

Katy Jain
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TPACK Assignment

Part I – The Initiative:

Often in Social Studies, students need help fully understanding the importance of the material we are covering. In a history class, often they need help understanding the relevance of the history and the point of view of the historical figures involved. In a class like civics or government, they may struggle to understand the point of view of other community members and why they hold differing viewpoints on tough political issues. Furthermore, when asked to communicate these ideas, especially through writing, students often fail at connecting to the point of view of others and expressing it fully in writing. They struggle to write well-thought out ideas using good spelling and grammar. They have become so accustomed to limiting their writing to fit into a text message or a tweet, they forget to use “to” instead of “2” and to provide adequate details to support their arguments. As teachers we know that to become responsible citizens, it is vital that students be able to connect with and empathize with others and then be able to communicate their ideas effectively.

To help overcome these issues, I propose the use of technology. For this particular problem, I propose the use of Google Docs for sharing and peer editing and blogs (such as Blogger or Edublogs) for publishing of R.A.F.T. writing assignments. While this proposed TPACK solution could be used in virtually any Social Studies class, I will focus on its use in 10th grade United States History for a unit on the Civil Rights Movement.

Part II – TPACK:

1. **The Pedagogical Knowledge (PK):** To help students connect to the points of view of others, teachers like to incorporate the use of R.A.F.T. writing activities. R.A.F.T.s are essentially writing prompts that ask students to consider the **R**ole of the writer, the **A**udience, the **F**ormat of the writing, and the **T**opic. For example, in this particular unit, I might ask students to write from either the point of view of Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King, Jr.(role), addressing the white leaders of the Montgomery public transit system (audience), through either a letter or an editorial article (format), about why they should stop the segregation on the Montgomery busses. R.A.F.T.s help students used embodied thinking and empathizing to relate to others, from historical figures to other community members.
2. **The Content Knowledge (CK):** Teachers would have to provide content knowledge on the civil rights movement for this lesson’s success. In this case, students would think about what it was like to be a black citizen who dealt with segregation and would have to think about arguments to convince power holding whites to change their practices. They would have to have an understanding of what segregation is and what it looked like on Montgomery busses. They would have to also understand the fear that many blacks had about retaliation for speaking out. They would also have to have an understanding of the Constitution and the rights it guarantees.
3. **The Technological Knowledge (TK):** To be able to carry out the R.A.F.T. writing assignment using technology, teachers would have to be proficient first in the use of

Google Docs. They would have to understand how to create an account, how to create a new document, and how to share that document with others in order to demonstrate how to do such tasks for their students. They would also need to understand how to use the Comment function in order to provide feedback to their students and show students how to provide feedback to their peers. Teachers would also need to be proficient in the creation and publishing of a blog. They would need to be able to create a blog using free sites such as Blogger or Edublogs. They would also need to understand how to share the blog, create tags for the blogs, and set up the blog so that others could comment on it. They would need to be proficient in this so they could effectively demonstrate all of these tasks to students who did not already know how to use these two platforms (Google docs and blogs). Finally, teachers would also need to have knowledge of netiquette and reinforce to students how to publish work responsibly and comment professionally and respectfully on the work of others.

4. **TPACK:** The unique combination of the R.A.F.T. writing activity with the technology (Google Docs and blogging), allows students to realistically think through a complicated issue, like civil rights and segregation, in a venue that makes more sense to them. Students are able to empathize with people from the time period and express their point of views through technologies that many students are already using on a daily basis in their home life. Students will also be given the unique writing support not only from the peer editing allowed through sharing and comments on Google Docs, the built in spelling and grammar checks, help teach students better writing skills. In the online format, students can instantly edit and revise their work. The comment functions on the blog will help students to think about their arguments and defend them to others. Not only will students tap into the content knowledge of the civil rights movement, through the use of the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of the R.A.F.T writing assignment, the students will also continue to develop and nurture their technological knowledge of using Google docs and blogs in a professional manner, allowing them to continue to practice good netiquette.