

## **Grant Proposal Title: Career Exploration Interview Podcasts**

### **Concept:**

Our middle school has identified a Guidance objective to educate students to potential careers as part of the eighth grade Social Studies curriculum. Students will be able to produce and hear interviews with people from a variety of careers and learn about the different aspects of selecting a career and training for a variety of professions, as well as some of the other considerations people have about their jobs. The audio files generated by students will be published to the school website as a daily podcast.

### **Problem/Need Statement:**

Students at our middle and high school need a further understanding of the various aspects of choosing a potential career. The Middle School Guidance curriculum focuses on career development. View the School's Curriculum Guide: <http://fc.sau16.org/~ssullivan/CMS-%20Guidance.htm> and NH Frameworks: <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/curriculum/Assessment/CurriculumFrameworkorks.htm>. The middle school has previously held a career day where students are exposed to community volunteers who come in and talk to students about a variety of careers. The delivery of this format presented many challenges – selection of careers, time availability of volunteers, scheduling, format of presentation, etc. This project would replace the previous format by having students select a potential career, locate someone who has worked in this profession, hold and record an interview with this person, edit the interview and publish the recording on the school's website as a daily podcast.

A majority of our middle school students use iPod/MP3 players and the school would like to have material that students could subscribe to locally. We hope that using this delivery method will engage students. It is a medium they like to work with – audio files – and naturally would assist the auditory learner. Career materials have traditionally been reading-based and it has been challenging to locate materials that students are interested in reading. Listening to these interviews is a good way to disseminate information that would be difficult to do in a classroom environment. The implications for learning through this medium are many ([http://www.learningcircuits.org/2005/jun2005/0506\\_trends](http://www.learningcircuits.org/2005/jun2005/0506_trends)). As a way of exploiting the educational potential of podcasts, it is believed that utilizing podcasts in an educational environment personalizes learning and offers a "strategy that actively engages and challenges learners and develop their ability to focus on their learning skills and their capability to take ownership of their own progress". (<http://www.recap.ltd.uk/articles/podguide3c.html>)

A portable player is not required to listen to the file – any computer with internet access and speakers or headphones could retrieve the files and play them, many of which are available in student homes, libraries, and in a variety of places in the school.

The new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) standard Ed 306.42 that was released in January of 2006 (section 5-c-4) states that student portfolios must include comments describing a student's reflection on his/her work. The student's weekly journal and final analysis paper will be included in the student's electronic portfolio.

The Middle School utilizes technology in many aspects of their classroom management and instruction. E-mail, online course tools, word processing, use of spreadsheets, presentations, and internet research are all used on a regular basis by most teachers and staff. They have not used audio recording or editing program technologies very much. It is a technology that is identified as important for differentiated learning and addressing various learning styles, but more training and use is needed. The teachers and staff are anxious to learn more about this technology in this project, and hope to find other ways to utilize what they learn.

The Guidance department and English Department staff think that the project will not be successful without an additional technology staff resource to teach the skills to current staff and provide the daily support that will be required to assist students and to publish the podcasts. They are anxious to learn the technology skills to apply to this project and others but they do not have the available time that is required to make this project successful without this extra resource and the training.

## **Goals, Objectives and Activities:**

**Goal:** Expose students to a variety of careers

**Objective:** Have students select a variety of careers to explore.

**Sample Activity:** Using career description resources such as career guides, books, online resources, the Occupational Outlook Handbook, online programs available such as Choices

(<http://www.ehs.sau16.k12.nh.us/guidance/pages/choices.htm>) or Bridges

(<http://www.ehs.sau16.k12.nh.us/guidance/pages/bridges.htm>) and other resources provided by the Guidance Counselors, have students select three potential careers they think they would be interested in.

**Goal:** Expose students to the different aspects of choosing a career

**Objective:** Have students develop an understanding that careers offer variety related to a number of aspects, including salary, advancement

opportunities, hours, travel, interaction with others, location, and others.

**Sample Activity:** Using a spreadsheet template that outlines a variety of aspects of each career, students will attempt to gather information about each career from available resources.

Sample Activity: Students will develop questions for interview to explore areas they think will effect their career selection.

**Goal:** Have students learn how to find out what training and experience is required for a career.

**Objective:** Teach students how to research and learn what resources are available to find out what training, education and experience is required for potential careers.

**Sample Activity:** Have students use resources from Guidance, online resources and books to outline what training and education and experience is required for their selected potential careers.

**Goal:** Staff development on audio technology skills

**Objective:** Have Guidance Counselors and English teachers learn to make audio recordings, edit the audio files and prepare them to publish them on the school website as podcasts.

**Sample Activity:** Hold a training session with staff on use of audio recording equipment and computer editing program Audacity.

**Sample Activity:** Hold a training session on using podcast aggregator programs and how to post and publish audio files and podcasts to the school website.

**Goal:** Provide locally-produced audio files as podcasts.

**Objective:** Have students produce interviews that can be published by school staff and provide content that is pertinent to curriculum and locally produced.

**Sample Activity:** Have students perform an interview, record it, edit it and provide to school to publish on website.

**Goal:** Fulfill ICT standard of student portfolio work

**Objective:** Submit student's reflection on his/her work to portfolio

**Sample Activity:** Have students keep journal in electronic document and at end of project, submit journal and final paper to student's portfolio.

## **Project Description:**

The project will begin by having the Guidance Counselors teach the students what resources are available in the Middle and High School Guidance departments and online. Students will learn how to access these resources to research potential careers with the goal of selecting three potential careers. Students will collect available data on their chosen careers. During the same time-frame, teachers will get

professional development training on recording and editing audio files and using the equipment and programs so they are familiar with the technologies.

The second part of the project will entail connecting students with a person that works in one of their chosen potential careers. Students will need assistance contacting appropriate people and making arrangements for an interview. The student will then interview that person, starting with a set of selected questions. The students are allowed to pursue whatever questions they desire, as long as they ask the pre-determined questions at a minimum. These interviews will be recorded, either in person or over the phone.

Once the interview is recorded, the student can edit it on the computer. It may require little editing or it may require extensive editing to make it listenable and engaging. Students will be trained to use the program and how to edit an interview to make it more appealing by cutting out dead time and keeping the topic moving. The audio files will be scheduled to be published as podcasts. Students will be taught how to subscribe to a podcast using an aggregator program such as iTunes or iPodder/Juice. The technology assistant will assist students in interview preparation, listen to all the files to ensure appropriateness, and publish them to the school website as a podcast according to the schedule.

Once the podcasts start, students will be queried to ensure they all know how to retrieve the files and listen to them. They will start to record their impressions in their career exploration journal in a word processor. Their journals will be reviewed by the English teachers at least once a month during the project to ensure students are meeting the listening and journaling requirements.

At the end of the project, students will write a paper that describes what career they listened to that they would be interested in pursuing and why. They are to describe the different factors that effected their decision and compare and contrast the various aspects of different careers.

The final paper and the student's journal will be submitted to the student's portfolio at the end of the project. Interview files will be available online for other students to listen to if desired.

**Timeline/Action Plan:** This project will be started in September in the eighth grade:

September

- Introduce topic to students
- Review resources of potential careers

- Have students select three potential careers

#### October

- Have and assist students in locating candidates for interviews
- Train students on using audio recording equipment
- Schedule interviews

#### November

- Complete interviews
- Train students on using audio editing program
- Provide class time for audio editing

#### December

- Train students on publishing podcast
- Start publishing podcast – post schedule

#### January – May

- Continue to publish podcasts and post audio files on website
- Monitor students involvement through journal

#### June

- Finish project by having students write paper describing what careers they may be interested in and why

#### Budget:

The project requires some hardware and a technology aide. The existing staff does not have the time to do the professional development training and podcast publishing and it is felt unless an additional staff person is provided, the project would not be possible.

#### Hardware requirements:

- 10 audio recorders @ \$85 each = \$850
- 2 telephone audio recorders @ \$175 = \$350
- 10 computer microphones @ \$25 = \$250

Total hardware requirements = \$1450

Technology Aide – 10 hours per week @ \$15/hour = \$150/week for 30 weeks = \$4500

- Train English teachers and Guidance Counselors involved in the project on the audio recording and editing technologies
- Train and assist students with recordings
- Train and assist students with editing
- Publish daily podcast
- Post audio files to web site and update web pages
- monitor and manage purchases, equipment and project

Existing computers in the middle school computer lab will be utilized for downloading, editing and publishing audio files. The audio editing program, Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>), will be used and since it is open-source, there is no cost associated with it.

Total budget request for proposal: \$6000

**Evaluation:**

Expectations are that students will produce one interview and listen to at least one per week and record it in their journal. The journal will be evaluated in January, March and May to ensure the students are listening and recording information, aspects and their feelings about various careers. The final paper will be graded to a rubric that includes comparison of careers, discussion of multiple factors used to discuss job satisfaction, and potential career selections.