

Article

Podcasting as an Innovative Pedagogical Tool in Social Work Education

Mim Fox^{1,*}  and Jonathan B. Singer² ¹ School of Health & Society, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW 2522, Australia² School of Social Work, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL 60611, USA; jsinger1@luc.edu

* Correspondence: mfox@uow.edu.au

Abstract: Podcasting as a means of educational delivery has been slowly increasing since the introduction of podcasting to the consciousness of the general public in 2004. In parallel, social work education has experienced a global increase in online and remote delivery. Social workers globally have embraced social work content podcasts as a means of providing, and supplementing, their traditional pedagogy. In this article, the authors, both international podcasting social work academics, present an innovative framework for podcasting pedagogy and discuss co-production of podcasts as a form of teaching and learning co-design that is grounded in social work approaches to knowledge creation, dissemination, and scholarship.

Keywords: social work; podcast; pedagogy; education; teaching; learning

1. Introduction

1.1. Background on Podcasting

Podcasting, which allows users to stream or download audio content, emerged in the early 2000s as an innovative format for sharing information. Coined in 2004, the term “podcast” did not truly take off until the launch of the *Serial Podcast* in 2014 ([This American Life n.d.](#)). This pivotal moment ushered in the era of modern podcasting, characterized by investigative journalism embracing the episodic format and the widespread availability of streaming technology ([Durrani et al. 2015](#)). By 2021, the number of podcasts available on platforms such as Apple iTunes reached 1.75 million ([Podcast Insights 2021](#)), with more than 5 million in 2024 ([What’s the Big Data? 2024](#)).

Podcasting, once an experimental medium, is now established as a distinct media genre ([Fox et al. 2021](#)). Its value as a learning tool is underscored by recent innovations like Google’s NotebookLM, which on 11 September 2024, introduced Audio Overview ([Wang 2024](#)). This feature allows users to convert documents into dynamic audio discussions, with two Artificial Intelligence (AI) hosts summarizing content, making connections, and engaging in dialogue. The conversations, downloadable for on-the-go listening, resemble the interactive style of modern chatcasts.

Given social work’s long-standing emphasis on narrative and relational approaches to learning, podcasting offers a unique medium to enhance student engagement through accessible, real-world content that complements traditional teaching methods. Or, using the more conversational tone of a podcast, we might say that podcasts are intimate. You listen with your headphones, you hear the inflection in someone’s voice, the emotion. It is a different experience from reading a journal article. It is relational, making it a perfect fit for social work. Although social work educators, students, and practitioners



Academic Editors: Erica Russ and Elizabeth C. Reimer

Received: 11 October 2024

Revised: 14 December 2024

Accepted: 19 December 2024

Published: 16 January 2025

Citation: Fox, Mim, and Jonathan B. Singer. 2025. Podcasting as an Innovative Pedagogical Tool in Social Work Education. *Social Sciences* 14: 47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14010047>

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

were early adopters of podcasting (Singer 2019), its integration into social work pedagogy remains limited (Fox and Singer 2025). We believe that podcasting, when grounded in key pedagogical theories, can offer educators an accessible, flexible, and meaningful way to enhance their teaching and engage students.

1.2. Podcasting in Social Work Education

Early uses of podcasting in higher education were largely focused on “coursecasting”, the recording of lectures for student review, often only available to registered students (Hitchcock et al. 2021; Cartney 2013). However, podcasting in education has since evolved, with educators utilizing publicly available in-depth expert interviews, narrative podcasts, panel discussions, and chatcast, where two or more hosts engage in friendly discussion to bring academic concepts to life (McHugh 2022). All of these formats allow for additional resources to be provided to the student cohort, which can then be integrated into classroom learning, self-directed online learning, or assessment tasks (Howard-Sukhil et al. 2021). Podcasts have been shown to encourage self-directed learning (Blakemore and Agllias 2019; Sprague and Pixley 2008), enhance critical reflection and analysis skills (Forbes 2011), and develop communication and practice skills (Alpay and Gulati 2010). In the social work classroom, student-led podcast creation has been demonstrated to improve theoretical and community engagement skills (Ferrer et al. 2020) and foster decolonizing practices (Fox et al. 2021). Because social work education is, in part, the first step in a long process of socializing students into a professional identity, using podcasts introduces students to an invaluable resource for lifelong learning (Fox and Singer 2025).

Student-led podcast creation, or the co-production of podcasts with students, is an important pedagogic strategy, noting that in its absence students do not often have choice in the content that is prescribed to them nor the format or style in which they digest it. Whilst this may not be an issue for some students, for those who lack self-motivation podcasting may provide an alternate study option. By virtue of individual streaming capacity, agency for engaging with a podcast is solely in the hands of the listener (Fronek et al. 2016); the listener can choose when to press start or stop on an episode. The social work student listener is most likely to be busy, multi-tasking whilst studying (Price et al. 2007). In addition, most podcasts that are available to the general public are either completely free to listeners or have a free version available (complete with advertising). Either way, this makes podcasts a low-cost teaching resource for social work educators and a low-cost learning resource for social work students.

1.3. The Role of Digital Pedagogy in Social Work

Globally, social work education embraced digital delivery through simulation, social media platforms, electronic portfolios, and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Fox and Singer 2025). Simulation-based pedagogy has grown globally, using platforms like virtual worlds, interactive programs, virtual humans, and virtual learning environments (Baker and Jenney 2023). While simulations can be analog, the digitalization of social work practice and education is inevitable, given their context-driven nature and organizations’ control over access and activity (Harris 2022). Similarly, social media platforms like Facebook and X/Twitter have been integrated into social work classrooms (Greenhowe and Lewin 2018), facilitating clinical practice resource sharing, discussion, and real-time educational exchanges through hashtags like #MacroSW and #SocialWorkEd (Harris 2022).

Electronic portfolios have become prevalent in social work education, offering benefits beyond assessment, including self-regulated learning, reflection, evaluation, collaboration, and technological proficiency (Zhang and Tur 2022). While there are important limitations and concerns about the accuracy, environmental impact, and ethics of using generative AI

in social work education (Singer et al. 2023), early adopters have identified a plethora of benefits, including creating realistic case scenarios for teaching purposes (Salinas-Navarro et al. 2024). These digital technologies, when incorporated into the social work classroom, minimize risks to real clients, reduce student anxiety during skill demonstrations, and expand educators' teaching toolboxes, fostering creativity in practice (Mishna et al. 2021).

While our traditional social work pedagogy and teaching methods have effectively produced the current generation of practitioners, they may be limited in their ability to create authentic learning experiences for future generations who are growing up in a world increasingly shaped by AI. Although some authors have turned their attention to the range of possibilities—both welcome and concerning—offered through generative AI (Singer et al. 2023; Goldkind et al. 2024), exploring those possibilities is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, we consider the relationship between the traditional written case study and podcasting. The traditional social work case study is written in a technical or professional tone that often intentionally avoids narrative techniques for eliciting emotional responses or engendering empathy. Although the role of case studies in social work pedagogy is to expand student knowledge, skills, and values, the absence of environmental context or vocal tone means that students will rely on their already developed assumptions about an individual living in the circumstances as outlined in the case study. Recognizing the limitations of written case studies, educators often turn to a live role play or video clip to engage in affective learning. To challenge student's default assumptions and enhance empathy, we need to incorporate more real-world stimuli, allowing students to experiment with responses, behaviors, and interventions. While simulating a real-world environment may not always be feasible, increasing the authenticity of teaching materials, such as through audio, can significantly enhance the learning experience (Meredith et al. 2021). Podcasts provide a means to enhance authenticity in social work education, offering students an opportunity to engage with realistic scenarios, develop empathy, and challenge pre-existing assumptions. While podcasting has grown, it has not yet been fully integrated into social work pedagogy. The Fox-Singer (Fox and Singer 2025) framework addresses this gap by grounding podcasting in social work's theoretical foundations—transformational learning, relationship-based practice, and experiential learning.

2. A Framework for Podcasting Pedagogy in Social Work Education

Twenty years after the first podcasts, there are still several barriers to using podcasts in social work education. Most educators will not have the time or inclination to develop their own podcasts nor will they assign their students to either listen to or create podcasts as formal teaching and learning resources. Unlike peer-reviewed journal articles or books from reputable publishers, there is no standard for assuring the quality or value of a podcast series or single episode (Beckstead et al. 2024). As a result, it can take educators more time and energy to evaluate and select podcasts for assignments. In addition, podcasting has not yet been integrated into pedagogy or andragogy, leaving educators to instinctually believe in the impact that podcasts may have on lifelong learning, without having the theoretical basis to support their work. To fill this gap, Fox and Singer (2025) developed a theoretical framework for podcasting pedagogy in social work education. The integration of podcasting into social work education offers a novel pedagogical framework that aligns with the profession's core values and theoretical basis to social work education. The Fox-Singer framework draws upon transformational learning, relationship-based practice, and experiential learning to create not only a blueprint for how to integrate podcasts into the social work curriculum but also a blueprint for how to produce social-work-aligned content. We briefly review these components and provide practical examples for social work educators of how podcasts support the framework.

2.1. Transformational Learning Theory

Transformational learning, as articulated by Mezirow (2000), involves transforming prior assumptions into new understandings that guide future actions. In social work education, podcasts that present diverse and challenging perspectives can create disorienting dilemmas, encouraging students to rethink their beliefs and reflect deeply on their personal and professional assumptions.

In the *Doin' The Work* podcast, Shimon Cohen interviews Dr. Yoosun Park about the Americanization project, which challenges deeply held assumptions about social work's role in this national movement rooted in whiteness (Cohen and Park 2023). Dr. Park explains how White social reformers and social work leaders of the time viewed European immigrants as Americanizable, while Indigenous Peoples, Africans, Asians, and Mexicans were considered un-Americanizable, cast as the "Other". This episode invites listeners to confront disorienting dilemmas that provoke deeper reflection and understanding (Mezirow 2000). Transformative learning theory, which connects to Freire and Habermas's critical theory (Kreber 2022), Foucault and Butler's post-structural analysis (Youdell 2006), and hooks' feminist intersectional analysis (Hooks 1994, 2003), supports this process. The goal of transformative learning is to foster "emancipatory intent" by helping students identify broader social justice issues that link the personal, political, and social worlds (Fleming 2022, pp. 4–6). Podcasts like this promote critical thinking and reflection—key elements of transformative learning. This approach builds on the foundation of critical thinking, reflection, and reflexivity already central to social work education (Watts 2019) and supervisory practice (Rankine 2019). Although not all podcast episodes will provide disorienting dilemmas, consideration of a podcast episode's function in transformative learning is key to the Fox-Singer framework.

2.2. Relationship-Based Practice

Relationship-based practice is central to social work practice and involves developing authentic, empathetic relationships (Ferguson et al. 2020; Trevithick 2003). In social work education, this approach can bridge transformative learning theory with the diverse teaching environments experienced by students worldwide, ranging from small study groups to large lecture halls and from in-person group discussions to online remote learning (Reamer 2019). Given the orientation of podcasts in audio narrative and storytelling, listening to real-life stories and experiences can help students hear the sound of a setting, population, or auditory experience. This is particularly important in the early stages of their social work studies when students may not yet have undertaken field placements or had personal contact with community members. For example, in her discussion of the *From Girls to Women (FGTW)* podcast (Dorsey 2025) emphasized the significance of listening to and trusting the lived experiences of African American females, particularly in contexts where their voices are often marginalized or silenced. This aligns with the core principles of relationship-based practice in social work, which emphasizes building authentic relationships based on trust, respect, and understanding the unique experiences of individuals and communities. The *FGTW* podcast emphasized using language and vernacular familiar to the girls, allowing them to express themselves authentically without code-switching. This approach reflects the importance of creating culturally sensitive and safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable sharing their stories, a key element in relationship-based practice.

Beyond passive listening, students can actively engage in relationship-based learning through the creation of podcasts. Co-producing podcasts with educators or peers allows students to practice communication skills and navigate ethical dilemmas, making the learning process more interactive and meaningful. Consumers of podcasts typically do not

consider the content that was excluded from the final product. When students engage in co-production, they encounter ethical dilemmas during the editing process, such as deciding what to include or exclude from the final audio piece. This challenge is particularly pronounced when editing interview or storytelling-style podcast episodes where an expert shares their lived or professional experiences. The editor must carefully consider whether and how to remove content, knowing that editing audio is more complex than editing text. Unlike text, audio edits can introduce discontinuities that listeners may detect, potentially undermining the authenticity and trustworthiness of the content (Singer 2025). Editing someone else's stories or ideas gives the producer the power to shape those ideas for the audience. By giving students the opportunity to think through and decide what content to keep or discard, and then requiring them to discuss their decisions in the context of social work ethics, they gain a unique experience in recognizing and grappling with professional power. This opportunity for work-integrated learning and hands-on experience is invaluable in preparing students for professional practice.

2.3. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory emphasizes learning through direct experience, which is a core aspect of social work education (Kolb 2015). In social work education, this is often seen in simulations, role-plays, and field placements (Jefferies et al. 2023). Podcasts provide an extension of experiential learning by including simulations of practitioner–client interactions, or presenting authentic case studies, that students can engage with, analyze, and discuss. By integrating podcasts into the practice curriculum in this way, educators can create assignments that require students to critically engage with the content. For example, students might listen to a podcast episode and then participate in a role-play based on the scenario presented. This combination of empathic listening and active participation helps to solidify learning and make it more applicable to real-world practice.

While transformational learning, relationship-based practice, and experiential learning provide a strong theoretical foundation for what we now understand as podcasting pedagogy, they do not offer social work educators practical guidance for creating or integrating podcasts into the classroom. It is through the practice of co-production that we can fully grasp the andragogy of podcasting.

3. Co-Production and Podcasting Pedagogy

Co-production and co-design in social work podcasting offers a valuable approach to knowledge creation and dissemination that aligns closely with the core values of social work (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2018)). These methods emphasize collaboration, egalitarianism, and the inclusion of marginalized voices (Masterson et al. 2022), making them particularly suitable for social work education and practice.

Co-production in social work involves the collaborative creation of services, or content, with a minimum of two parties (one being a service user) working together toward a common goal (Sapouna 2021). This approach is rooted in the belief that involving service users and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of social work interventions leads to more effective and relevant outcomes. In the context of podcasting, co-production means that the content is developed not just by the podcasters but also with the input and participation of guests, listeners, and other stakeholders (McHugh 2014). This collaborative process ensures that the podcast content is reflective of the diverse perspectives and experiences within which social work operates. Singer (2025) encouraged podcasters to engage participants from the outset, allowing them to contribute to topic selection and co-facilitate discussions. The participatory approach of co-production aligns with the principles of empowerment and collaboration central to social work's relationship-based practice.

3.1. Theoretical Foundations

The concept of co-production in podcasting production is supported by various methodological frameworks within social work and beyond. Participatory action research, for example, emphasizes mutuality, equality, and shared responsibility in the research process (Corbett et al. 2007; Gibbs 2001). This methodology aligns well with the principles of co-production, as it involves participants in all stages of research, from problem identification to data analysis and dissemination (Barbera 2008). Digital storytelling, another relevant methodology, involves participants in the creation of their own narratives, allowing for the expression of personal experiences in a way that is both empowering and informative (de Jager et al. 2017). One such example is the study from which Rogers and colleagues created a podcast series that utilized digital storytelling to explore the impact on city life amidst the unfolding experiences of COVID-19 in Australia (Rogers et al. 2020).

3.2. Practical Implementation

Implementing co-production in social work content podcasting is a deliberate approach involving several practical steps. Firstly, it requires the establishment of a collaborative environment where all participants feel valued and respected. This can be achieved through regular communication, shared decision making, and the acknowledgment of each participant's contributions. Secondly, the podcast production process should be transparent, with participants being informed about how their input will be used and how the final product will be shaped. One effective technique in promoting integrity and inclusiveness of the co-production process is member checking (Motulsky 2021). This involves sharing the draft podcast content with participants before finalization, allowing them to review and provide feedback. This practice not only ensures that their voices are accurately represented but also enhances the trustworthiness of the podcast as a scholarly output.

Several social work content podcasts have successfully integrated co-production and co-design principles. For instance, the *Social Work Stories* podcast, hosted by Mim Fox and Lis Murphy, involves social workers sharing their real-life experiences. The hosts engage with listeners by posing critical questions and incorporating "shout outs" that respond to current world events (Fox and Murphy 2025). This approach fosters a sense of community and shared learning among social workers globally. Another example is the *Social Work Discoveries* podcast, where host Ben Joseph collaborates with social work researchers to discuss their projects. By sending edited interviews to guests for review, the *Social Work Discoveries* podcast ensures that the content is both accurate and reflective of the participants' experiences (Joseph and Hall 2025).

While co-production offers many benefits, it also presents challenges. These include logistical issues, such as coordinating schedules and ensuring consistent audio quality, as well as the potential for power imbalances between podcast hosts, guests, and participating external organizations (Fox and Joseph 2025). Addressing these challenges requires a commitment to flexibility, transparency, and ongoing dialogue (Lundström and Lundström 2020). For instance, podcasters can use insights gleaned from participatory action research, or "public and participatory sonic action" (Beckstead et al. 2024, p. 45), and qualitative research techniques like member checking to involve guests more deeply in the production process and to address any concerns about representation and authenticity (Smith 2022).

3.3. The Fox-Singer Framework for Social Work Education and Podcasting

The Fox-Singer Framework for Social Work Education and Podcasting is designed to provide a structured approach to integrating podcasting into social work education (Fox 2025). The framework ensures that podcasting not only serves as a content delivery tool but also enriches the learning experience by aligning with core social work competen-

cies. Specifically, the Fox-Singer Framework supports podcasts to be integrated into social work classrooms in the following ways:

3.3.1. Grounding in Transformative Learning Theory

- Critical Reflection: Encourage students to critically engage with podcast content through reflective journals or group discussions.
- Perspective Transformation: Use podcasts to present diverse viewpoints, challenging students to transform their perspectives on social issues and professional practices.

3.3.2. Integrating Relationship-Based Practice

- Empathy Development: Select podcasts that tell stories from marginalized perspectives to foster empathy.
- Authentic Engagement: Encourage students to create their own podcasts as a form of assessment, promoting deep engagement with the content.

3.3.3. Enhancing Experiential Learning

- Simulations and Role Plays: Incorporate podcasts that simulate client interactions, followed by role-play exercises.
- Work-Integrated Learning: Use podcasts to prepare students for field experiences by providing insights into the realities of social work practice.

3.3.4. Building a Pedagogical Blueprint

- Curriculum Integration: Ensure podcast content is tightly aligned with curriculum objectives.
- Assessment Alignment: Develop assessments that require critical engagement with podcast content.

3.3.5. Leveraging Storytelling and Lived Experiences

- Narrative Competence: Highlight the importance of narrative in social work by using podcasts that excel in storytelling.
- Diverse Voices: Include podcasts that present diverse perspectives to deepen students' understanding of different social conditions.

3.3.6. Ensuring Rigor and Relevance

- Research-Based Content: Choose podcasts based on sound research and current best practices.
- Continuous Evaluation and Feedback: Regularly assess the effectiveness of podcasting as a teaching tool, seeking feedback from students.

The following is a brief example of how the Fox-Singer Framework can be used to think through addressing social justice issues in a foundation year course. The framework is intended to frame teaching and learning broadly, not just within a single course or session, although it can provide guidance for that as well.

3.4. Example Use of the Framework

3.4.1. Grounding in Transformative Learning Theory

The educator assigns a podcast episode featuring interviews with currently or formerly incarcerated individuals discussing their experiences with the carceral system (for example the *Ear Hustle Podcast*, <https://www.earhustlesq.com/>). Students are asked to listen to the episode and write reflective journals analyzing how the podcast challenged or confirmed their prior beliefs. In a follow-up class discussion, the educator encourages students to

explore how their perspectives on carceral reform or abolition might change based on these narratives (Critical Reflection and Perspective Transformation).

3.4.2. Integrating Relationship-Based Practice

As a form of assessment, students are tasked with creating their own mini-podcasts. Students will select a social issue that relates to their field of practice (e.g., housing insecurity, mental health, or immigration). Students will analyze the intersection between their field placement and the broader carceral system, drawing on specific insights from the assigned podcast episode. In their solo or group podcast, they will critically reflect on how relationship-based practice can be applied to support individuals impacted by incarceration, whether through direct services, advocacy, or systemic change. This exercise encourages students to make connections between their fieldwork and the lived experiences of those affected by the justice system, fostering a deeper understanding of how social workers can build meaningful, supportive relationships in this context. This exercise promotes deep engagement with course content and encourages students to think creatively about how to apply social work principles in practice (Empathy Development and Authentic Engagement).

3.4.3. Enhancing Experiential Learning

In preparation for field placements and practicums, students listen to a podcast episode featuring a simulated client interaction involving interpersonal violence. In class, the professor facilitates role-plays, where students take turns practicing client interviews, using insights gained from the podcast to shape their approach (Simulations and Work-Integrated Learning).

3.4.4. Building a Pedagogical Blueprint

During syllabus review, the professor ensures that podcast content is integrated into every session. Students are required to critically engage with the podcast content by drawing connections between what they learned in the podcast and the other course materials. One effective technique is to have students complete an SAQ (Summary, Analysis, Question) document for each week's materials. This approach encourages students to summarize key points from the materials, analyze the relationship between the podcast and other course content, and pose thoughtful questions for further exploration, fostering deeper reflection and integration of learning (Curriculum Integration and Assessment Alignment).

3.4.5. Leveraging Storytelling and Lived Experiences

A key consideration in selecting podcasts is to prioritize those that feature the voices and lived experiences of individuals navigating social services, alongside stories from frontline workers and policymakers shaping social service delivery. This approach helps students grasp the significance of narrative in social work while exposing them to diverse perspectives that are often underrepresented in traditional course materials. By hearing these varied voices, students gain a more nuanced understanding of the social service landscape and the complex realities of those involved (Narrative Competence and Diverse Voices).

3.4.6. Ensuring Rigor and Relevance

A final consideration for the podcast episodes is that they reflect the range of what constitutes trustworthy and reliable evidence. For example, in the United States, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center ([sprc.org](https://www.sprc.org)) serves as the federal clearinghouse for all information related to suicide prevention. Programs and policies are organized around two broad types of evidence—empirically defined and community-defined. Empirically

defined evidence reflects traditional notions of evidence as defined by hypothesis testing. By contrast, community-defined evidence refers to a set of practices that produce positive outcomes and have gained widespread acceptance within a specific community, which could be a workplace, neighborhood, school, or a group defined by geography or culture. A program with community evidence might not have been through the steps required for empirical evidence. Conversely, empirically supported programs might not be accepted in a given community. We encourage educators to consider the rigor of podcast evidence as including both empirical and community defined. Additionally, this aspect of the blueprint requires instructors to receive regular feedback from students to assess how well the podcasts are helping them meet course objectives. Instructors make adjustments as needed to ensure podcasts remain a relevant and effective teaching tool (Research-Based Content and Continuous Evaluation).

By weaving podcasting into these rich theoretical and practical frameworks, social work education can truly transform the learning experience. It empowers students to not only absorb knowledge but to engage deeply, fostering empathy, critical reflection, and a profound commitment to making a difference. Despite our enthusiasm for podcasting, we end with an acknowledgement of the challenges of embracing podcasting in social work academia.

4. Social Work Approaches to Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Scholarship

Whilst the argument for podcasting pedagogy and its application to social work education is strong, a tension exists for social work academics hoping to embrace podcasting pedagogy, research or more broadly as a contribution to social work scholarship. Social work's focus on real world engagement and impact has long been at odds with the academy's traditional focus on deep intellectual engagement and pursuit of knowledge discovery. At the same time, social work's focus on authentic community engagement and the amplifying of marginalized voices is often dismissed within academic environment where faculty productivity is quantified through metrics such as citation rates, journal quality, and grant funding.

Despite widespread criticism of neoliberal influences on the university and global higher education context and the commercialization of research, the trend towards marketable academic outputs continues to rise (Gaffikin and Perry 2009; Radice 2013; Shore 2010). This shift presents a dilemma for social work academics who prioritize egalitarian values (Shannon 2019). It does, however, also offer an opportunity for those adaptable to digital platforms, such as podcasts, to enhance their academic visibility and impact.

How we understand podcasting as a form of critical authentic scholarship is still evolving. Researching on, or researching with, podcasts is not yet the academic norm (Singer 2019). There are, however, lessons we can learn from our interdisciplinary colleagues that may guide the social work podcast scholar, and there are ways of thinking about and approaching research impact that suit social work scholars more than others. For example, journalism has paved the way in podcast scholarship through publishing on the transition from radio to a podcasting identity (Hancock and McMurtry 2018), the various podcasting genres and the role they play in the audio landscape (Bottomley 2015; Dowling and Miller 2019), and the power of podcasts to create an intimate and emotional audio space (Lindgren 2021). Journalism scholarship has also contributed to the educational podcast landscape through researching listeners expectations and motivations (Whipple et al. 2022), in order to inform emerging podcast pedagogy in the journalistic classroom (Huntsberger and Stavitsky 2006). For social work podcast scholars, our colleagues have paved the way to research not only the contribution of podcasting to our practice and teaching but also

podcast creation in a form which aligns more directly with social work values, such as social justice. It is by these interdisciplinary colleagues that podcasting methodology has been created and now documented, more specifically within disability studies (Tresco and Jordan 2024) and humanities research (Howard-Sukhil et al. 2021).

While it may be appropriate for a podcast listener to control when they press start or stop, the same cannot be said for social work educators, researchers, or scholars who produce podcasts. For social workers, who are guided by professional codes of ethics and informed by relational practice and advanced understandings of power, it would be negligent to overlook the inherent power dynamics in the role of podcast producer, creator, and host. Qualitative methodologies encourage us to consider trustworthiness, bias, and positionality (Lietz and Zayas 2010), while quantitative methodologies help us bring the principle of inclusion to life by using metrics to ensure that our podcasts reflect the needs, interests, and input of our audience.

Whilst both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can enhance the rigor of podcasting production. We argue that social work podcasting scholarship can make an authentic contribution through collaborative research and the principle of co-production. Whether the social work scholar is co-producing podcasts with students, with vulnerable peoples and lived experience community members, or with practitioner colleagues and industry representatives, the process of co-production speaks to an ethical decision-making process and output.

5. Conclusions

Social work students, practitioners, and educators find podcast episodes to be a valuable way to engage with lifelong learning. That said, we believe that thinking about podcasting as a pedagogical approach provides educators with more tools than simply pressing “play”. The Fox-Singer Framework provides educators with a roadmap for thinking about and using podcasts in a more comprehensive and holistic way. The combined theoretical base of transformational learning, relationship-based practice, and experiential learning support social work educators to embrace the integration of podcasts into the classroom and overall curriculum. The addition of co-production and co-design in the Fox-Singer Framework represents a powerful approach to creating and disseminating knowledge that is both inclusive and impactful. By involving diverse voices in the production process and ensuring that content is collaboratively developed, social work podcasters can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of their educational efforts. This approach not only ensures an alignment with the core values of social work but also contributes to the broader goals of social justice and community empowerment.

Author Contributions: Writing—original draft, M.F. and J.B.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article; further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- Alpay, Esat, and Shelly Gulati. 2010. Student-led podcasting for engineering education. *European Journal of Engineering Education* 35: 415–27. [CrossRef]

- Baker, Elizabeth, and Angeliqne Jenney. 2023. Virtual simulations to train social workers for competency-based learning: A scoping review. *Journal of Social Work Education* 59: 8–31. [CrossRef]
- Barbera, Rosemary A. 2008. Relationships and the Research Process: Participatory Action Research and Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 19: 140–59. [CrossRef]
- Beckstead, Lori, Ian M. Cook, and Hannah McGregor. 2024. *Podcast or Perish: Peer Review and Knowledge Creation for the 21st Century*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Blakemore, Tamara, and Kylie Agllias. 2019. Social media, empathy and interpersonal skills: Social work students' reflections in the digital era. *Social Work Education* 39: 200–13. [CrossRef]
- Bottomley, Andrew J. 2015. Podcasting, Welcome to Night Vale, and the Revival of Radio Drama. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 22: 179–89. [CrossRef]
- Cartney, Patricia. 2013. Podcasting in an age of austerity: A way of both enhancing student learning and reducing staffing costs? *British Journal of Social Work* 43: 446. [CrossRef]
- Cohen, Shimon, and Yoosun Park. 2023. Constructing a White Nation: Social Work in the Americanization Movement. *Doin' The Work: Frontline Stories of Social Change*. Podcast Audio. Available online: <https://dointhework.com/63-constructing-a-white-nation-social-work-in-the-americanization-movement-yoosun-park-msw-phd/> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Corbett, Andrea M, Karen Francis, and Ysanne Chapman. 2007. Feminist-informed participatory action research: A methodology of choice for examining critical nursing issues. *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 13: 81–88. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- de Jager, Adele, Andrea Fogarty, Anna Tewson, Caroline Lenette, and Katherine Boydell. 2017. Digital Storytelling in Research: A Systematic Review. *The Qualitative Report* 22: 2548–82. [CrossRef]
- Dorsey, Marquitta S. 2025. Co-creation with vulnerable populations. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 138–50. [CrossRef]
- Dowling, David O., and Kyle J. Miller. 2019. Immersive Audio Storytelling: Podcasting and Serial Documentary in the Digital Publishing Industry. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* 26: 167–84. [CrossRef]
- Durrani, Mariam, Kevin Gotkin, and Corrina Laughlin. 2015. Serial, seriality, and the possibilities for the podcast format. *American Anthropologist* 117: 593–6. [CrossRef]
- Ferguson, Harry, Lisa Warwick, Tom Disney, Jadwiga Leigh, Tarsem Singh Cooner, and Liz Beddoe. 2020. Relationship-based practice and the creation of therapeutic change in long-term work: Social work as a holding relationship. *Social Work Education* 41: 209–27. [CrossRef]
- Ferrer, Ilyan, Liza Lorenzetti, and Jessica Shaw. 2020. Podcasting for social justice: Exploring the potential of experiential and transformative teaching and learning through social work podcasts. *Social Work Education* 39: 849–65. [CrossRef]
- Fleming, Ted. 2022. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning: In dialogue with Honneth's critical theory. In *Transformative Learning Theory and Praxis: New Perspectives and Possibilities*. Edited by Effrosyni Kostara, Andreas Gavrielatos and Daphne Loads. New York: Routledge, pp. 3–14. [CrossRef]
- Forbes, Dianne. 2011. Beyond lecture capture: Student-generated podcasts in teacher education. *Waikato Journal of Education* 16: 51–64. [CrossRef]
- Fox, Mim. 2025. A theoretical frame for social work education. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 12–22. [CrossRef]
- Fox, Mim, and Benjamin Joseph. 2025. Co-creation with practitioners. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 130–37.
- Fox, Mim, and Jonathan Bentley Singer. 2025. The context of social work education. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 3–11. [CrossRef]
- Fox, Mim, and Lis Murphy. 2025. Co-creation of podcasts with students. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 124–30. [CrossRef]
- Fox, Mim, Siobhan Mchugh, Denika Thomas, Felix Kiefel-Johnson, and Benjamin Joseph. 2021. Bringing together podcasting, social work field education and learning about practice with Aboriginal peoples and communities. *Social Work Education* 42: 404–20. [CrossRef]
- Fronek, Patricia, Jennifer Boddy, Lesley Chenoweth, and Julie Clark. 2016. A report on the use of open access podcasting in the promotion of social work. *Australian Social Work* 69: 105–14. [CrossRef]
- Gaffikin, Frank, and David C. Perry. 2009. Discourses and strategic visions: The US research university as an institutional manifestation of neoliberalism in a global era. *American Educational Research Journal* 46: 115–144. [CrossRef]
- Gibbs, Anita. 2001. Social work and empowerment-based research: Possibilities, process and questions. *Australian Social Work* 54: 29–39. [CrossRef]
- Goldkind, Lauri, Lea Wolf, Alexis Glennon, Juan Rios, and Laura Nissen. 2024. The End of the World as We Know It? ChatGPT and Social Work. *Social Work* 69: 103–05. [CrossRef]

- Greenhowe, Christine, and Cathy Lewin. 2018. Social media and education: Reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. In *Social Media and Education: Now the Dust Has Settled*. Edited by Neil Selwyn and Eve Stirling. London: Routledge, pp. 6–31.
- Hancock, Danielle, and Leslie McMurtry. 2018. 'I Know What a Podcast Is': Post-Serial Fiction and Podcast Media Identity. In *Podcasting*. Edited by Dario Llinares, Neil Fox and Richard Berry. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. [CrossRef]
- Harris, Sera. 2022. Australian Social Workers' Understandings of Technology in Practice. *Australian Social Work* 75: 420–32. [CrossRef]
- Hitchcock, Laurel Iverson, Todd Sage, Michael Lynch, and Melanie Sage. 2021. Podcasting as a pedagogical tool for experiential learning in social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* 41: 172–91. [CrossRef]
- Hooks, Bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Hooks, Bell. 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Howard-Sukhil, Christian, Samantha Wallace, and Ankita Chakrabarti. 2021. Developing Research through Podcasts: Circulating Spaces, A Case Study. *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 15. Available online: <http://digitalhumanities.org:8081/dhq/vol/15/3/000554/000554.html> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Huntsberger, Michael W., and Alan G. Stavitsky. 2006. The New "Podagogy": Incorporating Podcasting into Journalism Education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 61: 397–410.
- International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). 2018. Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles. July 2. Available online: <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Jefferies, Gerard, Cindy Davis, Jonathan Mason, and Raj Yadav. 2023. Using simulation to prepare social work students for field education. *Social Work Education* 43: 1369–83. [CrossRef]
- Joseph, Benjamin, and Neil Hall. 2025. Podcasting and research skill development. In *Podcasting in Social Work education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 73–90.
- Kolb, David A. 2015. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning & Development*, 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kreber, Carolin. 2022. Cultivating authentic professional identities through transformative higher education: An application of Mezirow's comprehensive theory of adult learning. In *Transformative Learning Theory and Praxis: New Perspectives and Possibilities*. Edited by Effrosyni Kostara, Andreas Gavrielatos and Daphne Loads. New York: Routledge.
- Lietz, Cynthia A., and Luis E. Zayas. 2010. Evaluating qualitative research for social work practitioners. *Advances in Social Work* 11: 188–202. [CrossRef]
- Lindgren, Mia. 2021. Intimacy and Emotions in Podcast Journalism: A Study of Award-Winning Australian and British Podcasts. *Journalism Practice* 17: 704–19. [CrossRef]
- Lundström, Markus, and Tomas Poletti Lundström. 2020. Podcast ethnography. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 24: 289–99. [CrossRef]
- Masterson, Daniel, Kristina Areskoug Josefsson, Glenn Robert, Elisabeth Nylander, and Sofia Kjellström. 2022. Mapping definitions of co-production and co-design in health and social care: A systematic scoping review providing lessons for the future. *Health Expectations* 25: 902–13. [CrossRef]
- McHugh, Siobhàn. 2014. Audio storytelling: Unlocking the power of audio to inform, empower and connect. *Asia Pacific Media Educator* 24: 141–156. [CrossRef]
- McHugh, Siobhàn. 2022. *The Power of Podcasting: Telling Stories Through Sound*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Meredith, Cathryn, Philip Heslop, and Christina Dodds. 2021. Simulation: Social work education in a third place. *Social Work Education* 42: 917–34. [CrossRef]
- Mezirow, Jack. 2000. Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. Edited by J. Mezirow. San Francisco: Wiley, pp. 3–34.
- Mishna, Faye, Jane E. Sanders, Karen M. Sewell, and Elizabeth Milne. 2021. Teaching Note—Preparing Social Workers for the Digital Future of Social Work Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education* 57: 19–26. [CrossRef]
- Motulsky, Sue L. 2021. Is member checking the gold standard of quality in qualitative research? *Qualitative Psychology* 8: 389. [CrossRef]
- Podcast Insights. 2021. 2021 Podcast Stats & Facts. February 20. Available online: <https://www.podcastinsights.com/podcast-statistics/> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Price, Aaron, Pamela Gay, Travis Searle, and Gina Brissenden. 2007. A history and informal assessment of the Slacker Astronomy Podcast. *The Astronomy Education Review* 5: 53–69. [CrossRef]
- Radice, Hugo. 2013. How we got here: UK higher education under neoliberalism. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 12: 407–18.
- Rankine, Matt. 2019. The 'thinking aloud' process: A way forward in social work supervision. *Reflective Practice* 20: 97–110. [CrossRef]
- Reamer, Fredric G. 2019. Social Work Education in a Digital World: Technology Standards for Education and Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education* 55: 420–32. [CrossRef]

- Rogers, Dallas, Miles Herbert, Carolyn Whitzman, Eugene McCann, Paul J. Maginn, Beth Watts, Ashraful Alam, Madeleine Pill, Roger Keil, Tanja Dreher, and et al. 2020. The city under COVID 19: Podcasting as digital methodology. *Journal of Economic and Human Geography* 111: 434–50. [CrossRef]
- Salinas-Navarro, David Ernesto, Eliseo Vilalta-Perdomo, Rosario Michel-Villarreal, and Luis Montesinos. 2024. Designing experiential learning activities with generative artificial intelligence tools for authentic assessment. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education* 21: 708–34. [CrossRef]
- Sapouna, Lydia. 2021. Service-user narratives in social work education; Co-production or co-option? *Social Work Education* 40: 505–21. [CrossRef]
- Shannon, Patrick. 2019. Value-based social work research: Strategies for connecting research to the mission of social work. *Critical Social Work* 14: 102–14. [CrossRef]
- Shore, Cris. 2010. The reform of New Zealand’s university system: ‘After neoliberalism’. *Learning and Teaching* 3: 1–31. [CrossRef]
- Singer, Jonathan Bentley. 2019. Podcasting as social scholarship: A tool to increase the public impact of scholarship and research. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* 10: 571–590. [CrossRef]
- Singer, Jonathan Bentley. 2025. Podcasting in social work education for clinical skill development. In *Podcasting in Social Work Education: A Way Forward for Educators*. Edited by Mim Fox and Jonathan Bentley Singer. New York: Routledge, pp. 51–72.
- Singer, Jonathan Bentley, Johanna Creswell Báez, and Juan A. Rios. 2023. AI creates the message: Integrating AI language learning models into social work education and practice. *Journal of Social Work Education* 59: 294–302. [CrossRef]
- Smith, Ariel D. 2022. The Black Podcaster-Scholar: A Critical Reflection of Using Podcasting as Methodology as a Black Doctoral Student. *Social Media + Society* 8: 20563051221117576. [CrossRef]
- Sprague, Debra, and Cynthia Pixley. 2008. Podcasts in education: Let their voices be heard. *Computers in the Schools* 25: 226–34. [CrossRef]
- This American Life. n.d. Serial [Podcast]. Available online: <https://serialpodcast.org/season-one> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Treco, Kadesha, and Lorien S. Jordan. 2024. Decentering and Rezoning: Podcasts as a DisCrit Method for Doing Disability Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 23: 16094069241263682. [CrossRef]
- Trevithick, Pamela. 2003. Effective relationship-based practice: A theoretical exploration. *Journal of Social Work Practice* 17: 163–76. [CrossRef]
- Wang, Biao. 2024. NotebookLM Now Lets You Listen to a Conversation About Your Sources. *Google Blog*. September 11. Available online: <https://blog.google/technology/ai/notebooklm-audio-overviews/> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Watts, Lynelle. 2019. Reflective practice, reflexivity, and critical reflection in social work education in Australia. *Australian Social Work* 72: 8–20. [CrossRef]
- What’s the Big Data? 2024. Podcasts Statistics 2024: How Many Podcasts Are There? May 20. Available online: <https://whatsthebigdata.com/podcasts-statistics/> (accessed on 1 October 2024).
- Whipple, Kelsey, Ivy Ashe, and Lourdes M. Cueva Chacón. 2022. Examining Podcast Listeners’ Perceptions of the Journalistic Functions of Podcasts. *Electronic News* 17: 40–66. [CrossRef]
- Youdell, Deborah. 2006. Diversity, inequality, and a post-structural politics for education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 27: 33–42. [CrossRef]
- Zhang, Peng, and Gemma Tur. 2022. Educational e-portfolio overview: Aspiring for the future by building on the past. *IAFOR Journal of Education* 10: 51–74. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.