

## DE Consultant Tips for Phoning-in and Recording Audio

A number of Continuing Studies online instructors enhance their teaching presence in the virtual classroom by including audio to supplement or expand on text-based information or instruction in individual course units/modules. In addition to enhancing teaching presence, adding audio can provide different information to support different learning styles (e.g. some learners may learn more by hearing than reading a piece of text).

Audio instructional content is used to

- introduce objectives and key concepts for a unit/module
- provide a commentary on unit themes or key readings
- expose learners to a guest expert

Our instructors work with their DE Consultant to plan and record the audio content. Here are some tips to help you as you prepare to record your audio.

### Phoning-in Audio

- ***Make sure to write down your script before recording*** – we will need it to provide a written transcript for students for accessibility purposes (i.e., to provide a text-based version for students with hearing impairments or technical difficulties playing your audio clip), and it will make it easier for you to record your audio.
- Practice your message.
- Phone your DE Consultant's office number from a **land line** (a cell phone or speaker phone won't give us very good quality).
- Take a few deep breaths and record your audio as a message on voice mail. Make sure to speak strongly or the system may cut you off. If it does cut you off, just phone back and try again making sure to speak louder.
- You can record up to 5 minutes at a time, but if you need more than 5 minutes, you can just call back and continue on as everything can be edited together later by your DE Consultant.
- If you mis-speak, you can just say, for example "oops...cut that out...I'm starting that section again" and the audio can be edited later for you.
- Your DE Consultant will set the final, edited audio file up on your course site (hidden from students if the course is open) so you can review it before it is made available for students. If you need anything changed, just let your DE Consultant know. You can either re-record the whole thing, or just re-record a section as pieces can be edited in and out for you.

## Using Microphones

- Use digital recording software (i.e. Audacity).
- **Make sure to write down your script before recording** – we will need it to provide a written transcript for students for accessibility purposes (i.e., to provide a text-based version for students with hearing impairments or technical difficulties playing your audio clip), and it will make it easier for you to record your audio.
- Save your audio file at a minimum of 22,000 Hz, and save as MONO files (not stereo). These settings provide the best balance between quality and file size for voice recordings.
- Don't have the microphone too close to your mouth (or you'll hear breathy 'popping Ps') and try not to turn away from the mic while recording as this will distort the sound.
- Record a test file and listen to it. You can also send to your DE Consultant for review so adjustments can be made before you record too much.
- If you stumble or cough or forget what you're saying, just stop, pause and start your sentence/paragraph over (remember that you don't have to start the WHOLE thing over). It's much easier to edit if you pause and start again.
- When creating a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation with voiceover,
  - Note that if you're recording a voiceover for a PPT, you **don't** need to refer to "this slide" (i.e., "as you can see in this slide"), or to a colour ("the blue arrow") or to a place on the slide ("in the bottom right corner"), as your DE Consultant can highlight, move in, and send out elements on the slide to make it obvious to the viewer what is being referred to.
  - Avoid saying "as you can see above" when referring to the slide. There is no "above" – the students are seeing the slide and everything on it (or things moving in and out or being highlighted) as you're talking!
  - Make sure to **speak to the slide**. In other words, in your audio recording, you should first address the points on the slide as closely as possible (not necessarily 100% verbatim, but use the same terminology to avoid confusion), *then* add supplementary points/additional examples to the visual points. Remember that it is very difficult to read one thing on the slide while trying to listen to something that sounds completely different.
  - Try to chunk your presentations so that they are, ideally, 10 to 12 minutes long at most. This will make it easier for students both because the files won't be too big to download (so the students will be able to view them more easily), and because it is easier to listen to and digest information in if it is presented in 10- to 12-minute chunks.