

## Podcasting with Classroom Audio Technology

*Interview conducted by Bruce Bebb, Marketing Communications Director  
Lightspeed Technologies, Inc.*

**T**eachers today are using every possible means to ensure students receive the instruction needed to succeed. Lesson capture and pod-casting are fast becoming part of the education mix. A high school math teacher shares his experience using the latest instructional technology including a small microphone that made a big difference.

"These types of instructional technologies help kids reach the 'ah-ha' moment much faster."

— *Don House,*  
*Math Teacher, NY*

“When you teach, I usually pay attention but when you have the mic on, I have to pay attention all the time, because it’s like you’re talking directly to me.”

—Student in Mr. Hall’s Algebra class

## Introduction

Donald House, a math teacher at Marcus Whitman High School in Rushville, New York, has recently combined his energetic teaching style with an electronic white board and a classroom microphone system. And it all adds up to higher academic achievement.

The following are excerpts from an interview with Don House conducted by Bruce Bebb, MarCom Director at Lightspeed Technologies.

### **Tell me a little about your teaching background and why math is your thing?**

I started out as an average math student in elementary school, but when I hit high school I had some great math teachers, teachers who had a lot of passion for the science of numbers and things just started to click. I knew I wanted to be a teacher, so I majored in math; it just seemed the right thing for me. I also realized the power of it. If I can keep kids on the math path, a lot more doors will open for them. Success in mathematics is the number one predictor for future earnings. I’ve been teaching for over 30 years and still enjoy watching kids get that ‘ahha’ moment. If my teaching style helps kids get excited about math then I can contribute to their success in life.

### **What instructional technologies are you using that really make a difference?**

A few years ago I completed teaching this long lesson on trig and the unit circle. It’s a difficult concept. I have six blackboards across the room and I had all six of them covered. I sat back and said, ‘You know if those boards could just erase themselves that would be awesome. And then if all that information just magically reappeared on the board for Friday’s class, it’d be a miracle.’

It was only a couple months later a fellow teacher called me and said “You’ve got to come up to my room and see this thing.” That was the first time I used an electronic white board. It’s fantastic. It just opens up a whole new field of understanding for kids. Being able to put problems next to each other for visual comparison makes a big difference.

Infrared classroom audio has emerged as the perfect technology for delivering clear instruction to all students, mitigating poor acoustics and high ambient noise levels.

I recently added a wireless infrared microphone system that has really changed the dynamic of the classroom. I was apprehensive at first, afraid it would be a bigger distraction than an addition to the classroom, but was I wrong. It took only about 15 minutes to set up, and when I turned on the microphone it was like, 'holy cow!' I never realized how well it could work, how really effective it was until I tried it. The kids could immediately hear the difference even though they couldn't figure out where the speaker was. And for me, the system is so unobtrusive. I wear this little microphone and don't even realize I have it on half the time.

#### **What has been the student response?**

They pay attention more. One kid said to me the other day, "You know, when you have the mic on it's like you're talking to me". I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "When you teach, I usually pay attention but when you have the mic on, I have to pay attention all the time, because it's like you're talking directly to me." This is a kid that sits in the back row because she wants to tune me out sometimes. With the Lightspeed system she can't do that.

Kids can't afford to miss critical instruction, especially in advanced math. We're doing trig and whole sine/cosine curve. There's just so much imbedded in it, if they miss one little piece, then the next five things you say, they don't get. I know that they're getting it now. They stay with me. I get a lot better focused attention when I have the mic on.

#### **How have you integrated the electronic white board and the microphone system?**

For years I tried to record my lessons with different microphones in conjunction with the electronic white board, but I could never achieve good audio so I just gave up. Then it dawned on me to use the new Lightspeed mic system, and wow, it works perfectly. A simple patch cord from the amplifier to my computer is all it took. These two technologies together are just mind boggling.

If I have to miss a class, I'll record the lesson and just have the sub hit the start button on the computer. All the numbers, graphs and charts appear on the smart board and they're hearing me crystal clear. The sub was amazed because she felt like I was in the room teaching.

The other cool thing is that kids can have access to this audio/visual podcast at any time. If they miss the class or just want to review the lesson they simply download the shared file or I'll hand them a loaded jump drive and they are good to go.

We believe implementation of classroom audio systems may have more overall direct impact on student learning than any other single piece of technology in the district.”

—Larry L. Hicok - Principal  
Rudd-Rockford/Marble  
Rock District

### **What do you see in the future for this type of instructional technology?**

My dream is that every student would be able to participate in the class whether they are on campus or not. Many districts are already recording lessons for podcasting purposes. Eventually I want all classes linked to the schools website so if a student is sick or off campus, he/she can log on and be part of the class and not miss a beat. With crystal clear audio and visual it's like the kid is there. They don't lose anything.

### **How would you characterize your experience with the infrared microphone system?**

I've been thrilled with it. The ease of use, the seamless integration, it really helps make the classroom a positive learning experience. A pleasant surprise was the ability to have a second pass around microphone for students use. Not only can I record my lesson, I can record the questions and interactions of the students at the same time.

### **If you were in front of a group of educators, what would tell them about Classroom Audio Technology?**

I would tell them you've got to be fair to all the kids, and you do that by providing a level playing field, and equal opportunity to see and hear the instruction. There are lots of kids that go through school that seem invisible and are difficult to connect with, but the sound system helps make a connection. It's an equalizer for those kids because they think you're talking to them personally. It just makes teaching much more effective and that translates to successful students.

*The preceding interview was conducted by Bruce Bebb, MarCom Director at Lightspeed Technologies, Inc. All rights reserved.*

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- *High Value and Low Cost of Ownership*
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- *Highly Responsive Service and Support*
- *A Passionate Commitment to Education*



Established in 1990, Lightspeed Technologies is the trusted provider in classroom audio technology. Our passion is to improve the listening and learning environment for every child. We believe strengthening the connection between teachers and students is at the heart of learning.

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11509 SW HERMAN ROAD / TUALATIN, OREGON 97062  
TOLL FREE: 800.732.8999 / PHONE: 503.684.5538 / FAX: 503.684.3197  
LIGHTSPEED-TEK.COM