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TE 804

Popular Culture Project

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The popular culture object that I have chosen to share with my students is Facebook. Facebook is an internet networking program where members can make their own unique profiles. Members can read others' profiles and communicate with their best friends/complete strangers anywhere in the world. Facebook is very popular among adolescent teens and college students who enjoy this idea of socially networking through the use of technology. Facebook profiles usually include a member's: name, birthday, interests, activities, work information, educational information, messages from friends, pictures, etc.

I have chosen to use Facebook as a tool for teaching because of its popularity with young people. Hearing conversations among my students I have learned that many of them have a Facebook or Myspace (Myspace is similar to Facebook), or know someone that does. Students seem to understand what a Facebook is and enjoy portraying themselves online while working with newer technology. I feel that by using Facebook I can illicit some intrigue and excitement for this assignment.

This assignment can be incorporated anywhere in the curriculum. My initial thought for using Facebook for an assignment would be as an end of the year project. Students are to create a Facebook profile for one person that has been discussed this year in our 8<sup>th</sup> grade American History class. Instead of students writing a general biography on the person of their choice they will be creating a Facebook profile of the person instead. I doubt that many students realize they are reading autobiographies each time they look at one of their peers' Facebook pages. Although I want to implement this as an end of the year project, this idea could be used anywhere throughout and across curriculums. Anytime a class talks about a historical figure this type of assignment could be used to have students take a more in-depth look at the person they are studying.

I have set up a template (attached) which will help guide students' as to what they must include in their historical figure Facebook profile. Students will be urged to be creative in making their profile (see attached directions). First I would start this activity by showing a clip about Facebook which can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UNrqz6X-AE>. This video clip is an interview done by the television show "60 Minutes" with Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg. The interview gives a synopsis of what Facebook is and different things that can be done using Facebook. After showing this clip I would ask students what they themselves know about Facebook and what purposes does having a Facebook serve. After giving this Facebook overview with students I would hand out the assignment with directions and go over what this Historical Figure Facebook project entails.

Often times, students view history to be a dull and boring subject. Many students look at history and ask how it pertains to their own lives. Students are told to read

biographies of historical figures to get a general sense of what impact these people had on history. Students probably don't realize that by having a Facebook profile they are writing their own autobiography, and every time they look at a friend's profile they are reading someone else's autobiography. I want my students to learn about historical figures and to understand details about why these people are deemed important. However, instead of having students read and then produce a traditional biography of these historical people I want them to produce the biography in a genre that many of them are currently using on their own time. Part of being a good Social Studies teacher is being able to make things relevant for one's students. I hope that by using Facebook in this way that my students are able to learn about some historical figures in a way that is meaningful to them.