<u>**Overarching Unit Goal**</u>:
Learners will enhance independent reading, literary analysis, writing, and academic discussion skills through the application of choice and blogging in connection with a self-selected novel.

Learning Goals	Learning Activities	Assessment Activities
Foundation Knowledge: Learners will analyze the way electronic posts and discussions can shape the learning process.	✓ Review scholarly articles to glean background information about blogging. ✓ Review exemplar student blogs and consider how blogging might enhance learning.	➢ Discussion through a Socratic Seminar with The Backchannel
Application Skills: Learners will set up an ePortfolio to use as a tool for both blogging and group collaboration.	✓ View example ePortfolios to glean ideas for design. ✓ Decorate ePortfolios, craft introductions and set up blog pages.	➢ Share links for completed sites. ➢ View and comment on other students' ePortfolios.
Integration: Learners will select an independent book of their choice and craft a series of blog entries throughout the unit.	✓ Divide into homogenous groups based on the genre and premise of books. ✓ Read library books each class period while connecting comprehension to digital communication, reflection, and collaboration.	➢ Create blog entries in connection with required prompts. ➢ Comment on the blog of two other classmates for each post. ➢ Orally discuss reading in homogenous groups.
Human Dimension Goals: Learners will utilize the element of persuasion to gain the interest of other classmates in connection with their novels.	✓ Create a book trailer video using a self-selected platform to showcase the selection through pictures, text, and analysis.	➢ Write a post convincing others to read the novel. ➢ Embed book trailers within posts.

Caring Goals: Learners will explore the literary analysis of other classmates to cultivate interest for future readings.	✓ Share blog links in Google Classroom. ✓ Comb through the blogs of other classmates to find two new books to read.	➢ Create a blog post describing the two selected novels and explain rationale behind choices. ➢ Comment on the blogs of students whose work provided persuasion for choices. Explain the impact of their work.
Learning-How-to-Learn: Learners will identify the impact choice and blogging had on their learning process.	✓ Reflect on independent reading unit.	➢ Write a reflection post discussing the positives and negatives of independent reading and blogging to demonstrate learning.

Learning Environment & Situational Factors to Consider

1. **Specific Context of the Teaching/Learning Situation**

   How many students are in the class? Is the course primary, secondary, undergraduate, or graduate level? How long and frequent are the class meetings? How will the course be delivered: live, online, blended, flipped or in a classroom or lab? What physical elements of the learning environment will affect the class? What technology, networking and access issues will affect the class?

   There are roughly 100 secondary-level students served in sections 1101-2, 1101-5, 1201-03, and 1201-04 of English 1 & 2 with 25-30 students meeting at one time. The campus scheduling is designed based on a block-scheduling rotation where students attend four classes a day for an hour and a half. Based on this rotation, students attend English class every other day. The course is delivered both live and online in a regular classroom. The learning environment includes enough space to allow for students to be seated in cooperative groups in order to enhance opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, the District provides adequate wireless access and devices to allow for digital learning within the courses.

2. **General Context of the Learning Situation**

   What learning expectations are placed on this course or curriculum by: the school, district, university, college and/or department? the profession? society?

   The curriculum expectations are outlined by the Texas Education Association via the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills document. Secondary English covers a variety of intertwined facets of reading, writing, research, literary analysis and student collaboration. Since the above skills are the passage for all learning, instruction is expected to be rigorous and assessed using various methods. The foundations of English Language Arts and Reading are also necessary for success in a higher-education environment, and the expectation is for educators to adequately prepare students for what lies ahead after high school.

3. **Nature of the Subject**
   Is this subject primarily theoretical, practical, or a combination? Is the
   subject primarily convergent or divergent? Are there important changes or
   controversies occurring within the field?

English Language Arts and Reading is a practical-application content area. Through
the culmination of reading and writing, students are exposed to grammar, mechanics,
literary elements and devices, close-reading skills, analysis, and execution. The
subject is primarily divergent since writing and analysis are unique to the
individual, and there is not a finite solution to the majority of questions posed
throughout the course. The curriculum has shifted from the simple recall of events
in the reading to the application of literary elements and devices to the text to
generate higher-order thinking. Technology has also opened up new learning
experiences through project collaboration, online discussion, and digital lesson
delivery. Learning is shifting away from the old paper and pencil method.

4. **Characteristics of the Learners**
   What is the life situation of the learners (e.g., socio-economic, cultural,
   personal, family, professional goals)? What prior knowledge, experiences, and
   initial feelings do students usually have about this subject? What are their
   learning goals and expectations?

This campus serves a diverse population of learners from all races, socio-economic
levels, cultures, and family structures. Students entering each course have
typically studied the subject matter in some form or fashion since their entry into
Kindergarten. It is often seen that students either have a love of reading and
writing or they are the opposite; there is not usually much of an in between.
Tailoring the curriculum to the interests of the students can help to generate
additional buy in. The goals and expectations of each learner vary from college
preparation to just doing enough to get by and pass the course. Since they are on-
level courses, the latter is most often the case, and educators have to get
creative to engage the students.

5. **Characteristics of the Teacher**
   What beliefs and values does the teacher have about teaching and learning? What
   is his/her attitude toward: the subject? students? What level of knowledge or
   familiarity does s/he have with this subject? What are his/her strengths in
   teaching?

As a teacher, I believe that teaching and learning should be collaborative,
kinesthetic, and interactive in nature. Learning is enhanced when students are
allowed to team up with their peers. English Language Arts is a content area that
is near and dear to me and has been for as long as I can remember. My favorite
subjects in school were always reading and writing. Additionally, I have always
been an avid reader and this furthers my passion for my curriculum. My level of
knowledge has been enhanced through personal experiences outside of the classroom,
my K-12 education, and my undergraduate studies. Additionally, I have worked in
education for eight years. My strengths in teaching are creative planning,
kinesthetic lessons, technology integration, and incorporating student interests
into my lessons.

<u>Questions for Formulating Significant Learning Goals</u>

"A year (or more) after this course is over, I want and hope that students will be able to use digital tools to demonstrate their learning and collaborate with peers."

My Big Harry Audacious Goal (BHAG) for the course is:

Learners will enhance independent reading, literary analysis, writing, and academic discussion skills through the application of choice and blogging in connection with a self-selected novel.

Foundational Knowledge

What key <u>information</u> (e.g., facts, terms, formulae, concepts, principles, relationships, etc.) is/are important for students to <u>understand and remember</u> in the future?

Learners will analyze the way electronic posts and discussions can shape the learning process. By reading the following articles: "Blogging to Learn" and "Start a Reading Revolution: Flip Your Class with Blogs," students will glean background information to understand the teacher's choices and requirements for the upcoming unit of study. By collaborating in a Socratic Seminar while using The Backchannel, students will articulate and synthesize their learning while participating in both an oral and electronic discussion.

What key <u>ideas</u> (or perspectives) are important for students to understand in this course?

Digital interaction via electronic communication is not going away and will be necessary for success in both current and future education and professional endeavors. Reading and writing are integral components of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for high school English.

Application Goals

What kinds of <u>thinking</u> are important for students to learn?

- o <u>Critical thinking</u>, in which students analyze and evaluate:
  Students will think critically about their reading selection as they analyze and evaluate plot, characterization, setting/historical implications, the role of the antagonist, types of conflict, text-to-text connections, and literary devices contained within the text.
- o <u>Creative thinking</u>, in which students imagine and create:
  Students will create an ePortfolio site to use as a springboard to document their learning. In addition, they will build a book trailer using a video platform of their choice to persuade other students to read their selection.
- o <u>Practical thinking</u>, in which students solve problems and make decisions:
  The creation of the ePortfolio site will involve problem solving and decision making as students learn basic elements of crafting an electronic footprint and designing a product that is relative to their occasion and audience.

What important <u>skills</u> do students need to gain?
This unit is a comprehensive one since it integrates all the components of the English Language Arts curriculum with digital tools. Skills to be covered are reading, literary analysis, writing, group collaboration, and technology fluency.

Do students need to learn how to <u>manage complex projects</u>?
The management of this project will definitely be complex since it requires
students to fuse their learning with 21st Century tools. In addition, the
utilization of the ePortfolio will not end here; it will be used in multiple units
throughout the school year. The oversite of this platform will be ongoing.

Integration Goals

What <u>connections</u> (similarities and interactions) should students recognize and
make?

- o Among ideas *within* this course?
  Students will make a connection between their reading selection and the
  <u>Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills</u> required for the course:

  (2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students
  analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in
  different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide
  evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are
  expected to:
  >   (C) relate the figurative language of a literary work to its
  >   historical and cultural setting.

  (5) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students
  understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure
  and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their
  understanding. Students are expected to:

  >   (A) analyze non-linear plot development (e.g., flashbacks,
  >   foreshadowing, sub-plots, parallel plot structures) and compare
  >   it to linear plot development;

  >   (B) analyze how authors develop complex yet believable
  >   characters in works of fiction through a range of literary
  >   devices, including character foils;

  >   (C) analyze the way in which a work of fiction is shaped by the
  >   narrator's point of view;

  (26) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with
  others in teams. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with
  greater complexity. Students are expected to participate productively
  in teams, building on the ideas of others, contributing relevant
  information, developing a plan for consensus-building, and setting
  ground rules for decision-making.

(13) Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process
(planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.
Students are expected to:

>   (A) plan a first draft by selecting the correct genre for conveying
>   the intended meaning to multiple audiences, determining appropriate
>   topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background
>   reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or
>   controlling idea;

>   (B) structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way (e.g., using
>   outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, lists) and develop drafts in
>   timed and open-ended situations that include transitions and the
>   rhetorical devices used to convey meaning;

(C) revise drafts to improve style, word choice, figurative language, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed;

(D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and

(E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

- o Among the information, ideas, and perspectives in this course and those in other courses or areas?
  Since reading and writing are the gateway to all learning, the ideas and information in this course will enhance the learning and comprehension necessary for achievement in other courses. In addition, technology fluency will carry over into other courses and instructional levels.

- o Among material in this course and the students' own personal, social, and/or work life?
  Building a student's love of reading can carry over into many areas of their lives away from school. Reading is an excellent pastime for enjoyment during a person's downtime. It can also lead to social interaction as it gives students a platform for building conversations or joining book clubs. Finally, it is important to read for details in the workplace, and this is true in almost any occupation. The same applies to writing. In order to be successful in most jobs, a person much be able to communicate effectively via email and through the drafting of technical documents. Practicing writing in a digital environment will prepare the student for future endeavors.

Human Dimensions Goals

What could or should students learn about themselves?
Students should be able to add interests to their reading list, and learn how to create a digital footprint that is appropriate and conducive to a learning environment.

What could or should students learn about understanding others and/or interacting with them?

Students should learn how to be accepting of the viewpoints and opinions of others through collaborative blogging, and how to tailor their writing to a specific person and audience. In addition, they will learn to create a persuasive advertisement to influence the decisions of others.

Caring Goals

What changes/values do you hope students will adopt?

- o Feelings?
  I hope my students will develop a passion for reading, writing, and engaging in academic discussions.
- o Interests?
  I hope my students will gain an appreciation for the use of technology for both collaboration and building a collection of academic work.
- o Values?
  I hope to instill life-long learning values and habits in my students through the integration of this unit.

- What would you like for students to learn about:
  - o <u>how to be good students</u> in a course like this?
    Since reading and writing are important to present and future learning, I would like my students to become fluent readers and writers.
  - o <u>how to learn about this particular subject</u>?
    Learners will identify the impact choice and blogging had on their learning process. Hopefully, this will generate interest in future reading and collaboration within a learning community. In addition, they will learn to reflect on their learning and think about what worked and what didn't work.
  - o <u>how to become a self-directed learner</u> of this subject, i.e., having a learning agenda of what they need/want to learn, and a *plan* for learning it?
    Exposure to new and interesting literature in the classroom will help students search for additional selections to read for pleasure. Giving them a list of blogging prompts to compose independently with a learning target in mind will help students to monitor comprehension and enhance their own metacognition.

References

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