

EXPLORING VIDEO PRODUCTION AND DIGITAL LITERACY THROUGH SOCIAL ISSUES: AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

In the digital age, integrating technology into education not only enhances students' technical skills but also deepens their engagement with real-world issues. One such activity involves students creating a one-minute short film using stock footage to address a current issue faced by teenagers. The task, which combines both media production and critical thinking, encourages students to explore, analyse, and communicate about pressing societal concerns while developing their digital literacy and video editing skills. This assignment also provides an opportunity for teachers to integrate technology in ways that promote learning through creative problem-solving and digital media production.

The activity begins with students accessing a shared drive that contains a selection of ethically sourced stock footage. The students are then required to use this footage, along with basic video editing software, to craft a short film addressing a contemporary issue. The goal is to raise awareness and educate others about the chosen topic, using a digital medium to engage the audience. This requires students to employ effective research skills and a sound understanding of video editing techniques. To ensure a smooth execution of the project, it is essential for students to have access to suitable computers or laptops, as well as a video editing program such as DaVinci Resolve, a free and accessible software that allows for professional-level editing.



Research and Pre-production Process

At the outset, students form small groups, usually consisting of two or three members, and select an issue that teenagers face in the twenty-first century. Issues such as mental health, cyberbullying, substance abuse, climate change, and body image may be chosen, as they are not only relevant but also impactful for the target audience. Once a topic is selected, students are tasked with sourcing three credible facts or statistics related to their chosen issue. At this point, the teacher plays a crucial role in modeling the research process, guiding students in evaluating reliable sources, and ensuring they understand how to present facts appropriately in their films (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2017). This step also involves critical thinking, as students need to interpret their findings and decide how best to represent them visually.

The teacher should also model how to select and download footage from the shared drive into each student's local folder. The footage, which should align with the theme of the chosen issue, will serve as the raw material for the video. In selecting their clips, students should consider how well these materials can convey the message they intend to communicate, ensuring the footage accurately represents the chosen issue. The teacher's role at this stage is to engage in critical discussions with the students, helping them connect the chosen footage to the message they wish to convey and supporting their decision-making process (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017).

Production Process: Editing and Sequencing

Once students have sourced their footage, they load the clips into their video editing software. At this stage, the teacher demonstrates how to import, organize, and edit the clips within the software's timeline. Editing is the core of this project, as it allows students to construct a coherent narrative and effectively communicate their chosen issue. The teacher should model how to arrange the clips to tell a compelling story, highlighting the importance of pacing, shot selection, and narrative flow. This phase allows for individualized support, as the teacher circulates around the room, providing one-on-one feedback and addressing any technical challenges students may face (Van Der Kleij & Adie, 2020).

Editing involves more than just cutting and pasting footage. Students are required to consider how to best represent their research findings visually. They must decide what type of imagery, pacing, and transitions will best communicate the facts and emotions associated with their chosen issue. This process fosters creativity and requires critical reflection on the effectiveness of visual storytelling. Teachers should facilitate discussions around these choices, prompting students to justify their editing decisions and encouraging them to think about how their audience will interpret the film (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017).

Incorporating Music and Text

Once the editing of the video footage is complete, students are introduced to the next stage of the project—adding text and music. Text can be used to display the facts or statistics students sourced during the research phase, ensuring the message is clear and impactful. Additionally, students should consider how to use text to reinforce the tone and theme of the film. The teacher can model how to incorporate text titles seamlessly into the video, adjusting timing and positioning for maximum effect.

Music is another important element that can significantly enhance the emotional impact of the film. The teacher should guide students in sourcing royalty-free music that complements the tone of the video, with websites such as *Bensound.com* providing accessible, copyright-free tracks. Music can serve as a powerful tool for setting the mood, reinforcing key messages, and increasing the film's emotional appeal. Teachers should encourage students to critically reflect on their music choices and consider how different tracks might change the mood or meaning of their films. The use of sound, in conjunction with visuals, is a key element in crafting a compelling, multi-sensory educational message.

Submission and Peer Review

After finalising their films, students export the videos and upload them to a shared drive, where they can be submitted for assessment. This final product serves as a summative assessment of the students' ability to conduct research, think critically, and apply video editing techniques to communicate a relevant social issue. To promote a deeper level of reflection and collaboration, teachers may extend the activity by having students upload their completed films to an online forum where they can provide constructive feedback on their peers' work (Lang et al., 2017). This peer review process not only encourages critical analysis but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning.

In a secondary context, it is important to model appropriate etiquette when providing feedback. Teachers should establish guidelines for constructive criticism, ensuring that students focus on positive aspects of the work while offering suggestions for improvement in a respectful manner. This aspect of the activity allows students to practice literacy skills and engage in collaborative dialogue, further enhancing their communication abilities.

Pedagogical Frameworks: SAMR Model

The activity described in this project falls within the **Redefinition** level of Puentedura's (2006) Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) model. At the Redefinition level, students engage in activities that would not be possible without the use of ICT. In this case, students use digital tools not only to source, sequence, and edit high-quality video clips but also to incorporate professional-level audio elements that contribute to a cohesive and engaging final product. The ability to access stock footage, collaborate digitally, and incorporate diverse media types represents a significant enhancement of traditional classroom assignments. This model emphasizes the importance of leveraging technology to create new, transformative learning experiences that go beyond the capabilities of conventional educational tools.

Conclusion

This activity, which involves creating a short film addressing a contemporary issue faced by teenagers, serves as a powerful example of how technology can be integrated meaningfully into the classroom. Through this project, students gain practical experience in video production while simultaneously developing their research, critical thinking, and communication skills. By combining digital media production with social issue awareness, the project empowers students to engage with real-world problems in creative and

impactful ways. Furthermore, it highlights the potential of ICT to transform learning experiences, making education more relevant and engaging for the digital generation.

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