GarageBand in the Elementary Classroom[*]

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Abstract

This is a module of using GarageBand '08 in the elementary classroom. It gives a summary of the
software, getting started information and uses for the classroom.

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1 Overview

Figure 1

GarageBand is a simple digital audio workstation and music sequencer that can be used to create music or podcasts. The program is available as part of the iLife software package for the Mac OS X operating system. It comes already installed on new computers. The first version of GarageBand was announced in 2004. The most recent version of GarageBand (GarageBand 5, also known as '09) was released in August, 2009.

This module explores GarageBand 4 ('08). In this version, users can choose from over 100 virtual instruments or plug physical instruments into the computer to record and edit songs. Both the music and the podcasts can be used for the classroom.

This program is traditionally used for the creation of music by amature musicians. The program has multiple modes for the creation, mixing and production of music. It also includes a podcast function. This program can easily be modified for use in the elementary classroom. Teachers can use the program to create interesting material for use in their classrooms. The students can also use GarageBand '08 in class to enhance classroom projects.

The program is relatively simple to learn how to use. There are many tutorials including videos to help the beginner use the software. There is even a mode to create music from existing tracks for those who do

not create their own music.

Overall GarageBand '08 is a good addition to the classroom. It can be integrated into almost any big project and is a fun alternative to traditional presentations.

Photo is the GarageBand Logo.

2 How to Get Started With GarageBand '08

When GarageBand '08 is opened, the user is prompted with four options: Create New Music Project, Open An Existing Project, Create New Podcast Episode, and Magic GarageBand.

Create New Music Project is the music feature that allows the user to create music from scratch or upload MIDI music. The tempo, signature, and Key are created at the beginning when the song is initially saved. The default instrument is a virtual grand piano, but other software or real instrument tracks can be added. Any number of instruments can be added once the tracks are recorded, but Garageband can only record eight instruments at one time.

Open An Existing Project obviously, opens an existing project. There are no projects to choose from unless a project has already been created.

The **Create New Podcast** feature is extremely easy to use. After saving the file, the user simply clicks on the type of voice being recorded (male, female, or jingle) presses the red record button and begins speaking. In order to stop recording the user presses the play icon. Much like the Create New Music Project feature, the user can add more than one voice track and other tracks of music to the podcast. Artwork can also be added and can be dragged and dropped from the desktop.

Magic GarageBand is a new feature in this version of GarageBand. It makes it easy to create music using pre-recorded tracks. On the first screen, the user is prompted to select a genre of music. From there, they select instruments. The instrument can be changed to many styles of instrument, for example fretless bass, lounge bass, etc, or can be turned off. From there, the music is automatically created and ready to be edited.

2.1 Help and Support

Tutorials

Apple provides online tutorials for the software. There are twelve video tutorials for GarageBand '08, each about two to four minutes long. The videos show screen shots in addition to text to show what can be performed in the software. The tutorials will can help get started with the program, but it is difficult to set up the tutorial next to the software to follow along. In addition to the video tutorials there are six text tutorials.

The tutorials can be found at the following site:

http://www.apple.c om/findouthow/music/garageband08.html[1]

Help

There is a general help menu for GarageBand. Here there is additional help to get started with the program including a "Get Started" PDF and a glossary of musical terms. The user can also type in a question or topic and get a list of suggested pages.

Support

If software support is needed or if the user needs the answer to a more in depth question, support for the software can be found at the following site:

http://www.apple.com/support/gara geband/[2]

Unfortunately for GarageBand '08 users, the site has already been updated for GarageBand '09, so it is not as easy to find help. There is a search function of the support site incase help is not readily available.

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[1]http://www.apple.com/findouthow/music/garageband08.html
[2]http://www.apple.com/support/garageband/

3 Classroom Examples

3.1 Podcast: Instruction

Garage Band can be used to create readings of books for use in class. A podcast can be used in place of a purchased recording of a book. The teacher can incorporate his/her own activities into the reading. The student can point along with the teacher's reading and can conduct activities such as "Underline two words that rhyme on this page" or "color the picture blue."

This is a good way to use the program in a primary classroom before students can fully read texts on their own. Using this program, the teacher can set up two or three listening stations around the room. It allows students to be, in a way, working with the teacher when the teacher is occupied with other students or obligations. That being said, teachers should be careful not to use podcasts in place of one on one instruction.

A teacher recording can also be used as a differentiation tool for older students who have not let learned to read, or who cannot read due to physical handicaps. Providing these students with an audio of a classroom instruction can help even non-readers understand.

http://www.wtvi.com/TEKS/05_06_articles/classroom-audio- podcasting.html[3]

3.2 Cool Creations

This example describes using the program in a music class. The students were instructed to create a song they thought was 'cool.' The students were provided pre-recorded sound loops.

This is a good activity to get students acquainted with the software. It also would be good to help them get rid of their curiousity. In an activity for creating podcasts, the student should not be playing with the music. The song creation can "get it out of their system" so they can concentrate on the task at hand.

This song activity can be used in conjuction with a podcast at the beginning of the year for a getting to know you activity. Students can create a podcast about themselves, what they like to do, etc. They can use pictures from home or from copyright free sources and use the music they created for this project as the background noise. This activity is much more interesting than creating a powerpoint.

http://musicisit.teacherlingo.com/archive/2009/09/24/using- garageband-in-the-music-classroom.aspx[4]

3.3 Podcast: Story Telling

The students can use the podcast feature to create dramatic readings of stories they wrote or like. Story telling is important our society, but students only get the chance to tell stories through written language, rather than through spoken language. This is a way that students can write their stories and tell them to someone. The readings can be posted online for their parents and other teachers.

This can be used as a tool for the teacher to check reading fluency and intonation while reading over time. If one of these projects is completed every quarter, the teacher can check progress, and have a record of it for future reference.

http://images.apple.com/education/docs/teachers/Apple- DigitalMediaInTheClassroom-lesson5.pdf[5]

3.4 Music Video

This activity is a combination of using GarageBand in combination with a camera, in this case the Flip Camera. The students created a music video using songs they wrote, beats from GarageBand, and filmed using the camera, combining them. They modeled their activity off of a poem called Cats by Eleanor Fajeon. After all the parts were created they put them all together using iMovie.

Song Creation can also be used as a study aide. Songs can be written and recorded in class, with each student receiving a CD of the music used to study the material.

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[3]http://www.wtvi.com/TEKS/05_06_articles/classroom-audio- podcasting.html
[4]http://musicisit.teacherlingo.com/archive/2009/09/24/using- garageband-in-the-music- classroom.aspx
[5]http://images.apple.com/education/docs/teachers/Apple- DigitalMediaInTheClassroom- lesson5.pdf

http://willie42.globalteacher.org.au/2009/03/21/having-fun-%20with-the- flip-camera/[6]

4 Assessing GarageBand for the Classroom

4.1 Pro's

- The software is easy to learn and includes tutorial software with a lot of picture support. This makes it easy for the students if they need extra help when the teacher cannot be around to help them all individually.
- This can be used in each subject for many different projects. If it is used more than once, the students get used to the program without having to learn to use multiple programs.
- The program is free with Mac computers. The schools will not have to pay any extra money for the program.
- It can help to make oral presentations easy for all students. Students who are too nervous to speak in front of the classroom will be able to use the podcast software to speak, rather than physically getting up in front of the classroom.

4.2 Con's

- GarageBand is only available for Mac computers and, unlike other Mac software like iTunes, there are no versions available for Windows or any other computer system. This limits the classrooms GarageBand can be used in. There are other software programs similar to GarageBand, but most do not offer the same amount of features and support offered by Apple.
- The software is too complicated for younger students to understand. Once the students get into 4th grade they should be able to use the program easily.
- It can be complicated to get accustomed to the program. You do not want to have to do the introduction multiple times. If the program is used, it should be used rather frequently so students remember what they learned about the program.
- The program can be easily distracting and students can get off task easily. Since it is so distracting, it could take more time than allotted to finish projects.

5 Considerations for Teachers

- As with any public speaking, it is nice to have a script or outline when making a podcast. The students should have a script before they start recording. This helps the students learn to be prepared.
- The software is relatively easy to figure out, but it is important that the teacher understand how it works better than the students.
- There is a new version available. This is not a problem with the software, obviously, but as with any Mac program, when a new update comes out they are going to badger the user every ten seconds with information about the updates. If using at home for podcasts, it is not bad, but in the classroom this small distraction may be enough to detract from the activity. It may be less annoying to spend the $80 on the new package.
- It is easy to get distracted and caught up playing with the software so give students ample time to explore before introducing an initial activity.

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[6]http://willie42.globalteacher.org.au/2009/03/21/having-fun- %20with-the-flip- camera/

6 Synthesis of GarageBand '08

Overall, GarageBand '08 is a fun and interesting way to incorporate technology into the classroom. While it is only available to schools with Mac computers, it is a free program that is easy to learn. The program has many tutorials and resources available to make it even easier to understand. It can be used to help teachers make their lessons more interesting. GarageBand '08 can also be used by the students to enhance inclass projects. Students need to have an introduction to the software before they are given a project. It can be easily distracting since the program is fun to play with, an introduction will help reduce this. Students and teachers alike will have fun creating music and podcasts for use in the classroom.