In the Classroom 130
Using Diigo in the Classroom

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Stan Skrabut: Thanks ever so much for taking time to listen to this podcast. It certainly means a lot. I know you could be doing other things, perhaps you are, but you're still hanging out with me and I really appreciate it. In this episode, we're going to talk about one of my go-to tools. It is a tool I use every day. In fact, today, I've already used it a couple times. I use it to curate ideas, resources, that's where my research goes. This tool is called Diigo. It is a social bookmarking tool. I use it to directly support my classes, and I want to talk about how you can potentially use it for your classes.

I have been using Diigo since 2008 when I switched from Delicious, which was another social bookmarking tool. Diigo's prime purpose is to bookmark websites and documents that you want to refer to later. As of today, I have nearly 21,000 items bookmark in Diigo, and I have arranged them around just over 1,800 different tags. I use these tags when searching for resources that I've saved or I want to share with others. Tags, to me, are absolutely critical.

What is Diigo? Diigo is, as I said, a social bookmarking tool. It has a handful of tools that can be used in the classroom. I primarily use Diigo for its bookmarking capability. I am constantly scouring the internet on various topics either for something that I'm working on or for someone else. While your web browser lets you bookmark pages, and I have pages bookmarked on my browser, you could not bookmark 21,000 pages without crippling the browser, and it would be extremely difficult to organize them and find the right bookmarks later when you need them.

Also, Diigo is portable. I can open another browser, log into Diigo, and have my links right at my fingertips. I've done this at conferences while showing colleagues different sites that I had just found and not having my computer at hand. I can use Diigo wherever I'm at. I can use it from any browser and any device. I have Diigo on my phone; I have it on my iPad and at work, at home, and all the links are available to me. My research is available anywhere that I am. That's cool that it's on all these different devices.

Bookmarking, that's what I primarily use it for. With Diigo, you can tag these bookmarks, so not only are you just saving them to Diigo, but you also can provide a level of organization using tag. This is an important feature, for me, is the ability to tag my find. As I add resources I find into Diigo, I can tag them with one or more tags. I can have them across multiple categories. It's not like putting them into a folder where it only exists in one folder. With tags, I can have multiple tags. If I have something that's relative to one topic and another, that is great. If I'm thinking about a certain topic, I can pull that tag up, and that resource would be available to me.

This allows me to organize things into meaningful groupings or themes. This type of taxonomy is very useful for me. The real power with tags is that I can share a group of resources with others by doing a search for the tag and then using the resulting URL. If my resources are shared publicly, then I can use that tag, and I can place it. I can put it into an email; I can put it into a website, learning management system, whenever I want. That tag will take whoever's using it to my list of resources that I have curated and vetted for them. That, I use a lot.

Diigo also has the capability of highlighting a web page. You can go in to highlight text with Diigo. It'll save it as a bookmark with the highlights. You can do this with a web page or PDF document. When you go back to visit that page, you will see the highlights. You can change the color of the highlights to suit your needs. You also have the capability of adding Sticky Notes to a document. This is where you can capture your thoughts. In a collaborative sense, you can be working on looking at the same document and adding notes and highlights, and talking about that document.

I don't use these tools in Diigo. I probably should, but I don't. Instead, I use Hypothesis. The reason I use Hypothesis is because it feeds Readwise, and Readwise then pours into Evernote. I've talked about Hypothesis and Readwise in other episodes, specifically, ITC 54, 116, and 121. I will put links into the show notes so you can learn more about how I use those particular tools. With Annotations and Sticky Notes, you can document why you found this article important or the things that stood out to you in that article, which then leads us to groups.

Diigo allows you to create groups, so you can collectively add and share resources with others. I have specifically set up groups for my class. In fact, there's a link to education where there's a teacher console, where you can set up Diigo class collections and annotation sites. I put a link in the show notes about this capability. To use Diigo, you must set up an account on the Diigo website, this is where your library exists.

Now, Diigo has changed things. It used to be free; I'm not sure if it's still free. I have an account I pay for, which allows me to have certain capabilities. You can go on the Diigo site and see what an upgraded account looks like. I'm not sure exactly if you can use it for free anymore, but I think it's absolutely worth it. It has certainly benefited me since 2008. You set up an account on Diigo, and then you also put a capture tool on your web browser.

I use Google Chrome, so it's an extension tool. When I find a website that I like, that I want to save, I just click on the Diigo tool, and it will give me an option to save that bookmark and add tags to it, or I can provide an annotation or highlight certain texts. There's also a screenshot capability that you can annotate the screenshot. If you want to, using that tool, you can also share this resource that you found with others, whether it's on social media or via email. That's a nice feature that's available.

How do I use Diigo in my classroom? Well, primarily, I use Diigo as a way to just curate resources while I'm researching a topic. As I'm teaching a class, there may be a particular topic that I want to do a deeper dive on. I will pull up resources and tag them and save them to Diigo. I do this for all my research projects. When I'm working

on a book, I save things initially to Diigo, and then I will further filter to the point where they make the book or not. It's a place that I can just go grab resources quickly, dump them into Diigo, and then further vet them. Either I'll delete them from Diigo, or it's something that I'll use.

With my classes, I then share a link to a particular topic. I will create links around my class number, followed by a dot, and then whatever that particular topic is. I'm teaching a class, Higher Ed 5610. It's HEID5610.projectmanagement, one word. That will be a tag that I use. Anything that I'm looking for dealing with project management, I will jump into that particular tag, as well as any other tags that I want to use.

That tag, I use that particular URL to that tag, and I place it in the learning management system. When students click on that tag, they will come to the set of resources that I have shared with the students. Every time I add something to that particular tag, when somebody clicks on the link that I provided, they will get the latest and greatest that I shared, and they will always have the most current list. The nice thing is they can save that tag to their own resources later.

They can be well out of my class, going on with their life, but if they want to say, "Oh, I remember taking a class; we talked about project management, and I have that tag to project management. I wonder what **[unintelligible 00:08:29]** found," and they would get the latest and greatest on that particular topic. I'm always updating it because every time I teach a class, students and I find new resources, resources that have not been added to the Diigo site yet. I know that because when I go to a particular website, the Diigo tool will have a indication, indicating that if that website was saved or not, at least into my Diigo.

Another way that I've used it in my classroom is I've used Diigo as a collaboration tool for the students. I would add resources to the group site; I would set up a group site for our particular class and set up specific tags that I want them to use. Then I add some resources and I have students go make annotations to those documents. They would put on Sticky Notes; they would highlight things and explain why they were highlighting those specific resources. Then other students would come in and add their thoughts and comments, and we would dissect that particular document.

Other ways that you may want to consider using Diigo is you can just have students collect resources around a topic. You can create a group and, around that particular tag, that students collect those resources. In my discussions, that is part of the discussion; they have to find an external resource. Usually, I pull out the resource if I really like it and add it to the Diigo site. They can do this to work on research projects, maybe a group research project that they can use Diigo to collect the research around different topics. It's important to spell out the different tags that you want them to use. That way, there's a sense of consistency when collecting resources. With Diigo, you can have what are called tagrolls or linkrolls. This is just a little widget that you can add to a website. It basically pulls up all the links that you have saved related to a specific tag or specific topic. You can have this running on your website and, as new things are added, that would automatically show up.

You can also use Diigo for professional development. This is what I've done for my whole existence in higher ed is I've saved away different resources and used it as I'm researching topics for my professional development. As I'm getting smarter on different aspects of my job, I usually save a lot of resources that I read and I want to reference later. I use them for blog posts I write, podcast episodes that I create, books that I write, I use that Diigo resources. Basically, any topic of interest, you can curate resources using Diigo.

This is a powerful tool also for students, that students need to learn how to better curate resources. Diigo is a powerful tool to do that. I highly suggest that you take a look at Diigo, see how you can use it in your classrooms. I think, for educators, there is a deal, or even free, that you can use it. I put a link in the show notes related to Diigo and education. Check that out. Matter of fact, checking things out as I let you go, I'm going to put a plug-in for my book.