Technology: Friend or Foe?
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Grade Level: 12
Subject Area: English

<u>Project Summary:</u> Over the course of a semester, students delve deeply into the topic of man's relationship with technology. After reading short stories, a novel, a play, and various contemporary articles that all explore man's hopes and fears about his relationship with science and technology, students form panels to present on various aspects of the topic. Each panel member formally delivers a unique point of view, explaining and supporting with textual references. Finally, the panel engages in a lively question and answer period in which the members respond to questions posed by the audience, further developing their ideas.

<u>Introduction:</u>

Project Description: This semester-long in-depth study of man's relationship with technology includes extensive reading and a formal research paper, and culminates with panel talks. Students begin by reading several of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories ("The Artist of the Beautiful," "Drowne's Wooden Image," and "The Birthmark") that discuss artists and scientists creating things that have never been created before. Next, the students brainstorm a list of issues, hopes, and fears about scientific development that they think people have had over the past several hundred years. As the students then read *Frankenstein*, they determine how Mary Shelley has treated the subject of scientific advancement. Concurrently, they write a research paper on modern media. They then study the Czechoslovakian play *R.U.R.* that was written in 1921 and coined the term "robot," comparing Karel Capek's vision of man creating life to Shelley's. As they read several short stories, including E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" and Lester Rey's "Helen O'Loy," they also explore various contemporary opinion articles discussing technology. Many students do additional research, including watching science fiction movies on their own. Each member of the panel then develops his own thesis and argument and creates PowerPoint slides for the class presentation.   Finally, on panel talk day, over the course of twenty to thirty minutes the panel members present their ideas to the class using PowerPoint slides rather than note cards. After each panel member has discussed his claims and presented evidence, the entire panel responds to numerous questions posed by audience members.

This unit can be modified to work with other themes, subject areas, and grade levels. Teachers can choose their own favorite literature and authors or use another theme. Panel talks could be very useful in social studies and science classes, where panels might address how certain "themes" have presented themselves in different historical times or they could discuss issues such as global warming. I have done panel talks with sophomore college prep. students where the topic is a novel we have studied and each panel addresses a different theme.

Educational Value: Students work hard to come up with thoughtful claims to present to the class and they enjoy hearing what their classmates have to say. This topic works particularly well because most students have a vested interest in technology and it provides a contemporary reason to study literary works from the 19th and 20th century. The format of the discussion rewards advance preparation but also requires students to be prepared to think on their feet. Students learn how to equitably share question and answer time with their fellow group members. Some of the topics can be controversial, and the students learn how to present conflicting ideas in ways that are not offensive. For seniors, this is an opportunity to practice, in a controlled environment, the type of discussions in which they will most likely engage in many of their college courses.

Lesson Plans:

Lesson Plan 1: The Introduction

Objective: Students will access prior knowledge about the conflict of Man vs. Technology, understand the format of panel talks, and select their groups and topics.

Procedure:

1. Discuss with the class the common categories of conflict in literature: Man vs. Man; Man vs. Society; Man vs. Nature; Man vs. Self; Man vs. God. Explain that you will now be studying the conflict of Man vs. Technology.

2. Have the students do a quickwrite on the following topic: "What do people hope and fear about scientific and technological advancement? Have these views changed in the past few centuries?"

3. Ask students to share their ideas with a partner.

4. On the board, label two columns "hopes" and "fears." As the whole class discusses their ideas, make notes under the appropriate headings. Note whether there are more hopes or fears. To what do the students attribute a possible imbalance? Ask the students which of these are new ideas and which hopes/fears have probably remained constant for the past couple of centuries. Make notes on the board indicating whether the items are new or old hopes/fears.

5. Next is the time to introduce the format of panel talks. Many students find the concept a bit confusing at first. I have found that it helps to use stuffed animals to illustrate. First, put four different stuffed animals on the front table and explain that they represent a "panel" that will be experts on an aspect of the Man vs. Technology theme at the end of the semester. Holding up each one separately, explain that each will give an opening statement several minutes in length on a different aspect of the theme. You can point to one of their ideas on the board and say, "For example, we said that people are afraid that scientists will play God. This group might be discussing how authors have treated the subject of man playing God. The teddy bear, for example, might explain how Hawthorne explores this idea in 'The Birthmark' and 'The Artist of the Beautiful' while the panda is going to discuss how Victor plays God in *Frankenstein*." Continue giving examples for the other two stuffed animals. Then explain that after all four panel members have given their opening remarks, there will be an extended

question and answer period. Students who are not on the panel that is presenting at the time ask open-ended questions of the panel members. Students receive an additional point added onto their grade for the assignment for each good question that they ask. I also like to also use the animals to illustrate how to equitably share speaking time. Students shouldn't be "panel hogs" who never let anyone else speak, nor should they be "panel mice" too scared to ever speak up. I show how they can encourage reticent panel members to answer questions and how to politely disagree with each other. Pass out the rubric so that students will understand how they will be graded. Explain that each student will be graded individually based on the rubric.

6. Next, pass out the handout that explains the panel talks and gives the topics. Have students arrange themselves into groups. Four is the idea number of panel members. When there are five, it is difficult to separate a topic into five different subtopics. Panels of three also work.

7. Use a random method to select groups one at a time. The group that is chosen first gets first choice of panel topics and will be the first group to present at the end of the semester. The last group to choose will be the last group to present.

8. Allow time for the group to discuss books and movies they know that present their themes. Tell them that they can use these works as evidence in their talks if they choose.

9. Finally, explain that as they read each of the assigned texts, they should view it through the lens of their topic. It is a good idea to read with post-it notes and mark passages as they go that relate to their topic. This should provide richer evidence than if they choose their topic after reading and revisit the work later to find evidence.

Board work might look like this:

Hopes	Fears
medical advancements/ cures/longer life	our creations will overpower us/we won't be able to control them

more free time	we will ruin the environment
flying cars!	we won't be able to do anything for ourselves
connect with people who are far away	unemployment/fewer jobs because machines do all of the work
	we'll get unhealthy – lack of exercise
	we'll isolate ourselves – communicating online rather than in person
	fragmented multitasking – we won't be able to sustain interest or ideas

Handouts: Panel talk description and rubric

Lesson Plan 2: Modern Media Essay

(This assignment fits under the theme of Man vs. Technology but it is separate from the panel talks.)

Objective: Students will write a three to five page paper presenting a unique claim about modern media and supporting it with clear reasoning and evidence from at least three outside sources.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students to do a quickwrite on the following question: "How much time do you think 8 to 18 year olds spend using entertainment media each day? How do you think they are being affected by this media use?"

2. Have the students share their ideas with a partner and then participate in a group discussion.

3. Pass out the article titled "Daily Media Use Among Children and Teens Up Dramatically from Five Years Ago" available at this website: http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia012010nr.cfm

4. Ask the students to read the article and annotate information they find interesting, important, and/or confusing.

5. Students should then write a response to the information in the piece on the same paper they used for their previous quickwrites. Did this information surprise them or confirm what they had already thought? Discuss as a class.

6. Revisit the article the next class period. Ask the students to reread the piece with a critical eye. Do they detect any bias to the way the facts are presented? Are there reasons to question the accuracy of the data? (There is no single right answer to any of these questions. They are presented to encourage students to read informative text critically.) If there are reasons to question the data, should that completely invalidate it?

7. Discuss as a class: if this data is accurate, does it seem to suggest we should make any adjustments or restrictions to the way we allow young people to access entertainment media?

8. Pass out the Modern Media Essay handout and go over the directions for the essay. Students should first choose a medium that interests them – video games, facebook, smart phones, news websites, etc. Then they will develop a claim and do research to find support for their ideas. Here are some examples of possible claims:

    a. Video games are a new art form.

    b. Social networking sites like Facebook give a false sense of connection.

    c. Social networking sites like Facebook provide users with unprecedented opportunities to be part of communities and feel a sense of belongingness.

    d. Smart phones are causing users to be so distracted that they cannot fully function in their schools, workplaces and homes.

9. As needed, provide students with support for researching, developing claims, writing, giving peer feedback, editing, etc. An excellent resource for seniors is the handouts section of the University of North Carolina Writing Center website:

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html

Handouts: Modern media prompt and rubric

Lesson Plan 3: Modern Media Speed Dating

Objective: Students will personify their chosen media in a "speed dating" format in order to think about their media in new ways before they begin researching for their papers.

1. Using the handout, explain the concept of speed dating.

2. Hand out the name tags and have each student write the medium she has chosen for her paper on the name tag.

3. Arrange the students so that they are in pairs.

4. Give the students three minutes to ask questions of their partners, referring to the list on the handout. Walk around and monitor that the students remember to speak in the persona of their chosen media.

5. Repeat for several rounds.

6. Have the students do a quickwrite in which they reflect on what they learned, realized, or clarified that they know or don't know about their medium.

   Handout: Speed Dating

Lesson Plan 4: Research

   Objective: Students will research their chosen media to find facts and arguments to support their claims.

1. Discuss what kinds of research might be helpful to support their arguments in their modern media papers.

2. Discuss appropriate search terms. For example, here is a possible argument for a paper: *DVD players in vehicles are detrimental to young children because with constant access to movies they will not learn how to entertain themselves. While passively staring at the screen, children will not see the world around them, engage in conversation with their fellow travelers, pick up a book, or play travel games.* What might I search to find information that will support my argument? If my search terms are "dvd players in cars" I will most likely get hits that want to sell me dvd players. If I search "dvd players in cars bad for kids" it will probably

render less credible hits than if I use more academic language like "dvd players in cars harmful to children."

3. Discuss credibility of sources. Blogs may render interesting information but they are not as credible as nationally recognized newspapers and magazines.

4. Make the Modern Media Paper Research handout available on the web for students to download. They should copy, paste and type into the handout as they do their research. Copying the url's now will enable them to find the sources again and to make correct works cited entries. (I recommend easybib.com as a resource for students to use to make their works cited pages.)

Handout: Modern media research template

Lesson Plan 5: Panel Talk Presentation Day

Objective: Students will give three to four minute opening statements and thoughtfully answer open-ended questions posed by the class.

Procedure:

1. Arrange the classroom so that the panel members can sit facing the students. Panel members should be able to stand while presenting their individual opening statements and sit while fielding questions.

2. Each of the panel members should use PowerPoint slides to present claims and evidence for his subtopic. (Requiring students to use slides with bullet points rather than note cards cuts down on plagiarism and forces students to speak directly to the audience.) Use the rubric to evaluate the students as they present.

3. After all of the members of a panel have spoken, open the discussion up to questions from the class. Keep a tally of how many good questions each student asks and add an extra point for each question to the student's grade for the assignment.

4. After the panels have presented, engage the class in a discussion of the process. Who had a particularly good opening statement, and what made it so good? Whose slides were especially well done? What kinds of questions encouraged the richest discussion? What would they do differently if they were to do it again?

Student sample: PowerPoint slides

Student Impact:

Throughout this unit, students think critically about society's and their own relationship with technology. They analyze literature, research and evaluate the credibility of sources, develop and defend cohesive arguments, and express themselves through writing and public speaking.

Students benefit from seeing the connection of the past, present and future of man's use of technology, and they learn to think critically about their own media use. For seniors, this project works as a bridge from the literature-based high school curriculum and the five-paragraph essay to the types of expository reading and writing they will most likely be required to do in college.

Assessment:

For the paper and the panel talk, students are evaluated on their individual performance using the attached rubrics.

Standards:

2.0 Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent themes.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

1.0 Writing Strategies

1.3 Students structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

1.6 Students develop presentations by using clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies

Materials/Budget:

Frankenstein $4.95 per book

R.U.R. $2.25 per book

Most of the short stories are in the public domain and can be found on the Internet for free. Students who don't have access to PowerPoint can use Google to create a Google presentation document for free. For classrooms without projection units, panel talks can be done using posters and note cards in place of PowerPoint slideshows.

Cost per class of 35 is $252.00

Speed Dating

1. You are going to BE the technological medium that you have chosen for your research, i.e. video games, social networking, ipods, blogs, YouTube, etc.
2. Make a name tag for yourself: "Hi! I'm Video Games!" "Hi! I'm Social Networking!"
3. Rows 1 and 3 turn around. Redistribute yourselves until we have an outer and an inner circle and everyone has a partner.
4. You have three minutes for you and your partner to get to know each other. After you shake hands and introduce yourselves, ask each other questions and respond as though you ARE your medium. Suggested questions:
   a. What do you do for a living?
   b. How old are you?
   c. Tell me about your family.
   d. What are your best qualities?
   e. What makes you unique?
   f. What's your biggest fault?
   g. Do you think we have anything in common?
   h. What are your plans for the future?

5. After three minutes, the "gong" will sound and it will be time for the people in the outer circle to move three seats clockwise. Repeat for as many rounds as there is time.
6. When you're finished, do a quickwrite in your notebook about what you learned, realized, clarified, or at least focused on about your medium in this exercise.

Man vs. Technology

Panel Talks

As a culminating activity for our Man vs. Technology unit second quarter, we will have panel talks on various themes relating to our study. For the talks, you will be assigned a group of four people and a theme to discuss. On the day of your assigned talk, you will sit at the front of the room and have a twenty minute discussion.

Opening Statements:
To begin the discussion, each member of the panel will give an opening statement. When you first meet in your groups to prepare for your talks, each panel member should come up with a different approach to the theme (subtopic) so that as a group you will be looking at your theme from several different perspectives. In your opening statement, you will each explain to the class your particular insights into your theme.

Quotations:
You will need quotations for the texts to support your claims. As we read each work, you should keep a log of significant quotations. When you choose your subtopic, you will narrow your focus and select appropriate quotes that will support your ideas in your opening statement.

Discussion:
Once the opening statements are presented, discussion time will begin. The class will listen and ask thought-provoking questions. The panels will respond to the class's questions. It is important that the members of the panel work together to share the responsibility of answering the questions. Part of your grade will be based on how well you work together. I expect that more than one panel member will respond to each question as you add to (or occasionally contradict) your fellow panel members. You will need a bank of quotes relating to your topic to refer to so that you can give textual support when answering questions.

PowerPoint:
Each group will create a PowerPoint presentation to go with its panel talk. The only notes you will be allowed to use are your PowerPoint and any quotes you have marked in your book. Your slides should contain an **outline** of your key points. DO NOT write complete sentences or paragraphs on your slides; only bullet points are acceptable. We want to listen to you talk, not watch you read. Include pictures, charts and/or graphs on your slides to make your presentation more interesting and understandable. For convenience, compile all of your slides into one presentation for your panel. You will be graded individually on the slides that relate to your own subtopics.

Evaluation:
For your own panel talk, each member will be individually graded on his insight, knowledge of the texts, specific support, and ability to fairly share the allotted time with the other panel members. You will earn credit as well for asking meaningful questions of the other panels.

Topics:
Scientists and Obsession
Playing God – The Ethics of Scientific Development
Role of Nature
Creations overpowering Creators
Technology and the Soul
Evolution/Devolution of Man
Isolation
The Role of Women

Panel Talk Grading

A	B	C	D	F
Opening statement shows significant insight into topic **16 points**	Opening statement shows some insight into topic **14 points**	Opening statement shows general understanding of topic **12 points**	Opening statement shows minimal understanding of topic **10 points**	Opening statement shows little or no understanding of topic **0-9 points**
Opening statement is supported with ample evidence and explanation **18 points**	Opening statement is supported with clear evidence and explanation **16 points**	Opening statement is supported with basic evidence and explanation **14 points**	Opening statement is supported with minimal evidence and explanation **12 points**	Opening statement is supported with little or no evidence and explanation **0-11 points**
Speaker thoughtfully responds to many questions using concrete detail and commentary **34 points**	Speaker thoughtfully responds to some questions using concrete detail and commentary **28 points**	Speaker generally responds to some questions **26 points**	Speaker gives general responses to a few questions **22 points**	Speaker gives wrong responses to questions or does not respond to questions **0-21 points**
Speaker is animated, audible, sits up straight and makes eye contact with the audience. Speaker politely and fairly shares speaking time with panel-mates; helps nervous panel-mates be successful **16 points**	Speaker makes some eye contact with the audience and sits up straight. Speaker shares speaking time with panel-mates; may help nervous panel-mates be successful **14 points**	Speaker reads opening statement with little inflection or eye contact, may slouch. Speaker may use too much time (panel hog) or too little (panel mouse); may seem unaware of panel-mates' needs **12 points**	Speaker may be hard to hear or reads in a monotone without making eye contact. Speaker may use too much time (panel hog) or too little (panel mouse); may seem unaware of panel-mates' needs **10 points**	Speaker may be hard to hear or reads in a monotone without making eye contact. Speaker may use too much time (panel hog) or too little (panel mouse); may embarrass panel-mates **0-9 points**
Powerpoint slides are clear, complete. Contain the right amount of info. Make talk easy to follow Use bullet points, not sentences (except for quotes) **16 points**	Powerpoint slides are clear, complete but not as interesting as an A would be. Use bullet points, not sentences (except for quotes) **14 points**	Powerpoint slides may have a little too much or too little info. May be a little hard to follow. Bullet points are not complete sentences but may be rather wordy **12 points**	Powerpoint slides have too much or too little info. May be hard to read and/or contain many errors. May use complete sentences rather than bullet points. **10 points**	Powerpoint slides have far too much or too little info. May be very difficult to read and contain numerous errors. May be sentences and paragraphs rather than bullet points. **0-9 points**

Modern Media Paper Research

What are people saying about the medium you are researching? As you do your research, this is the place to keep your notes.

What it says (Copy and paste from the text): **What I think** (Comment on the argument):	**URL** (Copy and paste): **Type of source** (website, newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.): **Grade** (How credible is the source? Give it a letter grade and explain your judgment.):
What it says (Copy and paste from the text): **What I think** (Comment on the argument):	**URL** (Copy and paste): **Type of source** (website, newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.): **Grade** (How credible is the source? Give it a letter grade and explain your judgment.):
What it says (Copy and paste from the text): **What I think** (Comment on the argument):	**URL** (Copy and paste): **Type of source** (website, newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.): **Grade** (How credible is the source? Give it a letter grade and explain your judgment.):
What it says (Copy and paste from the text): **What I think** (Comment on the argument):	**URL** (Copy and paste): **Type of source** (website, newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.): **Grade** (How credible is the source? Give it a letter grade and explain your judgment.):
What it says (Copy and paste from the text): **What I think** (Comment on the argument):	**URL** (Copy and paste): **Type of source** (website, newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.): **Grade** (How credible is the source? Give it a letter grade and explain your judgment.):

In light of what I've read, the argument I plan to make is:

Modern Media Paper

Research a particular medium that interests you – video games, smart phones, facebook, television, etc. – then develop a claim (your own unique opinion) about some aspect or effect of that medium and its effect upon modern society. Write a three to five page paper in which you develop and support your claim. In your paper, you must cite a **minimum** of three sources – news articles, web sites, blogs, encyclopedias, etc. Be sure to TAG (title, author, genre) your sources in order to avoid plagiarizing and to make your argument as convincing as possible. When paraphrasing, remember that it is still important to cite your sources for information that is not common knowledge, even if you've rewritten it in your own words. Be sure to include a works cited page that correctly follows MLA formatting.

Modern Media Paper Rubric

A	B	C	D	F
Thesis is clear, complex, insightful and arguable	Thesis is clear, thoughtful, and arguable	Thesis is clear but somewhat simple. May formulaically list topics rather than present an argument	Thesis is vague or unclear	Thesis statement is missing
Arguments are very convincing and skillfully supported	Arguments are convincing and well-supported	Arguments are generally convincing and have adequate support	Arguments are weak and/or poorly supported	Arguments are very weak and/or have minimal support
Paper is purposefully and effectively organized so that the argument flows smoothly	Paper is logically organized with effective transitions and an appropriate flow of ideas	Paper is formulaically organized. Ideas are treated independently of each other	Paper is lacking clear organization and may be in need of transitions to connect ideas	Paper is unfocused and haphazardly organized. Transitions are missing or inappropriate
Paper makes effective use of at least three outside sources to support claims	Paper makes good use of at least three outside sources to support claims	Paper makes adequate use of at least two outside sources to support claims	Paper makes minimal use of outside sources to support claims	Paper makes little or no use of outside sources
Sources are skillfully cited (TAG)	Sources are well-cited (TAG)	Sources are cited (TAG), perhaps formulaically	Paper attempts to cite sources	Sources are not cited
Paper is carefully edited with very few errors in conventions	Paper is well-edited with few errors in conventions	Paper contains some errors in conventions that do not impede understanding	Paper contains numerous errors in conventions that may impede understanding	Paper contains numerous errors in conventions that severely impede understanding
Error-free works cited page	Works cited page contains few errors	Works cited page contains some errors	Works cited page contains numerous errors or only lists url's	Works cited page is missing