



Music Technology Lessons

"It's A RAP!" Lesson. Students examine the process of creating an audio recording using software.

Lesson 008

DATES _____

The 2nd through 5th Grade students receive one 40 minute lesson per week.

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Objectives:

To learn the basic process of creating a song using audio editing software, similar to the processes used in a recording studio.

Materials:

Computer, software audio editing program (example: Screenblast Acid - (now) Acid Music Studio, Cakewalk Products, etc.), a microphone that can be connected to a computer, (optional) sound effects found on looping or audio editing software CD's.

Procedures:

We have been using an older software program (from 2003) called Screenblast Acid 4 by Sony to create and edit audio for creating MP3's and .wav audio files for CD's. I created lyrics based on demonstrating character and respect for fellow students and the school. There is a FREE limited version of Acid XPress available at the following address: <http://www.acidplanet.com/tools/?p=acid>

'Zip Your Lips' is a song about learning to be quiet in the hallways and not disturb other students.

'Don't Run in the School' is a song about encouraging the students to walk, not run, through the long hallways at our school.

'Pride in Our School' is a song about trying to keep our school clean and take care of the new paint throughout the school.

'Central Park Will Pass the S.A.T.' is a song about motivating students to do their best on the annual standardized tests.

I recorded my voice originally so the students could hear the music as it was supposed to be recorded. The students rehearsed the music several times before recording took place. If they made a mistake, they immediately wanted to try it again. All of the students want to be the ones to 'make it' on the final CD produced for the school!

A screen shot below shows the features that are commonly used. Steps we used in creating the songs:

- 1) Write the lyrics, if needed, and have them available to all the students performing the recording.
- 2) Connect the microphone to the microphone jack in the computer. Open the Audio / Volume Controls in the computer to turn on the microphone.
- 3) Open the 'Sound Recorder' program in Windows.
- 4) Record the voices / lyrics / sound effects into the program individually.
- 5) Open the Screenblast Acid Program (or other audio editing program). Using the Explorer View at the bottom of the screen, click and drag the wav, MP3 or other media file to the main screen. Keep adding more audio and effects as needed. Each audio part appears as a 'track' on the screen (examples - drum track, vocal track, sound effects as seen below).
- 6) Click and drag the mouse to fill in the area where you would like the audio to play. Press the 'Play' button in the transport to play the song. Move the audio (graphics) to line it up if needed or to reposition it on the timeline. You can see the sound waves and shapes on the timeline below.

7) Experiment with changing the volume, pan, pitch, tempo, or add sound effects (reverb, delay) to the tracks. Save your file. To record the file to a CD, save or render the file as an MP3 or .wav format. The file may be written or 'burned' to a CD or posted on a website.

Here are the files in MP3 and Windows Media Player formats:



26 KB PDF of the Words to the Songs Below



MP3 (240 KB) of 'Zip Your Lips' Rap



MP3 (485 KB) 'Don't Run in the School'



MP3 (440 KB) 'Pride In Our School'



MP3 (425 KB) 'Central Park Will Pass the S.A.T.'



Windows Media Format (250 KB)



Windows Media Format (449 KB)



Windows Media Format (440 KB)



Windows Media Format (440 KB)

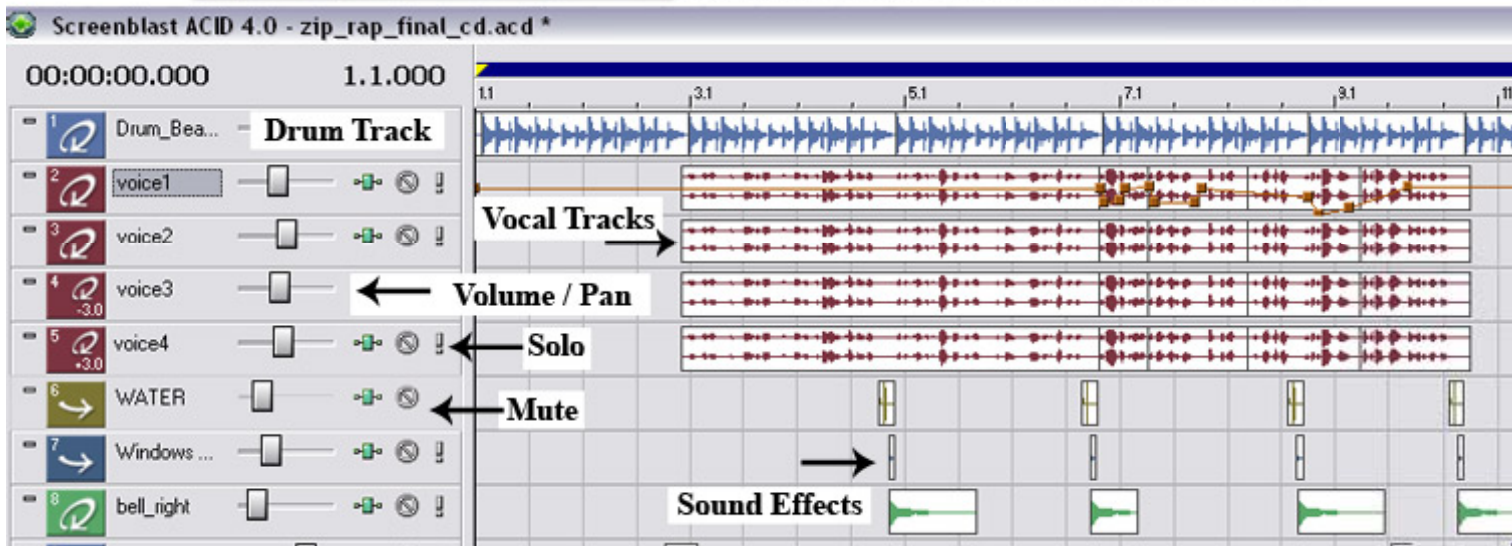


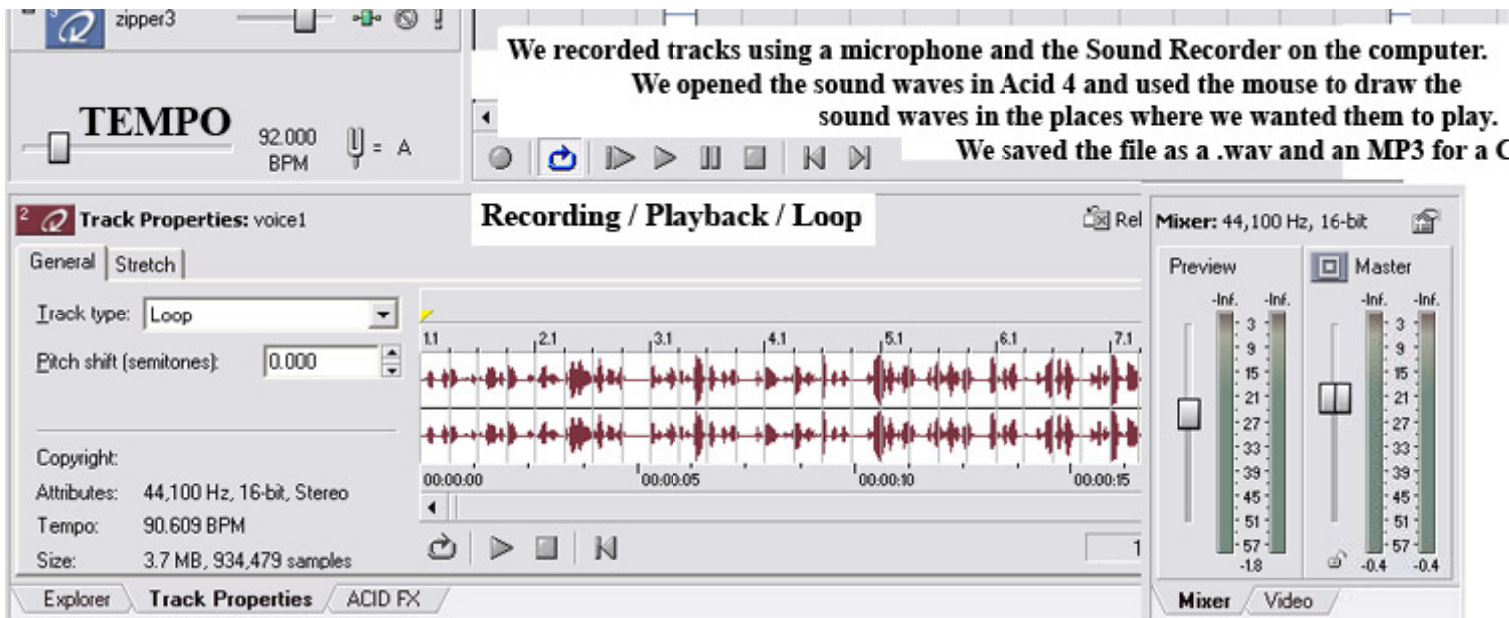
Using an Audio Program to Mix and Record

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A student demonstrates recording the vocal tracks into the computer using a computer microphone. We added more tracks and sound effects to build our song. The final mix of tracks was recorded as a .wav file and an MP3 file and recorded to a CD.

There are audio editing programs through the internet and in stores.





Ask students to notice.....

- Examine the software you are using. How many tracks can be recorded? What kinds of files can be imported and exported?
- What are some of the sound effects and processors available in the program?
- Is it easy to create a professional recording for the public to purchase?
- Does it take a long time to produce professional music recordings?
- Is there a lot of planning done before the recording can be made?
- What kinds of places do you have to go to in order to have professional music recordings made?
- Are there any recording studios in the city where you live?
- What are the financial costs of having a song or album recorded?

Extra Activities and Research:

- Research various recording studios on the Internet, especially ones in the area that the students' live.
- Research the costs of developing and creating the professional music recordings.
- What kinds of careers are available to people that produce professional music recordings?
- What are the types of software programs available to 'home' users for recording music? What are the differences between 'higher end and lower end' programs (i.e. - features)?
- Write the lyrics and music to a song and record it in class or at home.

Notes: -----

Evaluation:

- * Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of basic recording techniques using a computer, microphone and software based audio recording program.
- * Student production - Our audio files from this project will be posted to this website.