



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 11 to 12
About the Author: Created for MediaSmarts by Media Educator, Maureen Baron

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Making Media for Democratic Citizenship



This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & CREATE: A Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools:
<http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>.

Overview

In this five- or six-day unit, students create a video podcast to present balanced, unbiased perspectives on global development issues. They voice their perspectives through the language, codes and conventions of a visual medium.

This unit has been estimated as taking five days, but you may require more time depending on the previous background your students have in media production and global development issues.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- analyze contemporary crises or issues of international significance
- describe the topic, purpose and audience for media texts they plan to create
- produce media texts for a specific purpose and audience, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques
- use computers and multimedia technology to create a finished product

Activities Overview

Day One: Choosing a Topic

Activities

- a. Class discussion and definition of “developing nation” and “global development” (*optional*, 20 minutes)
- b. Reviewing the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout (20 minutes)
- c. Class discussion: choosing a topic (20 minutes)
- d. Class discussion: choosing an audience (15 minutes)
- e. Class discussion: identifying subtopics (15 minutes)
- f. Reviewing release forms (5 minutes)



Day Two: Pre-production

Activities

- a. Reviewing the “Pre-production” section of the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout (20 minutes)
- b. Brainstorming presentation formats (25 minutes)
- c. Group work: choosing a subtopic format (15 minutes)
- d. Reviewing scriptwriting (20 minutes)
- e. Reviewing storyboards and camera shots (15 minutes)

Day Three: Rehearsal

Activities

- a. Rehearsal (70 minutes)
- b. Reviewing release forms (5 minutes)

Day Four: Filming

Activities

- a. Shooting (75 minutes)

Day Five: Editing and Uploading

Activities

- a. Editing (55 minutes)
- b. Uploading (20 minutes)
- c. Evaluation

Preparation and Materials

- Consult the *Student Evaluation Rubric* and modify as needed
- Have lined paper available
- Ensure that you have Internet access and a classroom set-up that facilitates group work, including a station for teacher conferencing
- Obtain equipment for the podcast:
 - camera
 - microphones
 - computer
 - lights



- Ensure that you have podcast computer software applications, such as iMovie or Final Cut
- Photocopy the following handouts:
 - *Storyboard Template*
 - *What Is a Video Podcast?*
 - *Camera Shots*
 - *Parental/Guardian Consent Form*

Procedure

Day One: Choosing a Topic

On Day One, students will select a global development topic for their podcasts, determine their audience and choose subtopics for the individual groups to focus on.

Discussion of “developing nation” and “global development”

Note: This may be omitted if you have completed Unit One, Beyond Media Messages: Media Portrayal of Global Development.

Provide students with the following definition of a “developing nation”:

A country with a low standard of living, generally indicated by severe poverty, low income and education levels, high birth rate, and poorly developed social, economic, and technological infrastructure.

(PBS)

To make the concept more concrete to students, explain that many people in developing nations lack many of the basic amenities we take for granted, such as plumbing, clean drinking water, education, health care, and reliable electricity or public sanitation. Stress that we generally use the term “**developing** nation,” and give some examples of nations that have advanced significantly in providing these amenities in different ways (South Korea in economic terms, India in terms of democracy, Bhutan in terms of transition to modernity, etc.). Touch on the differences between the term “developing nation” and the older term “third world”: what negative stereotypes are associated with the older term?

Discuss with the class what might be meant by the term “global development”. What might be various aspects of global development? (For example food aid, disaster relief, promoting women’s rights, building infrastructure and ensuring access to clean water.) How can countries like Canada be involved in helping less developed nations become more developed? What types of people and organizations, other than governments, may be involved in global development? (Examples include individuals, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and celebrities drawing attention to a cause.)



What is a video podcast?

Distribute the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout to the class and ask what they know about video podcasting. Explain to the students that they will be making short video podcasts on global development issues, and that this handout will be their primary resource for technical information on creating a video podcast.

Choosing a topic

Divide the class into production teams of four or five students. Each team should have the following roles:

- Timekeeper – times each speaker according to whatever time the teacher or class decides, thereby ensuring that no one person monopolizes the production meeting
- Recorder – records major points, as in minutes, raised in the production meeting
- Traffic director – keeps track of who speaks after whom to ensure that every student has the opportunity to speak
- Reader – reads the minutes of the group's production meeting to the teacher during the teacher conference
- Pitcher – makes the “pitch” / presentation / tries to sell the topic to the class

Ask each member of the production team to investigate a global development issue for the podcasts and associated presentation format ideas. The issue may come from earlier units or from research for this unit. The purpose of the podcasts should be to encourage and inspire viewers to get involved in the issue.

Each member of the production team will develop an idea into a 60-second “pitch” that he or she will make to fellow group members. Direct each group to vote on which issue they will pitch to the class as the subject of the class podcast. Have each group pitch their idea to the class, and ask the class to vote to choose which final global development issue will be the topic of the class podcasts.

Students may find ideas for topics at any of the following web sites.

- Taking It Global, www.tigweb.org
- Canadian International Development Agency Youth Zone, www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/youthzone
- Youth Noise, www.youthnoise.com
- Global Youth Action Network, <http://gyan.tigweb.org/>
- National Youth Leadership Council, www.nylc.org
- Action Without Borders, www.idealists.org
- United Nations Global Teaching and Learning Project, <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/>
- Unite for Children Unite Against AIDS, www.uniteforchildren.org/
- Roots and Shoots, www.rootsandshoots.org
- Voices of Youth, www.unicef.org/voy/
- Ontario Council for International Cooperation, www.ocic.on.ca



Choosing an audience

Once the key topic of the podcast has been decided, hold a class discussion to narrow and characterize the audience for this podcast. Use the five Ws:

- Who are they?
- What do they like?
- Where do you find them?
- When do they enjoy watching video?
- Why would they want to see the podcast?

Other demographic data could include:

- age
- gender
- significant interests, such as:
 - media
 - entertainment
 - social activities
 - education
 - health
 - social action or causes
 - politics
- economics-disposable income

These data should create a picture of the expected target audience.

Identifying subtopics

Have the class brainstorm different aspects or subtopics within the selected global development issue. Each of the production groups from Day One should select a different aspect or subtopic for their podcast. (If time allows, you may revisit the material covered in Unit Three, *Finding and Authenticating Online Information on Global Development Issues*.)

Release forms

Distribute release forms to all students. Explain that the forms must be signed by the students (if they are 18 years or older) or their parents/guardians (if they are under 18), to allow them to appear in a public podcast. Tell students that all release forms must be signed and returned before each group can begin filming.

Day Two: Pre-production

On Day Two, students will be introduced to podcast production. They will select a format for their podcasts, write a script, and prepare a storyboard and camera shot list.



Discussion on pre-production

Review the “Pre-production” section of the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class. Explain that proper planning is the key to making a successful podcast, and talk them through the section entitled “Start with a plan.”

Brainstorming presentation formats

Have the class brainstorm different presentation formats that may be used for the individual groups' podcasts. For example:

- interviews
- testimonials
- first person accounts
- music recitals
- journalistic reports
- commentaries
- how-to instructions
- discussions
- panel presentations or exchanges
- interviews with or presentations by subject matter experts
- demonstrations or modelling
- audience participation, such as town hall meetings
- images
 - still images
 - video footage
 - animation
 - camera animation over a still image

Choosing a subtopic format

Before they research and write their script, have each group decide what format they will use for their podcast. Each podcast should be between three and five minutes and should include an introduction, three to five key points, and a summation.

Reviewing scriptwriting

Review the “Script” section in the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class. Direct each group to write the script for their podcast, following the roles they were assigned on Day One. Once the script is written, have them rehearse it to ensure that it is within the allotted time frame (three to five minutes).



Planning interviews, storyboard and camera shot list

Go through the “Storyboards” section in the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class. Distribute the *Storyboard Template* and *Camera Shots* handouts, and have each group create a storyboard and shot list for their podcast. Approve the storyboards and shot lists through conferencing with each group.

Day Three: Rehearsal

On Day Three, students will rehearse and make final preparations for their podcasts.

Rehearsal

Go through the “Finalizing your plan” section of the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class. Schedule rehearsals, both with and without the technology. The storyboards and shot lists may have to be adjusted based on the results of the rehearsals.

While they are rehearsing, have students make sure that no logos or other copyrighted or trademarked material will appear in their podcast. Remind them that this includes logos on clothing.

Reviewing release forms

Ensure that all release forms have been signed by students or their parents/guardians. Provide extra release forms to any groups whose podcasts include anyone outside the class: everyone who appears in any podcast must sign a release form.

Day Four: Filming

On Day Four, students will film their podcasts.

Shooting

Go through the “Production” section of the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class.

Remind students that no copyrighted or trademarked material, including logos on clothing, may appear in the podcast.

Have each group shoot their podcast, following their storyboard and shot list.

Day Five: Editing and Uploading

On Day Five, students will edit and upload their podcasts.

Editing

Go through the “Post-production” section of the *What Is a Video Podcast?* handout with the class. Have students edit the individual segments and then edit the segments together. Add opening titles, music and ending credits.

Publicize the podcast to the target audience.

Uploading

Upload the podcasts to the class Web site or school network, as appropriate.



Evaluation

You may use the *Student Evaluation Rubric* to help you evaluate the students based on the documents they have created, your observations during their work times, and an assessment of their developing abilities in the following areas:

- comparing different viewpoints regarding global development issues
- presenting and articulating information and ideas orally, visually, concretely or electronically regarding their beliefs and perspectives on global development issues
- acquiring and evaluating sources of information
- presenting ideas, information, themes, opinions, issues and/or experiences in media texts
- using effective work methods
- using information and communication technologies



Video Podcast: Parental/Guardian Consent Form

This form must be completed by all participants appearing in the video podcast or credited in its production, and signed (by parent or guardian for participants under the age of 18).

The form must be returned to the school before filming can begin. Please submit one form per **participant**.

Participant

School Name: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Age: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Email Address: _____

We/I hereby grant _____ (hereafter the *school*) the right to:

(Please check one. **Participants under 18 years of age must have this filled out by a parent or guardian.**)

use a photograph and/or recording produced on film, video, audio/tape of my child or ward aged _____.

use a photograph and/or recording produced on film, video, audio/tape of myself. I am 18 years or older.

In granting these rights, we/I understand that we/I hereby release the school and its employees from all actions, causes of actions, claims and demands, except for those arising from the negligence of the school and its employees.

Signature of Participant (if 18 years or older): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if under 18 years): _____



What Is a Video Podcast?

A video podcast is a video file distributed over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers.

How do you create a video podcast?

A video podcast can be created on a cell phone, a video camera, a webcam, or any device that records video. The process can be as simple or complex as you wish, edited or unedited, with music or without.

Pre-production

Start with a plan

The first thing you want to do is ask yourself some key questions, such as:

- What is the main message you want to convey? Will it be fiction or non-fiction?
- What style (realism, stylized, abstract) tone (serious, light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek) and genre (drama, documentary, docudrama, mockumentary, comedy-parody, satire or slapstick) will best connect your audience to your message?
- What visuals and technical elements, such as sound or camera angles, will support your story and help get your message across?
- What other elements may affect your story such as location, people who can help you and specific props? Sometimes it is a wise choice to plan your ideas around these elements.

Interviews

If you are writing interview questions, these questions should:

- Elicit conversational answers and not single word answers like yes or no
- Lead to a discussion or exchange
- Provide information
- Create controversy
- Quell or dispel controversy
- Elicit questions from an audience

Make sure to formally invite any interviewees to participate and verify their credentials.

Script

Once you have worked out the details of your main message and have an idea of how you hope to get the message across visually to your audience, it is time to commit your ideas to paper. Essentially you will be making a script that will be the blueprint for your video podcast. In the script you need to identify how the sequence of images and audio (dialogue, sound, music) will appear.



If you are creating a non-fiction podcast, then your script will be quite a bit different than a narrative one. Ideas may shift considerably based on the words and actions of the people you interview or the events you are using. Your script will be a list of events and images that you need to collect and record. Remember that if you are using images or sounds that someone else produced or recorded, you will need permission to use them in your podcast.

Storyboards

Once your script is complete, you are ready to create your storyboard. Don't worry about whether you can draw realistically. Many talented filmmakers create very simple drawings. Storyboards are important for many reasons, including:

- They help solidify the images you want to capture. The process of creating storyboards makes you focus on each sequence, the type of shot, camera angle and camera movement. Please refer to the handout *Camera Shots*.
- They serve as an excellent communication tool. You can show others (especially the people who are working with you) exactly how the story will unfold. Words can have many meanings and implications, which can cause confusion. A visual representation is much clearer and easier to understand.
- They make it easy to select the order in which you choose to shoot your project. When reviewing your storyboard, make a note of the shots that are similar enough to be covered by the same camera position. For example if your storyboard shots 4, 9 and 15 are close-ups of your subject sitting in the same location, then all three shots could be recorded one after the other.

Shot list

A shot list is the order in which you plan to shoot your podcast. List your shots in order of location and match ones that have a similar set-up.

In addition to the shot list, you may want to create lists for your sound effects, props, costumes and equipment.

Finalizing your plan

Here are some quick tips to consider before starting the production phase:

- Make sure you have charged the batteries for any equipment you will be using.
- Bring extra batteries, extension cords, roles of electrical and masking tape, and extra videotape or whatever format you are recording.
- When picking your locations:
 - Be sure you have permission to film at the location you choose. If you are filming at your school, you will need permission from your teacher or principal. If you are filming at a business or a private home, you will need permission from the owner. If you are shooting in a park or a public location, you may need a permit. If this is the case please have a teacher assist you.
 - If your location is indoors, make a note of the accessibility, location and number of electrical outlets.
- Make a note of what the light and sound is like at your chosen location. Are there any elements (water from a stream, traffic noise, a hum from a ceiling fan) that will cause a distortion in sound? Will you need additional lights for proper illumination?



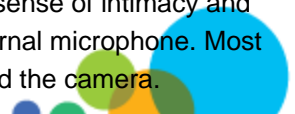
- If you plan to film outdoors, pay attention to the weather forecast three to four days in advance. You may need to plan around the weather or change the shooting day.
- Do not include scenes containing physical conflict, violence or weapons of any kind. If you plan to shoot a scene of crisis (verbal arguments, emotional distress or staged injuries) in a public place, take extra precautions such as notifying proper authorities, acquiring special permits, involving certified professionals and posting public notices. Please have your teacher assist you if you are planning such a scenario.
- Give advance notice of when and where you will be filming to the people who are helping. Let them know in advance what their roles will be.
- Make sure to let people appearing on camera know that they should avoid clothes that have visible logos or brands, as these are copyrighted images.
- Review your camera's operating manual. Make sure you are familiar with the key functions that you will need, and practise using the camera before the day of recording. Bring the camera's operating manual with you in case you need to troubleshoot.
- Have your pre-production notes with you at all times as they will keep you on track while shooting.

Production

Camera

Here are some quick tips when working with a video camera:

- Check the lens periodically to make sure it is free of dust and hair. Use the lens cap when you are not recording.
- At each location perform a white balance. This is a way of ensuring the camera registers colours in a proper manner. Each location will have its own unique lighting scenario, which creates different hues. To perform a white balance, zoom in on a white sheet of blank paper and select the white balance button (or select it from the menu).
- Use a tripod. Tripods will give you steady, professional looking shots that will be easier to match when editing. However, if your intent is to make your story feel realistic (like a home video, documented footage or police drama) then you may prefer a hand-held approach. Practise all camera movements before you shoot. When recording, don't stop until after you complete the motion.
- Use manual focus. Although automatic focus ensures everything is sharp, you run the risk of losing focus if there is movement near the lens or a change in lighting. To avoid these problems, set the camera to automatic focus, and then zoom in on your subject. Once your image is in focus, switch the focus to manual and zoom out to re-establish your original framing. Your subject will now be in focus for the duration of the shot.
- When setting up for filming, a good practice is to tape down the cords with electrical tape so that people will not trip on a cord and hurt themselves, or unplug or damage equipment.
- Keep a log of all your shots. Include information such as shot number, duration of the shot, and whether you felt it was a good take. This will save you time in editing.
- Keep the subject close to the camera. Your podcast in its final form will be viewed online in a smaller screen size. Extreme long shots will be difficult for your audience to see. Close-ups create a sense of intimacy and importance, and make sound recording easier if you are relying on your camera's internal microphone. Most video camera microphones will not pick up much sound beyond what is directly around the camera.



- Record longer versions of each shot than you need. You can always edit each shot down, but you can't make it longer in post-production. Beware that with some video cameras, the tape may roll back when you stop recording, losing some of the footage.
- If your subject is moving either through or out of a frame, wait until she or he leaves the frame before you stop recording.
- Take extra shots for cutaways. These come in handy during editing to insert between sequences that don't quite match up. Extra shots can be a close-up of a person, prop or hand movement. If you need to establish a location, using shots of the setting, such as an exterior of a building, is an easy way for your audience to identify the location.

Lighting

Lighting can help your project look professional. Here are a few quick tips.

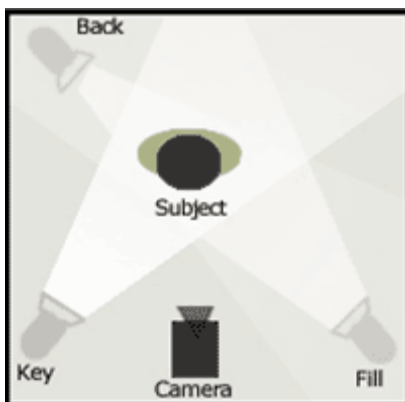
Working with natural light

- When it comes to making judgements on lighting, trust your video display and not your eyes. Eyes automatically adjust to light levels in ways that lenses can't. That is why a bright sunny day with lots of natural light appears clear and crisp to us, while on a camera it may appear overexposed and washed out. The best time to shoot outside is when the sun is not directly overhead.
- If possible, during interior shots avoid windows—especially placing your subject in front of one. The bright light from outside will make it hard to see your subject. You may need to cover windows and introduce artificial light.

Working with artificial light

Try using a three-point approach:

- The main light used to illuminate the subject is called the key light. The key light is usually the most intense light in the set-up and is placed at a forty-five degree angle from your subject and the camera.
- The fill light is the secondary light used to offset any shadows created by the key light. The fill light is located on the opposite side of the camera from the key light.
- A back light, a light pointed at your subject from behind, is used to distinguish your subject from the background.



Sound

Sound is extremely important. Audiences are often more forgiving of poor quality video than bad sound. Here are a few quick tips that will help you get the best sound possible and additional options for editing:

- If the sound is distorted, cracks or is too loud, then your subject is too close to the microphone. If you are using an independent sound recorder, your levels are too high.
- If the subject is too far away, the audio may be soft and blend into the background noise. If your subject is too far or too close, the sound will be unusable during editing.

Post-production

Editing

Your options during editing will vary depending on what software you use. Here are some general tips:

- Give yourself a lot of time to edit. You've worked hard to get to this point and you don't want to be rushed during the final important phase.
- Make sure the computer has more than enough space for your project. This includes original footage, extra files such as music, and the final product. If space is limited, refer to the shot log and use only the footage you need.
- Keep it simple. Once a scene has made its point, move to the next scene. Don't include shots just because they are interesting. Let the story be the focus. The podcast is three to five minutes in length so don't get carried away with transitions or special effects.
- If things are not working, try experimenting. Sometimes just changing around sequences can enhance or clarify the story.

Adding audio

- Use music to create the mood. You will most likely need to create the music yourself, have it created by a friend (or a friend's band) or use royalty-free music.
- Don't get carried away with sound effects. You want sound effects to blend into the scene and enhance the environment rather than distract the audience.
- If possible include background sound, recorded on location, to help fill in gaps in the soundtrack.



Camera Shots

A television program is made up of thousands of pictures, called shots, each of which must be carefully planned. To make television programs more interesting, various types of shots are used.

Camera Distance

There are three main shots describing how near or far the camera is from the subject. A **close-up** shows only one part of the subject, usually in great detail. Close-ups would include shots of a person's face, the paws of a dog walking down a path, a hand on a doorbell, or a tree branch. A picture showing half of the subject, such as a character from the waist up or the back end of a car, is a **medium shot**. A **long shot** shows the whole subject: a person from head to foot or the entire car. Any of these shots can show one subject or more at the same time.

These three shots are used for specific reasons. An **establishing shot** at the beginning of a scene tells viewers where they are; for example, a long shot of a car driving up to a hotel or a close-up of a restaurant sign. To show the effect of one person's words or actions on the other people in the scene, a **reaction shot** is used.

In general, television is a close-up medium: things look better in close-up because the screen is small. However, mixing the shots provides variety and gives information needed to keep the story moving.

Camera Angle

The angle from which a shot is taken is another way to give variety as well as information. A **high-angle shot** positions the camera above eye level, looking down on the subject, which consequently appears insignificant, weak, helpless or small according to how extreme the angle is. At **eye level**, the impression is neutral. A **low-angle shot** has the camera looking up at the subject, which then appears important, powerful or domineering, again depending on how exaggerated the angle is. Usually the camera looks at the subject, but occasionally the camera shows what the subject is seeing. This is a **reverse-angle shot**.

Camera Moves

Another way to give television programs variety is for the camera to move. When the camera changes its position by moving left or right, this is called **tracking or trucking**. Changing the camera's position by moving it forward or backward is known as **dollying**. When the camera stays in the same position but turns left or right, this is **panning**, and when it turns up or down, this is known as **tilting**. Even when the camera is stationary and not turning, it can appear to move closer to or farther from its subject; by using a special ring or lever on the lens, the cameraperson can **zoom in or out**.

Although these moves are useful, they should not be overused or they will lose their effect. In fact, any camera movement must be planned and rehearsed so that it will be smooth and in tune with the action.



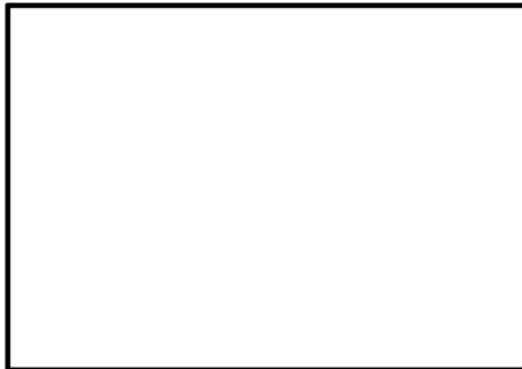
Storyboards for the Production: _____ Page ____ of ____



Shot # _____
Action: _____

Sound: _____

Notes: _____



Shot # _____
Action: _____

Sound: _____

Notes: _____



Shot # _____
Action: _____

Sound: _____

Notes: _____



Shot # _____
Action: _____

Sound: _____

Notes: _____

Student Evaluation Rubric

	Below Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge / Understanding	Fails to demonstrate an understanding of the different purposes and uses of online information	Shows a beginning understanding of the different purposes and uses of online information	Shows a developing understanding of the different purposes and uses of online information	Shows a competent understanding of the different purposes and uses of online information	Shows a confident understanding of the different purposes and uses of online information
Thinking / Inquiry	Fails to show an ability to evaluate online information on a global development topic	Shows a beginning ability to evaluate online information on a global development topic	Shows a developing ability to evaluate online information on a global development topic	Shows a competent ability to evaluate online information on a global development topic	Shows a confident ability to evaluate online information on a global development topic
Communication	Fails to show an ability to find multiple sources of information on a global development topic and to determine which is most appropriate for a variety of purposes	Shows a beginning ability to find multiple sources of information on a global development topic and to determine which is most appropriate for a variety of purposes	Shows a developing ability to find multiple sources of information on a global development topic and to determine which is most appropriate for a variety of purposes	Shows a competent ability to find multiple sources of information on a global development topic and to determine which is most appropriate for a variety of purposes	Shows a confident ability to find multiple sources of information on a global development topic and to determine which is most appropriate for a variety of purposes
Application	Fails to show an ability to apply different search skills and sources to researching a global development topic	Shows a beginning ability to apply different search skills and sources to researching a global development topic	Shows a developing ability to apply different search skills and sources to researching a global development topic	Shows a competent ability to apply different search skills and sources to researching a global development topic	Shows a confident ability to apply different search skills and sources to researching a global development topic

