

How to use Audacity in the classroom

Students can perform a variety of speaking tasks and use the aforementioned tools to record and edit their performance. Students could use Audacity to record any number of different types of speaking assignments, and "hand" them in to their teacher via email or a course management system such as Angel. In effect, Audacity allows teachers who used to have learners record assignments on cassette tapes do the same thing, but without the need for an unwieldy box of cassettes.

One example assignment could be to ask learners to **record a description of online shopping items, compare prices, and talk about their preferences**. Online items are usually accompanied with pictures, which provide a motivating basis for speaking and visual support for learning since they activate mental images (Curtis & Bailey, 2001).

Audacity could also be used for **recording interview assignments**. One advantage of interviews is that since interviews are intended to elicit particular information, students can prepare questions beforehand. This will reduce the tension on the part of the students and encourage them to take risks in the target language.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in integrating podcasts into language instruction. Podcasts are audio files published on the Internet allowing users to subscribe and receive them automatically. Students can create podcasts on various topics with a personalized scope and design using some background music and sound effects (be sure to make them aware of copyright issues and some of the resources available for downloading free music). **Students could create their own collection of podcasts which could function as a digital portfolio of their work.**

To make themselves understood, students need to attend to a certain level of pronunciation accuracy. Providing opportunities for them to "notice the gap" (Schmidt, 1990) between what they say and what other people say can help them improve their pronunciation.

Ideas for using Audacity (use it with the target language)

- At the restaurant
- In a store (shopping for clothes/foods)
- Read a poem
- Write your own story and record it
- Make a daily diary (instead of writing you can record it)
- Pretend that you are an anchor in a news TV, you need to write the news of the day (at least 1 story/news that happened, and then record it) – Example: The lesson plans requires students to work in groups to record a five minute radio show. The topics of discussion are left to the students' choice: it can be something related to their school, some examples suggested are the dress code, the cafeteria menu or the student handbook. This gives the students some freedom of choice and an

opportunity to express their opinions and creativity while still remaining a structured activity. This topic in particular makes the activity very relevant and meaningful to their lives, which is essential to engaged student learning.

- Create/Record original commercials or public service announcements (example: use Audacity to record a radio commercial using a special set of vocabulary words. Depending upon your students' abilities, you could change the vocabulary or the amount of student output required. For example, beginning level students could record themselves reading a prepared script composed by either the teacher or the whole class. More advanced students would not only be asked to use a larger amount of more challenging vocabulary, but they would also have to write the script for the ad themselves. This could be done individually or as a group assignment).