

## In the Classroom 100

# The Top 10 Episodes of the In the Classroom Podcast

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**Stan Skrabut:** Well, thanks ever so much for taking time out of your schedule to listen to my podcast. I know you could be doing other things, but you're hanging out with me, and I really appreciate it. It certainly means a lot, especially on this particular episode. We have just hit our first major milestone, we hit 100 episodes. Thank you ever so much for your support.

When I started this journey, I honestly didn't know where it would take me or how long this whole podcast thing would last. I originally started the podcast as a way to support my students, and then it has shifted to support fellow educators and instructional technologists. All along the way, it's been a learning journey for me. In my effort to provide meaningful information to you, I've had to take some deep dives into topics. These deep dives have helped me refresh my personal knowledge on topics, as well as learn some new things. I hope you also learned something along the way.

For a while, I was quite concerned that I wouldn't make this milestone. As you know, I was busy looking for a new job, and I successfully found one, which resulted in a recent move. Which, if you've done moves, man, that can mess up your schedule. Because of the move and poor planning on my part, one episode was delayed by a day and another was upended and delayed by an entire week. In the end, we made it to this major milestone, 100 episodes. Now, I'm excited to get on my way to 200 episodes.

As we look back over the last 100 episodes, here's some quick stats. So far, the first 99 episodes have been downloaded 5,262 times. Each episode has been downloaded an average of 53 times. 65 episodes account for 80% of the downloads if I apply Pareto's 80-20 rule. The fact that I've had over 5,000 downloads or listeners have listened to 5,000 downloads is truly gratifying. I really believe in this idea of instructional technology, I think it can make our classrooms better, and the fact that there are individuals out there that are willing to listen to me and partake in the information I'm sharing, I am truly grateful.

To recognize this particular milestone, I want to take a moment to look back and highlight the top 10 downloaded episodes. My criteria is nothing more than these are the episodes that you have found most interesting or wanted to hear for whatever reason. These particular episodes each have had 90 or more downloads. As to be expected, a majority of these episodes came from the first year of recording, but not all of them. Let's take a look.

Starting at number 10 of the most downloaded episodes, we have ITC: 5 - Why is Visual Literacy so Important? This episode originated out of my multimedia class that I was teaching at the time, but it's an essential topic to instructional design. We use imagery everywhere. Unfortunately, when we use bad imagery, we set back learning rather than improve it. If you sat through a poorly designed presentation, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Research has shown that more imagery and less text will actually help learning. If you're building those PowerPoint slides with a lot of bullets, rethink what you're doing. I'm glad that others are finding this topic important enough to listen to.

Number nine. Coming in at number nine, we have ITC: 41 - Using Backward Design to Build Better Courses. Developing and delivering exceptional courses is no accident, it comes about through thoughtful design. Many of you realize that and wanted to know more. Backward design will help you develop a course that ensures all the needed elements are included and help students achieve your objectives.

Backward design begins by identifying course goals and objectives, building assessments to meet those objectives, creating activities to practice for the assessments, and finally, developing content that will impart the lessons. This episode keys into these essential elements of backward design. Go check it out.

The eighth most downloaded episode was ITC: 57 - Building Online Learning Communities. As we shifted to an online environment due to COVID-19 virus, there was an increased interest in how to build learning communities online. If you lose the human element, you have nothing but a correspondence course, and no one likes a correspondence course. This is where you're all by yourself. This episode focused on the community of inquiry framework.

The community of inquiry framework focuses on three interlocking elements, cognitive presence, social presence, and teacher presence. I am a firm believer that learning takes place through dialogue, dialogue with content, fellow students, and the instructor. This is what's needed to build a learning community in an online class. Learning doesn't have to be all serious business. It seems others wanted to know more about how to use gaming elements to make courses more engaging.

In episode seven, ITC: 16 - Games and Gamification in the Classroom. It focused on how to weave gaming strategies into the classroom. With these particular strategies, we can tap into what the brain finds enjoyable. If we mold our instruction to how the brain actually builds learning, we're going to be more successful, and gaming is a way of doing that.

The episode that was the sixth most popular was ITC: 4 - Exploring the Concepts of Multimedia Literacy and Multimedia Learning. This episode was one of the first that I recorded. It was one that supported my multimedia learning course. As educators, we underutilize multimedia in the classroom. As a result, we may be impeding the learning that's taking place.

Our brains are naturally wired to take in input through visual and auditory channels. Yet, in a typical classroom, we're starving our students' brains from these elements.

In an online environment, it's imperative that we have a text-only path through the content. Additionally, we should create an equivalent multimedia path through the same content. This is very much in line with universal design for learning.

The next episode, which comes in fifth place, is one of two that focus on the same topic. This episode is ITC: 30 - Six Engaging Online Discussion Strategies. As we move to an online environment, many of you wanted to get some ideas for engaging in online discussions. In this episode, I pulled together some of my favorites. Definitely check them out.

Number four. To be honest, the episode that came in fourth place was rather surprising. It was recorded in August 2020. This episode was ITC: 83 - How to Effectively Use Chalkboards, Blackboards, and Whiteboards in Your Classroom. According to some research articles I found, there is no learning difference between using PowerPoint and writing on a chalkboard, but learning is improved when you combine them together. I talk more about that in this episode.

Another piece of research I found to be interesting is that students actually prefer instructors to use a chalkboard rather than PowerPoint. I wonder why. The great thing about these findings is they also apply to online learning, you can use whiteboards and chalkboards in an online learning environment.

It is nice to see this next episode in the number three position. ITC: 8 - What is Universal Design for Learning? This outlines a wonderful framework for making your courses more inclusive and accessible. UDL emphasizes providing support and choice within the curriculum. Technology also plays a prominent role in the framework. If you follow a UDL methodology, you will find continuous ways to strengthen your course to make a better learning environment. I'm a huge fan of UDL, and I'm constantly talking about it. This is just ways that we could keep improving what we're doing in the classroom, regardless of the modality.

In the number two position, we are focusing again on online discussions with ITC: 29 - Success Tips for Creating Engaging Online Discussions. This episode shared strategies for improving online discussions. Great discussions do not happen by accident, they come about through thoughtful design. Since discussions are a mainstay of online courses, it's important that we employ as many practices as possible.

Now, before I get to the top episode, I would like to give a shout-out to two runner-up episodes. These two episodes share strategies for incorporating movies into the classroom. The two episodes are ITC: 26 - What the Heck is a MovieTalk? and ITC: 48 - How to use Movies in the Classroom. If you're thinking about how to use movies in your classroom, definitely check these two episodes out.

Our number one downloaded episode for the first 100 is ITC: 44 - Andragogy - Treating Learners as Adults. We can hold learning back if we are using inappropriate strategies. When we are teaching college students, should we teach them as children or adult? As more and more students are post-traditional, I believe we should be teaching them as adults.

This episode focus on andragogy, which Malcolm Knowles put on the map. Knowles's assumptions for adult learners note that learners are self-directed to use prior experience for learning, are ready to learn, want to apply new knowledge right away, benefit from problem-based learning, and are intrinsically motivated. If we want our students to be self-directed, lifelong learners, we need to shift the responsibility of learning to the student. I encourage you to take a look.

Well, that's our list. Once again, here's a countdown of the top 10.

10. ITC: 5 - Why is Visual Literacy so Important?
9. ITC: 41 - Using Backward Design to Build Better Courses.
8. ITC: 57 - Building Online Communities.
7. ITC: 16 - Games and Gamification in the Classroom.
6. ITC: 4 - Exploring the Concepts of Multimedia Literacy and Multimedia Learning.
5. ITC: 30 - Six Engaging Online Discussion Strategies.
4. ITC: 83 - How to Effectively Use Chalkboards, Blackboards, and Whiteboards in Your Classroom.
3. ITC: 8 - What is Universal Design for Learning?
2. ITC: 29 - Success Tips for Creating Engaging Online Discussions.
1. ITC: 44 - Andragogy - Treating Learners as Adults.

Please go check them out if you haven't already listened to them. While you're checking things out, please check out my book.