

Lesson 3: Beginning Podcasts

By Molly Harrison

Context: After beginning their novels at home (and the introduction to propaganda, continuing from the beginning of the dystopian unit), the students will begin working in their literature circles to discuss their novels.

Objectives: Students will be able to (SWBAT):

- Students will be able to make summaries and personal inferences/opinions about the text.
- Students will be able to make predictions and dispute peer's predictions based on textual evidence.
- Students will be able to write about and discuss the role of technology in their novels.
- Students will be able to implement the use of podcasting technology (recording, playing back, editing, and posting).

Preparation for Classroom Interaction

Room arrangement: The room will be set up in small circles, spread around the room for students to work on their podcasts. We will also give students the options to work in the hallway/ other rooms (if available) so they are able to talk and record without too much interfering noise.

Lesson introduction:

To begin this lesson, we would have students do an individual journal time at the start of class. We would pose a "themed" question for the literature circles' daily talk, but they would use the journals as personal reflection time first.

An example of a possible journal question:

How do you see technology or science affecting the plot in your novel? How is this different or similar to technology you've seen today? Make a prediction about what conflicts you think this technology will pose through the rest of your novel.

Lesson development/description of activities:

-After the journal, we will do a short model of how to use the recording devices and upload them to the computer (we estimate that this will take approximately 10 minutes).
-For the remainder of the class period, students will work in their literature circles to discuss the posted theme of the talk (in this case, technology, based on the journal question), as well as more case-specific questions that will be printed out at their circle.
-During the discussion, students will record their opinions and points on the novel.

Rules for participation:

-One way to insure that each student will be able to participate is incorporating journals into the lesson; this way, each student will have at least one personal reflection on their text.

-In the literature circles, we will require that each student speaks during each podcast (however, we will not be strictly "marking" them, just facilitating by observing the discussion and asking questions at appropriate times).

*Students will take turns throughout the unit to use the technology aspect of podcasting (ie. One week, someone will be in charge of the recorder, then it will switch etc.)

Teacher's plan for facilitating interaction:

At this time, the teachers would be providing the question prompts for discussion (ie. The journal question, as well as questions at each lit circle tailored to their specific novel and also talking about broad themes). We would circulate groups to offer more questions about topics we have seen in other groups (to make connections and responses to their peers' thoughts), as well as aiding in any technological questions they may have about creating the podcasts.

Assessment tools and procedures:

For further assessment, we will assign the students a type of “homework”; they will be asked to listen to their podcasts on a computer at home (they will be posted online, but we will also allow students who do not have this access to take the recording devices home with them if possible). After listening, they will reflect on their group’s discussion based on the following questions¹:

1. What questions were left unresolved for you?
2. Which moments of the discussion were the most compelling?
3. What parts of the discussion might help convince a peer to read your novel?
4. Where did the discussion lag, or fall apart?
5. What are the key ideas emerging in your conversation of this novel?

We would not ask the students to formally write their thoughts down, but to come prepared to respond and share their ideas with their literature circles.

Materials:

- Copies of enough novels for each group member
- Enough recording devices for each group
- Computers for each group to upload their podcasts to
- Printed copies of questions for each group to reference

¹ These questions are taken from our professional text *Teaching the Neglected “R”*, from the article “Plugging in to Twenty-First Century Writers” by Sara Kajder. She suggests these questions as a type of reflection to help the podcasting process.