

TEACHING TODAY'S LEARNERS #9

GOT AUDIO?



Have you thought about using audiobooks in your classroom or recordings that can accompany text? There are definite advantages to using audiobooks in secondary classrooms.

Audiobooks have traditionally been used with students with learning disabilities, second-language learners, and struggling readers or nonreaders. In many cases, audiobooks have proven successful in helping these students access texts of all kinds and enjoy books. But they have not been widely used with all students.

Access to audio or audiobooks provides a great benefit to older readers by allowing them to listen to and consider books and materials that might be too complex for them to decode and independently comprehend in the written form alone. In addition, audiobooks address some of the ways students can struggle in reading; text complexity, lack of personal interest, prior knowledge or background information, and vocabulary.

Reading guru and classroom teacher Janet Allen states, "Of all the things I did in my classroom, audiobooks made the single biggest difference in increasing reading ability in my students." Listening helps many students achieve what really matters in reading—engaging critically and intellectually with the content of the book. It can also add to the enjoyment!

Benefits of Audio for ALL Readers:

- Engage students in texts above their reading level
- Teach critical listening
- Introduce new genres that students might not otherwise consider
- Provide a fluent read-aloud model
- Access to grade level vocabulary
- Hook students into a concept or unit
- Model good interpretive reading
- Highlight the mood/tone/etc. in books
- Introduce new vocabulary or difficult proper names or unfamiliar locations
- Increase motivation and self-confidence
- Provide background info before a unit of study
- Increase differentiation so students of all levels can participate in the same activity or discussion