In the Classroom 92
Using Audio Recordings to Boost Classroom Learning

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Stan Skrabut: Well, thanks ever so much for taking time to listen to this podcast. It certainly means a lot. You could be doing other things, but you're still hanging out with me, and I really appreciate it. This week, we are going to take another look at using audio in your classroom. If you remember, we looked at this topic in episode number ITC 7, but I thought it was worth touching on again for a number of different reasons, and talk about those in a second.

We have been processing sound since the beginning of time. When we started communicating with each other, sound was one of the primary means of doing that. Our brains are naturally programmed to process what we hear. We built this process before we even started to read. That's why Socrates has a group of people around him, and they're sharing ideas, and they're doing it primarily through the spoken word.

When we're born, we also process sound before we learn to read, and so it would only make sense that we incorporate sound into our instruction. We're really not doing that as well as should. Like I said, in episode ITC 7, we talked about audio in the classroom. If you haven't checked that out, certainly go do that. I talked a lot about the different benefits that are available, but some of the things that I want to highlight here, as far as benefits for using audio-- The first is you can listen to audio when you're doing other tasks.

If you're doing chores or if you're driving or walking, it's probably not as convenient to be reading a book. Especially if you are driving, that listening to an audio file, you can listen to the audio file and drive at the same time, where reading, I wouldn't recommend. You can do those type of thing.

Audio is also a wonderful alternative to textual content, and it provides a great support for distant-learning students. I know students would be appreciative if you also included this option, which is very much in line with universal design for learning, because audio provides that multimedia alternative to textual information.

Other reasons why you would want to do it-- Sometimes, learners just need to hear it again, especially if you're talking about complex topic. The fact that you can put an audio file in, sit there and listen to it over and over again, helps the student. With audio files, you can adjust the playback speed. When I'm listening to podcasts in the car, I crank up the playback speed to 1.5. I'm listening to it faster, so I can get through more podcast episodes, and I take notes here and there.

If you are taking notes based on a lecture, maybe, you want to dial it back and listen to it a little slower, and you can take notes. This is really effective for international

students or students where the language being used is not their primary language. Because I know when I'm listening to Dutch, sometimes, I need to slow it down in order to grasp everything. Students can also use these recordings of lectures as part of their review or as a way to catch up if they missed a lecture. If you provide those, that's a great way for them to come back up to speed.

Also, audio is a great way of providing feedback to students. I have just finished reading a book called *Rehumanizing Your Business*. The book focuses on the use of video, but I can also see how using audio in terms of feedback can be very powerful for a student to understand concepts that you want them to do. The research has also shown that students found audio feedback to be more detailed than written comment and allowed them to create better papers.

Well, when you are capturing audio, there's different ways that you can do this. You may want to-- I'm going to share- How many do I have? One, two, three, four, five, six- six ways that I'm talking about capturing audio file. The first is Zoom audio recording. If you're using Zoom to teach your class, when you do a recording and you're recording to your local computer, one of the things that you can do is--

Well, by simply recording your lecture, it will automatically save an MP3 file separately that you can automatically use if you wanted to. Students don't always need to see your lecture to gain understanding. Sometimes, they just need to listen to it. If you're recording with Zoom and you save it to your computer, Zoom automatically saves a separate MP3 file that you can upload to your learning management system or share from a storage location in order to provide access. I don't know if you knew that or not. You already are saving audio files. Now, it's just a matter of putting them to use.

Another way of recording audio files is to mic up. If you are teaching a face-to-face lecture, what you may want to do is just attach a microphone to maybe your smartphone, use the record audio application, and capture your audio as you are walking around and teaching. You can also have a separate audio recorder in which you do that, but capturing that-- Then, from there, you can go process it, and put it up on your class.

Another way that you can enhance your class is using text-to-speech. In our classes, we typically have a lot of textual content. There are tools out there called text-to-speech tools that will allow you to do this plus-one capability by supplementing your text files with an audio file. You would use these text-to-speech converters, dump the text in, and it will create an MP3 file for your document. In the show notes, I'll link to some of the text-to-speech recorders that I found.

Now, this technology keeps getting better and better, but to be honest, there are still some text-to-speech-- You know it's text-to-speech, because it's robotic in nature. Some find that this can be a distraction, but providing the options, I think it's still a good option that you can use in your class. Naturally, another way of doing this is you can simply read the text and capture the text.

I created an audio version of my book, *Read to Succeed.* That's out there. I know the process, going through that, takes a little bit of time to do it and do it right. These text-to-speech will do it automatically. Sometimes, the pronunciation is not what you hoped for, but you could go back in and edit those particular files if you want. If you happen to be a student on a long drive, long commute to class, these audio files can be a great way to use that valuable time on the commute, where they can listen to the audio files as they're driving.

My fourth way of getting an audio files is to do a podcast. Now, I have to give a big shout-out to podcasts, because that is a primary way that I learn. I am constantly listening to podcasts. That's how I stay current on a number of topics. I also use them for inspiration, for new ideas. You can use podcasts in your class. You can use it to summarize the week of discussion. You can introduce new topic, or you can do a deep dive in topic.

One of the things that is been fascinating in my podcast journey-- We are on episode number 92. I never thought I'd get here, but we're at 92, and I am enjoying it. A cool feature of the podcast is when I send this out for transcription, normally, my podcast episodes end up being six to eight pages long of just single-line transcription. Well, with 92 episodes, that's a lot of pages that I've put together.

One day, I may turn that into a book. This is a great way, if you're looking to build OER content, where, if you start with a podcast, you can repurpose it, and get the transcript, and start turning that into meaningful content, because you did the research on the front end, talked about it in your podcast. Now, you've got something where it's just a spoken word, so it comes out more naturally. From there, it's just a matter of editing it, cleaning it up. Now, you have something that you can also share back out in a different way.

I started this podcast as an experiment. I was really curious to see where it would go. Personally, it has helped me explore topics in greater depth than I normally would, because I feel I have an obligation to the folks that are listening to this podcast.

I spent a lot of energy going in and researching things and trying to pull things together, and I probably am doing more because of this podcast than I would normally do. As a side benefit, you guys all get to benefit from the learning that I'm doing, and I have this that I can share very much in the future, use it potentially for other instruction that I'm providing faculty members at places I work.

All right, number five. Export an audio file from a video. If you have some videos that you've created in the past, one of the things that you can do is you can strip off the audio and use that as a separate file. Why would you do that? Well, sometimes, it's not possible to watch the video. Once again, if you're driving, probably not a good time to watch a video. Even if you're walking, having your head down looking at your iPad or your phone can be dangerous. Simply listening to the audio, it's possible.

You can actually export an audio file from a YouTube video. There are converters that do that. Simply search "YouTube to MP3 converter", and you will find different ones that will do exactly what it says, create an MP3 file for you. Then, you can

upload that, once again, to your learning management system or other ways that you want to share that.

The sixth way is repurpose audio from a video recording. If you are creating videos using tools like Camtasia, they typically have a function where you can export just the audio file. This is just a great way to get ahead of the game. Before you post it to YouTube, you get the audio file first. Like I said, with these audio files, you can get transcriptions of them, turn these audio files into text files.

Microsoft Word, the new versions of Word, have a dictation function. In addition, they have a transcription function. You can actually put an audio file in there, and it will kick out a transcript. Those are definitely different ways that you can do this.

The different ways, right? Automatically get one from Zoom when you do a recording. You can mic up and capture recording that way. Text-to-speech, have the machine do it for you. Create your own podcast. This is where you're actually intentionally recording an audio file-- export audio files from video, repurpose audio files from a video recording, so getting it from YouTube or before you even put it up.

Before I let you go, some important tips. When you get a Zoom recording or you're recording on your mobile device or a podcast, take time to edit it. This particular episode, right now, I have been speaking for just over 16 minutes. Well, there's a lot of dead air space as I do that, and one of the things that I try to do is remove all that dead air space, so it's just that I'm moving pretty steadily. Otherwise, it just takes too long. It's nice, but you can reduce that.

Other things that you want to do when you're editing, especially if you're capturing a classroom lecture, is often you're taking attendance or there is small talk going on, side conversations that are not necessary, you can go in and strip those things out. Using a tool like Audacity, this will help you do this quite easily.

Well, that is my tale today talking about using audio. Once again, lots of great reasons why you would do it. It gives opportunity to provide learning in those spaces where using tech is probably not possible. Audio can supplement that. It also provides an alternative form for learning and meets students where their needs are. That's why I like it-- share different ways that you can do this. Yes, that's a little bit about audio in the classroom. Before I let you go, let's talk about the reading parts. I'm going to share a plug for my book, *Read to Succeed*.