

Details

Student Projects: Helping Students Create Audio Content with Lisa Hockenberry - 342

In this episode, I chat with Digital Learning Coach Lisa Hockenberry about using audio in student projects like podcasts to help students creatively showcase their learning. You'll also hear how Lisa supports teachers with practical tips for integrating digital tools plus how audio can empower all learners—especially those who struggle with traditional assignments. If you want to boost student engagement, foster authentic expression, and make room for a little creative “mess,” this episode has you covered!

Link to live show notes: <https://classtechtips.com/2025/10/21/student-projects-342/>

*student projects

Introduction

Hello there, and welcome to today's episode of the Easy EdTech podcast. My name is Monica Burns, and I am so glad you're here to join me today. If you want to make the most of education technology, AKA EdTech, you are in the right place. My goal has always been to help make EdTech easier and give you ideas to try yourself, share with a colleague, or bookmark for later in the school year.

Every Tuesday on the Easy EdTech podcast, you'll hear stories from my time in the classroom, my work with schools and districts, and my travels to different EdTech events. Get ready for solo episodes where I share some quick tips, stories, and interviews full of practical ideas and stories from new guests each month. If we mention something you'd like to check out, make sure to click the link. You'll find it in the episode description or the summary area where you're listening to this podcast, or you can find every episode and all of the resources we mention by going to EasyEdTechPodcast.com or by going to classtechtips.com and just clicking on the Easy EdTech Podcast button at the top of the page.

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Every classroom is different, but every teacher wants the same thing: every learner seen and supported. In between those moments of teaching, the details pile up. Kira lightens the load so you can do what you love most.

Today's Intro

This week's episode is titled: "Teaching Students to Create (Not Just Consume) Audio Content – 342." I'm joined by Lisa, a Digital Learning Coach in Frisco, Texas, who supports teachers and students across multiple campuses. In this episode, she shares how audio projects can help students express themselves, build confidence, and showcase their learning in creative ways. From podcast-style activities to classroom routines that incorporate voice, Lisa gives practical, low-lift ideas you can try right away. Let's jump into the conversation.

Episode Transcript

Monica Burns:

Welcome to the podcast. I'm so excited to talk about all things audio today. But before we get into all of that, can you share with listeners a bit about your role in education? What does your day-to-day look like?

Lisa Hockenberry:

So I'm a digital learning coach in Frisco, Texas. I'm going into my seventh year. I have two schools, and actually that's changing this next year we're taking on three schools. So that's gonna be a bit different for my day to day. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. It's gonna be a little bit, you know, trying to, logistics, trying to get everything worked out. But usually my day I spend going into teaching plan teachers plannings and just, you know, giving them any support they need, anything that they're thinking about, kind of talking through collaborating projects with them, and then working with the teachers in their classrooms. So then working with students as well. That kind of sums up the, this part.

Monica Burns:

Yeah, absolutely. And so what we're talking about today gets back to that work that you're doing and you're seeing in classrooms. And, you know, I am a big podcast consumer. I find myself a little embarrassed when I get my Spotify wrapped at the end of the year. I'm like, I try to remind myself, it's kind of like the radio sometimes <laugh>, but it's okay to hit so many minutes and, you know, whether students are consuming podcasts themselves Right. Or it's not part of their regular practice. It can also be a great way for them to share their learning. Like we're on video even though there's only audio released of this. Right. Like, but you know, sometimes video's a little intimidating for students, but when it comes particularly to the

audio of it all, you know, what inspired you to dive into podcasting as a way for kids to show their learning?

Lisa Hockenberry:

Well, I'm always looking for ways for students to just create beyond, you know, like pencil paper or even just, you know, a poster with construction paper. What are some ways we can integrate technology? So I'm all about trying to find those ways. And so I had worked with a teacher before this group of teachers I'd worked with, with podcasting with her fourth graders. Nice. And it, we used Flipgrid then, and it was amazing. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. It was so fun. And it was so cool to see these kids were like making sponsorship commercials with the podcast. Gosh.

Monica Burns:

Yeah.

Lisa Hockenberry:

And it just like seeing them so excited beyond just like pencil and paper or a poster board. They were creating something so they really had to think through and the, the way they thought through everything. They had scripts, they had commercials, there were jingles involved. It was mm-hmm <affirmative>. Very creative. And, and the podcasts were a complete different, you know, from one podcast there was a jingle and a rap, and the other one was just pretty straightforward. But it, it's just all about like trying to get the kids to create and instead of consume and let them show their creativity as much as possible.

Monica Burns:

I love that focus that you just shared on the process too, right? There's all these components, all these things kids have to plan for. And even if they're, that output is the same or like labeled the same as like, we're making a podcast or it's gotta have these three or four components, there's so much flexibility within that structure. So I love how you, you shared a bit about just the jingles, right? Or the extra pieces. So, you know, what role do you think audio can play in helping students express themselves more confidently, especially those who might not thrive or feel motivated with more traditional assignments?

Lisa Hockenberry:

Yeah, so this always, I always think about my daughter because she is extremely dyslexic. And so she has a really hard time expressing herself on paper. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Or even, you know, typing it. And so I was just trying to find ways that she could even communicate. And she's actually the one when she was five years old, she's about to be 15, she's five years old, she's in my bathroom and she's like, hi guys, I'm gonna show you how to put lipstick on <laugh> <laugh>,

Lisa Hockenberry:

What Are you doing? Like, she's five. It was the cutest thing, but it started getting me thinking like, she's five and she's already trying to express herself mm-hmm <affirmative>. Today. And our kids are so exposed to podcasts and Tiktoks and reels and all of those things. So you know, I think it's just a great way to help kids express themselves when maybe, you know, writing is just, sometimes it's tough and mm-hmm <affirmative>. All their thoughts out, you know, orally, it just helps them, it can help their writing as well. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Later on. 'cause They're really having to think through their ideas. So it's just a way, I think, really great for your kids to explore and share with their thinking. Thinking.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And just that connection to both, right. The options, right. For a student who might feel more comfortable to speak about their experience, and then maybe, you know, the writing comes down the line, right. Could be a, a preparation for that process, but also just the level of authenticity there. Like your daughter who's like, you know, seen something or heard something is replicating it. And then in a classroom setting, replicating that same sort of product Right. That they've consumed with that academic connection. I know when I talk to teachers sometimes about creativity in the classroom, it's like, just 'cause the output has changed doesn't even mean our rubric or our checklists have changed necessarily. Right. Like, maybe we add a line for like clarity of audio <laugh>, but that doesn't mean that the content Right. Or, or the meat of something has changed. So, you know, you alluded to this with that example, but how can audio tools support differentiation in a classroom for learners with different interests and different needs?

Lisa Hockenberry:

Yeah. I mean, I just think it really gives you a glimpse into a, the student's thinking when you're letting them share, audit their auditory learning, because I used to, when I was in the classroom, I used Seesaw a lot. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. I would have them not only do an activity, but they always had to like record some kind of explaining of their thinking. And there

were so many times where they got their answer wasn't quite right, you know, but their explanation, they understood it. They knew what they needed to do, they understood the learning. And if I hadn't recorded them, I would've never, I would've thought that they don't understand this. Okay. Gotta pull them back and do all of these things when instead it just gives you some insight to it. And I think that's what's so great about doing some recording, letting them share their voice because it's their voice <laugh> Yeah. We can glimpse into what they're thinking. It's just really powerful.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And so informative, right. When we're looking to check for understanding, when we wanna have a better sense of how a student got from A to Z, right? We can, we can get a lot right from that audio clip from the transcript that we might review if it's quicker for us, right. But however we go about it. And so, you know, for someone who's listening, maybe they consume a lot of podcasts, I don't think of my podcast as being a fancy one. Right. But maybe they consume some fancy podcasts with some fun editing and all different things. Or even something like this where we sneak in some music in different parts, right. Or trim something or clip it out, you know, what does it look like or, or what are some low lift ways teachers can get started with audio creation, even if it's not a big project or something that's like labeled podcast.

Lisa Hockenberry:

I think just starting small, not, you know, trying to take this huge, you know, endeavor project on mm-hmm <affirmative>. But, you know, something I always have my teachers do when we were working with Canva and when we've worked with Seesaw and it's new, we have them do a lot of like, warmup time with it mm-hmm <affirmative>. And explain the, the features of that tool. So then when we do wanna do a project that's more in depth, it's not, we're not having to worry about the technology piece of it. So if they, you know, start there, like where it's even during a morning meeting time where they're sharing some of their ways to be, you know, kind to their friends and leaving comments mm-hmm <affirmative>. To each other, you know, throughout Seesaw. Like I'm a huge proponent of always using Seesaw and using the comments and letting them kind of have their little social media in their classroom. And it gives you that time for them to give an auditory so even kindergartners can do this. Yeah. And, you know, can't write it out, but we can, we can still speak it. So I think it's a really just starting small and just also starting in like low risk, like during maybe your enrichment and extension time, things like that that just don't put pressure on you or the students and you can explore and give them time. That's what I always tell teachers <laugh>.

Monica Burns:

And that's such a great reminder for someone who might be like, kind of going into something new, right? Like build off of your existing routines. Maybe it's some morning meeting that you always do, or maybe it's the way you close out, you know, the period before the bell rings. Right. And then those low stakes things like you already know the answer to. It's not the academic question, but maybe it's a question about an interest or a favorite thing, or, you know, those kind of morning meeting questions that we think of where you just kind of have to pick something to share doesn't mean there, you know, there's no right or wrong answers necessarily. So I think that's a great example for someone who understandably may feel intimidated about bringing in a new type of media right. Into their work. And we know that kids of all ages, like a right, all the way up to a 15-year-old are consuming digital media, whether they're next to someone who has the phone open or they've got their own device. You know, how do you see classroom audio projects helping them become more thoughtful creators and maybe even more intentional consumers?

Monica Burns:

So in a world where kids are consuming so much digital media, maybe they've got, you know, someone next to them with a phone, they're watching together, or they're on their own device. How do you see classroom audio projects helping them become more thoughtful creators and maybe more intentional consumers of content too?

Lisa Hockenberry:

So this kind of goes back to what I've been wanting to do with my campuses is forming like an influencers club where it's school. Because I think students, they consume these podcasts and these tiktoks and reels and all these things, and they don't see all the behind the scenes work that goes into it. So really showing them like, we have to write a script. You have to think about your audience. You have to think about what you know, what you're presenting and how much you know about that topic. And so, like, when I was doing this with my third graders, and I wrote about this in my article, was we had a website that kind of like led them through all the steps they needed to do so that they could be thoughtful and really show their, their learning and showcase their creativity through their podcasting. But showing them there's, there's a whole behind the scenes action going on. So yeah, so there's just, there's a lot of behind the scenes. So I think eventually I'll get to that influencers club mm-hmm <affirmative>. And be able to really show these kiddos all the different things that kind of go into it.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And just the layers that are there, the amount of prep work, it's so easy for us to watch something, right? Or to scroll through a TikTok and not really think about all the steps it took to create that. Maybe even for a simple video, right? There's some planning or there's some prompts or, you know, some intention in terms of why a piece of music was chosen over another piece of music. So I love that idea of building that level of transparency for students to help them understand the process, which is, is so key. And I don't know if you've had a lot of AI conversations this past year. I mean, but I think one thing that I often come back to with educators, you know, that I'm working with is this idea of process. Like, sure, we can ask it to write an essay if we open up ChatGPT, but we, you know, we wanna document that whole process. So I think that's such great advice. And, you know, if you're talking with one of your teachers who might feel unsure about audio, maybe they're not consumers of podcasts themselves, right. Or they find that they have some tech limitations or even classroom management concerns, which is a really valid reason for being like, I don't wanna upset what we've got going on, or introduce something new. I think many of us have been there, you know, what advice do you have for them?

Lisa Hockenberry:

Something I just, I always tell my teachers is it's going to look messy. So just kind of get comfy with messy. 'cause It will look messy at first, but the more you do the technology, whatever it is, the more you use it, whether it's like Canva or Seesaw, it, they're going to get better at it throughout the year. So just kind of be okay with a little bit of messy at first. Yeah. And then just dive in and just get your hands dirty with it. <Laugh> like but I think teachers, I like to tell them that, you know, just take it slow and dig into it. I'm trying to think like <laugh>, I'm trying to think like all the things that I've like told them, but I think the main thing is just that it's gonna, it's gonna be a little, a little messy. I think I've said that. Sorry.

Monica Burns:

No, that's the perfect piece of advice. I think just that's such a good reminder for someone, you know, if they're trying something out in the next week or two, maybe they're opening up a tool they already have, like, oh, you know what? I never use the audio button in Seesaw mm-hmm <affirmative>. Or I've never, you know, come back to this before. Or maybe the first place they start is simply pressing play on an existing podcast for students. Right? Like, it doesn't have to be something massive in terms of their first step. So I think that's such great advice, Lisa. Just for someone who wants to tread thought for the first time, like, it doesn't have to be perfect. It can be a little messy. It can surely be noisy if you're recording everyone's

voice says, and all of that, you know, may be an indicator of success, right. Not failure, <laugh> as you're trying out these new projects.

Lisa Hockenberry:

Exactly. That's what I've, I've told teachers is just, it's okay if it's not perfect. We're not looking for perfection. They're, you know, they're third graders, they're yeah. Eight years old, nine years old. Like, it's okay. But like, look how engaged they are in their work and they're showcasing all of their learning. When, when this latest project came to fruition, when it all came together, these kiddos, we were out in the pod and some were recording in the classroom, some are recording in our, our main, our shared area. And not a single like teacher had to say anything. Like, we were just there to like support them. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. So a lot of times too, when teachers are worried about that classroom management, when students are so engaged in the work they're doing, you don't really have to do a lot of management. Like, it kind of takes care of itself. Yeah. So I always point that out when I'm with teachers. I'm like, oh, look like we're having a whole conversation here. And we haven't had to like, say anything to the kiddos mm-hmm <affirmative>. Yeah. They're,

Monica Burns:

They're in it. Right. There's no need for redirection. They understand and they're excited Right. About something that is, is a new way for them to share their learning. So I think for anyone listening today, you know, this has been such a, a helpful way for them to frame the type of activity they might have heard of, they might have tried and want to revisit. So, you know, as people continue to dive into this idea of audio content in their classroom, where can people connect with you, Lisa? Where can they learn more about your work?

Lisa Hockenberry:

Probably mainly on Twitter @TechieCoach303 and I usually post projects I'm doing, or articles I've written. I do have an Instagram with the same name, but I just, I don't, I don't do Instagram as much. I've been so comfy with Twitter, <laugh>, so I'm trying to force myself this next year to get into Instagram more. 'cause I know, I feel like that's where a lot of educators are going, so I'm there too.

Monica Burns:

Perfect. Well, we'll make sure to link out so people can find you and follow along with all of your great resources. So thank you so much for your time today.

Lisa Hockenberry:

Yeah. Thank you.

So let's make this EdTech easy with some key points from the episode...

Audio creation gives students ways to express learning beyond traditional assignments.

Podcast-style projects can support creativity, critical thinking, and student voice.

Low-stakes recording helps build student confidence and classroom engagement.

Audio explanations reveal student understanding that may not show in written work.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode including all of the ways to connect with Lisa Hockenberry on EasyEdTechPodcast.com and finding today's episode #342!

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Outro

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Thank you so much for taking this extra step, it helps other educators find episodes like this one when they are searching for EdTech tips.

Episode Resources

- Connect with Lisa Hockenberry on [X \(Twitter\)](#) & [Instagram](#)
- [Teaching Elementary Students to Use Audio and Graphic Design Tools](#) (Edutopia article)
- [Seesaw](#) (Digital learning platform)
- [Canva for Education](#) (Graphic design platform)
- [Spotify](#) (Digital music, podcast, and video streaming service)
- [Forget a Debate! Try a Podcast with Students Instead](#) (Podcast Episode)
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