Script: Becoming Informed Citizens Through Current Events

A Technology Integrated Writing Unit for College and Career Readiness

1. This is the screencast of my lesson plan and results for the Technology Integration Project.
2. My name is Bridget Barker and I am a teacher at Exeter Adult Education in Exeter, NH.
3. My Adult Career Pathways Writing students are a mix of advanced ESOL students, HiSET prep students, and people who are trying to improve their academic skills. With one exception, they are all comfortable with technology and the internet, and they all have access to computers and the internet at home. We have been using Google Docs to write, edit, and collaborate in classes, and they are all using it outside of school as well. None of them had posted to blogs before and only some had even read a blog.
4. At the end of this unit students will be able to:

* Write informed arguments about current issues with valid reasoning and sufficient and relevant evidence.
* Evaluate news sources for bias and credibility.
* Use information from multiple print and media sources without plagiarizing.
* Be able to post on a blog.

1. These are the standards that are addressed by this unit (read to themselves):

* RI Anchors 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8
* W Anchors 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8
* SL Anchors 1 and 2
* Language Anchors 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6

1. The biggest challenge for this unit was that my students generally did not read or watch the news in any format. They are unaware of biases in news reporting. They could do internet research and use Google Docs. We started with one news story and worked through it together. From that research and discussion, I guided them to develop a rubric for evaluating news sources and news reporting. They then applied the rubric to a topic of their own choosing. Finally, I assigned one controversial topic (gun rights/gun control) for them to research and blog about. I wanted it to be controversial so they could see two very distinct sides and see some bias in reporting. They will choose a write a persuasive essay on Google Docs and share it with the class. We are not quite finished with this.
2. For technology, we used laptops, Google Docs, and Blogger(.com). My challenge for the technology piece was that I had to learn to set up and administer a blog. Blogger made it very easy to do.
3. For formative assessment, I used observations and questioning at the beginning of each phase to be sure that they understood the tasks and had the necessary skills. I used discussion, questioning, observations, and their written responses to the given tasks to assess them as we went on.
4. The lesson overview is we:

* used internet and print sources via the internet to learn to evaluate source reliability and validity
* researched and analyzed a topic of their own choice
* researched, analyzed, and blogged about the final topic
* they will write a persuasive essay, citing sources and providing evidence to support their points

1. This unit was very easy to implement, much more so than I thought. It took four classes for the initial phase, three classes to do their individual topics. They quickly picked up the blogging, so that only took one class. I even had one student who in her first post included a video and a picture which was cool. Like all of you, I’m sure, we had several snow days that delayed our progress through the unit, so students are still finishing their final papers. They have spent two classes on their final projects so far. I anticipate them finishing after another three sessions.
2. I really liked this lesson and have already started it with two other classes. The POST method was helpful for planning and I will definitely use it again. The technology really added to the lesson. Researching and posting online made having to engage in the news a little more palatable for my students. They enjoyed learning how to blog, and my ESOL students have said they may use it with family and friends to keep in touch. Students are reluctantly beginning to pay attention to the news. In my social studies class, I am extending it to connect it to studying the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and government organization.
3. This is the rubric we developed for evaluating the news.
4. These next few slides are pictures of students’ work. This is the topic that we did together.
5. This is a student’s individual topic.
6. And more of that
7. And one more.
8. These last two are pictures of our blog.
9. I really enjoyed this class and learned a lot. Thank you everyone for sharing your ideas.