

Podcasts Expand Classroom Walls

Teachers are creating podcasts as a way of telling their stories, flipping their classrooms, and archiving classroom lessons.

BY JEFFREY BRADBURY
From *NJEA Review*

Wednesday, September 30, 2015, was the second international Podcast Day, an event celebrated not only by podcasters, but by students and teachers in classrooms around the world. This year, I was happy to share my passion for podcasting with 5th-grade students in two elementary buildings at Westwood Regional School District. Through the use of Google Hangouts, we connected our classrooms and interviewed our superintendent, Ray Gonzalez, who did a great job answering some tough questions on the

spot about what it takes to run a school district.

Traditionally, a podcast is rigidly defined as a piece of audio or video media that, when combined with an RSS feed, can be subscribed to by a worldwide audience. In education, however, the term podcast can be used with any type of recorded learning media. Teachers everywhere are creating podcasts as a way of telling their stories in their schools, flipping their classrooms, or archiving their classroom lessons.

**Best Practices
in Creating Podcasts**
1. Use a good microphone.

Jeffrey Bradbury (teachercast@gmail.com) is technology integration coordinator for the Westwood Regional School District, Bergen County, NJ, and creator of TeacherCast.net, TeacherCast University, and Educational Podcasting Today. Condensed, with permission, from NJEA Review, 89 (November 2015), 41, the official journal of the New Jersey Education Association.

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Here are two classroom microphones that I recommend:

- The Snowball microphone is very lightweight and USB powered. It can easily plug into any computer or iPad (using the camera connection kit) and its 360° recording makes it perfect for classrooms.

- The Yeti microphone is heavier and sturdier than the Snowball, yet also features 360° recording. It can easily plug into any computer or iPad, as long as you have a powered USB hub and camera connection kit.

2. Have a plan. When creating media, it is always best to have a plan of attack. I don't always recommend writing a word-for-word script, but I like to think of podcasts the same way I think of lesson planning: Have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

- First, introduce yourself and thank the audience for listening. Briefly explain what the show will be about and how the audience can communicate with the show.

- The middle is the body of the podcast. Identify and expand on your topics, but be sure to limit them. (Three is a good number of ideas to tackle.)

- To close out your podcast, review all the topics covered, thank the listeners, and remind

them how to communicate with the show. You may also want to add some closing thoughts.

3. Have fun. Podcasting is all about creating content. It's not a race for numbers, and it's not about which podcaster did a better job. When we created our podcast in Westwood, we were setting up an experience where 5th-graders were given the rare opportunity of speaking with the superintendent. We created a scenario that turned into something that resembled a game of 20 questions. The fact that we recorded it was simply a bonus.

Additional Advice

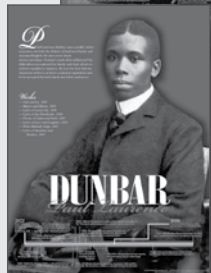
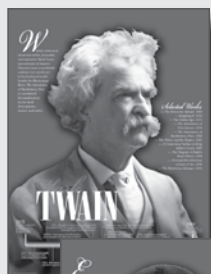
One of the best reasons to create and share digital media is to introduce your students to the fact that global classrooms have no walls. We can create content or share an experience that not only connects with students inside the classroom, but with students outside too. Podcasting is about giving students a voice and showing them that we all have a story to be told.

If you are interested in learning how to listen and consume podcasts and in learning how to create podcasts of your own, check out the resources found at "Educational Podcasting Today," a page on TeacherCast.

net, an educational broadcasting network I created to assist educators. You will find advice, tricks, and links to equipment, apps, and other tools that I recommend.

Are you an educator who commutes to work? Are you an educator who is looking for new and innovative ideas for your next class, faculty meeting, or community event? Check out

some podcasts today. If you are looking to learn more about podcasting, or participate in a podcast, I encourage you to reach out and be a guest on my next show by emailing me at feedback@teachercast.net. I'm happy to have you on the show! You can subscribe to the podcasts at www.TeacherCast.net/itunes and www.TeacherCast.net/youtube. ■



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