

Podcasting: Recording Our Way to Motivated Writing

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Abstract

With State College's integrated units, my third grade students do most of their writing for informational purposes. This can get hard, and tiresome for many students. I wondered if there was any way that my students could be motivated in this type of writing. I decided to try to integrate podcasting into the writing process to see if this quick extra recording of their written material would have any effect on their motivation to write.

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Classroom Context

Along with a highly motivated and experienced mentor teacher, I am teaching in a self contained third grade classroom at Corl Street Elementary School with 20 students, six boys and fourteen girls. This small school contains only 12 classes of students grades K-5. There is one other third grade class at the school, and we work together with the two fourth grade classes in science and social studies. My class is diverse in terms of academics, behavior patterns, and ethnic backgrounds.

Academically, we have one student who is significantly below grade level in mathematics and reading and receives learning support for both. This child needs support during most academic activities. We also have three additional students who tend to need increased support during math and reading. One of these three students is in the ESL program and leaves the classroom for part of the day. The other two students receive Title 1 support in both math and reading. These students benefit from prompts during the writing process, and require significant editing.

The next group of four students receives Title 1 support in either math or reading. They can be considered only slightly below average, but enough to receive this support. These students maintain healthy social relationships, and do not display any serious behavior patterns. Three of them seem to be motivated during the writing process, while one tends to have some difficulty.

In this class, we have seven students who are considered academically average. These students cooperate well. They usually work hard, and get their work done in a timely fashion. Also, these students seem to usually enjoy the writing process.

There are five students who are considered high academic achievers. One of these students is very timid in responses because she lacks confidence in herself, but the other

four seem sure of their answers and abilities. Behaviorally, four of the five students show positive behavior. Socially, these students work and play together well with all other students in the classroom. One of the students has ADHD and can be very disruptive at times. He receives support from a TSS. This student is easy to reason with if you can present him with explanations that he can see as rational. He has a difficult time writing, and uses an Alpha Smart to do many writing activities.

Our classroom also has children with many different cultural backgrounds. We have one student from Russia, who receives ESL support during the day. We also have a student with an Indian background, and one student from a military family who often travels around the country and to other countries.

Rationale

Through the year, I have realized that some of my students have found writing to be a stressor so, many times they do not enjoy it as much as they could. It is my personal opinion that writing should be enjoyable for students. I believe that students will get the most beneficial practice in writing when they are actively engaged in it. Although I have never actually created a podcast, the new technology seemed fresh and exciting to me. I know that my students love using the computers for both personal use and academic subjects, and therefore wondered if this new technology would increase their motivation to write and present their own work. According to third grade standards, students should be able to write narratives, informational pieces and opinion pieces. They should also be able to adapt writing for different purposes. I wonder if the use of

podcasting will motivate students to try different writing styles such as interviews, poetry, and persuasive pieces.

This inquiry will affect my future teaching in a variety of ways. First, it will allow me to have evidence to support my decision to use or not to use new technologies in my classroom on a regular basis. As a teacher, it is important to have this evidence to support the decisions that you are making. Second, my inquiry into podcasting will reveal how effectively I am able to teach children new technologies. I will be able to assess my teaching, and improve upon it for other lessons. Last, through this inquiry, I will develop an understanding into the different activities that do effect student motivation. Even if podcasting specifically does not effect motivation, I will be able to interview students, and learn a little more about how they are motivated.

Growing up, I always enjoyed writing, and remained actively engaged in the process during the allotted time period. This led me to wonder what was different today than from my experience. After conducting a short survey, I found that about a quarter of my students listed that their least favorite part about writing was what they have to write about, and about half of the students wrote that they would like to engage in more creative writing (stories, poems, riddles, etc.). This led me to wonder about the goal of writing each day. The district has integrated writing into the science and social studies curriculum, but does this effect student motivation to write?

What does the research say?

Podcasts got their name from Apple iPod. It is a combination between ipod and broadcast, but you do not actually need an ipod to be able to create a podcast (Chauncey, 2007). It is like a radio show, although you are able to add pictures to your recording if you like, and have the ability to view them. Podcasting is a relatively new technology to be integrated into the elementary classroom, but in recent years, the number of teachers learning and using this technology has significantly increased. Podcasts can be used in any subject as well, but are especially useful in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. “Educators are starting to see how podcasting can be used to assist students’ vocabulary, writing, editing, public speaking, and presentation skills.” (School Computing Wiki, 2007).

According to Wesley Fryer, in *Integrating Technology in the Classroom*, the use of technology, can be fun and motivating in classrooms. He says,

“In our increasingly test-driven classrooms, some teachers and administrators seem to have forgotten (or never learned) that people learn best when they are having fun. Interactive podcasting can be engaging, valuable, and impactful for students for many reasons, but one of the most important is that it can be fun! If students are having fun, and if they are having conversations about their classroom activities which extend outside regular classtime, the instructional strategy is likely an effective one” (Fryer, 2006).

When children are enjoying what they are doing in school, they are likely to remember more of what they are doing, which is typically the ultimate goal for the teacher. Additionally, podcasting gives children the ability to write for audiences other than just the teacher who will, in turn, be grading their work. Podcasts allow all students to write for not only their classmates, but for the world, whether it be other students in their city, across the country, or even those on another side of the globe. Fryer says that,

“Many students are not motivated to write and “perform” in class when the teacher is the only member of the audience.” (Fryer, 2006) But when students have the ability to write for a variety of audiences, they stay more engaged and motivated in their work.

A common misconception among teachers and administrators is that it is hard to learn how to podcast. On the contrary, it is fairly easy. All you actually need is a computer with access to the internet, and a microphone. In actuality, all it takes is a little time to sit down, play with the recording process, and make a podcast of your own.

“Kathleen B. Schrock, administrator for technology at Nauset Public Schools in Orleans, Mass., said one goal of her podcasts is to persuade teachers ‘how easy it is to produce one.’” (Selingo, 2006)

Inquiry Question and Other Wonderings

I soon began to brainstorm activities that might be more engaging and interesting to a group of third graders. I was searching for something that could still be used in integration with the units, but that would help to stimulate a child’s curiosity. That is when I thought that technology might be something to try. We are learning how to create a podcast in the PDS program, and I thought that this may be something that I could integrate into the writing process to see if it would have an effect on the motivation of the students. This led me to my initial wondering of:

- **What effect will participating in a podcasting project have on students’ interest or motivation in writing?**

After deciding how I would integrate this new technology into the school day, I developed some other questions about what I would find. Having students of many different abilities, as well as interests, I wanted to engage all students, so I wondered:

- How can I differentiate the writing process in order to allow all students to participate productively in the podcast?

I believe that all students should have the opportunity to see the fun and joys in writing, and if I only catered to one group of children, I think I would be keeping them from enjoying this part of the school day.

Pondering these two questions led me to wonder:

- How can I fit my podcasting into an already tight school schedule?
- How much time should be given to the writing process before recording?
- How much time will it take to do a podcast with students?

Finally, I couldn't help but wonder:

- Will interest in the podcast effect the quality and/or variety of writing?

If students are motivated to write, and actively engaged in the process, will the quality of their writing improve? Will they practice good writing and editing strategies more readily, or will new concepts be understood better when in context with a writing piece that they enjoy? Finally, if students are introduced to new forms of writing such as poetry, and interviews, will they, if given the chance, use a variety of writing for personal use?

As my inquiry project begins to unfold, I am sure to come across new wonderings based on what I am observing. As an aspiring teacher, I am hoping that I will gain insight into what motivates students to work, and how this motivation effects the quality of their work.

Project vs. Inquiry

Creating a podcast, to many, may seem like a project rather than an inquiry topic. Although the process seems to be a project, I was not sure if this would help the students, or if it would have an opposite effect depending on the student. I wanted to integrate this new technology into my classroom, but was not sure how, or what the effects would be. I decided that in order to help me become a better teacher, I should try this new technology, and collect evidence to determine the results. It is difficult to distinguish an inquiry from a project in this case, but since I am not sure if the incorporation of this technology will yield positive or negative effects, and I am collecting data to determine this, it can be considered inquiry, and not a project.

Inquiry Plan

In order to begin my inquiry, I chose a group of 5 students to work with. Of these students, 3 were girls, and 2 were boys. I wanted to be sure that I chose a variety of students, both boys and girls. Although most displayed interest in writing stories, 4 of the five lacked interest in informational writing.

In our first meeting, I simply explained what a podcast was to the students, and allowed them to experiment with recording and listening to their voice on Garageband. This proved to be fun, and surprising for the students. They were astonished to hear that their voice did not sound like they thought it would. Once they had a chance to experiment, we began to talk about what types of things they have heard on a radio show. They came up with forms of writing such as commercials, newscasts, weather,

newsflashes, songs, and interviews. Once a list was brainstormed, I had the students pick an important person in Pennsylvania to research and create a newscast about. They chose Milton Hershey. Before the session was over, I had the children to write down the answers to four questions I asked. I conducted this short initial survey to discover how motivated the students were without knowing too much about what their experience would be.

In the second session with the students, I wanted to have them decide how they would present their information, and begin writing. We began this session reviewing different ways to write. Then, I had each child pick the form that they would be interested in writing in. I reminded them that even though they would be using different creative writing forms, their writing needed to be factual because they would be teaching their classmates about Milton Hershey through this podcast. We began to read one of the informational books together. By doing this, I was able to start the students off with a strategy for gathering information. As we read something that someone thought was important, we would stop and write the fact in a bulleted list. This way they would be able to go back after reading, to a list of important information that they could include in their writing. From there, students were able to plan their writing according to the format they decided to write in.

As students began writing, I observed, and helped children navigate through the informational books to find information. I also suggested strategies for writing. For example, for the child writing an interview, I suggested that she write down all the questions that she would like to ask Milton Hershey. After brainstorming a list of questions, she was able to look in the books for the exact information that she wanted.

As students conducted their research, they shared information that they found interesting with each other, and decided on who would write about it. At the end of this session, I sent the students home with a survey for their parents to fill out about what they knew about podcasting.

In the third session with this group of students, I had them continue working on their writing. As students finished, I allowed them to begin working on short creative writings about Milton Hershey. One of the students wrote a short jingle about how chocolate is made, and another wrote commercials for candies that are made by Hershey.

Finally, in the last session, the students began to record what they had written. I had the students who were not recording gather around the computer so they could watch how I was recording by pressing the record button before and after the students recording spoke. Eventually, each student got a chance to be the recorder for their peer. Once each voice was recorded, we were ready to add in the extras. I invited the students to stay after school on a Tuesday to put on the final touches. They were not required to do so, but all five students attended this session. Here, we decided on music to put in the short breaks, and recorded short sound clips introducing the next reader, and telling the audience that they would be back after the break. I also gave the students a final written survey about their experience and explained that they would each receive a CD with their show on it.

Once the podcast was over, I wrote up a list of questions for my mentor teacher to ask the students in front of a video camera. She taped these interviews. Students were encouraged to answer the questions, and provide any additional comments.

Data Collection

Baseline Data

While completing the four sessions, I periodically collected data through surveys, field notes, and self-reflective journals. This led me to make claims based on concrete evidence. I wanted to know if the podcast had any effect on the motivation of students writing for informational purposes.

To begin the data collection process, I began with baseline data. I needed something to refer back to to determine if there was any change in motivation from when the students began the podcast. I gave all the children a survey with multiple statements, in which they circled a number on a scale according to how strongly they agreed with the statement (Appendix A). I included the following 13 statements:

1. I like writing in third grade.
2. I feel like I don't know what to write about.
3. I write because I have to.
4. I find writing hard.
5. I am bored by writing.
6. I think writing is exciting.
7. I can never think of anything to say.
8. I like to write stories.
9. I like to write poems.
10. I would like to learn something new.
11. I think I know everything there is about writing.
12. I know what a podcast is.

On the next page of the survey, I included open ended questions for the students.

They wrote about their favorite part of writing, their least favorite part of writing, and one thing that they wished about writing. Conducting surveys allowed me to assess how the students felt about what they were doing.

Pre-podcasting survey

After explaining to the students what a podcast is, and deciding on a person to research, I conducted another short baseline survey (Appendix B). I asked the following four questions, and had the children write their answers on lines paper:

1. Would you rather write a paragraph about Milton Hershey, and then hand it in, or record your voice onto a podcast after writing, which would you do?
2. Do you enjoy using computers at school?
3. Does podcasting seem like something that you will look forward to?
4. From what you have learned today, would you recommend making a podcast to your classmates?

Field Notes

Throughout the time I was conducting my inquiry, I observed the students working, and talking about the podcasts and wrote down my observations (Appendix C). I noted what the students were saying to each other during the writing process, the recording process, and what they told other students, the teacher, and parent volunteers when they returned to the classroom. For example, when my mentor came out during the recording process, and asked, “How is it?”, one of the students said, “Good. It is fun to hear my voice, but I don’t really sound like that!”. Another student, explained to the parent volunteer (his mother), that “Milton Hershey made a candy bar for the Army that had lots of nutrients in it.” I wrote down everything that I heard the children say that

related to my inquiry question. These notes helped me to determine if the students stayed motivated during their podcast.

Final Verbal Survey (Appendix D)

As the students creating the podcast finished recording and editing their final version, I conducted a survey with them by recording voice clips on the computer in a podcast. I asked each child, “Did you enjoy creating the podcast?”, and “What would you say to a classmate who is about to create a podcast?”. In addition to these two questions, I asked students a few extra questions such as, “Would you recommend this to a friend? Why or why not?”, and “What was your favorite thing about creating this podcast?”. These final surveys helped me to determine student feelings about creating a podcast. I also asked, “Do you think that it was worth it to have to do extra work outside of the classroom, and after school?” Each of these questions directly relates to my question, and point me towards finding claims that I can make based on hard evidence.

Data Analysis

Baseline Data

My data analysis began before I even started the actual podcast with the children, and before they knew about it. I surveyed the class on their feelings about writing. These initial surveys served as baseline data for my inquiry question. Because my question focuses mainly on motivation of students during informational writing, I selected specific questions that I would use for my baseline. They were:

1. I think writing is exciting.
2. I am bored by writing.

3. I like to write informational paragraphs.
4. I like to write stories.
5. I would like to learn something new.
6. I know what a podcast is.

These statements were answered by circling a number 1-5 with 1 meaning they agree strongly, and 5 meaning they disagree strongly. To analyze these surveys, I made a chart for each of the questions I wanted to analyze. Then, I tallied how many students circled each number. By writing these numbers in a table format, I was easily able to look back and see how my students felt about writing in third grade. The results were as follows:

1. I think writing is exciting.

1 (Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Disagree Strongly)
9	3	4	1	3

2. I am bored by writing.

1(Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Disagree Strongly)
3	2	1	6	8

3. I like to write informational paragraphs.

1(Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Disagree Strongly)
3	4	7	4	2

4. I like to write stories.

1 (Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Disagree Strongly)
11	6	2	0	1

5. I would like to learn something new.

1 (Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Agree Strongly)
10	6	2	0	2

6. I know what a podcast is.

1 (Agree Strongly)	2	3	4	5 (Agree Strongly)
0	0	0	0	20

Also, included on this survey were open-ended questions about writing in third grade. I went through each of the surveys and picked out answers that were related to student motivation, or writing for informational purposes vs. story writing.

Favorite things about writing:

“Writing stories”

“Getting to write”

“The imagination” (imagination)

Least favorite things about writing:

“Writing a lot.”

“We don’t write that much.”

“Writing a paragraph”

“What we write.” (note: This child’s favorite thing was “Getting to write.”)

“Explaining stuff”

I wish we would:

“Write more stories” (8 out of 20 write this)

“Write riddles more”

“Write poems”

“Do less writing” (Do less writing)

“Write more” (6 out of 20 students wrote this)

By analyzing this data, I could better determine how the students felt about writing. I think that the open-ended responses are particularly interesting because they were not prompted on what they could write, yet many students wrote similar responses to the questions. I could also determine what was motivating in writing for the children.

Survey 2 (Appendix B)

In analyzing the results of the survey I gave the students before creating the podcast, I created another chart. This visual allowed me to ‘see’ the data more clearly.

1. Would you rather write a paragraph about Milton Hershey, and then hand it in, or record your voice onto a podcast after writing, which would you do?
2. Do you enjoy using computers at school?
3. Does podcasting seem like something that you will look forward to?
4. From what you have learned today, would you recommend making a podcast to your classmates?

Question	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5
1	<i>Podcast</i>	<i>Podcast</i>	<i>Podcast</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>Podcast</i>
2	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
3	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
4	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Field observation notes (Appendix C)

To analyze the notes that I took during the process of writing and creating our podcast, I went through each comment and placed a plus (+) by it if it indicated that the students were enjoying themselves, and/or were motivated, and a minus (-) if the students were unmotivated or off task. In addition, I noted some key quotes from the students. I wrote these down in a journal which I brought with me to all sessions, and then transferred them into my laptop for easier access during analyzing.

Verbal survey (Appendix D)

I interviewed the children who created the podcast after the process was over. This was done via a podcast. To analyze this data, I listened to the recording, and tallied the positive and negative answers. After tallying, I looked to see if I had more positive comments about the experience, or negative responses. I also wrote down a couple of examples of responses. This enabled me to determine the overall feelings of the students after completing the podcast.

What did I learn from Inquiry?

Claim 1: Integrating podcasts into the writing process increases motivation to write for informational purposes.

Claim 2: Integrating podcasts motivates students to research topics on their own time.

Claim 3: Motivation due to podcasting does not directly effect student writing quality.

Evidence:

Claim 1: Integrating podcasts into the writing process increases motivation to write for informational purposes.

When I gave my initial survey to the class, only 7 out of the 20 children surveyed answered that they like writing informational paragraphs. Out of the five students that I worked with, only one said that they liked writing informational paragraphs. Of the other four, one was indifferent, and three students said that they did not like writing them at all.

After completing the podcast together, all five students said that they would like to do another podcast, even if it meant that they would have extra work from the rest of the class. All five also stated that they would recommend this process to a friend who did not enjoy writing non-fiction paragraphs. One of those five said maybe not, but her reason was “Because I might not want them to get ‘famous-er’ than me.” This student enjoyed making to podcast because she knew that she would have an audience other than just the teacher. They also said that they enjoyed the process of creating the podcast. While one student stated, “I liked making decisions on how to make the podcast”, another said they enjoyed “Writing down planning stuff to get the podcast ready.” Yet another student stated that she enjoyed listening to her voice on the podcast. In the final verbal survey that I did with the students, I tallied 11 positive comments, and only 2 negative comments. The two negative comments were, “Probably, no.” which was immediately followed by, “...or probably yes”, and “Maybe, because some subjects are more fun than some subjects.” Because these two statements either contradict each other, or are not directly related to the student motivation in informational writing, I can conclude that the podcast did enhance student motivation for informational writing.

Claim 2: Integrating podcasts motivates students to research topics on their own time.

During the process of creating the podcast with the students, I periodically gave the students the opportunity to take their writing home with them to work on it, or to look up information at home. At the beginning of the process, when asked who thought they would like to work on this at home, only one student said that he would like to. By the second day working on the writing, four of the five students said that they would like to

take it home. One took an informational book with them, and the others said that they would look up additional information at home on the internet. Of those four students, three came back with more work completed than they previously had. This shows that the podcast motivated these student to do extra work on top of the homework they were required to do for school.

Claim 3: Motivation due to podcasting does not directly affect student writing quality.

Even though I had planned to spend more time directly instructing the writing process, this was difficult to do in such a short period of time, and I found myself focusing more on getting the podcast finished than working on the actual writing process with the children. Therefore, when I compared the student writing from the podcast to writing that they had done previously, I did not notice any increases in writing quality. While writing the podcast, students focused more on the content of their writings than the mechanics (spelling, grammar, etc.). Instead of carefully planning their paragraphs, and then editing at the end, they wrote, and then read their paragraph aloud on the podcast. If I were to do this again, I would spend more time on the actual writing process, and then have them podcast after the writing has been edited for any errors. I think that by doing this, it would push student learning further.

Despite not seeing an increase in student writing quality, I did notice that students used their various strengths in writing to show their creativity. Students wrote and recorded newscasts, commercials, interviews, and even a jingle. It surprised me to see what my children were truly capable of creatively. I think that in a changing world that focuses greatly on a persons ability to think outside the box, it is important to allow

students time to use this creativity in various aspects of their work. One student chose to write a jingle on “How to Make Chocolate” based on her research of Milton Hershey.

She completed this independently, without any teacher help.

“You put the cocoa beans in, and the sugar too, You mix it all together,
and you’re glad too.”

Although short and simple, this shows that this student is not only able to research a topic, and get the facts written coherently on paper, but she is also able to understand them enough to manipulate what she knows to create a song with rhyme.

Although I did not find that the increased motivation affected student writing, I do still believe that while directly instructing students on their writing, it would help to have students motivated by something that they will then do with their writing. This may cut down on the belief that there is no real reason for the students to create a well written paragraph.

Conclusions:

It is no secret that, “Students in the 21st century need to be actively engaged in the collaborative creation of authentic knowledge products using technology tools, rather than sitting in front of drill-and-practice software helping them answer multiple choice questions for an end-of-year standardized test.” (Fryer W, 2007). Having students write and produce their own podcasts allows for a fun and engaging way for students to have meaningful learning experiences.

Before this inquiry, I was not sure if learning and integrating this new technology

would be worth the time involved. Although I did agree that students needed to be engaged with technologies inside the classroom, I was not sure about what kind of impact it actually had on the children. Now I can see that integrating technologies not only prepares children for the ever-changing future, but it is also a tool that can be used by teachers to motivate students. In the future, I will use podcasts in whatever class I end up in, and am confident that I will become more skilled and confident each time. Eventually, I hope that this will become routine in my classroom, and I will be able to feel comfortable enough to teach and allow students to podcast independently. In my future teaching, I will integrate these new technologies into my everyday lessons, and try to stay up to date on future technologies.

In addition to using podcasts in my future teaching, this inquiry has also led me to appreciate the feedback of my students. My inquiry focused on surveying the students to determine how they were feeling about their learning. The results that I got back made me realize the importance of that kind of information. It is good, as a teacher, to hear the voice of your students. This should help to inform how I teach now and in the future.

Through this inquiry, I have also learned that it is important to understand that the first time around, nothing is perfect. While I would have loved to create a longer, more thought out product, I did not yet have the time or expertise with podcasting. I realize, as a teacher, that my ability to create a postcast with children will only increase from where I am now, as I gain valuable experience with the program. I eagerly look forward to creating more podcasts in the future, and refining my ability in using them to teach. I think that the more experience the students and I have with the program and process, the more sophisticated and polished the product will be.

New wonderings:

Completing the inquiry process with my initial question has led me to new wonderings that are based off of my learnings. Both my new knowledge, and these new wonderings will guide my teaching in future years.

1. How can I refine the podcasting process so that it is more focused on student writing and speaking rather than the process and creation of a podcast?
2. Can third graders effectively learn how to podcast independently or in groups?
3. Do children learn more content through podcasting?
4. Can student made podcasts from my classroom effect the motivation of students in other classrooms across the nation?
5. Is podcasting an effective way to communicate what is going on in school with parents?

Resources

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Appendix A.1
Third Grade Writing Survey

Circle the number that best describes how you feel:
1=Agree Strongly, 2=Agree, 3=Not sure, 4=Disagree, 5=Disagree Strongly



I like writing in third grade.

1 2 3 4 5

I feel like I don't know what to write about.

1 2 3 4 5

I write because I have to.

1 2 3 4 5

I find writing hard.

1 2 3 4 5

I am bored by writing.

1 2 3 4 5

I think writing is exciting.

1 2 3 4 5

I can never think of anything to say.

1 2 3 4 5

I like to write stories.

1 2 3 4 5

I like to write poems.

1 2 3 4 5

I would like to learn something new.

1 2 3 4 5

I think I know everything there is about writing.

1 2 3 4 5

I like to write informational paragraphs.

1 2 3 4 5

I know what a podcast is.

1 2 3 4 5

My favorite thing about writing in third grade is:

My least favorite thing about writing is:

Appendix C: (Field Observation Notes)

Quotes compiled from student work:

(+)“Miss Hautala, it was really fun doing the podcast.”

“Are you sad that it is over?”

“Yea.”

Mrs. Davis: “How is it going?”

(+)C: “Great! I love hearing my voice. It’s funny. I don’t think I sound like that.”

Miss Hautala: “If you would like to bring your writing and a book home with you to work at home in your free time, you may, but you don’t have to. Does anyone think they would like to bring it home?”

(+)N: “I want to. I don’t need a book. I’m ‘gunna’ look on the internet at home.”

(Two others raise their hands)

(-)E: No, I don’t want to work on it tonight.

Comments from parents:

(+)“A is really excited about the podcast.”

(+)“C is eager to come in. Thank you so much.”

(+)“E is very excited to stay after school. Do you need anything that I can provide?”

Child to his mother who came in to volunteer and asked about the podcast:

Student: “I wrote about Milton Hershey’s candy bar that he made for the army. It had lots of nutrients in it for them.

Mother: Oh, interesting.

A (after bringing home the podcast on a CD to share at home):

Miss Hautala: “So A, did you listen to the podcast?”

(+)A: “Yea, right when I got home, I ran up to my room and played it because I was excited to listen to it. Then I waited until dinner before I told my parents. They really liked it.”

Appendix D: (Final Verbal Survey)

Included on disk

PARENT SURVEY

1. Do you know what a podcast is? YES NO
If you answered yes, how do you know?

2. Has your child talked to you about what a podcast is?
 YES NO
3. If the answer to #2 is no, ask your child what a podcast is, and what they are doing with it in school. When you ask this, does your child seem bored or excited about it?

4. Do you, personally, think that using technology, specifically podcasting will motivate your child to investigate, and write about informational people and/or places?

5. Please comment on anything about this activity.