

Cora James, Oklahoma

Using iTunes and free Podcasts in the classroom

An engaging way to begin class every day is with a bell ringer. As my students come into the classroom they are expected to enter three or four sentences after a brief activity that is designed to focus them on the days topic or as a review of previous material. I also use these starters to help illustrate how what they are learning in class is connected to the world and scientific community around them. There is a large variety of free podcasts that are available from the iTunes store. They are published by various science focused organizations including NOVA, NASA, The Discover Channel, The History Channel, Scientific America and numerous other organizations. These podcasts are available over a range of topics including health, evolution, ecology, astronomy, technology, and many other topics. Most of them are about five minutes in length but there are more detailed ones that are longer and some are under two minutes. I find these to be an excellent resource that engages student interest. I will give a brief demonstration during the share-a-thon.

- It does take some time to build up a library of podcasts but when established they are saved to your computer and can be used for years.
- Initially you will need to establish an iTunes account on the computer you use in the classroom.
- You will need an LED projector
- After establishing an iTunes account you go to the iTunes store and search the podcasts area for science podcasts. You can narrow the search to your topic of preference.
- When you find an interesting podcast just subscribe to it by selecting it and clicking on subscribe.
- The number of episodes varies by publisher. Some podcasts post several times a month and some are infrequently updated. You can choose to download which episodes look interesting to you by reading a brief description of each one.
- After downloading the episodes they can be organize by topic. I have folders and subfolders arranged by class and them by large topics from that class. For example I have one folder called Bio I and within that are several subfolders such as evolution, ecology, genetics, etc.

Questions?

Cora James

Haskell High School

Cjames@haskell.k12.ok.us