Afterword

This book has presented a wealth of information, guidance, and suggestions on how to accomplish Academic Podcasting and Mobile Assisted Language Learning, along with well-grounded arguments supporting why one would want to attempt it. There is also good advice about pitfalls to avoid, and reasons one might choose not to pursue an in-house podcasting project. While the book is quite comprehensive, the editors have been kind enough to invite me to contribute this Afterword with a few thoughts on how Apple's iPad might influence MALL.

IPADS IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Turning the metaphorical page from today's podcasting to tomorrow's 'Padcasting (this author's new term for presentations created on the iPad), what will be presented here is a brief look at what one institution is in the process of implementing with a class set of iPads for their Spanish classes. Arizona State University's Downtown Phoenix campus is a rich technological environment, essentially built from the ground up five years ago, with ubiquitous WiFi promoting a 1-to-1 environment where each student is encouraged to have his/her own computing device. All classrooms are mediated, with a teaching station, computer projector, and laptop VGA connection available. While the School of Letters and Sciences has a Language Resource Lab with 24-computer ReLANsign Language Lab system, where the students have half of their class time, the students spend the other half of their class time in a standard (mediated) classroom.

In order to extend individual access to technology to the class time in the standard classroom, (and, granted, provide an attractive, motivational stimulus in class), ASU has purchased twelve (WiFi only) iPads to be checked out for a class session, along with iPads to be checked out to the instructors who will be using them on a semester-by-semester basis. This will allow the instructor to become proficient with the iPad, and when checking out the 12 for the class session, to provide one iPad for every two students, so that in pairs, they can perform various tasks that will help them explore and document the target culture. Making the task relevant can aid learning, so to contextualize the task, the instructor might tell the students to imagine that they will spend the summer in Madrid to study Art History and Spanish, and they need to locate an apartment near the Prado Museum. Starting with a Spanish-language Google search for "Apartmentos Madrid," the students can find an apartment, and then pull up the address in Google Maps. Using Street View, they can see the building, and find a pharmacy nearby. Using the Home button/Sleep button screen capture function, they can snap a picture of the building. Using the two-finger zoom, they can take a close-up picture of the signs in the pharmacy window, and then

document the route they would follow to get to the Prado. Using Keynote, the presentation software available for the iPad, they can create a slideshow to present to the class with the VGA adapter connected to the projector for a live presentation. With SonicPics software, they can create a presentation of screen shots or pictures and using the on-board mic, record a narration to be played on the iPad, or exported and uploaded to YouTube.

Many iPad apps have obvious potential for use in the language classroom, including, but not limited to, travel and news apps. Though the list is always expanding, following are a few free or inexpensive apps that have already been identified for potential use. Globe for the iPad links directly to the Wikipedia entries for any fingered (selected) country. InfoBAE.com is a Latin American news website that has an iPad app with text and pictures and videos. A nice feature of InfoBAE is that when the user opts to share an article by e-mail, the app launches an e-mail message with the text and pictures of the article in the body of the e-mail, so without getting involved in DropBox (a cloud-based file-sharing system), students will be able to use a generic Gmail account on each iPad to send pictures and stories to their own e-mail for off-iPad use. Having an audio recording app such as AudioMemos will facilitate the recording of interviews or role-plays. GoodReader provides a .pdf-displaying tool which can also be used to add comments and annotations to the .pdf documents, opening the possibility of worksheet-like activities to be returned to the instructor. Mental Case Classroom Edition provides the ability to create iPad (and iPhone/iPod Touch) flash cards with text or graphic or audio prompts and answers; instructors or students can create flashcard sets to be shared with classmates. (All of the apps mentioned can be found by searching for them by name in the online App Store.)

Does the iPad change the role of podcasting and MALL? To the extent that the iPad is just an iPod Touch in a large form-factor, albeit with all the functionality available (synching audio and video podcasts through iTunes, direct download of podcasts via WiFi, playback of audio podcasts at normal speed, 1/2 speed, or double speed, 30-second replay of video podcasts, etc.), no, it doesn't change that role. To the extent that it embeds the podcasting environment in a hand-held, full-screen, connected device, yes, it does change MALL. With an audio podcast playing in the background, the student can launch another app to be taking notes or dictation, researching related information on a target-language news site, creating an online presentation, or opening up an email-attached .pdf or word processing document with a podcast-based activity. The student can use the on-board mic to record and his/her own interactions, and even test his/her own pronunciation with the free Dragon Dictation app, which takes dictation in English and a growing list of other languages already including French, German, Spanish and Italian. The iPad (and the other competing touch screen devices coming to the market) provide an opportunity for enriching the MALL-scape with creative tools that can always be at hand. The challenge for the language educator is to take advantage of the ever-advancing technology available, without losing sight of the ultimate goal of language acquisition. It is hoped that this discussion has helped stimulate the reader to consider how these technologies can benefit tomorrow's language students.

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