

Open Education Network Podcasting  
Series 1 : Using Audio in Education  
Episode 1.3 : Assessing the Benefits ( mp3 7.0MB 7m08s )

Hello. Welcome to Open Education Network Podcasting .

My name is Paul Kawachi.

This is the third and final episode of this series about using audio files in education. In this episode, I will discuss the benefits of using audio, and how they can help to improve teaching and learning.

In the previous episode, we looked at how you could create your own audio files. An important next step is for you to store them safely for future use, and for sharing with other teachers. Remember that each audio file should be short, within five or ten minutes, and try to keep them generic so they can be re-used easily – for example don't record the date or lesson topic in the audio. If you record different types of bird songs, or lullabies from different cultures – then keep the recording limited to just that. You can always play another audio file as an introduction. Key advantages then are re-usability and portability. If you make an audio of Mozart, another of Sibelius, another of Brahms, and so on – this then adds flexibility to your future lesson plans, especially if you record the music only in the file with the composer only mentioned in the file name for storage and retrieval. Be careful to make audio of key points to use in lessons, not of your reading the textbook aloud for 90 minutes - though blind students may appreciate this, the longer the file then the less it will be re-usable. Keep the tonal range fairly limited, so students with low bandwidth or poor quality playback equipment can have equal access as those with higher quality hardware. Make and offer a tape script or detailed description – such as a visualization of the sound frequencies or of the musical score. Though this all adds time and effort to the work of the teacher initially, the users will later be glad this was done. A catalogued library of audio files will then be built up over the years for future use and re-use. Students who later access your powerpoint or keynote slides, can then find embedded in each slide the audio file of the main points. This will benefit the student who might otherwise be puzzled or confused by the graphical data on the slide, and also cater to those students whose learning styles might want audio as well as graphics. When used judiciously, audio can be extremely interactive and motivating to the student. You can ask students to listen to several audio clips and listen to a question at the end of the audio. They can write their responses on paper, or answer by text or audio in email or onto a blog or website. This can provide added benefits to faraway students learning a foreign language, and to the teacher assessing their language learning. Several thousand audio files can be easily stored on a small portable mp3 player like an iPod, so mobile ubiquitous learning is practical at very low cost to the student. Even during a lesson, audio can be extremely effective in conveying a key point and a variety of media can be stimulating to the students.

Well, thank you for listening to Open Education Network Podcasting on how to use audio in education. My name is Paul Kawachi. You can send your comments by email in writing or by audio to me at 'kawachi@open-ed.net'. Thank you. Goodbye.