



LESSON PLAN: PODCASTING -- SHARING YOUR IDEAS ABOUT FEATURED TOPICS AND ISSUES

Background, Activities and Critical Analysis

By Lisa Prososki

Subject(s): secondary current events, social studies, communication arts, technology, science, and journalism classes

NOTE: This lesson is broken in to three parts that could be used in sequence as an extended lesson or broken apart and used individually, depending on the teacher's objective in the classroom.

Estimated Time:

Part 1: one 90-minute class periods, two 50-minute class periods

Part 2: one 90-minute class period, two 50-minute class periods

Part 3: three 90-minute class periods, five to six 50-minute class periods, depending on the depth

of study

Objectives - Students will:

Part 1:

1. Participate in an in-class survey about podcasting.
2. Read a companion article and/or NewsHour transcript about podcasting and use it to learn about types of programs available as podcasts as well as the technology related to podcasting.
3. Practice accessing a podcast and using various features such as pausing, rewinding, and fast-forwarding the program as well as other technical aspects of using the podcast.
4. Participate in a class discussion about podcasts using what they have learned from reading about and accessing a podcast.
5. Complete an oral or written response activity based upon what they have learned about the basics of podcasting.

Part 2:

1. Listen to a podcast and record key information and content from the podcast using a graphic organizer chosen by the teacher.
2. Participate in a class discussion and/or written about how they completed the content on the graphic organizer as well as what they learned from listening to the podcast.
3. Complete a culminating follow-up activity that illustrates what was learned from the podcast.

Part 3:

1. Use content from online resources to learn about the steps necessary for producing a podcast.
2. Work in small groups to plan a podcast that is appropriate for the classroom.
3. Work in small group to produce an original podcast and share it with classmates.
4. Evaluate the content of the podcasts produced by their classmates by using an evaluation form to provide feedback.

To make these lesson plans better

[SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK](#)

Correlation to National Standards

Materials

Part 1:

- NewsHour Extra article "Podcasting Power for the People" available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june05/podcasting_2-23.html
- Online NewsHour segment transcript "Apple's iPod a Technological, Cultural Phenomenon" available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june06/ipod_05-15.html
- Access to a NewsHour podcast available from the listing at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rss/media/index.html> and appropriate hardware and software for listening to the podcast as part of a class activity

Part 2:

- Graphic Organizers (printer-friendly PDFs provided at links below)
[Finding the Facts](#)
[KWL](#)
[5 W's and H](#)
[Mapping Main Ideas](#)
- Access to a NewsHour podcast available from the listing at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rss/media/index.html> and appropriate hardware and software for listening to the podcast as part of a class activity
- Assorted art supplies (optional)

Part 3:

- Computers with Internet access
- Podcasting Planning Sheet ([Printer-friendly PDF](#))
- Peer Evaluation Form ([Printer-friendly PDF](#))

Procedure

NOTE: This lesson is broken in to three parts that could be used in sequence as an extended lesson or broken apart and used individually, depending on the teacher's objective in the classroom.

Part 1: Podcasting 101

1. Create student interest in podcasting by surveying students and quickly tabulating the results of the survey so students can see the growth potential for podcasters.

- Do you own or have access to an iPod or other MP3 device or a home computer?
- Are you are familiar with the term podcast and what it means?
- Have you ever listened to a podcast?
- Do you currently listen to/subscribe to at least one podcast on a regular basis?

As student answer each question, record the number of students who answer yes to each question and quickly determine what percentage of students familiar with or currently utilizing this type of technology.

2. Distribute or read aloud the NewsHour Extra article "Podcasting Power for the People" available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june05/podcasting_2-23.html. Use this article to instruct students about:

- various types of programs available as podcasts (i.e. audio blogs, news and informational programming (such as NewsHour and other popular PBS programs), independently produced music, etc.)
- the technology of podcasting (i.e. hardware, software, the production process, , RSS, subscribing to a podcast, etc.)

Focus specifically on the sections of the article entitled "Podcasting Power" and "How Does Podcasting Work?" for this part of the activity.

For further enrichment students could also read or listen or watch the streaming video from the NewsHour segment, Online NewsHour segment transcript "Apple's iPod a Technological, Cultural Phenomenon" available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/jan-june06/ipod_05-15.html.

3. Using a NewsHour podcast available from the listing at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rss/media/index.html>, work as a class and have students practice accessing the podcast. Discuss the types of equipment needed to access the podcast. Listen to 1-2 minutes of the podcast and utilize some of the features such as the ability to pause, rewind, and fast-forward the program.

4. Refer back to the NewsHour Extra article "Podcasting Power for the People". Pay special attention to the section entitled "Creeping Commercialization" and facilitate a short discussion about podcasts using questions such as:

- In what ways are podcasts similar to television programs that have been TiVoed?
- How are podcasts different from what is currently available on traditional radio?
- How are traditional television broadcasters and advertisers using podcasting to reach different audiences as well as target markets?
- Why do you think podcasting has become so popular? Discuss some of the benefits of podcasting.
- Is there a down side to podcasting? Discuss some of the negatives that could result from this medium of communication.

5. Close the discussion by asking students to respond orally or in writing to questions such as:

- Summarize the process used for creating a podcast.
- Do you agree with the last statement in the Newhour Extra article that says: "This is 'not a flash in the pan, it's here to stay.'" Why or why not?
- Do you think podvertising will be a good thing? Why or why not?
- If podcasters begin to charge subscription fees, how do you think this will impact podcasting? Why?
- If given the opportunity, would you ever consider creating your own podcast or a podvertising campaign? Why or why not?
- What impact, if any, do you believe podcasting will have on education in the U.S.?

Part 2: Using NewsHour Podcasts in the Classroom

1. After reviewing the podcast and considering the objectives of your lesson, choose one of the graphic organizers provided and prepare copies for distribution to students.
2. Before listening to the podcast, distribute the selected graphic organizer and review the directions for completion of the organizer.
3. Provide students with a brief introduction to the podcast including information such as:
 - topic being discussed
 - featured speaker/interviewee
4. Select a method for listening to the podcast (individually on pc's or mp3 players, etc. or as a class using the computer). Remind students that they have two goals as they listen:
 - completion of the graphic organizer
 - understanding of the main ideas and information presented in the podcast
5. Once all students have had an opportunity to listen to the podcast, provide 3-5 minutes of class time for students to complete the graphic organizer.
6. Facilitate a short classroom discussion about the podcast using information students recorded on the graphic organizer. Collect graphic organizers after discussion as a form of student assessment.
7. Questions such as those below could be used as part of a classroom discussion or could be assigned as a written response activity.
 - Why is the story/topic of this podcast significant/important?
 - How are the world, country, and/or individuals being impacted by what is described in the podcast?
 - What did you learn from listening to the podcast?
 - What additional questions do you have about this topic after hearing the podcast?
8. Select a follow-up activity from the list below as a culminating activity for students to share what they learned from listening to the podcast.
 - Make a drawing that illustrates the main idea(s) presented in the podcast
 - Create a poster, bumper sticker, or billboard design that creates awareness about the topic presented in the podcast

- Write a persuasive speech, editorial/letter to the editor, or a letter to a lawmaker sharing your opinions about the topic presented in the podcast
- Conduct research about the topic of the podcast and write a 1-page report that describes the additional information you learned from researching.

Part 3: Producing Your Own Podcast

1. Using a Web site such as Podcasting Tools available at <http://www.podcasting-tools.com/how-to-podcast.htm> or Podcasting News "Make Your Own Podcast" at <http://www.podcastingnews.com/articles/How-to-Podcast.html>, review the procedures that must be followed for creating a podcast.
2. Have students work in pairs or small groups to create a podcast about the topic of their choice. This could be an assigned topic (maybe opinions about a controversial issue, a current events report, a school news story, etc.) or a topic chosen by students (possibly featuring their own music, a feature talk show about students, groups, or teachers from the building, etc.) Distribute a [Podcasting Planning Sheet](#) to each group so they can organize the podcast and have it approved before beginning production. Give groups 10-15 minutes to plan their podcasts.
3. Review each group's Podcasting Planning Sheet to ensure that what students have planned is appropriate and can be accomplished within the confines of the school environment.
4. Provide students with one class period to produce their podcast. Provide assistance with production issues and monitor groups closely for content as well as the process used for completing the project.
5. When each group completes his/her podcast, have them play it so you can approve the quality and content of the podcast.
6. When all groups have completed their podcasts, have them share the podcasts with their classmates. Have each student complete a [Peer Evaluation Form](#) to provide other groups with feedback about their podcasts.

Extension Activity

After producing podcasts in Part 3 above, have the class work to produce a podcast that could be shared with other classrooms within the school or the school district. Decide on a programming format and have students work in pairs or small groups to produce content for the podcast at regular intervals. Encourage teachers from other classrooms to utilize the podcast content with their classes and provide feedback about the podcast. Also, submit a description of the podcast and contact information to NewsHour Extra at: extra@newshour.org

Correlation to National Standards

[McRel Compendium of K-12 Standards Addressed:](#)

Technology

Standard 1: Knows the characteristics and uses of computer hardware and operating systems

Standard 3: Understands the relationships among science, technology, society, and the individual

Standard 6: Understands the nature and uses of different forms of technology

Language Arts

Writing

Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Media

Standard 10: Understands the characteristics and components of the media

Working with Others

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

Standard 5: Demonstrates leadership skills

About the Author: Lisa Prososki is an independent educational consultant and instructional design specialist who taught middle school and high school social studies, English, reading, and technology courses for twelve years. Prososki has worked with PBS TeacherSource and has authored and edited many lesson plans and materials for various PBS programs over the past ten years. In addition to conducting workshops for teachers at various state and national meetings, Prososki works as an editor, creates a wide range of educational and training materials for corporate clients, and has authored one book.

To find out more about opportunities to contribute to this site, contact Leah Clapman at extra@newshour.org.

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