

Podcast 156 – I Gave a Talk About My Podcast

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 156 – I Gave a Talk About My Podcast

<https://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast156v2.mp3>

(This podcast is 14 minutes and 5 seconds long.)

Hi,

I recently received an exciting email from a teacher working at the Swinburne University of Technology here in Melbourne, at the Wantirna South Campus. Her name is Leah Burgers. She teaches adult migrants who want to develop and improve their English language skills. She explained that she has been using my podcast in her classes and has found the materials to be very useful. Also, she said that her students, all adults, really like them. She said that the aspects which they liked most included the wide variety of topics, my clear Australian voice and the simple vocabulary list and quiz which follow the transcript on my website at www.slowenglish.info. Naturally, I was really pleased to receive such great feedback. Leah then asked if I would be interested in doing a class visit, to talk about my podcast and how I produce it. This sounded like a wonderful opportunity to meet some of my listeners and to talk about my podcast. I said I would like to come and we arranged a time. In this podcast, I would like to talk about how I prepared and delivered my talk, and also about the students I met when I was there.

Leah had given me some good ideas on what could be in my talk. She advised me that there would be around 100 people from around six classes at Intermediate Level. It would be

held in a large auditorium, which is a lecture room set up like a theatre with tiered seating sloping upwards from the front to the back of the room, so that everyone can see the teacher standing at the front. I must admit that I got some feelings of nervousness when I thought of an auditorium with high ceilings, with me down at the front and looking out and up over a large audience. Even though I have done a lot of talking to medium-sized groups in my career as a teacher and project manager, talking to this many people is a little bit frightening for those who don't do it very often. Since I retired 13 years ago, I have done hardly any talking to big groups. However, I knew the audience would be very supportive and friendly, so I said to myself that I should not worry – it would go well. Even so, that nervousness remained.

Based on Leah's suggestions, I decided the outline for my talk would be as follows:

1. My background.
2. Why I started the podcast.
3. How I set up the podcast.
4. How I create each podcast episode.
5. How students could use the podcast materials.
6. Questions from the audience.

I prepared a simple one-page PowerPoint presentation showing these points, including a copy of my Slow English kangaroo banner photograph on the side, which I assumed would be displayed on a powerful projector with a wide screen at the front for everyone to see. I also prepared some notes about my favourite podcasts, in case I found I needed something extra to talk about. It would depend how the talk went on the day. I like the idea of being prepared for the unexpected.

Leah indicated that the auditorium had been booked for 1 hour. Therefore, I assumed I should talk for maybe 25 minutes, followed by questions from the audience and then maybe an opportunity for me to meet and chat with some of the

students afterwards.

My first challenge was to decide what personal notes I would use for my talk. A 25-minute talk is quite long, so my notes should ideally be brief and summarized. I decided to use mind maps to construct my talking notes. A mind map is like a skeleton outline of your talk. A mind map has only single words or short phrases connected by lines, circles, arrows and shapes. Nonetheless, they summarize well all your ideas and points. The mind maps would allow me to remember all the points I wanted to present and the sequence of their presentation. Using that, you then have the freedom to adlib as you go, which sounds more natural to the listener.

So, I prepared my single PowerPoint slide and also my mind maps, which went over 6 pages. I practised my talk several times and timed how long it took. It took somewhere between 22 minutes and 26 minutes, depending on how fast I spoke. I was ready.

On the morning of my talk, I drove to Swinburne University in Wantirna. I hate being late, so I left home early and arrived about 40 minutes before the talk was due to start. The campus at Wantirna is extremely well laid out with many grassed areas with beautiful trees and garden beds. I thought to myself, what a great place to take a course of study, and also for the teachers to work.



The grounds at Swinburne University in Wantirna are well kept and have a great atmosphere.

I found the auditorium building and entered. The auditorium was empty so I waited outside in the foyer, feeling a little apprehensive but also excited to be there. After only a few minutes, a lady approached me and introduced herself as Leah.

She was very welcoming and she took me inside. Very quickly she set up the auditorium and I was able to email to her my PowerPoint slide which she quickly displayed on the big screen at the front of the auditorium. She then told me about the students, where they came from and how positive they were about their studies. She told me they were undertaking the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), a government program designed to encourage and support migrants to learn English. I talked about this program in more detail in Podcast 100 Languages in Australia (see <https://slowenglish.info/podcast-100-languages-in-australia/>).

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program>).

As we talked, some students started arriving and some of them immediately approached me. We started talking. Their welcome for me could not have been better. They were so friendly and enthusiastic. I really appreciated that. Just before we started, Leah took some photos to record the experience.



Before the talk began, it was great to talk to some students from the audience. (Frank and I are talking here.) They were very polite and keen to hear about my podcast. They spoke well.



Here I am posing in the auditorium with the audience, before my talk. (Photo by Leah Burgers)

My talk went very well. Luckily, I had the use of a microphone so I tried to talk clearly and not too fast. The students seemed very interested, with some even taking notes as I talked. I even made them laugh when I told them the funny story about how I took the photograph of the 4 kangaroos which I use on the top of my website page. I successfully delivered my talk in around 30 minutes, which seemed about the right length. Then there were some questions from the audience, which I answered as best I could.



I enjoyed answering their questions at the end of my talk.
(Photo by Leah Burgers)

After the questions, two students came down to the front and

gave a short speech of thanks to me in very good English and gave me a small gift of some chocolates and a thankyou card, which I thought was a really nice gesture. My wife and I enjoyed the chocolates and they were all eaten by the next day!

I was very impressed by the attentiveness and friendliness of the students, some of whom are as old or older than me (I'm 72). At the end, many of them came down from their seats to talk with me and make photos of themselves standing with me. My smile was very wide. I felt like a movie star. Their kind words about my talk, my podcast and my efforts on Slow English are greatly appreciated. I was most impressed by them all. They came from places such as China, Iran, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Thailand, Iraq, Myanmar, South Korea and Vietnam. I really admire and respect their desire to learn English and to make the very best of their opportunity in their new home in Australia. I wish them every success as they learn English and make their new lives here.



Here I am after the talk, posing with Leah Burger and her class of students.



Here I am posing with a group from the audience, after my talk.

If you have a question or comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 156 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

- Play adlib = to make it up as you go along (in a speech, in music, etc)
- Play adult = a person who is grown up, 18 years of age or older
- Play advised = when someone gives you ideas
- Play appreciated = feeling thankful
- Play apprehensive = nervous, when you are worrying about something
- Play approached = came towards me
- Play arranged = organised, set up, agreed
- Play aspects = parts of an idea, experience or concept
- Play attentiveness = when you look at something closely or listen hard to someone
- Play audience = the people who are listening to a speaker
- Play banner photograph = a photograph which is shown at the top, usually on every page
- Play campus = the place where a university is located
- Play career = the different jobs someone has over their working life

- Play ceilings = the roof (when looking up inside a room)
- Play challenge = something that is hard to do
- Play chat = to talk with someone
- Play delivered = (here) given
- Play desire = what someone wants
- Play displayed = shown
- Play due = (here) planned
- Play encourage = to help someone to do something (such as learning a language)
- Play enthusiastic = to be positive about something, to really want to do something
- Play extremely = very
- Play garden beds = a place in a garden where plants are grown, usually flowers
- Play gesture = an action which shows that you are thankful to somebody for what they have done
- Play hardly any = almost none, close to zero (but not zero)
- Play indicated = (here) explained
- Play intermediate = a medium or middle level (not basic, but not advanced)
- Play lecture = when someone gives a speech or a talk
- Play materials = (here) information, ideas and/or exercises to use in learning
- Play medium-sized = not small, and not large
- Play microphone = a device that you speak into, so that your

voice is made louder

- Play migrants = people who go to live in another country, never to return
- Play nervousness = the feeling of being nervous or a little scared
- Play opportunity = when you have a chance to do something which you can't do at another time
- Play outline = a summary of a talk, book, film or play
- Play PowerPoint = software that allows you to do a summary of a talk and show it on a projector
- Play practised = to do something many times in order to improve and do it without errors
- Play present = (here) to give
- Play produce = (here) make
- Play projector= a device used to show a picture or PowerPoint slide onto a screen
- Play recently = when something happened not very long ago. For example, last week or month
- Play sequence = the order in which you do something
- Play skeleton outline = a picture showing all the high-level points in a book, speech, film, etc
- Play sloping = going from low to high (like the side of a hill)
- Play suggestions = ideas which someone gives to you, which you can use to do a job
- Play summarized = when you show only the high-level points (leave out the details)

- Play supportive = when someone likes what you do and tells you to keep doing it
- Play theatre = a big room where a film is seen by an audience
- Play tiered = rows of seating where each row behind is a little higher than the row in front
- Play transcript = when a speech or talk is written down
- Play undertaking = doing
- Play unexpected = when you see something which you did not think would happen
- Play variety = many types, each a little different to the others