Ms. Kamburov

12th grade American Government or Civics

**Cyber-Activism & Political Participation**

**Essential “Guiding Questions” of the Lesson**

How do we participate in the government of the United States? What is cyber-activism and is it an effective form of political participation?

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Addressed in the Lesson**

* **SS.912.C.2.2**: Evaluate the importance of political participation and civic participation.
* **SS.912.C.2.8**: Analyze the impact of citizen participation as a means of achieving political and social change.
* **SS.912.C.2.10**: Monitor current public issues in Florida.

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will identify & define major forms of political participation in the United States.
* Students will identify & define “cyber-activism.”
* Students will evaluate the usefulness of cyber-activism as a form of political participation.
* Students will respond to a current Florida public issue via cyber-activism.

**Lesson Content**

Political participation in the United States can take many forms. The most conventional & accessible form of participation has conventionally been ballot voting. Other forms of participation include protesting, writing letters to the government, organizing demonstrations, protesting and lobbying, etc.

With the advancement of technology, we now have an additional and more accessible form of political participation – cyber-activism. As the internet has gained increasing popularity and availability throughout the world, many political dissidents have used cyber-activism to spread revolutionary ideas. The spread of ideas has become infinitely easier with the availability of the internet and media, and thus we have an important new avenue through which to voice our opinions and attitudes about government. In addition, a citizen does not need to be of voting age to participate in cyber-activism. As long as a person has an internet connection, he or she can voice opinions and attitudes with ease, no matter the age or location of that person.

**Student Grouping**

Students will be seated in rows facing the Smartboard in order to see the presentation. Students will participate in whole-class discussion to encourage deep-level thought processing and critical thinking about content. Individually, students will complete a cyber-activism assignment and comment on each other’s assignments.

**Methods**

PowerPoint presentation – efficiently presents content & lead discussion

Class discussion – ensures understanding of content presented and allows for elaborative, deeper thought

Social networking via Facebook – involves high student engagement and interest in demonstrating lesson content, provides a product to evaluate

**Activities**

*Opening*

Begin class by posing the question “How do we participate in government?” Have students raise their hands to briefly discuss several political participation options. Use the first slide of the PowerPoint to pose the question. Allow 5 minutes.

* Ensure that all the forms of political participation on the second slide are briefly discussed during this time.

*Main Activities*

Move on to the 3rd slide of the PowerPoint and pose the question “What is cyber-activism?” Allow 5 minutes to discuss.

* Show the video using the link on the 3rd slide. Pose & discuss student answers to the questions following the video. Allow 15 minutes.
* Move on to the 4th slide and briefly discuss issues written on the slide affecting Florida as well as allowing students to address any other present issues in Florida. Allow 15 minutes.

*Closing*

For the remainder of the class, discuss the night’s homework assignment (written on the next slide) and allow students to begin working on it (if time & resources permit).

* If you have not already done so, create a class Facebook page for students to use for the assignment.
* Review the assignment instructions with students found on the 5th slide & be sure to also post them to the Facebook page.

*Important Questions to Ask*

1. How do we participate in government?
2. What is cyber-activism?
   1. How is it different from cyber-terrorism?
3. Can cyber-activism help reform governments?
   1. How can we use it to address local & state issues in Florida?
4. When is cyber-activism most effective?
5. What do we need to engage in cyber-activism?

**Materials**

PowerPoint presentation – used as primary method of content delivery

Smartboard/projector – in order to display presentation

Class Facebook account – necessary for completion of the assignment, integrates both technology and political participation demonstration via cyber-activism

Internet connection – to view video link from the presentation

Class laptops/laptop cart reservation/computers (if available) – in order for students to begin completion of assignment at the end of class

**Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated for class participation in discussion as well as the clarity and thoughtfulness of their response on the class Facebook page. Facebook is a daily part of many students’ lives, and thus it is important to integrate as much technology and personal meaning into our classrooms in order to gain maximum student engagement. Using Facebook for this assignment also allows students to experience cyber-activism by doing cyber-activism.