

3.4 Lesson Plan: Create an Advocacy Video

Overview

Student teams up to choose a political issue and design a short persuasive video that demonstrates their knowledge and position regarding the issue and urges viewers to take action. When completed, they post the video to a social media site, such as Youth Noise (www.youthnoise.com) or Youth Media Exchange (ymex.org/members/join), as well as their blogs.

Key Skills

NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations: Articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources; share policy positions in such forms as position statements, editorials, or political cartoons

McREL Language Arts Standards: Make an oral presentation (e.g., using notes and outlines; using organizational pattern that includes preview, introduction, body, transitions, conclusion; maintaining a clear point of view; using evidence and arguments to support opinions; uses visual media); use appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., inflection/modulation of voice, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture); use production elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a visual medium

ISTE NETS Standard: 2b: Communication and Collaboration: communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats

Grades 9–12

Time Estimate Two to three 45-minute class periods, plus homework

Required Resources Video recording devices (video camera, web cam, video phone, etc.), computers with Internet access, video editing software

Prerequisites (optional)

Students should have explored their positions on issues with You Decide (www.kqed.org/w/youdecide) (see Lesson 2.4), analyzed persuasive techniques in advocacy messages (see Lesson 2.2), and/or assessed credibility in media messages (see Lesson 2.3).

Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us (del.icio.us). Preview all of the Web sites and videos used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students.

Procedure

1. What is an advocacy video? As a class, read about and look at examples of advocacy videos. Explain that the purpose of an advocacy piece is to:

- Educate –viewers about an issue or problem
- Motivate –viewers to be concerned about the issue
- Persuade –viewers to adopt a particular position
- Unite –people to take collective action
- Urge –people to do something about the issue or problem

To explore advocacy videos, read the Benton Foundation's case studies (www.benton.org/publibrary/practice/features/advideocase3.html) about the effectiveness of advocacy video in creating real change. Then view these examples of advocacy videos:

- Forests: A Greenpeace video about the negative effects of deforestation. (www.greenpeace.org/usa/campaigns/forests)
- Love the 1 You're With: A three-minute film advocating upgrading, rather than replacing, computers to help the environment. (www.lovethe1yourewith.com)
- Stop the Clash of Civilizations: A video that advocates for Middle East peace talks and promotes tolerance of cultural views. (ymex.org/video/view.html?ID=160)

After viewing each one, ask students to identify: 1) the issue or problem; 2) the producer's stance on the issue or problem; and 3) how the producer uses persuasive techniques to encourage viewers to take action.

2. Brainstorm and plan. Ask students to brainstorm in small groups about political and social issues about which they are passionate. Ask them to agree on one issue on which to take a stand. Tell students that they will be creating an advocacy video about their issue and that their goal is to persuade viewers to assume a particular point of view and take action. Before moving on, be sure students have clearly identified their issue and what their advocacy stance is. If students have not already explored positions on campaign issues in depth, you will need to allot time for them to do so.

3. Plan and storyboard. Students use creative brainstorming to plan out the main points of their video. Students should start thinking about what striking images, video footage, audio clips or live action they can include to make their message persuasive. Students then create a storyboard of the main points of their message on a large sheet of paper.

Example

Storyboard: Group 1

Topic: Dependence on oil

Position: Americans need to become less dependent on oil; consumers need better options for cleaner cars.

Storyboard

Introduction	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Conclusion
Exhaust fumes, traffic, gridlock	Problem: America's reliance on oil	Problem: Price of oil increasing	Problem: Damage to environment	Solution: Consumers need more options for less oil-dependent vehicles	Predict the future: What will happen if we go on like this? We need transportation. We need options. Join STCD – Striving Towards Cleaner Driving.

4. **Script.** Once students have created their plan and you have approved it, they should script the video according to their storyboard. A typical script includes a column for the written/spoken text and a column for visual shots. Example:

SCRIPT	VISUALS
VOICEOVER: "Americans are getting fed up with our options for driving. A majority of our citizens rely on cars, but we can't keep spinning our wheels."	Crowded rush hour traffic Close-up of frustrated driver

5. **Gather media footage and shoot live action.** You can provide students with more information on how to create a video by having them visit the Youth Noise site (www.youthnoise.com/page.php?page_id=6074). Students can gather media about their issue by visiting the Web sites of news sources, advocacy organizations and the presidential candidates. If students are using found footage, they should be encouraged to cite their sources correctly. If students are shooting live action footage, they should produce that footage during this step. (Note: Be sure all students play a role in the process. It may be beneficial to assign students to different roles, e.g. director, actor, cameraperson, soundperson).
6. **Compile and edit.** Using editing software such as iMovie or FinalCutPro, students edit the clips to create a cohesive video. If students need different ways to put together their video, check out the options listed in "50 Web 2.0 Ways to Tell a Story" (cogdogroo.wikispaces.com/50+Ways).
7. **Screen the final videos.** Once students have edited the final version of their videos, screen them all in class. Be sure students introduce their video, and have classmates respond to the persuasive techniques the producers used.
8. **Upload final videos.** Finally, students upload their videos on Youth Noise (www.youthnoise.com), Youth Media Exchange (ymex.org/members/join), or another social media site. The class can periodically return to the sites where they post their videos to check on comments and/or ratings from viewers. Students should also upload their videos to their blogs.
9. **BLOG THIS!** Students can view and comment on other students' videos, including their stance on the issue and the effectiveness of the persuasive techniques used. Were students inspired to take action? Why or why not?

Assessment

Students should present a portfolio of documents that demonstrate their research and planning process. Some of these documents might include:

- Topic Research
- Video Planning—created effective storyboard and script
- Live Action—effective production skills (camera, lighting, sound)
- Video Editing—compilation of clips and editing shown in video
- Content: Used persuasive and effective language, still images, video, and live action to present a clear advocacy position
- Group collaboration and participation

Use students' blog posts and/or their submissions on youth media sites to assess their communication, collaboration skills, and technology skills as well as their understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizenship.