

Audio Podcasting in the Classroom [Part 1 of 2]

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My Bible 10 students got a little intimidated and then quite motivated when I announced that they would create an internet audio “Podcast.” A podcast is an audio or video recording posted to a website and is available to anyone with a web connection. In our case, our audience is our school family, other SDA schools, or anyone else in the world interested in what we produce.

We embarked on our podcast adventure toward the end of the school year. The chosen subject of our first podcast was “Happiness.” Relevant reading from the textbook and other sources was assigned, followed by class discussions on the subject. I then assigned all students to prepare a short highlight reflecting their view on Christian happiness.

Most students were self conscious about being recorded. Some students even told me that they would not want to participate if the recording was video. An advantage to using audio recordings is that students can overcome their discomfort of being recorded and published on the web. Another advantage is that audio recording is simpler than video. For example, aside from the extra technical skills required, getting a student in web pictures or videos requires extra parental consent. [Editor’s Note: Some schools may require parent consent for the publication of student work on the web as well. Check with your principal.]

Here are some more benefits of podcasts. Having a wider “real world” audience is motivating for the students. Many enjoy using their speaking skills to report as a change from the more common written reports. It’s a perfect and safe environment to develop communicative self confidence in a student. The interest in quality of both content and presentation spreads to all students; it’s contagious.

If you wish to hear the first podcast of our Bible 10 student production, visit this web location: <http://members.shaw.ca/fvaa/podcasts/septembrepodcasts.rss>

My plan for Bible 10 students was to create an ipod project at the end of each learning unit. The students’ confidence and skills would soon expand with their ability to take care of their own audio recording and editing.

The projects will eventually grow to include visual support as well. Since they are published on the web, a teacher must remember to teach students to use images and background music that is free from copyright limitations. Another important tip is that the teacher should always be in control of the last production step: the actual posting of the digital sound file to the internet web site. This ensures that the content is verified and edited to his/her satisfaction before the whole world can hear/see it.

I have received some positive feedback from my students and others. Some reminded me that this activity was stimulating not only to the authors but has the potential to help both members and non-members in their spiritual walk . . . something real that makes a real difference in the “real world.” This activity can be adapted to any other subject area and any grade level. I believe it is certainly an especially good fit for a Christian school’s

secondary Religious Studies course!

The equipment needed should be accessible in any school. All you need is a computer, a mike, some free editing software, and an internet connection. Here are some of our Digital Audio Recording Options:

- Portable digital recording device with microphone (ex. iPod Touch, laptop or other digital recorder) used in classroom during class time.
- 3 Mikes available in computer lab. Workstations with Audacity software. Server Hard drive space for project available on “Resources” Drive.
- Student home setup with microphone and “Audacity” (free audio software).

In part two of this article, I will provide you with many needed resources, a sample schedule, and an evaluation rubric. I will also include a copy of the student instruction sheet we used to help create our first student audio podcast project.