



## Digital Content and High Sound Quality Help Deliver Core Curriculum

### Issue

Though the mission at Herndon-Barstow Elementary School (Fresno, CA) is simple – “Creating Success Together!” – it envelops a sense of efficacy that is showcased by the staff’s passion for incorporating technology across the curriculum. Led by Principal Melody Burriss, Herndon-Barstow purchased multiple core textbooks that were supported by audio features, available mostly as MP3 files.

Burriss understands the power of audio technology for all students, especially for ELL and special needs students, and wanted to provide her staff with the technology to utilize the audio support materials. The school’s classroom stereo systems were outdated and did not offer a CD player that could read MP3 files.

As background, most CDs are formatted to contain CDA files that prevent the copying of copyrighted material. The majority of CD players can read and play these CDs. MP3 audio files use a unique format that boasts a greatly reduced file size allowing more content to be burned on to one CD. “The problem is that only certain CD players can read this unique format,” said Tim Ridgway, VP of Marketing for Califone.

Using their older stereo systems would require Herndon-Barstow teachers to download the files, transfer the files into a different format, and then burn them onto a CD, taking away from valuable teaching and preparation time. Burriss decided to research cost-effective stereo systems that would meet their needs as an alternative.

### Implementation

After reviewing various models, Burriss chose the Califone MP3-Capable Music Maker™ multimedia player (2385-03), and purchased 12 units to be distributed among her staff. Designed to support audio assisted learning, the Music Maker is durable and reliable, unlike many consumer products that are not designed for daily use in the classroom. Available with a cassette recorder/player, a 20-track programmable CD player, and an AM-FM stereo, the stereo system, most important, is able to play MP3 files.

Supporting Herndon-Barstow’s decision, Califone recently conducted an online survey addressing the use of multimedia players in schools and libraries. From language learning to listening to audio books to participating in story time, multimedia players are often called on to perform a number of tasks in the classroom.



The survey revealed teachers and librarians (64.3 percent) believe it is most important for a boombox to be able to project audio for all students in the class to hear without it being connected to a secondary audio amplification system. And the other notable finding showed that 14.3 percent of the participants believe it is most important for the boombox to have “the ability to play, upload or download MP3 files.”

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### Results

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The MP3-Capable Music Maker also can play user-generated digital content, allowing educators to customize materials for differentiated instruction. This is ideal when working with students to promote phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and to support ELL, ELD and other language learning activities.

“Our teachers were thrilled to use the curriculum audio support pieces,” Burriss said. “They use the players for whole class instruction, in small group lessons with headsets, for music instruction, to re-read ELA stories, and more.”