From the Field

A radio station project

Edna Geva

“Radio Michlal is the greatest, the best and you know the rest!” “Gal Michlal is the name and radio is the game!” “It’s 10 o’clock and here are the headlines for today!” “Tune in to our next program!” These announcements can be heard from the young broadcasters on Radio Michlal, the English radio station of Michlal School, Ramat Gan. The audience, in classrooms or the English room, listens carefully to the daily broadcasts, waiting to solve the brain teaser as fast as possible. Personal messages and catchy music follow the program.

Adopting the medium of radio to supplement the textbook Radio Fever had two purposes. It increased pupil motivation and provided opportunities to develop listening skills both in and out of the classroom. In order to familiarize pupils with the medium of radio, we visited several local radio stations. At Radio Tel Aviv, pupils were given the opportunity to experience an authentic live broadcast. A technician taught the pupils how to use the equipment – microphones, earphones, an amplifier and a computer – to record jingles, which they had prepared in advance.

Following our visits, eighth graders began to operate a mini local radio station located in the English room, broadcasting only inside the school. Equipment and funds for the project came from parents and the Beneficiary P.E.F. Israel Endowment Funds U.S.A. Programs, planned and prepared by pupils, contained many items: music, commercials, breaking news with weather reports, and interviews with teachers, parents and favorite athletes. Live broadcasts were combined with recorded programs.

During the following year the project was expanded to include seventh graders, who discussed possible broadcast issues during their English lessons. Their representatives joined the radio team in making broadcast decisions. Pupils have one weekly hour for team meetings and one for broadcasting, and may broadcast personal messages and announcements during breaks. The team, with class representatives, advertise the radio station on the air or by posting notices on the bulletin boards in school.

In preparatory lessons, pupils work in heterogeneous groups dealing with one of the following categories: news, entertainment, sports, commercials and jingles, drama and literature, science. The sports and entertainment groups are usually the most popular. Pupils with an interest in newscasting usually choose the news group. In their groups, pupils take on different roles, such as editor, producer, reporter, broadcaster, copywriter, secretary, technician, sound person and program coordinator. Group reporters investigate and report on community issues.

After listening to the broadcast, pupils evaluate their work, using the “Evaluation of Radio Programs” form (Appendix A). They reflect on how to improve their work for the next broadcast. The project also includes “while-listening” assignments (Appendix B). The ever-improving quality of the broadcasts shows how working with the radio station helps to improve the pupils’ writing and oral presentation skills. Pupils are encouraged to conduct surveys and to take responsibility for their own assignments.

In conclusion, this project has been valuable in providing many learning opportunities. It has encouraged pupils to use English actively and purposefully, often in a group situation. In addition, evaluation of the broadcasts provides practice in oral presentations and written projects. I feel that both my pupils and myself have not only enjoyed, but have also benefited from the radio station project.
References
Radio Tel Aviv, 102 FM, 1997.

APPENDIX A

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name: __________________</th>
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**Evaluating Radio Programs**

Participants: __________________
Radio Station: __________________
Program: __________________
Time: __________________
Scale:
1 = not at all   2 = partial   3 = good   4 = outstanding

1. The program is interesting. 1 2 3 4
2. Opening and ending are well prepared. 1 2 3 4
3. Broadcasters read clearly and fluently. 1 2 3 4
4. The show is dramatic. 1 2 3 4
5. Sound effects are suitable and lively. 1 2 3 4
6. Music is suitable. 1 2 3 4
7. The program is the right length of time 1 2 3 4
8. Participants demonstrate team work. 1 2 3 4
9. The topic is clearly defined. 1 2 3 4
10. Speakers are friendly and spontaneous. 1 2 3 4

Comments / suggestions: __________________

APPENDIX B

**The star program**

1. Write one word to tell how the program made you feel.

2. Make up a new two word title for the program.

3. Name the three most important events in the program.

4. Using four words, tell where most of the program took place.

5. In five words, tell how the program ended.

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