Podomatic Minicast Maker would be an excellent resource to incorporate into my STEM classroom. The website features tutorial blogs to assist new users (me!) in how to use the site to its full potential. The blogs consist of the “how to’s” of completing an audio recording using Online Voice Recorder (a website that allows you to record your voice for free that is great for beginners), as well as a blog that explains how to upload your podcast and make it eye catching to those who may wish to listen to it. The blogs on Podomatic even go as far as to help you make sure your computer’s internal microphone is set up, which is especially helpful for beginners such as myself and my students. One of the features of the blog I appreciate is that it explains how to include a memorable title for your podcast. It includes language I can utilize and summarize for my students to help them think creatively about their upcoming podcast assignment.

Speaking of their upcoming podcast assignment, I would love to utilize this tool in my STEM classroom. I teach a STEM class to my fifth and sixth graders for approximately two periods every six school days. A project I have been planning in my head for the past six months or so is for students to collaborate on a Science related podcast. My plan for this project begins with my students researching what a podcast is and how it came into existence in our ever evolving technological world. Once they understand the basics, I hope to assign a “popular” podcast for the students to listen to, respond to, and analyze both verbally with their peers and in writing in their notebooks. I would love for them to think about the various characteristics that may make a podcast successful, interesting, and worthwhile for its listeners. My students can refer to the factors that drew them into the podcast and hopefully relate those tactics to their own podcast ideas. I hope to utilize this tool, the Podomatic Minicast Maker, in my classroom so that
my students can create their own intriguing and insightful podcasts that can then be shared with other students, teachers, and even parents.

My project idea consists of a constellation study. I would like my students to choose a constellation in the night sky and research its history and its story. Students will write a script to help summarize and explain the constellation’s story for the first part (or episode) of their podcast. Next, the students will think about a symbol that represents themselves that could be their own personal constellation. The second part or episode of their podcast would be to show and explain their personal constellation designs and express the meaning behind the symbol they chose for their constellation. Students can collaborate with peers throughout the project to share ideas and to provide feedback. I would also love to involve the Language Arts and Writing teachers to make this project cross-curricular within the fifth and sixth grades. Finally, the students will share their constellation stories with peers, younger students, and their parents and families. This project would be great to implement in the beginning of the year, as it can help to introduce students to one another and their teachers and help peers learn more about each other.

Unfortunately, as with many technology, we may encounter some problems when using this program in the classroom. First off, my school is very small and the staff is limited. Therefore, it may be difficult for my students to find a quiet place to record their podcasts successfully. The best option would be to leave the classroom and find a quiet place around the school, but with limited staff, I will not always have an adult, such as a paraprofessional, to oversee their progress. This may be solved by recording the podcasts at home, however. In addition, our school’s security features on our ChromeBooks may block these websites. I may have to speak with my principal to “unblock” these sites if this is indeed a problem. I am glad
that, however, my administrators are open to experimenting, especially with technology, so it shouldn’t be an issue to unblock these sites.

Podomatic’s website includes step by step instructions that will prove to be very helpful for my students, especially those who are not as technologically advanced as others. I especially love that the Minicast Maker also incorporates photos, as I would love my students to be able to take photographs or use Internet photos to convey their message both visually and verbally in their podcasts. In the past, I have instructed my students to use Google Slides or Prezi when creating presentations. Podomatic’s Minicast Maker would be a more updated and creative way for my students to create presentations in their Science and STEM classrooms.