THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

COMPUTERS: ENGAGING OR JUST FOR ENTERTAINMENT

SARAH ANN KREPPS
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Jamie Myers
Associate Professor
Thesis Supervisor and Honors Adviser

Anne Whitney
Assistant Professor
Second Reader

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.
ABSTRACT

Research consistently finds that today’s students live in a digital world and that an increasing number of teachers are using technology in their classrooms, but does technology help to engage students in the classroom? This case study examines the impact of using computers in two Advanced English 10 classrooms on the students’ engagement with a unit on *A Tale of Two Cities*. A variety of data, including teacher observations, journal reflections, and results of student activities, was used to study the effect of technology on student engagement. Results indicated that some assignments using computers and the Internet fostered engagement while others fell short. In addition, in other instances, traditional assignments were also successful at engaging the students. Implications include that while computers in the classroom have some benefits, further research is required to better understand their effect on student engagement.
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Chapter 1

Introduction: The Road to My Unit

During the summer before the 2009-2010 school year began, I met with my Professional Development School (PDS) mentor, to discuss how the first few days of school would proceed as well as how she envisioned the entire school year progressing. She had a very organized plan for the year, where the Advanced 10th grade texts would be read chronologically. Being a former PDS intern, my mentor informed me that many interns chose to teach their unit in January or February, which according to her plans, meant that I had the option to teach Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*. I was excited! After taking a course at Penn State the year before on the Victorian novel, I thoroughly enjoyed reading the genre, and only thinking about how much I enjoyed reading Victorian literature, I agreed to teach the unit.

Around the beginning of November, I started planning the unit. At this point, after observing and teaching for a couple months, I realized that my love for the Victorian novel would not be enough to capture the interest of my students while reading *A Tale of Two Cities*. I asked my mentor as well as other Advanced English 10 teachers what they had done for their units on *A Tale of Two Cities* in the past. My mentor gave me a huge, intimidating stack of manila folders: her teaching materials for *A Tale of Two Cities*. Other English teachers gave me select assignments that had worked well in the past in their classrooms; I also asked for ideas on English Companion Ning, a website “where English teachers go to help each other,” and searched online for resources (“English Companion Ning”). As I accumulated materials and had

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1 The Professional Development School is a year-long, entirely school-based, teacher education program.
discussions with other teachers in the English office, I realized that *A Tale of Two Cities* was a challenge for any teacher, let alone a student teacher. In addition, I also learned from talking to other teachers that, as a teacher, you have to convince the students, from the start, that a book is worth reading. In order to “sell” a book, you have to do something to light a spark in the students to want to read it. From these conversations as well as from the past couple months of being in the classroom, observing my mentor and the students, and teaching my own lessons, I had a much more realistic view of teaching the novel than I did when I first discussed the idea during the past summer.

Around the same time, I was thinking about what I wanted to inquire on for my iMovie project. Using technology, specifically the laptop computers, in the classroom interested me. However, the computer cart of laptops in my classroom was rarely used, and how could I explore computer use in the classroom when the students were not using the computers? Then, I realized that I would have control over how much the computers were used during my unit on *A Tale of Two Cities*. However, the issue was far larger than I could cover for my iMovie project. But if I incorporated using computers into my unit, I could study their effects on the students during the unit for my inquiry project. I kept thinking that everyone likes to use computers, so why not use them to bridge the gap between the students and the novel? After further thinking about these ideas, I began to question the assumption that everyone prefers using computers during the writing process, which led to my inquiry for the iMovie project.

From experience and research, I knew that young adults, like my Advanced English 10 students, frequently used computers and the Internet outside of school for entertainment. However, would using computers in the classroom help to engage the students in my Advanced

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2 One of the requirements of the PDS is to create a short film using iMovie that addresses an issue in the classroom.
English 10 classes during the unit on *A Tale of Two Cities*? Or would the computers fail to have the same effect when not used for entertainment?

**Pedagogical Goals**

For the *Tale of Two Cities* unit, as well as for all other units, an overall goal was to engage the students in the activities and materials. I define engagement similar to how it is defined in “Plugging In,” a summary of educational research from North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, a government sponsored clearinghouse. First, engaged learners are “responsible for their own learning” (Jones). They find some interest or value in learning the material, set goals for themselves, and subsequently, generate motivation to interact with the material. In addition, engaged learners are also “energized by learning” (Jones). The students not only decide to learn, but they “derive excitement and pleasure from learning” (Jones). Finally, engaged learners are “collaborative” (Jones). They realize that their voices are valued, and in turn, “they value others and work with them skillfully” (Jones). Engaged learners are not students who are passive learners, those who mentally detached from learning, or those who refuse to participate in class activities. Therefore, during the unit, I was looking to see if my students were motivated to complete the activities, were excited about learning, and were interacting not only with the material but also with fellow students and myself.

Consequently, some of my other pedagogical goals are incorporating collaboration, accessibility of information, authentic activities, student interests, and organizational skills. First, collaboration, as mentioned above, is a tool that engaged students use to learn. Through collaboration, students learn to work together and negotiate others’ thoughts and opinions. Consequently, through collaboration, a student learns to value others’ contributions and realizes
that the other students value his or her voice. These interactions aid students in becoming engaged learners.

Next, information should be easily accessible for all students. The easier it is for a student to access information, the greater chance students will take the time and effort to obtain the material. In addition, another aspect of accessibility is distribution. Equally important is how easy it is for my students to access materials I have for them and, in turn, how easy it is for me to access their work. However, another important component is equal accessibility and distribution. All students should have similar opportunities in accessing materials; one area where this issue arises is with Internet access. Fortunately, all of my students had computer and Internet access at home, which eliminated some chance for inequality. In general, my students seem to expect accessibility, so when information is not easily accessible, they lose interest and are not engaged.

The third goal, incorporating authentic activities, is closely tied to student engagement. In order to cultivate authentic interest or value in learning the material and to energize the students, classroom activities need to have more significance than simply being for a grade. The activities should mirror life outside the classroom. Therefore, these activities should incorporate elements that people use in their everyday lives. In addition, for these activities, students need to have an authentic audience, meaning the teacher should not be their sole audience. When students see how activities relate to the “real world,” authentic engagement follows.

Another pedagogical goal is creating opportunities for students to incorporate their interests. Engaged students “derive excitement and pleasure from learning,” and what better way to begin the process of creating engaged learners than by starting with something that the students already find exciting (Jones). Whether students are fascinated by music, sports, or other
passions, they enjoy the chance to bring their interests into the classroom. When activities allow students to involve their passions, they find more value in the assignment. Consequently, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn.

The final goal, incorporating organizational skills, is key to student success. Engaged students take responsibility for their learning, and in order to do this, they need to develop organizational skills. Also, organization plays a larger role when students are collaborating; if a student is not organized, not only is the student affected but the other collaborators are affected as well. Teachers can play a role in the development of these skills.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: The Current State of Digital Learning

Digital Technology and Media Usage

In today’s age, digital technology plays a significant daily role in the lives of many Americans. More accessible than ever, digital media consumes hours of people’s lives each day, and children and adolescents are embracing technology and media at earlier ages than ever before (Rosen). In his article, “Welcome to the . . . iGeneration!” Larry Rosen discusses how digital media has infiltrated the lives of everyone from “older” generations such as the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X to “younger” generations such as the “‘Net [Internet] Generation,” which began in 1980 and is defined by “the importance of the Internet in the lives of these children, teens, and young adults,” and the “‘iGeneration,” named after all the devices with an ‘i’—iPod, iPhone, iTouch,” and encompasses today’s preschool and elementary school-aged children. Specifically, according to “several studies of thousands of children, teens, and their parents,” Baby Boomers spend about 9.5 hours daily with media while “Generation Xers” spend about 15 hours and “older Net Geners (18- to 29-years-old)” spend about 20 hours (Rosen). The “younger Net Geners” and “‘iGeneration” are divided by age and their media usage times range from about 5 ½ hours to over 20 hours (see table 1).

Table 1 Technology and Media Usage in Hours/Day by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>4 to 8 Years Olds</th>
<th>9 to 12 Year Olds</th>
<th>13 to 15 Year Olds</th>
<th>16 to 18 Year Olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours/Day</td>
<td>5:35</td>
<td>9:46</td>
<td>15:47</td>
<td>20:20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Larry Rosen; "Welcome to the . . . iGeneration!" *The Education Digest*, 1 Apr. 2010; Research Library Core; ProQuest; Web; 13 Mar. 2010.
However, all technology and media usage times are the result of adding the usage times of several different technologies and media including the following: online, on computer, email, IM/chat, telephone, texting, video games, music, and television (Rosen). Since people do not use a single technology or medium at a time, the actual time of simultaneous technology and media usage is less. Also, as seen in table 1, “all generations are using media and technology with the iGeneration and younger Net Geners leading the way” (Rosen).

These results are higher than the findings of a national study by the Kaiser Family Foundation:

Today, 8-18 year-olds devote an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes (7:38) to using entertainment media across a typical day (more than 53 hours a week). And because they spend so much of that time ‘media multitasking’ (using more than one medium at a time), they actually manage to pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes (10:45) worth of media content into those 7½ hours. (“Daily Media Use”)

These findings show an increase in the average time spent with media of 1 hour and 17 minutes from the average in 2004, 6 hours and 21 minutes. However, the total amount of media content consumed increased more from 8:33 in 2004 to 10:45 today (“Daily Media Use”).

With technology use prevalent and increasing in the lives of adolescents, many educators are seizing the chance to incorporate the same technologies into their classrooms in order to create engaging learning experiences that parallel students’ lives outside the classroom. This idea is also supported in the Obama administration’s first National Educational Technology Plan, entitled “Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology.” The plan states:

Just as technology is at the core of virtually every aspect of our daily lives and work, we must leverage it to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences, content, and resources and assessments that measure student achievement in more complete, authentic, and meaningful ways. (v)
Multiple digital resources exist, but at the core of almost all of them is the Internet and, subsequently, the computer. At the click of a mouse, a wealth of information and resources are available including social networking, social bookmarking services, video sharing websites, email, podcasts, course management systems, chat rooms, discussion forums, video games, and Google Docs. All of these Internet resources are widely used by technology savvy people in society, and more and more educators are expanding their use of these resources in their classrooms.

**Internet Resources and Their Use in the English Classroom**

The Internet has changed the way people live in many ways. For example, the Internet has changed the way people access information and communicate. Studies at The Center for a Digital Future at the University of Southern California have found that “adolescents consider the Internet to be their most important resource, surpassing all other media including television, radio, newspapers, and books” (Strom). In fact, adolescents spend about 15 hours per week using the Internet, and “87% of students go online daily and describe the Internet as a virtual reference library that helps them quickly locate information, communicate with friends, and satisfy curiosity” (Strom; Rosen). Consequently, many teachers are incorporating technology that used to be “off-limits in the classroom” (Martineau).

However, in the last couple years, the use of technology in the classroom is changing from a “one-way medium to a multidirectional ‘conversation’” through the use of Web 2.0 (Johnson). In her article, “Primary Sources and Web 2.0: Unlikely Match or Made for Each Other,” Mary J. Johnson, an educational consultant in Colorado Springs, Colorado, describes the Web 2.0 Revolution:

Enter Web 2.0—a set of powerful, open, usually free, egalitarian, multimedia-
friendly communication and publishing tools existing on the same old Internet backbone...This new Web accepts and celebrates the individual and collective output of student learning in every content area. With Web 2.0, the very nature of student work has changed from student-teacher interaction to student-community interaction. The classroom has begun to look more like a studio in which students create their own content and then publish it.

In short, Web 2.0 expands the classroom “beyond the ‘walls within schools that inhibit collaboration’” (Thomas). In the following sections, a few of the Web 2.0 tools that teachers are using in their classrooms today are described.

Wikis

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online*, a wiki is “a type of web page designed so that its content can be edited by anyone who accesses it, using a simplified markup language.” Therefore, anyone can “freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser” (Leuf). In addition, hyperlinks can be embedded in the text of a wiki, and many of the pages are interlinked (Leuf). The most well known wiki is *Wikipedia*, “a multilingual, web-based, free-content encyclopedia [that] is written collaboratively by largely anonymous Internet users who write without pay” (Help:About).

According to James Strickland, a professor at Slippery Rock University, a wiki can be a valuable resource in the classroom because it “invites teamwork” and “can have embedded in it such things as podcasts, photo essays, and other little Web widgets” (Strickland). Specifically, wikis allow students to participate in online collaboration through asynchronous communication (Johnson). Also, because a wiki has “features that support the act of revision, including instant editing in the main page, a ‘history’ page that outlines the revisions the page has gone through, and a ‘discussion’ page that allows for the author(s) of the page to carry on conversations with responders,” it can be an effective digital writing tool to help students in the revision process.
A specific way that a wiki can be used while reading a text is for the students to keep a character’s blog. For example, when reading *Romeo and Juliet*, “different groups of students could maintain and revise Romeo’s daily blog, or Juliet’s, or the Nurse’s” (Strickland). In addition, in “Plugged In or Tuned Out,” the author describes a professor’s use of a wiki in her classroom:

She splits students into groups, and after each class session, one group is required to write a report on the day’s discussion and post it on the wiki. The student reports must contain interpretation and analysis, and by the end of the semester, they are expected to link to reports from earlier classes. (Blankenship)

As shown in these applications, wikis can be useful in the English classroom.

I think wikis could be useful in the classroom because they address many of my pedagogical goals. First, with features that allow the user to quickly and easily add information, they allow for collaboration; in fact, in order to exist, wikis basically require collaboration. In addition, because wikis are online, anyone can access them at any time. Therefore, if my students were creating a wiki, I could go online and see their work once they finished. Also, wikis can be used to create an authentic activity. However, because anyone can view a wiki, parental permission is needed for students to participate in creating one. In fact, I was not able to incorporate an activity involving wikis because by the time I realized what a great resource wikis were, I did not have enough time to get parental permission.

**Blogs**

A blog, the shortened form of weblog, is “a frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites” (“weblog”). While some bloggers write about news, other people offer commentary in their blogs. In addition, others think of their blogs as an online diary.
or journal (“What’s a blog?”). Normally, a blog will contain “text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic.” The final defining characteristic of a blog is “the ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format” (“Blog”).

In her article, “What Classroom Technology Has Taught Me about Curriculum, Teaching, and Infinite Possibilities,” Laura Christine Rochette relays her thoughts after implementing a blog into her tenth-grade American studies classes:

Yes, they can do this in discussion, but the nature of the class discussion forces students to edit, keep it short. The blog is expanded thinking. What is so different about the blog as opposed to an essay assignment? One student told me it was the lack of pressure that somehow turning in a paper intensified and writing a blog post did not, even though she still faced a deadline…A blog, with the tools available to quickly incorporate other material from files or the Internet, gives the student the freedom to create, and because of the level of engagement this entails, the writing, ironically enough, often is the student’s strongest, even if it is not always mechanically ‘perfect.’

Later, Rochette concludes that the students’ blogs may be stronger than normal writing because “the very nature of its being public challenges them to be at their best…they take risks that they may not feel comfortable taking in a paper or may not have the chance to take in a class discussion.” In addition, Strickland writes, “blogs can be easily read by classmates and teacher or shared via social networking. They can bring the solitary artist out of the tower and into a community of writers, one that is probably more conducive to writing.” He continues by suggesting having “students assume the identities of characters…and ghost-write their blogs” in order to incorporate a blog into a literature unit.

However, while some people like Sarah Kajder, Assistant Professor of English Education at Virginia Tech, “[believe] that ‘real writing’ for kids happens not in classroom assignments, but in blogs and other electronic sites,” others are skeptical of the value of integrating blogs into the
English classroom (Strickland). One opponent to classroom blogs is Rachel Bowser, a professor at University of South Carolina Beaufort who states:

‘I’ve had colleagues who have used classroom blogs as stand-ins for response papers, and those things often don’t succeed because they don’t really get students involved in a compelling conversation…when we send students to their computers at home to do something connected to their class work, we give them one more thing to check. Unless you give them an incentive to participate, they’re probably not going to get that invested.’ (Blankenship)

However, despite Bowser’s reasoning, I tend to agree with others who believe blogs are excellent classroom resources. While creating a blog is not as collaborative as creating a wiki, a blog’s comments feature allows for some interaction with others. An additional benefit of the comments feature is that feedback is immediate. Also, because of being online, the blogs are easily accessible. For example, currently, my students respond to journal prompts at the beginning of the period each day for five minutes. However, their ideas are stuck in their notebooks; with the use of blogs, the students’ ideas could be discussed further among one another. Additionally, blogs have organizational tools built-in, such as organizing entries by date and the ability to search, so the students could easily find specific pieces. However, like the wiki, I was unable to use blogs in my classroom because I needed parental permission since the accessibility allows anyone to view a blog.

Social Networks

Social Network Sites (SNSs) are defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd). While most social networks provide ways for users to “leave messages on their Friends’ profiles” and to send private messages similar to
emails, they “vary greatly in their [other] features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology.” In addition, they also vary in their privacy settings (boyd). Currently, two social network sites that are popular among American adolescents are Facebook and MySpace; in fact, research estimates that high school students “spend one to two hours a day communicating on social networks” such as these (Rosen). Another popular social network is Twitter, which “only lets users communicate in 140-character bursts” and, thus, is also a microblogging service (Blankenship; Martineau).

Social networks can also be used in the classroom. For example, many schools use “ePals, one of the more popular sites, [which] boasts it’s ‘the Internet’s largest global community of connected classrooms,’ linking more than 11 million students and teachers from 191 countries” (Martineau). Other social networking sites such as Saywire “allow students and teachers to e-mail each other and instant message (IM), connecting as digital pen pals across time zones and national borders” (Martineau). In addition, social networks also provide a way for students to share their blogs and other writing (Strickland).

Recently, in an article about social networking, Joseph Zeccola, a teacher at the Los Angeles Unified School District, wrote:

We not only need to get our kids to think, we also need to invest in who they are. Only when they feel that we truly value them will they work for us…Like it or not [social networking] sites are now a part of our culture. Our students use them regularly, often religiously. We cannot eliminate them, nor should we try. Ultimately, they present a tremendous opportunity for us as teachers. We can use them as a means to invest in the identity of our kids.

However, while many believe social networks should be used in the classroom as a resource, many think that social network sites are hurting students. For example, Kate Conrath, also a teacher at the Los Angeles Unified School District, writes:
“[Students’] growth in vocabulary becomes stunted because of the social networking explosion…We’re talking about a medium where ‘Il c u l8r’ is coin of the realm. Internet communications also have come dangerously close to replacing actual social interactions that underpin important functions, including small-group projects. Children lose the ability to pick up on nonverbal cues when they rely only on written text.”

Conrath also calls social networks “a major distraction with no viable benefit.” In addition, others believe that Twitter “eradicates [students] desire to spell correctly, use punctuation, or consider grammar” (Blankenship).

While I agree Zeccola over Conrath, I am not quite sure how exactly I would want to incorporate social networking into my classroom. Because of this as well as needing parental permission, I was unable to incorporate social networks in my classroom this year. However, I think that social networks could be useful in expanding the classroom community. Also, since most students already use social networks outside of school, students may view using them in the classroom as incorporating one of their interests, which could lead to authentic engagement. Further research is required to fully decide the usefulness of incorporating social networks into the classroom.

**Video Sharing Websites**

Video Sharing websites are websites that allow users to “watch and share originally-created videos,” and most offer their services for free (“About YouTube;” “List of video hosting websites”). While there are normally a few restrictions, users can upload their videos to share with other website users, who can use the website’s search engine to search for videos (“List of video hosting websites”). In addition, video sharing websites provide an opportunity for “amateur producers [to] share their videos with thousands [or even millions] of viewers” (“Video Share Websites Review”). TopTenREVIEWS, a website that reviews products and creates
“side-by-side comparison charts,” in their 2010 Video Share Websites Comparison Review, ranked YouTube as the overall best video sharing website. Metacafe, Break, and Google Video were ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively (“Video Share Websites Review”).

Research shows that “music becomes increasingly important as children move into adolescence” (Rosen). In fact, in a recent study, “seventh-, ninth-, and eleventh-grade students were prompted to identify which medium they would prefer to take with them on a desert island, music was selected over television, computers, video games, radios, books, newspapers, and magazines (Rodesiler). These facts prompted Luke Rodesiler, a former high school English teacher and current doctoral student at the University of Florida, to suggest ways of using music and music videos in the English classroom. In his article, “Turn It On and Turn It Up,” he says, “students can view thousands of videos at their discretion, and English language arts teachers can bring them into the classroom just as quickly and just as easily to invigorate conversations and facilitate learning.” Throughout the article, Rodesiler offers specific videos, all of which can be found on video sharing websites such as YouTube, to use in examining literary terms and social commentary as well as in prompting student writing. However, music videos are not the only type of videos that can be used in the classroom. Numerous, educational Internet videos are available on video sharing websites; teachers just need to search for them (Gilroy).

However, many people challenge the idea of using videos from video sharing websites in the classroom “because music [and other] videos often push the bounds of conventional taste and may include adult content” (Rodesiler). Rodesiler acknowledges this idea and reminds teachers to “select videos they find appropriate for the students they teach.” Another solution is to search video sharing websites that only have educational videos, including YouTube EDU,
TeacherTube, iTunesU, SchoolTube, and teachers.tv (Gilroy; “List of educational video websites”).

I see two possibilities for using video sharing websites in my classroom. First, if I incorporated an activity where students made their own videos, they could share them via a video sharing website. However, this would require parental permission. The other way that video sharing websites could be used in the classroom is by viewing videos from one, which I actually incorporated into my unit. While ease of accessibility played a role in incorporating them, the primary reason stemmed from student interest. Video sharing websites, particularly YouTube, have a tremendous collection of videos that cover numerous topics. Therefore, students were able to find videos that not only interested them but also related to the course material, which is explained in more detail in the Artifact Presentation sections. Overall, the use of video sharing websites was successful.

Podcasts

A podcast is “a digital recording of a broadcast, made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or personal audio player” (“podcast, n.”). According to Richard Byrne, in his widely read blog, “Free Technology for Teachers,” a common misconception is that one needs an iPod to receive and use podcasts (“Free Tech for Teachers”). This misconception may stem from its name; the word “podcast” is a combination of “pod,” derived from iPod, Apple’s portable media player, and “broadcast” (“podcast;” “Free Tech for Teachers”).

While relatively new, podcasting can be a great resource in the classroom. In his blog, Byrne describes how easy it is to integrate podcasts into the classroom:
All you need to do is download and install Itunes, for free, from Apple.com. All of the Podcasts on the Itunes store can be played right on your computer, whether you have a PC or a Mac does not matter. The Itunes store has thousands of free podcasts that are perfect for educators. In fact, the Itunes store has a section dedicated to free podcasts for educators.

In addition, podcasting can also be used for a writing activity; Strickland suggests, “writing may be done as scripts for podcasts.” Mary J. Johnson also supports this idea: “given a minimal investment in software and equipment, any student can become a podcaster.”

I also see value in incorporating podcasts into the classroom. While I have not investigated how useful or relevant the downloadable podcasts are, a worthwhile activity could center around students creating a podcast. First, the activity could involve collaboration if students worked in pairs or groups. In addition, once finished, the groups of students could share their podcasts with one another. During my unit, I actually planned to incorporate an activity where the students created podcasts. However, because of the confounding issue of time, I was unable to use the activity.

**Google Docs**

Google Docs is a “free, Web-based word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, form, and data storage service offered by Google” (“Google Docs”). However, what makes Google Docs different from using other offline office suites such as Microsoft Office or Apple’s iWork is the ability for “users to create and edit documents online while collaborating in real-time with other users” (“Google Docs;” “Google Docs Tour”). The free services are available to anyone with an Internet connection. Users simply go to the Google Docs page and create a free Google account. If a person already has a Google account to use Gmail, Google Docs is accessible using the same username and password. Then, one can upload documents from his or her computer onto Google Docs to create online versions of the documents or create a new document (“Google Docs
Tour”). Once a document is created, the person has full control of who can see the document and can “share instantly” by inviting others to edit or view; consequently, Google Docs sends emails inviting them to collaborate “in real time” on the document (“Google Docs Tour”). Therefore, when anyone edits the document, everyone else who has access to edit or view the document will see the changes immediately (“Google Docs Tour”). After a document is created, it can be accessed from anywhere. In addition, because the files are saved online, “you needn't fear local hard drive failures or power outages,” and past versions are also saved along with the updated document all in one place (“Google Docs Tour”). Just a few of the many other features include the ability to save and export, organize, and publish documents (“Google Docs Tour”). As Google Docs expands its features, more businesses and schools are using the services (“Google Docs”). If interested in more information, “the Google Docs team” has a blog, The Official Google Docs Blog, which provides updates as well as information on how to use Google Docs for numerous situations.

Google Docs also has begun to infiltrate schools. One reason for this is because “Google Docs allows students and teachers to draft documents and...to share and revise in succession and real time” (Thomas). In addition, Google Docs is useful for both teachers and students because “the program saves drafts automatically (including keeping a record of when the drafts are revised)” (Thomas). In addition, in a YouTube video made by Google, Google Docs in Plain English, the speaker explains how Google Docs can be helpful for a newsletter editor when working with local writers who want to contribute to the newsletter. When the writers send their drafts as email attachments, the editor reviews them and sends them back to the writers with comments. Sometimes, more than one draft is reviewed which creates multiple copies of the draft on both the editor and writer’s computers as well as quite a few emails. When
this happens, the editor might become overwhelmed in trying to keep track of all the versions that are being sent. However, the problem is solved with Google Docs, since emails are eliminated and only one document exists for both the editor and writer (Google Docs). The same holds true for teachers and students where the teacher is the editor and the students are the writers. Multiple examples of how Google Docs is being used for writing, peer review, and connecting English classes from different schools can be found on English Companion Ning.

During my unit on *A Tale of Two Cities*, I incorporated a few activities where Google Docs was used. In fact, two of the unit’s activities centered on using the online word processor. I thought the activities would be useful and decided to incorporate them because they met a few of my pedagogical goals. First, the students would have to collaborate with one another in order to complete the activity. In fact, for one of the activities, not only did the groups of students collaborate but also the class as a whole worked together on the activity. In addition, the Google Docs that the students created were available to each student. The accessibility also allowed for students to receive quick feedback from their peers and myself. Lastly, one of the activities was ongoing throughout the unit, but having the assignment online on Google Docs aided many students in remaining organized. The students always knew where to find their work and did not have the chance to lose the assignment. Overall, my experience using Google Docs in my classroom was positive.

**Classrooms for the Future**

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Education in the No Child Left Behind Act set a goal “to improve academic achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary schools” (Maninger). Consequently, the United States “experienced a steady increase in interest and investment in computer technology at the national, state, and local levels in education”
Pennsylvania took action in 2006 with Classrooms for the Future (CFF), an initiative focusing on “recognizing and embracing the need for high school reform, enabling teachers to use technology as an effective tool for educating students, and preparing students to enter and successfully compete in the ever-expanding high-tech global marketplace” (“About CFF”). Also, CFF aims to transform traditional high schools, or “School 1.0” into “21st Century learning environments,” or “School 2.0” (“About CFF”). There are many differences between the two (see table 2). “School 1.0” is teacher centered, where the teacher is a lecturer and the students learn in isolation, while “School 2.0” is learner centered, where the teacher is more of a facilitator and the students learn collaboratively (“About CFF”).

Table 2 School 1.0 versus School 2.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL 1.0</th>
<th>SCHOOL 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher centered</td>
<td>Learner centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content coverage</td>
<td>Learning and Doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing information</td>
<td>Using information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Facilitator/Co-Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole group configuration</td>
<td>Flexible grouping configuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single instructional and learning modality</td>
<td>Multiple instruction and learning modalities to include all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization and recall</td>
<td>Higher Order Thinking Skills - creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single discipline</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook dependent</td>
<td>Multiple sources of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers teaching to one learning style</td>
<td>Teachers addressing multiple learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning content</td>
<td>Learning how to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning isolated skills and factoids</td>
<td>Completing authentic projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The stated purpose of CFF is “to utilize research-based, technology-enabled instructional strategies to thrill, to inspire, and to capture the imagination of our students” (“Overview”). Consequently, CFF “creates environments for deeper cognitive development through inquiry,
real and relevant project-based learning, and differentiated instruction” (“Overview”). In order to achieve School 2.0, professional development is also needed. CFF requires:

- teachers and school leaders participate in extensive professional development on how to best harness the power of technology to increase student achievement and ensure students are ready for college and the high-tech global job market. The professional development activities include vendor provided face to face practice with equipment and instructional strategies, online blended study job-embedded courses for teachers and administrators and a half time instructional coach to assist teachers with just-in-time professional development. (“About CFF”)

However, CFF emphasizes that traditional classroom items such as “chalk, blackboards and textbooks are still essential components for educating students today” (“About CFF”).

Now, three years since CFF began, the initiative “has transformed the way high school teachers teach and how students learn in over 540 Pennsylvania high schools, affecting over 12,000 teachers and 500,000 students, by equipping English, math, science and social studies classrooms with enhanced technology, internet connected laptop computers for teachers and every student, and other state-of-the art resources” (“About CFF”). But has the initiative made classrooms more engaging and met other goals?

In the “Year Three CFF Report,” a comprehensive evaluation of “what CFF has achieved over the first 3 years of the programs implementation,” some of the key findings from the report include the following. First, the evaluation found that “students spend less time listening to the teacher and more time working independently, working in groups, and talking with the teacher one-to-one or in small group conversations...students are also spending more time ‘off task.’” As for student engagement, results varied. While “student engagement is reported as high in CFF classrooms” by observers, teachers and students reported a decline in student engagement and interest. Regarding changes in teacher activity, the report states, “teachers were spending significantly less time in whole class lecture and were spending more time working with
individual students and walking through the room observing, and interacting with students.” In addition, “the physical organization of some classrooms is changing, from the familiar pattern of desks in rows...to more classrooms organized as clusters of three to five desks, which promotes collaboration and group work.” The report also found that “significantly less time was spent in teacher lecture or demonstration and in teacher-led low level discussion, while significantly more time was spent in project or problem based learning, authentic learning experiences, and web quests.” In all, the study found that “participation in CFF classrooms does not appear to increase student interest in language arts, math, science, or social studies...[and] there is no compelling evidence that CFF is, at this point in its development, resulting in significant improvements in students’ 21st century skill development.”

At the school where the study was completed, CFF funding was awarded towards the end of the first year. The money was used to purchase laptop computers, laptop carts, mounted projectors, digital camcorders, and wireless infrastructure. All English classrooms, including my classroom where the study was completed, were given laptop carts. The laptops are Apple Macbooks and are loaded with current Apple software. The computers can access the school’s wireless Internet network. Also, my classroom has a projector, so the laptops can be connected to it using a dongle; once connected, the laptop’s screen can be projected on the projector screen. While using the computers, the students are only to be completing academic tasks, and the laptop use is limited to while in the classroom. Therefore, students cannot take the laptops outside of the assigned classroom. In addition, students are not allowed to personalize the computers. To logon to the computers, students simply select the “Student” logon. Students do not have individual usernames and passwords to logon to the computers.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The general purpose of this case study was to gain a deeper understanding of my students’ learning needs in order to improve the quality of instruction in my classroom. Specifically, the purpose of the case study was to answer the following questions:

- While research shows that students are using technology in their lives for entertainment, does using the computers in the classroom for instruction and activities help to engage the students during a unit on *A Tale of Two Cities*?
- Do the computers have the same effect when not used for entertainment?
- Do the computers distract the students since some may associate the computers with entertainment?
- Overall, how do computers make a difference in the students’ learning?

Setting and Participants

This case study was conducted at a large, suburban public high school located near a large, land-grant university. A total of 48 tenth grade students, who range in age from 15 to 16 years old, from two sections of Advanced English 10\(^3\) participated in the case study. Of the 48 students, 22 (45.8%) were male, and 26 (54.2%) were female.

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\(^3\) There are three English course options for tenth graders: English 10, Advanced English 10, and Advanced Honors English 10.
Procedure

The unit, Social Conflict: *A Tale of Two Cities*, took place over an eight-week period beginning in the second nine-weeks and ending in the third nine-weeks of the school year. However, because of in-service days, a snow day, a day celebrating African American Read-In Day, and a writing workshop day, only 32 days were spent on the unit material (a modified version of the unit calendar that I gave to my students can be found in Appendix A). Each day, classes met for 47 minutes. During these days, students discussed Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* as well as learned about the French Revolution, the social conditions of France during this time, and the conditions of England during Dickens’ time that motivated him to write the novel. Students also explored ideas such as justice and revenge, how political and social events affect individuals, how an individual’s character is developed or destroyed through crisis, how power and wealth can corrupt an individual, and how individuals negotiate the conflict between duty and desire. However, opposed to how the novel was taught by other teachers in prior years, I planned to incorporate a number of activities using the classroom’s laptop computers. But, I also planned some activities that did not involve using the laptops.

Limitations

There were limitations for the case study resulting from the choices made when developing the case study as well as from unavoidable issues. First, while I planned and taught some lessons during the first few months of the school year, the unit for this case study was my first to create, plan, and teach independently. Therefore, some of the students may not have been engaged because of my instruction and/or assignments. In addition, because I am a student
teacher, I have not had any formal computer training for the computers and their applications; also, I have not had any of the professional development associated with CFF. In addition, although I am not a novice computer user, I had never before used many of the applications that the laptops contained, so while I attempted to learn how to use the programs, I was not entirely familiar with them.

Another limitation was that I was given eight weeks to teach *A Tale of Two Cities*. However, for the first eleven days of the unit, the students were working on persuasive essays, a major assessment from the previous unit. Consequently, I had to adjust homework assignments and schedules for certain days to allow for outline review, essay drafting, and a peer review workshop. In addition, the students opposed reading the novel from the first day; it did not help that many of the student copies of the novel were in poor condition. Throughout the unit, many students stated that they could not relate to the characters or situations in the novel and that they did not see the value in reading the novel. Consequently, despite my efforts, many students did not read the text and came to class unprepared. In fact, one student did not read the novel at all.

Next, my mentor teacher required that I include the literary analysis as a final assessment. However, her decision was made after I had created a final project assessment. Therefore, we decided that both assessments would be included in the unit. However, because I had already planned the final days of the unit, the literary analysis would begin towards the end of my unit and continue on into the next unit.

Finally, I did not plan to give the students surveys to collect their thoughts about how engaging they thought the unit’s activities were. However, when analyzing the results of the activities, I realized that giving short surveys throughout the unit might have been beneficial.
Activities during Social Conflict: A Tale of Two Cities

During my unit, I incorporated numerous activities where the students used the classroom’s computers. However, I also found the technology very helpful as the teacher. I often used my laptop and the projector to show the class pictures of things from the novel. For example, some students asked what a wine cask looked like from TTC Book the First, Chapter 5, so I found a picture of one on the Internet and showed it to them. Before then, I tried to anticipate objects or other aspects of the novel that the students might not be able to visualize and found pictures of them. Some examples include a mail coach, a map of the route from London to Paris, and a blunderbuss. I also used the projector to give the class directions for assignments or questions to be discussed in small groups. This was especially convenient when I had more than one activity planned; I could have both sets of directions ready on my computer and just change the positions of the document windows to show one or the other.

Another helpful utility was Apple Remote Desktop, an application that allows users to remotely monitor or control other computers on the same network. I used Remote Desktop to monitor the students when they were using the computers. Sometimes, I just wanted to make sure they were on task while working on a project; other times, when they were taking a quiz, I wanted to make sure they were not looking for answers on the Internet. However, while Remote Desktop was great when it was working, many times, the application would close unexpectedly.

On the first day of the unit, I introduced A Tale of Two Cities (TTC) by showing a PowerPoint presentation, using the classroom projector, that I created on my Macbook; using the presentation as a guide for whole group discussion, I introduced and the class discussed concepts such as serial writing and historical novels as well as the French Revolution (see Appendix B). In addition, to help them visualize the characters in the book, I showed pictures of English and
French fashion from the novel’s time period. Afterwards, I introduced the unit’s first activity, the Flipbook.

*Flipbook*

Based on a worksheet from my mentor teacher, I created an assignment, similar to a WebQuest, where students, in pairs, would answer a set of given questions by consulting a few Internet Web pages (see Appendix C); then, students would use the information to create a PowerPoint presentation. However, because the previous unit lasted slightly longer than expected, I modified the assignment so students could do the project individually outside of class as homework. Also, because the students had their persuasive essay outlines due the following day and I did not want to prolong this introductory activity, I eliminated the PowerPoint presentation part of the activity. As an alternative, I gave the students three strips of different colored paper to create a flipbook, an idea I discovered while at the National Council of Teachers of English’s annual conference. To make the flipbook, you take three strips of evenly cut paper; I made the strips by cutting standard printer paper in half long ways to form 4 ¼ x 11 inch strips (see figure 1). Then, you stagger the sheets so the bottom edges of the strips are about an inch from the other strips’ bottom edges (see figure 2). Finally, you fold the strips over so the top edge of the front-most strip is about an inch above its bottom edge (see figure 3). Now, you have a flipbook! I also modeled a completed flipbook (see Appendix D). Then, the students used their flipbooks to record the information for the assignment. Despite the fact that the students handwrote their answers, the activity was still worthwhile because the students had to search for information on the Internet, a “real world” task that most people do when they need to explore a subject.
Character Google Docs

The Character Google Docs was a core activity for the unit. At the beginning of the unit, I used a program feature on the school’s course management system to randomly create five groups of students for each of the Advanced 10 classes. Then, for each class, I created as set of ten Google Docs. Nine of the Google Docs centered on major characters from *TTC*: Jarvis Lorry, Jerry Cruncher, Lucie Manette, Dr. Manette, Ernest Defarge, Madame Defarge, Charles Darnay, Sydney Carton, and Miss Pross (see Appendix E). The tenth Google Doc focused on secondary characters such as Gaspard, John Barsad, Roger Cly, Mr. Stryver, the Monseigneur, the Marquis St. Evremonde, and Gabelle (see Appendix F). In the past, teachers would give each student a packet containing similar pages to complete individually during the course of the unit.

For this unit, I chose five days (Days 6, 10, 17, 23, 26) throughout the unit, which normally fell after the students had just read chapters that focused on certain characters, to have sessions where the students would work in their groups to update the one or two character Google Docs that I assigned to them. The sessions were normally about 20 minutes, half the period, except for the first session, which was a full period. For the first two sessions that the
students worked on the character Google Docs, the groups only had one character to update. However, the remaining three times, the groups had two characters to update. Groups never worked on the same character twice, so by the end of the five sessions, every group had contributed to eight of the ten pages. This decision was made based on my pedagogical goal of equal access and distribution. Beforehand, to ensure that a group would not get stuck updating the same Google Doc two times during the unit, I created a schedule that listed each group along with which Google Docs the group would be working on during the five sessions throughout the unit (see Appendix G).

Additionally, as owner of the Google Docs, I was able to select which students were able to edit the pages. However, after a character Google Doc was edited the first time by a group, I allowed all students in that class to view the Google Doc. Consequently, the Google Docs contained all of the shared knowledge about the character, and the students could refer back to the pages to review when working on other assignments. Each session, I would give the students class time to work on the character Google Docs. I would post the list of the groups and which Google Docs each group was responsible for working on that session. In addition, I gave no direction as to how the students should work together. Each student would write his or her name in a different color from everyone else in the group at the top. Then, each student used the same color for the rest of his or her contributions to the Google Doc; the students were required to make at least four significant contributions each session. Because the students only had half the period, normally, to work on the Google Doc, I would leave the editing settings the same for an additional day or two, so the groups could add anything they did not have time to in class. While the students worked on the Google Docs, I circulated, answered questions, and helped students find passages in *TTC*. 
After each Google Doc session, after I had changed all of the students back to viewers (opposed to editors), I copied each Google Doc into a Word document to grade at a later time. Then, back in the Google Doc, I would copy all of the text to black, and delete the names at the top. Lastly, after the first session, before saving the page for the next session, I added the line, “Text in black is what has been contributed during past sessions” to each Google Doc. Then, before the second session, I told the students that all information was to remain on the Google Doc for the duration of the activity whether the information about a character was correct or whether the information was invalid because of changes in the character. Keeping all of the information allowed the students to see the progression of character development as well as their progression of ideas. In addition, I also told the students not to delete anything that other students had written, even if what was written was incorrect. Instead, I instructed the students to correct the error by adding a comment to clarify the information. I made this decision because if one student inaccurately perceived something about a character, other students probably did as well, and other students could benefit from seeing the clarifying note.

Creating and planning this assignment stemmed from my goal to incorporate collaboration into the classroom. Similar to a wiki, this Google Docs assignment required collaboration in order to be completed. Also, if successfully completed after each session, the Character Google Docs would provide equal and easy access for my students to extensive information on the novel’s characters. Finally, a contributing factor in deciding to use Google Docs for this assignment was Google Docs inherent organization, which would help the students to keep track of the important study guide. The possibility for these benefits contributed to my decision to use Google Docs for this assignment over using the traditional paper study guide.
Worksheets on Google Docs

A second way that I used Google Docs during the unit was to complete a worksheet. About once a month, as part of PDS, I attend an all day seminar, and consequently, I am absent from my classes. The first seminar fell on Day 12 of my unit, so I decided to have my students discuss the assigned reading, TTC Book 2, Chapters 12-14, in small groups. To prepare for my absence, I created an extensive worksheet to cover the literary elements and ideas found in the chapter (see Appendix H). Then, I uploaded two copies of the worksheet, one for each class, to Google Docs and shared it with the students, so they could all access and edit their class’s document. In addition, because of my views pertaining to equal access and distribution, I strategically divided the questions into five groups, so that each of the five groups of students would have questions of varying levels of difficulty to answer. Once my students created five groups, the guest teacher had to assign each group a number, (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5), so that the groups would know which questions to answer. The rest of the information for completing the assignment was at the top of the Google Doc. The students could read the directions, add their names next to their assigned group at the top of the Google Doc, and complete their questions. However, in the case that there were technical difficulties, I left a hard copy of the assignment with the guest teacher. Overall, in crafting this worksheet, the activity seemed worthwhile because of the collaboration involved as well as the other benefits mentioned for the Character Google Docs.

Pardon the Interruption (PTI) Presentations

In order to learn about the different aspects of the French Revolution that were relevant in our study of TTC, I modified an assignment I received from another English teacher. The PTI
Presentations activity, based on the popular television show on ESPN, required the students, in pairs, to research information on an assigned topic relating to the French Revolution (see Appendix I). Then, in order to somewhat replicate the circumstances on *PTI*, the pair had to create a script for a two-minute presentation on their topic. Finally, the students presented their findings to the class on the presentation day, Day 13. I assigned the activity and gave the students the assignment sheet/evaluation sheet one week before presentation day to allow the students some time to research their topics on their own. The same day that I introduced the activity, I passed around a sign-up sheet in both classes (see Appendix J), so the students could choose their topics. Then, on Day 11 and 12, I gave the students some time to work with their partner in class. Then, on Day 13, the partners, following the order listed on the sign-up sheet, presented after giving me back one of their evaluation sheets.

For the activity, a few different computer resources were used. First, the students used the Internet to conduct their searches for information. In addition, since the students had to do some work on the activity outside of class, I recommended that they used Google Docs, which allowed both partners to contribute to the scripts. Finally, while not required, some students used the classroom projector to show the rest of the class images relating to their topic.

When I first came across this assignment when looking through the materials other teachers had given me, I immediately wanted to incorporate the assignment. First, many of my students were involved in sports, so I knew some would be familiar with the television show, *PTI*. The connection between the television show and the assignment would incorporate an interest of these students and, consequently, could potentially lead to authentic interest. In addition, I decided to let students choose their partners, so they would be more comfortable collaborating during planning and presenting in front of the class.
Artifact Presentations

On most TTC discussion days, the class started by having one or two of the students present artifacts; the artifact could be any “text” that connected to an idea or ideas from the assigned chapters. People, in general, are constantly making connections between different events or aspects of their lives, so by finding and presenting a connection that they made between a “text” and the novel, the students would be replicating a process that they do every day while strengthening their understanding of the novel. I introduced the assignment, which I received from multiple teachers in the English department and modified, on Day 3 of the unit and gave students the assignment sheet and rubric, which the students kept and returned to me on their presentation day (see Appendix K). That day, I also passed around a sign-up sheet for students to choose the day they wanted to present; each day corresponded with two or three chapters of the novel that the presentations would cover (see Appendix L). However, students presented their artifacts on the discussion day following when their chapters were discussed in class. In addition, I modeled an artifact that I chose for Book 1, Chapter 1 of TTC.

I encouraged students to use the Internet, especially YouTube, to find their artifacts. In addition, since part of the assignment was to share the artifact with the class, students used the classroom projector to share their artifacts. In addition to presenting, a written explanation that explained the connection found between the “text” and TTC was required. Although not necessary, many students chose to write the written portion of the assignment on Google Docs, which shows that they had found some value in using the application.
Final Assessments

At the end of the unit, the students had two final assessments. First, the students had to complete a final project. The last week of the unit was basically devoted to the final project. Day 28 and 29 were days for the students to work, and Day 31 and 32 were presentation days. On Day 30, students did other activities because I was out of the classroom for my second seminar; however, the students also had time to work on their final projects at the end of the period. However, weeks prior, before creating the final project assignment sheet, I asked the students what they would like to do for a final project. I took their responses and created an assignment sheet with six options: talk show, chapter illustrations, soundtrack, iMovie, board game, and eulogies (see Appendix M). In giving them quite a few options, I intended to provide all of the students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge through a means that incorporated their interests. While some options involved collaboration, I also kept in mind that several students would not be in class for the work days because of field trips, so I made sure there were options for individual students. I introduced the assignment and gave the students the assignment sheets with all of the options at the end of the period on Day 25. I also told the students to think about which option they were interested in doing. Then, on Day 27, I asked the students to choose their project option and form groups. Finally, on Day 28, the students’ first work day, I gave the students rubrics that corresponded with their project choices (see Appendix N).

For the final project, two of the options, the soundtrack and iMovie, incorporated classroom technology. First, regarding the technological aspect of the soundtrack, students had to search for songs that reflected themes or ideas from the novel. Then, using iTunes or another music application, the students had to create a play list; the students were instructed not to use
YouTube since the site is blocked by the school’s Web filter. In addition, students had to make a CD cover using either hand-drawn images or computer images. For the iMovie, students had to use the computer program iMovie to create a 3-5 minute film reenacting a pivotal scene from *A Tale of Two Cities*.

In addition, after the final projects, students had to write literary analyses. While I simply used the assignment from past years, I made a few changes. First, instead of submitting their topics on sheets of paper, I created a Google Doc, one for each class, with a list of the students’ names and asked students to write their topic choice next to their name. In addition, I asked students to use Google Docs to write their outlines and drafts. Then, they could share their documents with me, which would address a pedagogical goal, ease of accessibility and distribution, as well as allow me to respond more quickly than if they used alternate distribution methods. During the days planned for conferencing with students about their papers, a number of students were going to be absent for various reasons. However, if the students were using Google Docs, I could still comment and collaborate with them on their drafts.

*Newspaper Project*

After finishing *TTC* Book 2, students, in groups of four or five, created newspapers that covered the storming of the Bastille on Days 20 and 21. Each student was required to write a major and minor piece for the newspaper. Major pieces included a news article, a feature article, an editorial, a letter to the editor, and a “Dear Abby” letter. Minor pieces included an advertisement, a political cartoon, an obituary section, a banner, and a horoscope. Because I knew some students would not be familiar with all of the newspaper components, I brought in newspapers and referenced specific articles as examples. After giving the students the
assignment sheet and explaining the project, I gave each group a group sign-up sheet to fill out indicating who would be responsible for what pieces (see Appendices O and P). Then, the students were to begin writing their pieces in Google Docs, as I recommended in order to increase accessibility of all parts of the newspaper as well as collaboration within a group. The students were to finish the pieces at home that night, if not finished. Then, the second day, the students could transfer their newspaper pieces to Microsoft Word or another word processor. Specifically, I recommended that students use one of the Newsletter templates in Microsoft Word. During both days, I planned to walk around the room and help groups with various issues relating both to the assignment and to using the computers.

Activities on the School’s Course Management System (CMS)

The school uses a free software package based off of Moodle to provide teachers with a way to extend their classroom online through “Internet-based courses and web sites” (“About Moodle”). On my course pages, I posted assignments, throughout the unit, for the students to complete. First, I assigned two reading responses. For each reading response, I posted a prompt for the students to respond to. Both reading responses did not require additional research, only to read the chapters that the prompts related to and respond in a short essay. The intended purpose for the reading responses was to get students to begin thinking about key ideas found within the novel. For example, students responded to the following prompt after reading Book the Second, Chapters 15 and 16:

One of the key themes of A Tale of Two Cities is that fate, the idea that things must happen in a certain way regardless of human attempts to change them, controls humanity. Dickens often uses the character of Madame Defarge to represent fate and to deny the idea that individuals’ choices can make a difference in life. Her knitting links her to three Greek goddesses, known as the Fates, who were in charge of the birth, life, and death of all people. One goddess spun the thread of
life, another measured it, and the third cut it. Examine the dialogue and
descriptions of Madame Defarge in Chapters 15 and 16 of this section. Look for
her attitudes about revenge, time, and individual choice, paying special attention to
the images she uses. Then write a short summary of how Dickens uses Madame
Defarge to represent the idea of fate. In your summary, use at least one quote
from the text to support your answer.

In order to respond, the students simply logged on to the school’s CMS, using their school
usernames and passwords, and clicked on their English course. There, they found a list of the
assignments that I had assigned. By clicking on the assignment, the students were able to upload
a document containing their submission to the reading response. Therefore, students completed
the reading responses in Microsoft Word; then, they uploaded the Word document onto the
course page.

In addition, I also administered quizzes via the CMS towards the end of the unit. The
quizzes were open-ended and asked the students to list and describe significant events from the
assigned reading; I chose this format to give the students every opportunity to share any
information they remembered in order to demonstrate that they had done the reading. The
students completed the quiz by typing their response in the text box underneath the quiz
question. When giving quizzes on the CMS, I had to consider the fact that students could cheat
not only by looking at neighboring computers but also by looking for the answer on the Internet;
to monitor the students more carefully, I used Remote Desktop. While I normally encouraged
using other resources to improve understanding, I only wanted students to share their ideas. If a
few students used other resources for the quiz, the other students would have unequal access of
information. Finally, I used the school’s CMS for other assignments. For these assignments,
students uploaded Word documents containing the completed assignments, the same way as for
the reading responses.
Finally, I also planned to use the CMS’s Grades feature to manage the students’ grades. When viewing all the submissions for an assignment, I could grade the student work using one of the given scales: complete or not, satisfactory, and points. In addition, the students would have immediate access to their grades after I submitted the grades.

*Comic Life and GarageBand*

Prior to the unit, I planned two activities, one using Comic Life and the other using GarageBand, that I was not able to implement for different reasons. First, I was very excited to create the Character Facebook Profile activity. For the activity, I modified another teacher’s Facebook Profile template, which she had made on Comic Life for another text, to work for *TTC* (see Appendix Q). Then, I planned on sharing the template with the students on my mentor teacher’s web page. From there, students were going to choose a character to complete the Facebook Profile for, save the file as a PDF, and send the file to me. However, a few days before I was going to assign the activity, I realized that the students could simply access the Character Google Doc for their chosen character and get almost all of the information from there needed to complete the activity. Therefore, the students would not be thinking critically about the character; instead, they would be copying information to complete the assignment. Because the students could be more productive doing other activities to enhance their understanding of the novel, I decided to skip this activity.

Another activity that I was excited for was having the students, in pairs, make podcasts using GarageBand. Students would have just read the end of Book 3, Chapter 7, where Charles Darnay is taken as a prisoner again and Lucie Manette, her father, and her child are left together in the house. For the assignment, students would write a script for a possible conversation that
the Manettes might have after the officials leave with Darnay. Then, students would record themselves reading the scene to create a podcast. However, because the day’s discussion, which was the most important activity to accomplish because it helped the students to begin to make connections and find significance in the text, took longer than expected and because the next day’s activities were equally important, I could not afford to complete the assignment as intended. Therefore, to fit the available time, I decided to simply have the students write scripts, the part of the activity where the students had to think critically about the text.
Chapter 4

Does using computers help to engage the students?

During the unit, I observed the students each day during classes and wrote reflections after class. Also, my mentor teacher observed the classes and wrote reflections of them. In addition, I videotaped some of the lessons, so that I could compare the recordings and my observations during class. For all of the unit’s activities, I was observing whether students appeared to be engaged in the activities or not. In other words, I was looking to see if my students were motivated to complete the activities, were excited about learning, and were interacting not only with the material but also with fellow students and myself.

After completing the unit and analyzing the results from the activities, I found that the answer to my question was yes and no. Sometimes, technology contributed to helping students become engaged in the material. Other times, using the computers did not help students to become engaged. In both situations, other factors such as the assignment, my instruction, the atmosphere, and the students’ preparedness affected the outcome.

Results of the Activities

Flipbooks

While creating the flipbooks, most students appeared to be engaged. The students got their laptops and went straight to work. One of the requirements of the assignment was to find an interesting fact about Charles Dickens or Victorian England that did not answer any of the questions, so I frequently heard a student tell others a random fact about Dickens or Queen Victoria. In addition, some of the answers proved hard to find, but the students helped one
another. When one student struggled to find an answer, another would help by informing him or her which website to consult. Thus, the students seemed engaged because they were excited to learn, and they interacted with one another. As for being motivated to complete the assignment, with the exception of one, all of the students completed and submitted the assignment, and the average of the two classes was a B. However, creating the flipbooks also seemed to engage the students. The classes worked together to make sure everyone was able to put the flipbook together. In addition, the majority of the students were excited about using colored paper.

The assignment confirmed that the Internet is a great resource to facilitate learning and to help engage students. While I was able to direct the students to certain websites with valuable information, the Internet also allowed the students to learn more about Dickens if they chose; some students added more detail than was required by the assignment. In order to find unique facts about Dickens that other classmates did not have, students browsed other websites about Dickens, which demonstrated that because of the ease in accessing information using the Internet, they wanted to learn more about the material on their own.

*Character Google Docs*

The Character Google Docs varied in their results. Because I gave the students the option of deciding how they wanted to work within their groups during the days they updated their Google Docs, the groups’ seating arrangements and work styles differed. Some groups would move their desks to form a circle. Other groups would sit near one another but not move the desks out of the rows. Others would complete the activity not sitting anywhere near one another. Some groups discussed the character in detail before completing the Google Docs. Some groups only discussed who would complete which sections of the Google Doc. Other groups did not
discuss anything verbally; they only worked on the Google Doc. Some students worked while listening to their iPods. However, these differences in the students’ methods of completing the assignment were expected because the students have different learning styles.

While circulating the room, I would listen to some of the conversations that groups were having about characters. Many of the conversations were very insightful, and the students would discuss more than what was asked on the Character Google Docs. For example, one day, a group of students was discussing how they thought Dr. Manette was an unrealistic character and how they could not relate to him. In addition, during these conversations, the students would often help one another when misconceptions arose about characters or the novel in general. On Character Google Docs days, I think many learned a lot simply because they had time to think and discuss the novel. On the other hand, sometimes, groups accomplished a lot without talking to one another. They revealed their thoughts by contributing to the Google Docs.

However, many times, for groups or select students, the ideas and thoughts would not make it onto the Google Docs. Some students, especially those behind on the reading, would spend almost all of their time looking through the book for things to contribute. Consequently, they would contribute little to nothing of written substance. Sometimes, students who had engaged in great discussions would not write down what they had just talked about; apparently, the technology did not help to engage them. While the students could easily access the Google Docs, they did not seem to see the value in reiterating their discussions on the Google Docs; without a sense of purpose, these students did not complete the activity. This translated to some poor grades, which brought down the class’ average to a C. In fact, 18 of the 48 students did not contribute at all on at least one of the five Google Doc days.
Despite these issues, I think that using Google Docs to complete the character study guides is more valuable than simply giving each student a copy of the packet to complete on their own. Groups could collaborate and see what their peers thought; as mentioned, sometimes, the Google Docs sparked conversations that helped the students to learn. In both verbal and written discussions, students could correct their peers’ misconceptions. Because they worked on it in class and I had set up everything prior to class, I was able to walk around and facilitate their learning. Lastly, after the five sessions throughout the unit, the students, in each class, had created an excellent character study guide that they could use for other assignments and their final assessments. Because of these reasons and the potential for learning that some students took advantage of, I think it is beneficial to continue to use this activity despite the fact that the technology did not engage many of the students.

*Worksheet on Google Docs*

For this activity, I was at a seminar, so I was not able to observe the students during class. However, from talking with my mentor teacher, who led the class in my place, the students interacted with each other similar to when they worked on their Google Docs while in groups. While using a Google Doc for the assignment allowed the groups of students to collaborate, the one-time assignment was basically just a traditional worksheet using technology. Because the students had class time to complete the assignment and all of the groups finished before the end of the period, all students, with the exception of one who was absent and excused from the activity, completed the assignment. In addition, while most groups through collaborating, clarifying each other’s misconceptions, and building understanding as a group were successful in providing answers or opinions that could be supported by the text, two groups chose to not
answer multiple questions, which resulted in poor scores. Since time did not seem to be an issue, I am not sure why the groups decided to leave certain questions blank. Based on the past performances of these students, they probably did not read the assigned chapters for homework, which made completing the worksheet difficult, so they decided not to finish.

There were also benefits to this assignment. First, as mentioned above, the Google Docs allowed the students to collaborate as a class again; just as with the Character Google Docs, the students were able to clarify misconceptions for each other. In addition, that night, I was able to review the students’ work and comment on their answers. Some of the students were confused about Mr. Carton and Mr. Stryver, so I was able to address that in my comments to them. Because the students could still view the worksheet on Google Docs, they had the opportunity to view my comments that night. The next day, I told the students to go back to the worksheet and view the comments on their group’s work as well as to look through the worksheet as a whole. In hindsight, I should have given them class time to do this; I am not sure how many students actually took advantage of reviewing the worksheet.

PTI Presentations

The PTI Presentations activity was one of the more successful activities at engaging the students. When I first introduced the assignment, many students who were familiar with the television show, PTI, were excited about the assignment. The majority of the students had already studied the French Revolution in their World History class or had heard about some of the topics on the sign-up sheet before, so when I passed around the sign-up sheet, the students all were anxious to select certain topics. During the days that time was given for the partners to collaborate, students worked solidly on their scripts; the majority of the students had already
been working together through a Google Doc. Then, on the presentation day, every pair did a
great job during their two minutes; some went beyond what was expected by covering their topic
in great detail while incorporating humor and extra dialogue or projecting images for their
classmates to see. There was time for all pairs in class that day to present. Overall, the
presentations provided an engaging way to learn about many aspects of the French Revolution.

While the popularity of PTI was a contributing factor to the success of the activity, I
think another factor was that the activity provided a break from reading TTC, based on the fact
that many students did not enjoy reading the novel. Furthermore, the students did not have to
read the novel to complete the activity, so for students who were not reading, this was an activity
that could potentially boost their grades and maybe draw them in to read the novel. However,
while the activity engaged the students, I am not sure how much using the Internet contributed to
their engagement. The Google Docs made partner communication easier, which could have
contributed. Also, when a pair projected images, the rest of the class seemed more engaged.
After presentation day, students regularly referenced some of the topics that were discussed in
the presentations in their writing and in class discussions; this behavior along with the final
products of the assignment, which averaged an A, confirmed that the students were engaged and
had learned the material. Consequently, in the future, I will use this assignment again since it
helped the students to learn as well as met some of my other pedagogical goals: incorporating
student interests and collaboration. However, one thing I will do when I incorporate this activity
again is to show a clip of an episode of PTI. Several students, who were not familiar with the
show, told me that they watched the show on the Internet at home to understand the assignment
more thoroughly. I think all students could benefit from having this example.
**Artifact Presentations**

The artifact presentations varied in their results. Since the artifact presentations were completed over the course of the unit, the presentations towards the beginning were weaker than ones towards the middle and end, which was expected. The students who went towards the beginning not only had fewer examples to follow but also did not have a strong understanding or connection to the novel yet. Towards the middle and end of the presentations, the students were better able to relate to the characters and understand the themes of the novel, which was evident in their presentations.

The presentations ranged, in length, from about one minute to nine minutes; the majority fell under five minutes. While the majority of the student artifacts were film clips and songs, a few students chose poems and one student chose a comic strip. Overall, I think the artifacts accurately reflected the students’ interests, which contributed to their engagement in the activity. In fact, many students were very excited to present their artifacts and proud of the connections they made. One student in particular was absent on her day to present. The next day, when she came in, she said she was ready to present, and I told her that she would have to wait until the next day since the schedule for that day was full. Although disappointed, the following day, she was ready and excited again. The students watching the presentations also seemed engaged the majority of the time. Most of the time, the artifact was something that everyone was familiar with and enjoyed, so the other students paid attention and were engaged.

As I stated above, the presentations fell on the discussion day after the chapters assigned were discussed. I chose to schedule the presentations this way so the students could benefit from the discussion of their chapters. Many students came to class, after reading, and were confused, so the class activities were aimed at helping the students make sense of what was going on and to
begin to make connections in the text. Once they had the benefit of class discussion and activities for the chapters, the students made better connections to the novel, the purpose of the assignment. By making connections, the students saw that the novel does not exist in and of itself. Therefore, using technology to find connections and considering how other “texts” relate to the novel helped the students to layer their interpretations. In other words, by framing the novel and giving it context, the students gained greater comprehension. Another reason that I really liked having the students present the following discussion day was that the presentations refreshed the students’ minds about what was occurring in the text, so when we moved on to the chapters for that day, the students were ready to begin. Also, since the artifacts were normally something from popular culture that the students liked or could at least relate to, the discussion days started on a positive note. Another benefit of the assignment in general was that it motivated most students to read the chapters that were assigned to them for the presentations; after the unit was over, some students admitted that they did not always read, but that they read their chapters for the artifact presentations.

However, while the presentations engaged most of the students, they also presented some challenges. First, with two students, sometimes more, presenting on a day, it was hard to predict how long the presentations would last. Initially, I did not set a time limit on the presentations. However, when the first student in one class showed a nine-minute film clip, I decided to set a time limit of five minutes. However, a handful of students asked if they could show slightly longer clips, and I agreed. In addition, the presentations took slightly longer when using technology. The student would have to get their computer from the computer cart, log on, go to the website, have myself or my mentor teacher bypass the Web filter if the website was blocked, find the correct dongle for the student’s computer, and connect the computer using the dongle to
be able to project. At first, I would have to get the students to start this process, but as the unit progressed, students would begin to get their computers themselves. Another issue, that did not occur often, was when students’ artifacts were very surface level and lacked substance. For example, one student related the scene where Charles Darnay is taken as a prisoner the second time to the song “Rain on Your Parade” by Duffy; the student’s only connection was that the officials that took Darnay away rained on Lucy’s parade, which is said in the song. While I was glad that the student was able to make a connection at all, I wanted the student to push herself to make deeper connections. Then, I realized that my rubric did not specifically account for how substantial the connections were. In all, the students averaged an A-. For future use, I changed the rubric to include that the students needed to make figurative connections. However, most students already did that, so overall, I thought the assignment was successful.

Final Assessments

First, for the final project, I found the students’ choices interesting. The most popular choice was the soundtrack. The next most popular choice was the chapter illustrations followed by the eulogy. Only a handful of students chose the board game, and no students chose to do the iMovie or the talk show. While a few people wanted to do the talk show initially, working with friends was more important, so these students did what their friends were doing. As for the iMovie option, a few students also wanted to do the project at first, but the project would have required the students to work outside the classroom, as the allotted work time was not sufficient to complete the task. These students realized this and chose different options.

All of the options had required written portions. Although not required or even recommended by me, the majority of the students used Google Docs to collaborate with group
members on this section. With the exception of the students who chose the eulogy option, the
students were engaged during the two days allotted for work time. As with other past
assignments, the students were engaged, in part, because their interests were incorporated into
the assignment. The students who enjoyed music were completing soundtracks, the students
who liked to draw were creating chapter illustrations, and the students who enjoyed being
creative and playing board games were creating one! However, the students who chose the
eulogy option chose the option because they thought it was the easiest and the least amount of
work, not because they were interested in writing and memorizing speeches.

On the first presentation day, during the first soundtrack presentation, I realized the
presentations were taking too long with each person playing clips and discussing each of their
four songs, so I decided to have each student only play and discuss two songs. I also told all
groups to summarize their written explanations during their presentations. However, many
students struggled to do this. In addition, despite instructions to create play lists and avoid using
YouTube, many students still used the site, which required me to override the block for each
song. Because of the combination of these things, the presentations ended up taking three days
to complete. However, I think the extra time was worthwhile since the students really seemed to
enjoy each other’s presentations. With the exception of some of the students who did the
eulogies and did not memorize their speeches, the students did a wonderful job. Because of
these results, I will use the assessment in the future but remove the eulogy option. Overall, the
final projects engaged most of the students, which shows that an activity that combines
technology, collaboration, and student interests will engage students.

The other final assessment, the final project, also used technology. But using the Google
Docs was not used for the core of the assignment, just as organization tool and for convenience.
For example, having the students post their topics on a class Google Doc was only to check everyone’s topic choice to ensure that each student had begun to think about his or her paper. Then, the students also used Google Docs to write their outlines and drafts. There was one significant benefit in using the computers over handwriting: the students and I could both work on the outlines or drafts at the same time. Instead of having a student give me his or her draft to review, we could both view and work on the draft at the same time. An additional benefit of using Google Docs was that the students could see my comments as I typed them; they did not have to wait for me to email back a Word document or hand back a handwritten draft with handwritten notes. Also, as mentioned above, using Google Docs was extremely helpful for helping students who were absent. Overall, the use of Google Docs for the final paper did not help to fully engage the students but still was very helpful in providing a way for the students and I to collaborate during the writing process.

Newspaper Project

For this assignment, students used Google Docs, the Internet, Microsoft Word or another word processor, and Comic Life. As to whether using these computer resources helped to engage the students, results varied. Google Docs allowed the students to write all of the groups members’ pieces in one document. Then, when the time came to transfer the pieces to Word, the documents were all accessible on one computer. The Google Docs were also used by a couple of groups to edit each other’s writing. In all, the Google Docs did not seem to help to engage the students, only to make the assignment easier to complete. Next, although not required, the students used the Internet in general to find images to complement their writing. The students also used the Internet to find more examples of different parts of the newspaper. Although I
brought in newspapers for examples, the students still had questions about different types of articles. I saw a few people researching the different types of articles as well as looking at examples in online newspapers. Overall, I thought the Internet did help to engage the students since they used it voluntarily to make their projects better. Then, I recommended using a newsletter template on Microsoft Word to assemble their newspapers. However, some groups liked the templates more on Pages, Apple’s word processor. Also, one group used Google Docs Presentations to create their newspaper. With the exception of a few students who really enjoyed choosing or designing the layout of the newspaper, especially one student who is involved in the school paper, the word processors did not seem to engage the students. Finally, one student, who was in charge of creating a comic strip for her group’s paper, decided to use Comic Life. Since the student was incorporating her interest of using the application, the program helped to engage her in the assignment.

Overall, despite the fact that the technology did not always help to engage all of the students, most of the students were engaged by some aspect of the assignment. After the first day of working on the project, the students completed their portions of the newspaper for the next day. However, the next school day was cancelled because of a snowstorm. The following school day had shortened periods because of a two-hour delay. The shortened period schedule, along with the students being excited to tell their peers what they did during the snow day, resulted in the students not completing their newspapers. Consequently, I gave them extensions. The only other issue with the project that I noticed was that towards the end, one person was assembling the newspaper and the rest of the group could not really help since it all had to be done on one computer; right now, I am not really sure how to resolve this issue. However, regardless of the issues, the groups worked hard, and the effort paid off as most of the final
newspapers turned out wonderful! In fact, the average for the assignment was an A-. Many students did a great job of being creative while still consistent with the text. In general, I thought this was a worthwhile assignment, and I will use it again in the future because the assignment met many of my pedagogical goals: incorporated collaboration, accessibility of information, authenticity, and student interest (for some).

Activities on the School’s Course Management System (CMS)

For activities using the school’s CMS, students were not engaged. I used CMS only to collect and grade assignments. Therefore, the students normally used Microsoft Word to complete some kind of writing assignment. Then, they simply uploaded their assignments onto the CMS. Sometimes, an online text box was available, and students could type their answers directly into the box. I found that there were a lot of issues with using the school’s CMS. First, when using the text boxes for assignments, sometimes, the CMS would freeze on some computers, and the student would lose their work. To solve this problem, I had students complete the assignment in Microsoft Word and copy the text into the text box. Also, the CMS crashed one weekend and was not available for a few days; during this time, my students were supposed to upload their reading responses before Monday. When they could not upload the assignment, they emailed me. While the issue was resolved by having the students hand in the assignment in class, many students were stressed about the situation. For the remaining assignments, a couple students, each time, would tell me that the CMS would not allow them to upload their assignments or that the CMS uploaded their assignment when it was not there. Whether the CMS was having problems or the students were using the initial problem as an excuse, I found that it was not worth the trouble to use the CMS for the rest of the unit.
For the assignments that I did use the CMS for, I graded the assignments on the CMS. While I liked that I could grade and comment on the assignments using a points scale, the scale only allowed full points, and my mentor teacher had established a rule of grading using half points. Overall, while I did not have success using the school’s CMS during my unit, I think being trained and learning how to use the hundreds of features of the program would be beneficial and provide for a better experience in the future.

**Discussion**

Throughout the course of the unit, I was trying to answer the question of whether using the laptop computers in the classroom helped to engage the students. Sometimes, using the computers clearly helped to engage the students such as when some students were using the Internet to find songs for their soundtracks. Other times, it was clear that the students were not engaged by using the computers such as using the CMS to upload assignments. Still, for other assignments, it was unclear whether the students were engaged or unengaged because of the technology or because of other factors such as the classroom atmosphere, the assignment, my instruction, the students that were working together, and whether the students had done the assigned reading.

However, by the end of the unit, I realized that the Internet and Google Docs are two resources that are extremely valuable because their benefits provide opportunities to meet my pedagogical goals: engaging the students and incorporating collaboration, accessibility of information, authentic activities, student interests, and organizational skills. According to the students, the ease of using the Internet contributes to why it is valuable for them. But while the students say this, if they encounter a problem, many times, they do not know how to remedy the situation, and they lose focus of what is important. Therefore, while the Internet is a great
resource, teachers need to guide students in using the Internet. One way to help students is to give them a set of websites that are good to use, which is what I did for the Flipbook Activity. Another way to guide students is to teach them how to search effectively, so that students can more easily access sought information. Although I did not do this with the class as a whole during the unit, I worked individually with students struggling to find information. Nevertheless, the Internet is a great resource because of its sheer size. When students want to learn more about anything, they can find a wealth of information on the Internet.

However, throughout the unit, I also noticed that the Internet distracted the students. Most of my students had a habit of going to a particular Web page as soon as they logged on to their computers. For example, many students checked their email. Others, especially male students, went to ESPN.com or another related Web site to check the scores of a game. Another favorite was checking the weather. If I had told the students that they could listen to music while working, many went straight to Pandora or playlist.com. While the students would normally only spend a minute or two engaging in these “distractions,” many times, students only had 15 minutes to complete an activity, and with around five minutes needed for getting the computer, logging on, logging off, and putting the computer back in the computer cart, students needed to get straight to work. Sometimes, students made the choice not to work on an activity in class and save it for homework after becoming distracted by something on the Internet. However, normally, the activity was still completed and submitted the following day. Overall, the Internet’s benefits outweigh its disadvantages, so I plan to incorporate the use of the Internet into my classroom in the future.

Before this school year, I had never used Google Docs before. After hearing how other teachers were using the resource, I decided I wanted to incorporate it into my unit. Although the
students were not always engaged because of the Google Docs in and of itself, it is still a tool that can be used successfully with an engaging assignment, such as the Newspaper Project. As seen in many of the above assignments, Google Docs allows students to collaborate; it allowed the students to create a comprehensive class resource that everyone could view at once. For other assignments, students could collaborate with each other on the same document without having to be together; this was useful for my 10th grade students when group assignments needed to be finished outside of class. In addition, Google Docs was helpful for students with poor organizational skills; students always knew where to find the documents. When the students were finished working on something, they did not have the chance to bury it in their book bag or forgot it in their locker; also, they knew where to find it for reference when doing other assignments. For on-going assignments such as the Character Google Docs, the students could see the progression of ideas and changes in the characters that others had found in the past. Another great feature of Google Docs is the ability to share documents easily. I could share documents with students. Students could share with each other for peer editing. And students could share documents with me when a printer was not working. Lastly, Google Docs saved time and paper. After grading things on Google Docs, I simply made sure the file was saved, and I did not have to pass back any papers. In addition, the packet that I based my Character Google Docs on was six pages printed on both sides. With 48 students, using Google Docs saved 288 pages. However, with all these great features, how will Google Docs hold up against cheating? Although I did not have a problem with the assignments that I used Google Docs for, I had a handful of students that copied each other for other paper-based assignments. Will Google Docs make it easier to cheat? Will students copy, paste, and be done? This is something that I will explore in the future.
While computers and the Internet are great resources, the unit also confirmed another idea of mine: traditional classroom resources also engage students. Since drawing was an interest of many students, I regularly incorporated activities where students could draw, and everyone was normally quite happy using colored pencils and paper. One activity that most of the students enjoyed, especially those that were not artistically inclined, was creating pictograms. Students would use symbols, shapes, and three to five colors to represent an idea or character. Because the logic behind the products is often hard to see from the drawing, I required the students to include their reasoning in a written paragraph. In the written portion, the students’ responses showed evidence that they had thought critically about the subjects of their pictograms.

Another paper-based activity that the students enjoyed was creating postcards. Given a template for a postcard, students wrote letters to imaginary friends with their response to the chapter. They also had to draw the image on the front of the postcard as well as a stamp. Although I did not get to try this, I had originally wanted my two classes to write to one another where each student from one class would have a pen pal from the other class.

The last couple non-digital activities that the students enjoyed centered on two things: getting out of their seats and writing on the board. Most of the students, outside the classroom, do not sit around all the time, so having them get up from their desks helped to include more authenticity in the activity. The first activity, creating timelines, was one that we did frequently at the beginning of the novel when the majority of the students were confused about what was occurring in the text. I did many variations of this activity. Sometimes, the class would split into groups and each group would be in charge of covering the major events from certain pages of the reading. Other times, I wrote key events on the timeline, and the students would add why
the events were important and details about them. Regardless, the students really enjoyed being able to stand up and control some of what was written on the boards. The other activity, Provocative Statements, is from “Enriched Classics Curriculum Guide to A Tale of Two Cities” published by Simon and Schuster, which is available online. For this activity, I wrote a provocative statement relating to the novel on the board as well as two columns entitled “Agree” and “Disagree;” next, the students would write their comments under the column that best fit their opinion. Then, after everyone had contributed, the students decided which side was better supported. Overall, these activities prove that computers and digital resources are not the only way to engage students.
Chapter 5

Conclusion: Only the Beginning

Implications

Based on what I learned from researching the current state of using technology in the classroom, I plan to remain up-to-date on classroom technology. The Internet has many great resources, such as English Companion Ning and The Official Google Docs Blog, that describe how other teachers are using technology in their classrooms and how people are using technology in general. Also, from completing the study, I recommend that other teachers be open to trying activities that incorporate technology. While some activities may not work, others will engage students and help them to learn. Also, when technological problems occur, sometimes, the students know what to do and can help.

The National Educational Technology Plan, “Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology,” and Classrooms for the Future emphasize that students need to be prepared for 21st century jobs. In addition, as James Strickland points out, the National Council of Teachers of English “believes:”

‘As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable.’

Therefore, all teachers need to value technology in the classroom and incorporate it into their lessons. In addition, Strickland reminds teachers, “the real change is to see the technology aspect not as an add-on but as transformative in creating a new digital conception of the writing process, one that includes still photos, video, and audio components, as well as the traditional
word-processed text.” Also, assignments, which include these technological elements, frequently allow the students to be more creative and incorporate their interests, which lead to authentic engagement. However, teachers should remember that technology is just a tool to help the students learn. Therefore, use the technology with purpose, take risks, and see what happens.

Overall, while I came to some conclusions about whether certain activities using technology engaged the students during the unit, further research is required to confirm whether the students were engaged or unengaged because of the technology as well as to confirm how much the other factors played a part in affecting the students’ engagement levels. In addition, the case study also led to more questions, which require additional research:

- How will teachers reconcile the tradition of assessing students as individuals with Web 2.0 and its emphasis on collaboration and community?
- Where is the line between collaboration and cheating?
- Will the Internet and its abundance of information cause students to rely solely on it and lose their ability to think critically?
- Will the educational divide become even greater because of the uneven distribution of technological resources in schools?
- How will technology affect the future of the classroom?
## Appendix A

### Unit Calendar

*A Tale of Two Cities* Unit Calendar (modified version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roots Unit 5 Vocabulary Quiz</td>
<td>Due: Persuasive Essay Outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Tale of Two Cities</em> (<em>TTC</em>) Introduction/Activity (Flipbook)</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 1, Ch. 1</em> (in class)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day 3</th>
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<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 1, Ch. 2-3</em> (9 pages)</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 1, Ch. 4</em> (11 pages)</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 1, Ch. 5-6</em> (21 pages)</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 1-3</em> (25 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Drafting or SSR</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Activity Day: Character Google Docs 1</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 7-9</em> (24 pages)</td>
<td>Victorian Letter</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-service Day: No School</td>
<td>Records Day: No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due: Rough Draft Grammar Persuasive Essay Draft Workshop</td>
<td>Due: <em>Vocab HW 1</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 4-6</em> (23 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 7-9</em> (24 pages)</td>
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<td>Assign PTI</td>
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<th>Day 12</th>
<th>Day 13</th>
<th>Day 14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Due: Persuasive Essays <em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 10-11</em> (11 pages)</td>
<td>Activity Day PTI presentations</td>
<td>Due: <em>Vocab HW 2</em></td>
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<td><em>TTC Vocabulary Quiz 1</em> Char. G Docs 2</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 12-14</em> (21 pages)</td>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>Activity Day: Make up PTI and artifact presentations</td>
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<tbody>
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<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 15-16</em> (21 pages)</td>
<td>Shakespeare Competition &amp; African American Read-In Day <em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 17-19</em> (18 pages)</td>
<td><em>TTC Vocabulary Quiz 2</em></td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 20-22</em> (19 pages)</td>
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<td>Head Silhouette Activity</td>
<td>Postcard Quiz/Activity Char. G Docs 3</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
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<th>Day 21</th>
<th>Day 22</th>
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<td><em>TTC Bk. 2, Ch. 23-24</em> (18 pages)</td>
<td>Activity Day Newspaper Activity</td>
<td>SNOW DAY</td>
<td>Activity Day Newspaper Activity</td>
<td><em>TTC Bk. 3, Ch. 1-3</em> (22 pages)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>List of Char. Activity (Part 2)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Day 23</td>
<td>Day 24</td>
<td>Day 25</td>
<td>Day 26</td>
<td>Day 27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC Bk. 3, Ch. 4-6 (17 pages)</td>
<td>TTC Bk. 3, Ch. 7-9 (29 pages)</td>
<td>TTC Bk. 3, Ch. 10-12 (25 pages)</td>
<td>Due: Author’s Language Packet</td>
<td>MUG shots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Char. G Docs 4</td>
<td>Lucie/Dr. Manette conversation activity</td>
<td>Introduce final projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Activity Day: Form project groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provocative Statements Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 28</td>
<td>Day 29</td>
<td>Day 30</td>
<td>Day 31</td>
<td>Day 32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Work Time</td>
<td>Final Project Work Time</td>
<td>Due: Essay topics Author’s Language Quiz Introduce Roots 10 vocab</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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</table>
Appendix B

Introductory PowerPoint Presentation

Introduction to
A Tale of Two Cities

and Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities

- Serialized
- Historical Novel
What is Serial Writing?

Writing that is published in weekly or monthly installments

Serial Form
- Suspense builds while waiting for the next segment
- Characters begin to seem like part of the family

Book Form
- Suspenseful moments quickly are resolved
- Identification with characters is short-lived


Serial Writing

- Dickens published A Tale of Two Cities (TTC) in his newly founded popular magazine, All the Year Round in 1859
- TTC ran from April through November in 1859 in 31 issues
- The serial version also was published in monthly installments as well as in weekly installments in America
- Hablot K. Browne, known as “Phiz” illustrated the monthly installments.
Historical Novel

- Before writing *TTC*, Dickens did some research on the French Revolution
- Victorian historian Thomas Carlyle’s *The French Revolution* (1837)

French Revolution

- One of the most important events of the 1700s
- Began in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille
- Although there was multiple causes of the revolution, one that Dickens focuses on is the divide between the French aristocracy and the French peasants.
Fashion: French Aristocracy

Fashion: French Aristocracy
Fashion: English Lower Class

Bibliography

- Slide 1: http://robertarood.wordpress.com/2008/07/
- Slide 7: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eudr/hd_eudr.htm
- Slide 8: http://www.americanrevolution.org/clothing/frenchfashion.html
- Slide 9: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1750%E2%80%931795_in_fashion#Working_class_clothing
Appendix C

Flipbook Assignment Sheet

Advanced English 10
Miss Krepps

A TALE OF TWO CITIES FLIPBOOK

Directions: Using the websites provided (and linked from my school district website), find the answers to the following questions about Charles Dickens, the author of the book A Tale of Two Cities, and about Victorian England. Record your responses in your flipbook in your own words. Please be as detailed and specific as possible.

Charles Dickens

URLs:  http://www.online-literature.com/dickens/
http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio1.html

Questions:

Childhood

When and where was Charles Dickens born?
How many siblings did he have? (Remember not to count Dickens himself.)
Name one of his favorite childhood authors.
Name one of the other towns in which Dickens lived during his childhood.
What defining event happened to the Dickens family in 1824, and how did it affect Charles?

Early Years

What was Dickens's first job?
What other job did Dickens hold before he achieved success as a writer?
What was the name of his first published story (not book)? What year was it published?
What pen-name did Dickens use?
Middle Years
Who and when did Dickens marry?
How many children did Dickens and his wife have?
During a visit to Canada and the U.S., what ideas did Dickens advocate?

Late Years/Death
What traumatic event happened to Dickens, his lover, and her mother?
When, where, and of what did Dickens die?
In addition to writing, what other activity did Dickens engage in during the 1850s?
Where is Dickens buried?

Writing Career
Name five of his novels.
In what year was *A Tale of Two Cities* published?
Name one of the illustrators of Dickens’s books.
Name two of the weekly journals that he founded.
What was Dickens' last published major work?

Victorian England
URLs:  http://www.english.uwosh.edu/roth/VictorianEngland.htm
       http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/lect/mod10.html
       http://www.britannia.com/history/euro/1/2_2.html

Questions:
What are the years of the reign of Queen Victoria?
What is one key event that occurred during this era? How did it affect conditions in Great Britain?
What was one important modern movement that took form during this period?
Name the lands that made up the British Empire at this time:
What was education like for the upper classes?
Which diseases were widespread?

**Under the top flap, please list an interesting fact about Charles Dickens or Victorian England that is not written elsewhere in the flipbook.**

Due: __________________________
Appendix D

Flipbook Model

About Charles Dickens by Miss Krepps

Childhood

Early Years

Middle & Late/Death Years

Writing Career

Victorian England
Appendix E

Google Docs Template #1 (picture and Word document)

Names:

Character Name

How the character looks:

How the character acts:

Where the character lives/works:

What others say (quote them):

Descriptive words that Dickens uses to describe this character (page numbers will be helpful here):
Appendix F

Google Docs Template #2

Names:

Identify the role of each of the following characters in the novel:

Gaspard

John Barsad

Roger Cly

Mr. Stryver

The Monseigneur

The Marquis St. Evremonde

Gabelle
## Appendix G

### Google Docs Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For BOTH Periods:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: Jerry Cruncher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2: Charles Darnay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3: Ernest and Madame Defarge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4: Sydney Carton and Secondary Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5: Miss Pross and Mr. Lorry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Group B**                           |
| Week 1: Lucie Manette                |
| Week 2: Jerry Cruncher               |
| Week 3: Sydney Carton and Secondary Characters |
| Week 4: Ernest and Madame Defarge    |
| Week 5: Dr. Manette and Charles Darnay |

| **Group C**                           |
| Week 1: Jarvis Lorry                 |
| Week 2: Sydney Carton                |
| Week 3: Lucie Manette and Dr. Manette|
| Week 4: Miss Pross and Jerry Cruncher|
| Week 5: Secondary Characters and Madame Defarge |

| **Group D**                           |
| Week 1: Dr. Manette                  |
| Week 2: Secondary Characters         |
| Week 3: Miss Pross and Jerry Cruncher|
| Week 4: Charles Darnay and Mr. Lorry |
| Week 5: Lucie Manette and Ernest Defarge |

| **Group E**                           |
| Week 1: Ernest and Madame Defarge    |
| Week 2: Miss Pross                   |
| Week 3: Charles Darnay and Mr. Lorry |
| Week 4: Lucie Manette and Dr. Manette3 |
| Week 5: Sydney Carton and Jerry Cruncher |
Appendix H

Google Docs Worksheet

A Tale of Two Cities Worksheet on Book 2, Chapters 12-14
Advanced English 10
Miss Krepps

Groups: Please put your names next to the group assigned to you!
Group 1:
Questions 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31

Group 2:
Questions 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32

Group 3:
Questions 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33

Group 4:
Questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34

Group 5:
Questions 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35

Directions: Please answer only your assigned questions. Only consult Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities to answer the questions. Do not use other, outside sources. Remember to give textual evidence (and page numbers) to support all of your answers. Remember to add all group members’ names next to your assigned group!

Chapters 12 and 13: "The Fellow of Delicacy" and "The Fellow of No Delicacy"

Part A:

1. To what other person, besides Carton, does Stryver reveal his matrimonial plan? What advice does this person give Stryver and why?

2. What decision, about his marriage plans, does Stryver make at last? Why?

3. Why does Carton visit Lucie? What promise does he make?

4. What line in particular tells you that Sydney Carton never expected Lucie to want to marry him?
5. How does Sydney Carton feel about himself? How does Lucie feel about Carton?

**Part B:**

6. How does Stryver reveal his character again in giving his reasons for marrying?

7. Stryver and Carton have contrasting attitudes toward Lucie. What are they?

8. How does Stryver's attitude toward his defeat in love further reveal his character?

9. How does Mr. Lorry show himself as a perceptive old man in his advice to Stryver?

10. Why does Lucie weep during the interview with Carton?

**Part C:**

11. Stryver presents first to Carton and then to Lorry his intentions to marry Lucie. There is much irony, quite unintended by Stryver, in his own words and thoughts concerning himself. Why? Give some examples. (Please refer back to previous chapters. See pages 125-127, 130, 133.)

12. On p. 128, in what way does Stryver look upon his marriage plans? What basic element has Stryver not taken into account?

13. We display different personalities when we are with different people. When Carton is talking to Stryver, he is bitter, mocking, and cynical. How does he speak when he is talking with Lucie? How does Dickens want his readers to feel about Sydney Carton?

14. In Chapter 13, there are several hints about the role Carton may play in the future in the life of Lucie. (See p. 135, lines 27-28; p. 138, lines 14-16) Can you think of ways in which Sydney Carton might help Lucie in the future?

15. If Lucie had chosen to marry Sydney Carton, what would probably have been the reactions of Dr. Manette, Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay, and Mr. Stryver?

**Chapter 14: The Honest Tradesman**

**Part A:**

16. Whose funeral passes Tellson's Bank? Why is it poorly attended?

17. Why does Jerry Cruncher leave his favorite spot outside Tellson's Bank?

18. Why is Jerry interested in the funeral?

19. Why does Jerry call upon "his medical adviser," the surgeon?

20. Why does Jerry leave his house late at night? What is his purpose?
21. Where does he tell his wife and son he is going? Does Jerry's wife know where he is really going?

22. Describe what young Jerry witnessed.

23. Jerry's is in a foul mood the following day. What might have happened the night before?

24. What respectable-sounding job title does Jerry give his occupation?

25. This chapter seems to be an interlude in the main thread of the story. Yet, what one connecting link is there with an earlier important event in which Darnay, the Manettes, and Mr. Lorry were involved?

Part B:

26. How does young Jerry again attempt to imitate his father?

27. Why does young Jerry follow his father on his expedition?

28. Why is Jerry's wife so upset by Jerry's activities?

29. How does Jerry again show his tendency to bully?

30. Why does Cruncher look at young Jerry with pride at the end of the chapter? In what way is he even more justified than he knows?

Part C:

31. What does Dickens think of the behavior of the mob at the funeral? Give examples to support your answer.

32. Throughout the chapter, the joke about Jerry's "fishing" is maintained. What is Jerry actually "fishing" for? What is his "fishing equipment" consist of?

33. How does Dickens poke fun at Cruncher's "gallantry" in escorting women from one side of Fleet Street to the other?

34. Why does Dickens use the word "moral" in the sentence: "Mr. Crunch was soothed, but shook his head in a dubious and moral way?"

35. What special purpose does Jerry Cruncher serve in this novel?
Appendix I

PTI Presentations Assignment and Evaluation Sheet

Advanced English 10
Miss Krepps

Pardon the Interruption

French Revolution Presentations

PTI is a popular television show on ESPN. On the show, the hosts present information and opinions during a two-minute time span on a number of different topics. Your task is to present as much information about your topic with your partner as you can in two minutes. You can keep it lighthearted if you like. However, remember to focus on conveying the most important information about your topic, so that the rest of the class will also have background information to better understand A Tale of Two Cities.

Presentation Day: Thursday, January 28, 2010

My topic:

PTI Evaluation Sheet

Start time: End time:

Script ________/5
Contains important information about topic
Works Cited using MLA format
Grammatically and mechanically sound

Presentation ________/10
Presentation lasts about 2 minutes
Conveys important information about topic
Articulate speech
Appropriate volume and rate
Consistent eye contact

Comments: Total ________/15
## Appendix J

**PTI Presentation Topics/Sign-up Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Causes of the French Revolution (What was the social climate in France prior to it?)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>____________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>____________________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>____________________________________________________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What happened on July 14, 1789? How and why do the French today celebrate this day?

____________________________________________________________________  &  ___________________________________________________________________

What was the Second Revolution, in 1792?

____________________________________________________________________  &  ___________________________________________________________________

What was the March of the Women?

____________________________________________________________________  &  ___________________________________________________________________

For the following topics, briefly explain why the following were important in late-18th century France:

House of Bourbon (Louis XV, XVI, XVII) _____________________  &  _____________________

Marquis de Lafayette _____________________  &  _____________________

Marie Antoinette _____________________  &  _____________________

Napoleon Bonaparte _____________________  &  _____________________

Voltaire and Rousseau _____________________  &  _____________________

The Guillotine _____________________  &  _____________________

Robespierre and The Reign of Terror _____________________  &  _____________________
Appendix K

Artifact Presentation Assignment Sheet and Rubric

A Tale of Two Cities Artifact Presentation
Advanced English 10
Miss Krepps

Name ____________________________
Period _____ Date _________________

Grade: _____/20

Throughout this unit, every student will be responsible for the presentation of an artifact that connects to an idea or ideas from the assigned chapters for the day. During your presentation, you will share your artifact with the class and clearly and thoroughly explain its connection to your assigned chapters. The purpose of this activity is to make connections between two seemingly unrelated “texts” to enhance our understanding of the ideas from our reading.

A “text” is anything that can be “read.” Texts include poems, song lyrics, movie or television clips, cartoons, advertisements, passages from other novels or short stories, or other works of art. You are not limited to these suggestions; be creative! The text you select should be something of substance that aids us in thinking more deeply about the idea(s) you identify.

*Note: A simple photo or image of an object is not sufficiently substantive for this assignment.

Be creative: consider involving the class in a mini-lesson or activity.
Focus on: theme, symbols, plot development, a character sketch, or anything else that interests you in these chapters.

** Provide a copy of your artifact along with a written explanation of the connections found. Your written piece should identify the book and chapter number(s) assigned.

My Book and chapter numbers: _____________________

Preparation

Artifact addresses one or more key literary elements of the novel _____/3
Artifact is creative, substantive, and fits the definition of a “text” _____/4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written explanation clearly and thoroughly explaining connections is provided to the teacher along with a copy of the artifact, including citation</th>
<th>____/5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact is readily accessible to the entire class</td>
<td>____/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenter clearly articulates the connections between the artifact and the novel</td>
<td>____/5</td>
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## Appendix L

**Artifact Presentation Sign-up Sheet**

<table>
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<td>Bk. 3, ch. 7-9 (2/16)</td>
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<td>Bk. 3, ch. 13-15 (2/18)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix M

TTC Final Project Assignment Sheet

| Project Choices for *A Tale of Two Cities* | Name __________________________________________ |
| Advanced English 10                      | Due: ____________________________ |
| Miss Krepp                               | **You may work individually or in groups of no more than three people. You must work individually if you have a planned, excused absence on the days of the scheduled presentations or throughout the planning time.**

We will work on the projects in class on Day 28 and Day 29. **Projects will be presented in class on Day 31 with make-ups and overflow on Day 32. Everyone should be ready to present on Day 31. Please let me know if you will be absent one or both of the presentation days.**

Choose **one** of the following options.

1. **Talk Show:**

   **Conduct a thorough three- to five-minute talk show.** Simulate a popular talk show using the characters from *A Tale of Two Cities* as the guests for your show. For groups of two, one person will be the talk show host while the other will be the guest. For groups of three, you must have two guests, so everyone will be involved. You will **compose** both the questions and the answers, **write** an explanation of how each of the answers is logical based on details from the novel, and **perform** the interview for your classmates. Before beginning, consider what kind of talk show the novel’s characters might participate in. Also, think about how the characters should be portrayed. What would the characters say? How would they talk? How would they react to other characters? What kind of personality would they reveal? **For groups only.**

2. **Chapter Illustrations:**

   **Create illustrations** that could be placed above the chapter titles in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Each illustration should capture an important idea or theme found in the selected chapter. For individuals, you must **draw at least three well-drawn illustrations** (no stick figures!). For groups of two or three, each individual must still contribute at least three illustrations; be sure to select different chapters to use. In addition, you will **write** an explanation of how each illustration reveals the idea or theme as well as how the illustration is logical based on details from the book. Lastly, you will **present** the drawings to your classmates and give a brief explanation of each.
3. Soundtrack:

The soundtrack of a movie helps heighten the mood throughout the production. **Design a soundtrack** for *A Tale of Two Cities*. Be sure to make the play list more than one genre (i.e., rap, rock, country, classical, etc.). Each individual should select at least four songs to include on the soundtrack. **Design an appropriate CD cover**, which should be the size of a CD case. For each song, write a paragraph explanation of which scene each song would accompany and why your group chose each song for the scenes. You will play selections of each of the songs as well as explain the connections during your presentation. You do not have to burn the songs to a single CD. Attach the CD cover to your written explanations before turning them in.

4. iMovie:

**Create a 3-5 minute iMovie** reenacting a pivotal scene from *A Tale of Two Cities*. In addition, be sure to submit a well-annotated script that notes vocal pauses, stresses, and inflections; tone of voice; gestures and facial expressions (those that are explicit in the movie as well as those that are not); movements; and definitions of words or phrases that you do not understand. Finally, include a thorough written explanation of why the scene is pivotal in the novel, based on evidence from the text. Lastly, you will give a brief explanation of the iMovie and play the iMovie for the class. **For groups only.** *(iMovie must be submitted on Thursday to be previewed before being presented in class on Friday!)*

5. Board Game:

**Create a board game** complete with pieces, cards, directions, rules, and board. The theme of the game must relate to one of the themes of *A Tale of Two Cities*. If you choose this option, see me about options for creating the game’s board. Also, using a popular board game, such as Monopoly or Clue, as a model can help you to remember all the aspects that should be included in the directions and rules. Additionally, at the beginning of your directions, explain how the game relates to a theme or idea from the novel. Lastly, you will present your game by giving an overview of how the game is played; you may want to have either group members or other members of the class play the game for a few minutes.

6. Eulogy:

A eulogy is “a speech or writing in praise of a person or thing, esp. a set oration in honor of a deceased person” (“eulogy”). **Write eulogies** for two characters from a *Tale of Two Cities*. Each eulogy should be at least 150 words and written from the perspective of another character. In addition, write an explanation of how each eulogy is logical based on details from the novel as well as why you chose to write the eulogy from a particular character’s perspective. Then, you will recite the eulogies. While you do not have to memorize the eulogies, you should be very familiar with them. **For individuals only.**

Appendix N

*TTC* Final Project Rubrics

**TTC Final Project: Soundtrack Evaluation Sheet**

Name(s):

**Song Selections/CD Cover**
(A minimum of 4 songs per person from a variety of genres. CD cover is creative and neatly designed. No spelling errors.) ___/10

**Rationale**
(Thorough written explanations that include where in the movie each song would play and specific reasons why that particular song was chosen based on evidence from the text. Grammatically and mechanically sound.) ___/15

**Presentation**
(The group plays a 20-30 second selection of a song that is appropriate for school. Group members identify the songs they have chosen and explain the connections found. Articulate speech. Appropriate volume and rate. Consistent eye contact.) ___/10

**Effective Use of Class Time**
(Group members worked together and students used all of the class time offered to advance the project.) ___/5

Comments:

Total ___/40

**TTC Final Project: Chapter Illustrations Evaluation Sheet**

Name(s):

**Illustrations**
(A minimum of 3 detailed illustrations per person that capture an important idea or theme found in the selected chapter. Illustrations correspond with different chapters. No spelling errors.) ___/10

**Rationale**
(Thorough written explanation of why the chapter illustrations are appropriate for the selected chapters based on evidence from the text and how they relate to a significant idea or theme. Grammatically and mechanically sound.) ___/15

**Presentation**
Thorough description of illustrations and how they relate to selected chapters and ideas or themes. Articulate speech. Appropriate volume and rate. Consistent eye contact.) ___/10

**Effective Use of Class Time**
(Group members worked together and students used all of the class time offered to advance the project.) ___/5

Comments: Total ___/40

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**TTC Final Project: Board Game Evaluation Sheet**

Name(s):

**Board Game**
(Board game complete with pieces, cards, directions, rules, and board that relates to one of the themes of the novel. No spelling errors.) ___/10

**Rationale**
(Thorough written explanation, found in the directions, of how the game relates to a theme or idea from the novel. Grammatically and mechanically sound.) ___/15

**Presentation**
(Thorough description of how the board game is played as well as a clear explanation of how the game relates to a selected idea or theme from the novel. Articulate speech. Appropriate volume and rate. Consistent eye contact.) ___/10

**Effective Use of Class Time**
(Group members worked together and students used all of the class time offered to advance the project.) ___/5

Comments: Total ___/40

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**TTC Final Project: Eulogy Evaluation Sheet**

Name(s):

**Eulogies**
(Two eulogies for two different characters written from the perspectives of other characters. Each eulogy is at least 150 words in length. Grammatically and mechanically sound.) ___/15

**Rationale**
**Thorough written explanation of how the eulogies are true to both the characters who are speaking and the characters who are being eulogized based on the text. Grammatically and mechanically sound.** ___/10

**Presentation**
(Speaker remains in character throughout presentation and is familiar with his or her eulogies. Articulate speech. Appropriate volume and rate.) ___/10

**Effective Use of Class Time**
(Group members worked together and students used all of the class time offered to advance the project.) ___/5

Comments:

Total ___/40
NEWSPAPER PROJECT

It is the week after the Storming of the Bastille. In groups of 4 or 5, create a newspaper. Each member must contribute a major and minor piece to the newspaper that relates to the revolution, following the format of the examples provided.

**Major Pieces**
- News Article
- Feature Article
- Editorial
- Letter to the Editor
- “Dear Abby” letter (optional for groups of 4)

**Minor Pieces**
- Advertisement
- Political Cartoon or Comic Strip
- Obituary Section
- Banner
- Horoscope (optional for groups of 4)

Use Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* as the foundation for both major and minor pieces. You may construct additional details if needed; however, be sure that your creative additions do not substitute or conflict with actual details from the novel.

During today’s class, groups will have time to work on the written portion. Each group member should have both pieces finished for the beginning of class tomorrow. During class tomorrow, groups will work together to put together and format the newspaper using the Newsletter template on Microsoft Word. **Completed newspapers are due at the end of the period on tomorrow.**

**Descriptions**

**Major pieces:** should be at least 250 words.
A **News Article** is an article that discusses current or recent news by only focusing on the facts. These articles do not contain any opinions. News articles cover local, national, and international news and can include accounts of eyewitnesses to the happening event. News articles can also contain photographs, statistics, graphs, interviews, or polls. The writer should give facts and detailed information that answer the questions: who, what, when, where, why and how. Lastly, these articles are written in inverted pyramid style, with the most important information in the beginning and less vital details towards the end. Remember to include a headline that will catch the attention of the reader! Remember to include a byline with your name. For examples, see “Saints defeat Colts 31-17” or “State sees record accumulation on p. 1 or “Despite snow, students run for Haiti” on p. 4.

A **Feature Article** is a nonfiction article that intends to inform, teach or amuse the reader on a topic. The topic centers around human interests. Feature stories may include conventions found in fiction such as dialogue, plot, and character. Feature articles span many types of published writing. However, for the feature article in this assignment, write a human interest story. A human interest story is an article that involves local people and events and contains human interest elements, such as anecdotes or accounts of personal experiences. Remember to include a headline that will catch the attention of the reader! Remember to include a byline with your name. For examples, see “Doctors weigh in on Haiti” or “Walk-ons vie for spot on team” on p. 1. An **Editorial** is a piece of writing intended to promote the opinion or perspective of the writer. Editorials are featured in many newspapers and are usually written by the senior editor of the publication. Remember to include a headline that will catch the attention of the reader! For an example, see “Pledge shows devotion to cause” on p. 6.

A **Letter to the Editor** is a letter sent to a publication that addresses some issue or concern of the writer, who is also a reader of the publication. Subject matter varies greatly but may include remarking on materials (such as a news story) that have appeared in the past, correcting a perceived error or misrepresentation, or commenting on a current issue being debated by a governing body. Letters may either be critical or praising. For this assignment, the letter should not be responding to the editorial. Remember to include a headline that will catch the attention of the reader! Also, remember to sign the name of the character that is writing the letter. For examples, see the letters on the right side of p. 6.

**Dear Abby** is the name of an advice column founded in 1956 by Pauline Phillips under the pen name Abigail Van Buren and carried on today by her daughter, Jeanne Phillips. In the widely syndicated column, Abby responds with “commonsense solutions to everyday problems.” In addition, “Abby uses her column not only to entertain, but also to educate...Abby addresses relationship problems in people's personal and business lives, alcohol and drug abuse, crimes against children, diversity, domestic abuse, preventive health, suicide prevention, and volunteerism to name only a few.” See examples on separate sheet.

**Minor pieces:**

**Advertisement:** Provide at least one in the newspaper. You may create the advertisement using computer images or hand drawings. If you use a computer image, you must cite the source of the photo. There are numerous examples including those on p. 4.

**Political Cartoon or Comic Strip:** You may create the cartoon or comic strip using computer
images or hand drawings. If you use a computer image, you must cite the source of the photo. There are examples of political cartoons on p. 6 and examples of comic strips on p. 13.

Obituary Section: Include at least two entries. See examples on separate sheet.

Banner: The banner is the top of the front page of the newspaper. With help from your group, come up with a name for your newspaper. Also, include the date. Volume and issue numbers as well as cost are optional. See p. 1 for an example.

Horoscope: Create a few horoscope entries. However, for this assignment, you will be predicting future events and giving advice for specific characters. Therefore, replace the set of dates with the name of the character you are writing the horoscope for. For example, take the first entry from the horoscope on p. 11. For this assignment, the entry would look like this:

ARIES (name of character)
Changes occur with a great deal of ease...

Other Notes:
All examples, unless otherwise noted, are in the Monday, February 8, 2010 edition of The Daily Collegian.

While photos are not required, remember to include a photo credit and caption if you do include any photos. See the examples on p. 1.

Works Cited


Appendix P

Newspaper Group Sign-up Sheets

Advanced English 10  Name of Newspaper: ________________________________
Miss Krepps

NEWSPAPER PROJECT

Major Pieces

News Article ________________________________
Feature Article ________________________________
Editorial ________________________________
Letter to the Editor ________________________________
“Dear Abby” letter ________________________________

Minor Pieces

Advertisement ________________________________
Political Cartoon or Comic Strip ________________________________
Obituary Section ________________________________
Banner ________________________________
Horoscope ________________________________

Be sure to attach this sheet to your paper before turning it in.
Appendix Q

Facebook Character Profile Template

(Need to download file while in school.)
Bibliography


ACADEMIC VITA of Sarah Ann Krepps

Sarah Ann Krepps
3010 East Ridge Drive
Gibsonia, PA 15044
sarahakrepps@gmail.com

Education:
Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education, Penn State University, Spring 2010
Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, Penn State University, Spring 2010
Honors in Curriculum and Instruction
Thesis Title: Computers: Engaging or Just for Entertainment
Thesis Supervisor: Jamie Myers

Teaching Experience:
Internship with the Professional Development School (a year-long student teaching program)
Supervisor: Jamie Myers; Jeff King
Fall 2009 to Summer 2010

Awards:
Dean’s List
Phi Beta Kappa member

Presentations/Activities:
Presented at the 2010 PDS Conference
Judged the 2010 Poetry Out Loud Contest
Attended the annual 2009 NCTE national conference
Attended Professional Development sessions at SCAHS
Completed mission work in Pass Christian, Mississippi