page?</p> <p><b>Classwork:</b> Re-visit scripts and see how your writing changes after you've recorded your writing. What's the same? What's different?</p> <p><b>What's Next:</b> <b>DUE:</b> Final Podcast <b>DUE:</b> Rhetorical Analysis of podcast</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p><b>Due in class:</b> Final Podcast with Script and Rhetorical Analysis</p>
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## Monday & Wednesday

### **Classwork: Listening to in-process podcasts**

I prefer to listen to podcasts in process so that students can get feedback, hear how their podcasts sound projected through our classroom speakers, and then keep working on their podcasts as opposed to listening to podcasts after they turn them in. Students need to have their podcasts as close to finished as possible for these days in class.

## Friday

**Due in Class:** Podcast, Script, and Rhetorical Analysis