

TechTalk4Teachers:

Episode 204 - Ten Years of Educational Podcasting Transcript

Dr. Grissom: It's Thursday, August 31st 2017 and welcome to Episode 204 of TechTalk4Teachers. I'm Tom Grissom. Welcome to TechTalk4Teachers the show about teaching and technology. I am in a bit of a reflective mood today as the TechTalk4Teachers podcast has hit a major milestone. This episode I want to reflect upon why I chose to start the TechTalk4Teachers podcast and be sure to listen to the entire show as I also discuss why recorded audio is such an important tool for any teachers' toolbox.

Today marks the completion of ten years of consecutive monthly podcasting for TechTalk4Teachers. On August 31, 2007 I set the goal of producing at least one episode of the TechTalk4Teachers podcast each month. I am proud to say we have now met that goal for ten complete years and counting. That makes TechTalk4Teachers is the longest consecutive running podcast at Eastern Illinois University. I want to thank the many guests that have volunteered to be on the show over the years. I will not start naming names as I do not want to leave anyone out, but I thank each and every guest for taking the time out of their busy schedules to record a show with me. The great thing about podcasts is that they are archived and you can go back through the old show notes to find guests and topics of interest.

I began the TechTalk4Teachers podcast out of a frustration that many professional development events use a "one-and-done" approach. Podcasts offered a way to continually renew content at a time and place convenient for the listener. For the first episode of TechTalk4Teachers, I had just finished teaching a graduate-level course and I wanted the information presented that summer to continue to flow throughout the year as it was put to practical use in the classroom. Back then, new Web 2.0 technologies were just beginning to appear on the scene and many educators saw the potential for teaching and learning. Audio podcasting was new and a bit easier to do than a video production. Podcasting offered a way to "broadcast" specific news and information to listeners in an easy to consume format so they would always be updated with the latest and greatest, and so TechTalk4Teachers was born ten years ago today on this date.

I thought it would be fun to take a listen to that very first episode that introduced TechTalk4Teachers to the world ten years ago, it is relatively short at a little over three minutes so here it is:

(TECHTALK4TEACHERS EPISODE 1 PLAYS)

Episode one was produced August 31st, 2007.

OK, so there you go. Episode 1 - the show that started it all. Ten years ago today, just seems like it was yesterday.

Since that time we have witnessed many technologies come and go. There have been many band wagons that educators have jumped on and off since that time. The archives of TechTalk4Teachers reads like a Who's Who in educational technologies over the past decade. Our Technology Picks of the Week chronicle the evolution of Web 2.0 technologies and cloud computing. We were there as the rise of Personal Learning Networks developed with Twitter and Facebook that expanded the reach of the average classroom teacher. We watched as waves of new technologies like cloud computing, netbooks, Smart Boards, Clickers, iPads, Chromebooks, Smartphones, and new 2-in-1 hybrid devices with touchscreens and digital inking were introduced for classroom use.

In the early days we had a knack of picking startup companies that would eventually be bought out by other tech titans like Google, Microsoft, and Apple. Many of the technologies being introduced were in the startup phase and free. These were the wild, wild, west days of Web 2.0. Free services offered had the cost of eventually turning into a fee-based service or closing down completely. Many apps and services used a freemium model backed by advertising or came with conditions that tracked online habits and/or the use of data in ways that are of concern for many privacy advocates. The phrase, "If you're not paying for it; you're the product" is tossed about by many and is a reminder that there is a cost for "free". I'll provide a couple of links in the show notes about the origins of this phrase. As educators we still struggle with this concept and its trade-offs today, and we must always remember, there is no such thing as a free lunch.

<http://lifehacker.com/5697167/if-youre-not-paying-for-it-youre-the-product>

<https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/07/16/product/>

Why an audio podcast?

Long before podcasting burst onto the scene in the mid-2000's educators had been using audio in the classroom for over a century. As soon as radio was invented in 1895 by Marconi in Italy, educators saw promise and many educational uses began to appear in the early 1900's. Franklin Roosevelt used Fireside Chats in the 1930's and 1940's (before Television) to keep Americans informed of national concerns. Television rose to challenge radio in the 50's and 60's but radio still held on. When the Internet went public in the 1990's many radio shows began to move online and were streamed as Internet radio. Podcasting came along as just another evolution of audio delivery. But,

podcasting was a delivery method that lowered the production bar so that anyone could be a broadcaster. That was the real revolution that was occurring, in December of 2006 Time Magazine named "You" as the person of the year.

You control the Information Age, Welcome to your world. I will have a link in the show notes. With Web 2.0 technologies like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter the average user now had the capability of producing and disseminating content with a never before ease.

<http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,20061225,00.html>

Today, anyone can record an audio show and have it posted to the Internet in minutes, to a worldwide audience, no radio license required. The catch is having something worthy to say. The technology hurdles have been greatly lowered so that nearly anyone with something to say can do it. As with many educational technologies, podcasting has waxed and waned in popularity over the years. Today podcasts are experiencing a resurgence in popularity thanks in part to popular shows like the Serial podcast produced by NPR. iPods and MP3 players have been replaced by the ubiquitous smartphone that nearly every college student has in their pocket. That makes our students potential listeners of educational content to improve their lives, but, more importantly, it also gives students the power to produce their own content.

What is it about audio that draws us in?

I think Earl Nightengale, a radio personality from the 20th Century, describes the educational value of audio best. Nightengale was famous for his radio editorials about business success, motivation, and the human spirit. He produced "spoken word" records in the 1950's and later cassette tapes of his programs.

Here is a great analogy that Nightengale makes. It is a bit dated from the last century but it clearly describes the benefits and limitations of learning by listening. He said listening to recorded audio for learning is like listening to a spinning record player, every now and then our mind wanders off and it attends to something that was just said. We tune out the rest of the ongoing message as we process our thoughts. It is like lifting the tone arm of a record player, the record continues spinning but we hear nothing as we think about the idea that popped into our head. We tune the speaker out until our mind can focus again on the content, in the meantime we lost everything the speaker said while we were pondering. That is why we must listen (or read, or watch) something several times as we learn. As any elementary teacher will tell you, repetition is the mother of all learning. Each time we listen to an audio message we pick up on something new that we previously missed due to our wandering mind. As Earl

Nightengale says, "that is why you have to listen to something several times to hear it for the first time." Let me say that again, **"that is why you have to listen to something several times to hear it for the first time."** I think we teachers need to always keep that statement in mind as we teach our students anything new for the first time. Learning takes time.

Recorded audio whether it be a LP record, cassette tape, 8 track tape, CD or a more modern MP3 has the benefit of being paused, rewound, and listened to many times. This repetition is beneficial to the learner as each time the message is played back the student can focus on content that was missed the first time. This realization gives one pause when we think about the thousands of ephemeral lectures that are given in the fleeting time of a class period every day. Face-to-Face teaching is not necessarily the gold standard for teaching that so many make it out to be.

The human voice also transmits emotion in a way the written word cannot. Even though recorded audio is a one-way medium, it can still be used to build relationships over time. This simple observation has consequences for the way we design learning experiences for our students. This is why I use recorded audio as just one part of a content delivery strategy for instructing students. Is it the best way? Certainly not, as teaching requires a variety of methods and media to be effective over the long haul. However, with today's technologies we can layer in additional asynchronous discussion groups, real-time chats, and shared collaborative notetaking to help build upon a recorded message.

I often get asked, "What is the best way to teach?" To which I answer, "There are many."

Everyone is looking for a silver bullet, an easy answer to solve the world's complex problems. Many look to technology as part of the easy answer but many confuse means with ends. So many use technology for technology's sake, this will never work as good teaching takes a solid grounding with sound pedagogical practices in order to be effective. Teacher educators have long discussed the multiple benefits of mixing visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning experiences for our students. This is why I created the ITC Launchpad for the main Instructional Technology Center website located at www.eiu.edu/itc. There you will find links to the TechTalk4Teachers audio podcast, ITC Techshare YouTube video channel, OneNote Notebooks, and links to blog and journal postings. This fits nicely with the Universal Design for Learning Philosophy of having mixed media, choices, and different experiences available to the learner for any given lesson.

Another reason I favor audio as a choice for content delivery is that it is a natural way we humans learn. Listening is one of the most effective and effortless ways we have of obtaining information. Storytelling is as old as cavemen and cavewomen setting around campfires hashing out the day's events. We also learn to read by listening, when we read there is a bit of a mechanical process that takes place in our brains that is absent while we listen. This coding and decoding takes effort and reading/watching also requires our attention. We are limited to dedicated single tasks for those media and that takes time away from other things. Recorded audio can be listened to anytime and anywhere and at any time; while commuting, exercising, doing the chores, or just relaxing. Commuting is a prime time for listening to podcasts for many individuals. Many suggest the perfect length of a podcast is 20 minutes that is the time it takes for an average commute in the US. Zig Ziglar had a name for this type of learning while commuting, he called it "automobile university". That is the beauty of audio, it can be listened to while we do other things. These are just a few of the reasons I am a fan of audio podcasting and why I began TechTalk4Teachers 10 years ago today.

Technology Pick of the Week

My Technology Pick of the Week is an article from the website edudemic about the history and evolution of educational technologies. The article stops in the year 2010 with the iPad but we can easily add Chromebooks and 2-in-1 hybrid devices with digital ink to the list since that time. I will leave a link in the show notes if you want to learn more.

<http://www.edudemic.com/classroom-technology/>

This article highlights much of what I have communicated about educational technologies over the years. While it often seems a new advent of technology changes everything it really is often just an evolution of previous technological advancements. Every now and then a new technology promises to change the world as we know it. One can make that argument for a variety of technologies. When podcasts burst onto the scene, many were predicting revolutionary changes for education. It's been over a decade since the "invention" of podcasts yet few educators have incorporated them into their classroom on a wide scale.

Going forward Virtual Reality and Mixed Reality have the potential to change the way we deliver education in ways that were previously impossible. This technology however did not develop in a vacuum, and there will also be growing pains as VR and MR are developed into viable products that can benefit the education sector. This is a space that

I am keeping a close eye on and I am sure I will be sharing new developments in upcoming episodes.

That wraps it up for TechTalk4Teachers. I want to say a big thank you to all of you that have listened to TechTalk4Teachers over the years. Whether this is your first episode or if you are a long time listener, thank you. It is the audience that keeps this show going and the reason for its existence. For show notes please visit www.eiu.edu/itc and click on the techTalk4Teachers link. Until next time, this is Tom Grissom. Keep on Learning!