Communication

Creating Instagram Videos

Tools for creating videos for Instagram

Utilising BYOD for AVA

Given that many students carry smart devices in their pockets and bags, you might as well take advantage of the powerful apps that these devices use. Many schools have implemented Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies for use in your classroom. Using smart devices in your classroom helps teach students to use everyday technology, a direct curriculum requirement in many syllabus documents.

Instagram in AVA

As we all know, students love using smartphones! So why not take advantage of smartphone content creation apps by asking students to create informative short videos about their AVA projects and upload them to Instagram? Every day in your classroom, students gain new insights and make their interpretations of how the world works. Here is a fantastic opportunity for students to use their devices as a creative outlet and share their knowledge in a medium they love.

So, how could Instagram be useful for teaching AVA?

Documenting learning

With a point of their camera and some simple content creation apps, your students could be documenting the AVA experiments, the challenges and questions raised in your classroom for other classes to learn from, plus they're a good reflection tool in their own right.

Creation of student challenges

Using Instagram as the medium, you could set a communication challenge for your students to explain a given concept to their peers.

Instagram allows you to publish videos up to 60 seconds in length. While you can get students to upload raw video to Instagram with no editing, it's nice to teach students how to use a couple of apps to make their science video much better. Of course, free apps may limit the scope of editing; however, here are two free apps that could come in handy:
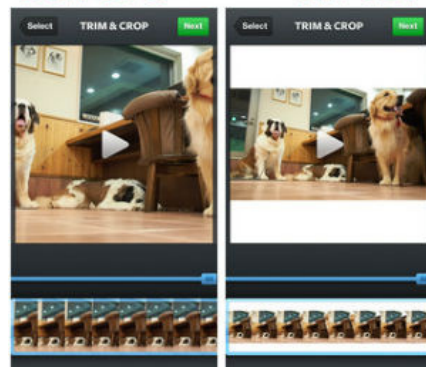
1 Squareready for Video

An issue with working with Instagram is that the videos are square rather than 16:9 ratio. If you are unsure how to crop your video to a square aspect or how to add top and bottom borders, you can still use Square Ready for Video. Like many free apps, it does have in-app purchases; however, you can pay to have them removed. Additionally, you must convert your entry to .mp4 /MOV file format.

Tools for creating videos for Instagram

2 Magisto

Available on iTunes and Google Play, Magisto is a free video editing app that does the editing for you (!). Simply select the raw video file, add a soundtrack and a title and the editor stitches it all together.

Dropbox

If you create videos on your PC, it can be challenging to get these files to Instagram. A common workaround is to use Dropbox instead. First, convert your video file to a .mp4 file and then upload it to Dropbox. Now on your smart device, open Dropbox, select the .mp4 file you uploaded and then export it to Instagram.

Students using a laptop

The raw video created by students does not just have to reside on Instagram. Your students could upload the same video to your classroom blog or pass it across to upload it onto your classes YouTube or Vimeo account. Also, students can upload 6.5-second videos using Snapchat. Snapchat has become a major social media outlet for students, and its popularity cannot be ignored. Of course, there are significant issues around how content created on Snapchat disappears once viewed, subsequently opening up the platform for potential cyberbullying and other inappropriate behaviours. As such, I recommend that you discuss the pro & cons of this platform with your school administration first.

So, what AVA challenge activity could you get your students to document in your classroom with the above in mind? It does not have to be the entire project, and perhaps you could showcase snippets of the in-class activity or use it for your AVA challenge pitch, just like Shark Tank! No matter what you choose, make sure you adhere to your school's social media policies. Above all, make sure the students have fun with it!

Happy teaching,
Ben Newsome