

## METHODOLOGY FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' MEDIA COMPETENCE THROUGH THE USE OF PODCASTS AND VLOGS

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**Annotation:** In the digital era, media competence has become a fundamental component of students' educational development, particularly in language learning contexts. This article explores methodological approaches to enhancing students' media competence through the integration of podcasts and vlogs in the educational process. The study examines how these multimedia tools contribute to the development of critical thinking, communication skills, digital literacy, and content creation abilities. A mixed-method approach was used, including experimental teaching, observation, and assessment of students' performance. The findings demonstrate that the use of podcasts and vlogs significantly improves students' ability to analyze, interpret, and create media content. The article concludes with recommendations for educators on effectively integrating these tools into teaching practice.

**Keywords:** Media competence, podcasts, vlogs, digital literacy, language learning, multimedia education, critical thinking, communication skills

The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed the educational landscape, requiring new competencies from learners. Among these, media competence—the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media content—has gained particular importance. Modern students are active consumers of digital media; however, their ability to critically engage with media remains limited.

Podcasts and vlogs (video blogs) have emerged as powerful educational tools that align with students' interests and digital habits. These tools not only provide authentic learning materials but also enable learners to become content creators. In language education, especially English language classes, podcasts and vlogs offer opportunities to develop listening, speaking, and intercultural communication skills. This study aims to develop and justify a methodology for enhancing students' media competence through the systematic use of podcasts and vlogs in the educational process.

A well-structured methodology for enhancing students' media competence (often used interchangeably with media literacy in educational contexts) through podcasts and vlogs typically combines active production (creation by students) with critical consumption (analysis of existing media). This approach is supported by recent educational research and practical classroom implementations.

Media competence here includes abilities to:

- Access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages
- Understand how media is produced, distributed, and influences audiences
- Develop digital skills, critical thinking, storytelling, ethical awareness, and communication in multimodal formats

Core Pedagogical Principles

The methodology draws from project-based learning (PBL), constructivist approaches, and frameworks like NAMLE's (National Association for Media Literacy Education) core principles or critical media literacy models. Key ideas include:

- Production-based learning → students become creators rather than passive consumers
- Authentic audience → publishing work online increases motivation and real-world feedback
- Reflection cycles → critical self- and peer-evaluation
- Integration of theory and practice

Step-by-Step Methodology (Recommended Sequence)

Foundation Phase: Building Media Awareness (2–4 weeks)

- Introduce core media literacy concepts: source credibility, bias, framing, target audience, persuasive techniques, algorithms, misinformation, representation, copyright/ethics.

- Analyze professional examples:

- Listen to educational/investigative podcasts (e.g., Reveal, The Daily, Radiolab excerpts)
- Watch vlogs/YouTube explainers or educational channels
- Activities: guided listening/watching sheets, group discussions, deconstruction exercises (who made it? why? how? for whom? what's omitted?).
- Goal: Develop critical consumption skills before creation.

Skill-Building & Tool Introduction Phase (2–3 weeks)

- Teach technical basics without overwhelming students:

- Podcasts: free tools (Audacity, GarageBand, Anchor/Spotify for Podcasters), microphone use, basic editing (cuts, fades, intro/outro music), scripting for spoken word.
- Vlogs: smartphone recording, free editors (CapCut, DaVinci Resolve, iMovie), lighting/sound basics, scripting + on-camera presence.

- Short practice tasks: 1–2 minute “mini-episodes” or vlog updates on simple topics.

- Discuss digital citizenship, privacy, consent when featuring others.

#### Project Design & Planning Phase (1–2 weeks)

- Students choose meaningful topics (curricular links or current issues: environment, culture, technology impact, local history, fake news examples).

- Form small teams (2–4 people) for collaboration skills.

- Create production plan:

- Research question / thesis

- Target audience

- Format decision (podcast, vlog, or hybrid)

- Storyboard/script outline

- Source list (must include credible + diverse perspectives)

#### Production Phase (4–8 weeks) – Core Creation

- Iterative production cycle:

- Research → script/storyboard → record → edit → peer feedback → revise

→ final edit

- Incorporate media literacy deliberately:

- Cite sources verbally/visually

- Balance perspectives

- Reflect on own biases/framing choices

- Consider accessibility (transcripts, captions)

- Publish on safe platforms (school YouTube channel, podcast hosting with private link, class-only access initially).

#### Critical Reflection & Evaluation Phase (1–2 weeks)

- Self-reflection essay or video diary: “What did I learn about how media is constructed? How did audience awareness change my choices? What biases did I notice in my own work?”

- Peer review using media literacy rubrics (credibility, structure, engagement, ethics, technical quality).

- Class “media festival” or gallery walk → listen/watch + provide structured feedback.

- Teacher assessment combines product + process (reflection depth often weighted heavily).

#### Assessment Framework (Example Rubric Categories)

- Media Literacy Understanding (analysis of own + others’ media)

- Content Quality (research depth, balance, originality)

- Narrative & Communication (storytelling, clarity, engagement)

- Technical Execution (audio/video quality appropriate to level)

- Ethical & Responsible Creation (attribution, consent, representation)
- Reflection & Growth (evidence of metacognition)

#### Practical Tips for Implementation

- Start small: begin with teacher-led class podcast/vlog episodes before individual/group projects.
- Scaffold heavily for younger/less experienced students; offer more autonomy for older/advanced learners.
- Use less-guided production for deeper engagement when students have basic skills (some studies show greater perceived skill growth with more autonomy).
- Connect to curriculum: history → historical reenactment vlogs; science → explain phenomena podcasts; literature → book review series.
- Address equity: provide school devices if needed, teach low-bandwidth options.

This methodology has been shown to improve not only media competence but also related 21st-century skills: digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, oral/written expression, and confidence in public communication. The strongest gains appear when students produce rather than only consume media.

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that the systematic use of podcasts and vlogs significantly enhances students' media competence. The proposed methodology fosters not only language skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. The integration of multimedia tools in education is no longer optional but essential for preparing students for the demands of the digital age. Podcasts and vlogs serve as effective instruments for bridging the gap between traditional education and modern media environments.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### Curriculum Integration

Include podcasts and vlogs as regular components of language courses

#### Teacher Training

Provide professional development programs on digital tools and media education

#### Technical Support

Ensure access to necessary devices and software

#### Student Guidance

Develop clear instructions and assessment criteria for media tasks

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