1. Unit Overview
   a. Context
      • This unit was created with the mindset for an 11th grade general English course. Due to the focus of technology throughout these lessons (Internet postings, research, discussion), accessibility to technology (computers and Internet) at school and at home is very important. For contexts in which students lack this accessibility, modifications would have to be made to allow for computer/Internet usage during class time.
   
   b. Unit - Technology: Potential for Enhancing Human Life
      • This unit has been structured under the umbrella of Michigan State curriculum standards for 11th grade English. The anchor text for the unit is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* with an extensive, inquiry based research project as the final assessment. The focus is transformational thinking that will connect the text with the research proposal that asks students to investigate a technological advancement within our society and the effects of pursuing this knowledge.
      • Previous Unit
         • The previous unit's focus was "Informed Decision Making" which included Renaissance texts and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Larger ideas within this unit center on decision-making, consequences/forward thinking, and decisions in the course of history. Students will be able to apply what they have learned in this unit to the scientific/technical realm of our history and society discussed in this unit.
      • Following Unit
         • The next unit's focus is "Understanding Human Nature: Coping with crisis, chaos and change." Through this unit students will be prepared to incorporate what they've learned about change and addressing potential progress and consequences to a thematic concept explored in the following unit: It is better to examine the consequences of a decision before it's made, than to discover them afterwards. Students will continue to build on similar themes related to development and outcomes through drawing connections among the year's curriculum.
   
   c. Themes/Concepts
      • Technology has the potential to enhance and extend human life.
      • Man's fascination with creation is reflected in fact and fiction.
      • Scientific exploration has the potential to improve human life. (But what about consequences?)
      • Altering human traits has unexplored consequences.

Essential Questions
• What is technology's role in society?
• When do technological solutions become new problems?
• What issues are involved in creating, lengthening, and bettering life?
• Is there a point (percentage of replacement parts) when a human being is no longer considered human?
• How have humans been redefined by technological advances?
d. Rationale

- MDE English Curriculum as unit backbone
  - I wanted to make this unit relevant and realistic to my future curriculum. Considering that most curriculums are set prior to signing your name on the dotted line, I felt that utilizing a pre-determined framework would be beneficial to my unit planning. For English 11, MDE focuses its main disposition on transformational thinking, which ties nicely into the final inquiry project. Through the planning process, I worked around determined themes and larger ideas presented in the MDE English curriculum, though chose to scaffold my students learning through different modes of inquiry and assessment than what was presented.

- Utilizing a Multimedia Inquiry Project as Assessment
  - It is important that students are able to conduct research on issues and interests of their own personal choice by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. Through gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing data from a variety of sources (Internet, film, image, etc.) students will be able to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience (PowerPoint, iMovie, film, etc.). They will continue to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, of the cultures of the United States and the world. They will acquire new information through inquiry that responds to critical issues and demands of society.
  - Resource: NCTE Standards

- Integrating the use of technology within class and assignments
  - It is a goal of No Child Left Behind that schools will "Assist every student in crossing the digital divide by ensuring that every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability." MDE Educational Technology Standards and Expectations for Grades 9-12 are intended to build on this goal and to further educate students on the role technology plays in our society and the benefits and implications of its use. Some technological standards this unit addresses includes, but is not limited to: determine if online sources are authoritative, valid, reliable, relevant, and comprehensive; formulate a research question or hypothesis, then use appropriate information and communication technology resources to collect relevant information, analyze the findings, and report the results to multiple audiences; use available technologies (e.g. desktop conferencing, e-mail, groupware, instant messaging) to communicate with others on a class assignment or project.

- Incorporating ACT prep into the curriculum
  - Most students begin preparation for the ACT in their junior year of high school, therefore integrating standardized testing preparation into the eleventh grade English curriculum is relevant. Writing has always been and will continue to be one of the essential skills for college readiness and success. Though the ACT Writing component is not necessarily connected to an authentic writing experience, as an educator it is my responsibility to provide students with the necessary knowledge to perform well on standardized tests. Through reviewing the positives and negatives of ACT writing, students will have a better perspective on why ACT is used, how it is graded, and how to transition from ACT essay structure as a building block towards more authentic and developed writing. Through critically examining the structure and purpose of standardized testing, students will be able to strengthen critical thinking skills that will complement the final inquiry project.
e. Goals
   • This unit intends to focus on transformational thinking through the exploration of technology and the pursuit of knowledge as potential for enhancing human life. Students will be able to make connections from the unit's text, *Frankenstein*, to current debates and controversies with modern scientific and technological developments through using multi-mediæs (film, image, internet) both in class and in individual investigation for their project. Through integrating ACT preparation for the Writing Test, students will have an opportunity to critically engage with questions related to standardized testing, assessment, and authentic writing. Students will be able to extend these critical thinking skills through preparing for their inquiry project. The final inquiry project will provide an opportunity for students to critically explore a current scientific or technological advancement, take a stance, and provide evidence and rationale.

f. Standards
   • Michigan Department of Education, Content Standards for English Language Arts
   • CE1.1.1, CE1.1.4, CE 1.1.8, CE1.2.1, CE1.2.2, CE1.2.3, CE1.3.1, CE1.3.2, CE1.3.4, CE1.4.1, CE1.4.2, CE1.4.3, CE1.4.7, CE1.5.1, CE1.5.2, CE1.5.4, CE1.5.5, CE2.1.1, CE2.1.2, CE2.1.6, CE2.2.2, CE2.2.3, CE2.3.4, CE2.3.7, CE3.1.4, CE3.1.5, CE3.1.8, CE3.1.9, CE3.3.3, CE 3.4.3, CE3.4.2, CE3.4.4, CE4.1.1

f. Summative Assessment
   • Students will be asked to investigate the pursuit of knowledge involving a technological topic of student's choice through exploring 1. The origins of the topic (Why was it needed? What was the initial problem to be solved?), 2. Its objective (What was it intended to do?), 3. How it has transformed our society and what debates are behind this topic (for/against), 4. Predictions (What is your prediction of what will come of this topic? Will it continue to transform society? Create new problems, etc.)
   • See attached handout

h. References
   • Michigan Merit Curriculum, www.michigan.gov/highschool
   • http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-38924_41644_42674---,00.html, April 2009.
   • ACT Writing Preparation
   • Enriched Classics, Frankenstein Curriculum Guide. Simon and Schuster. April 2009
   • <www.simonsays.com>

i. Calendar
   • Separate pdf file attachment
2. Daily Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Introduction, 'Cause We Gotta Start Somewhere

a. Goals
   • Introduce unit topic (Technology: Potential for Enhancing Human life) in connection with the focal text, *Frankenstein*
   • Give students a sense of familiarity with text through sharing relevant background information
   • Frame the novel through introducing the gothic genre and main themes (see Unit Overview)

b. Rationale
   • An effective and relevant introductory lesson familiarizing students with the text, genre, and societal issues from the time period will scaffold their learning and help bridge connections between the text and the multi-media inquiry project while relating these ideas to the unit's themes and essential questions.

c. Assessments
   • Are students participating in the discussion?
   • Are students raising questions that address the unit's disposition (transformational thinking)?
   • Participation as assessment

   Teacher Assessment
   • Were students able to acknowledge the connection between the unit's focal theme and the text?
   • Assessment through summarizing/discussion at end of hour

d. Objectives
   Students will be able to:
   • Explore and add to the essential questions presented in the lesson
   • Make connections between the background information of the text and the unit's focal theme
   • Share ideas related to essential questions

e. Tasks
   (15 minutes) Introduce unit's focus, Technology: Potential for Enhancing Human Life. Discuss with students: What is technology? How does technology affect our lives? Address positives and negatives.

   Prompt students to raise essential questions; write down ideas/questions on board. Share essential questions not addressed if applicable. For the moment, focus students' attention on asking the questions, not finding the answers.

   (15 minutes) Introduce text, *Frankenstein*, by asking students to share what they know about the story. Possible connections may be through film, advertising, Halloween, etc. From students' responses, are there multiple perspectives of the story? Address why this may be so, if applicable. Inform students that they will be exploring misconceptions between the text and how it's presented in popular culture. How does this connect to form = audience + purpose.
(15 minutes) Introduce logistics of text and author (form, genre, relevant author information). Briefly discuss gothic literature, as students will have an opportunity to explore this genre in the following lesson. Focus attention on technology/science advancements during the time period, etc.

(5 minutes) Pass out text, remind students to put their names inside and to take care of them! Assign Homework: Read Preface through Chapter 4 due Thursday.

f. Materials
- Blackboard, Whiteboard, Transparency etc. for documenting students' responses
- Relevant background information on text and author
- *Frankenstein* text, 1/student

g. To-Do List
- Research relevant background information, focusing on why Shelley chose to write about scientific advancements and creating human life
- Prepare presentation of background information (Form = notes)
- Gather enough texts for each student

h. References
- MDE Michigan Merit Curriculum, Course/Credit Requirements, English Language Arts: Grade 11 (See unit overview for web address reference)

i. Relevant Handouts
- None for lesson
- Students will take individual notes

**Lesson 3: Utilizing Technology to Enhance our Educational Lives**

a. Goals
- Introduce students to Ning and provide an opportunity to become acquainted with the website's layout, where to find class assignments, assignment descriptions, class calendar, etc.
- Students will find Ning to be a useful organizational and educational tool.
- Students make connections between Youtube.com "Did You Know" video and the essential questions they raised in Lesson 1.

b. Rationale
- Our world is transforming every day and much of that is due to technological advancements, especially the Internet. The English 11 curriculum disposition focuses on transformational thinking which connects nicely to the importance of developing technological skills and utilizing technology as a source of learning, organization, and communication. Allocating adequate class time for students to engage with technological tools (Ning) will provide a solid knowledge base that will enable students to be successful when utilizing it for educational purposes (posting, blogging, etc.).
Incorporating another digital form (Youtube video) will help students in bridging connections with the essential questions and how they may think about exploring potential answers (will connect with goals for inquiry project).

c. Assessments
   • Completed personal Ning page
   • Homework: Ning post asking students to respond to the Youtube video and pose new questions (1 post/student)

d. Objectives
   Students will be able to:
   • Utilize technology as an instructional and organizational tool.
   • Explore digital forms of communication.
   • Utilize film media to further explore and connect with essential questions.

e. Tasks
   (5 minutes) Have students move to lab and become situated. Take attendance in lab to ensure all students are accounted for.
   (15 minutes) On SmartBoard/projection screen introduce Ning (layout, applications, etc.) and the basics about blogging, where to find assignments, etc. Students should not be on computers at this time. Answer a few questions but remind students that you will be walking around to answer individual questions when they are creating their personal pages.
   (15 minutes) Introduce how to create an account and give students time to create own page and explore the classroom page, English Explorations. Answer individual questions if applicable. Make sure to cache Youtube video while students are still working.
   (5 minutes) Show Youtube video "Did You Know 3.0" on SmartBoard/larger projection screen.
   (10 minutes) Allow students to respond to video through posting responses/questions on Ning. Inform students that they will have an opportunity to discuss the video and its connections to the unit's essential questions at the beginning of tomorrow's class. Remind them that they must have finished reading the Preface through chapter 4 for the following day and that if they didn't complete their Ning post, they must finish it for homework as well.

f. Materials
   • Access to computers/Internet, 1/student (Lab)
   • Means to project computer onto larger screen for student viewing (i.e. SmartBoard, projector)
   • Youtube video "Did You Know 3.0"

g. To-Do List
   • Request lab time for that day/hour
   • Find and cache video during student's work time
   • Update Ning to include current classroom information
   • Become adept in navigating website
     • Technological knowledge should be solid prior to school year
Lesson 7: Reliable Resources Activity, Can You Believe Everything You Read?

a. Goals
   - To continue the exposure and familiarity with technological tools (computers/Internet)
   - Have students explore the pros/cons of researching online
   - Scaffold students' research through addressing reliable sources online
   - Allow adequate time for students to begin their research, especially for students with no/limited Internet access at home
   - Make myself available during this time to answer individual questions

b. Rationale
   - Students need to have working knowledge of how to navigate the World Wide Web and assess sources for reliability.
   - Students need an opportunity to research their topic, but need to experience the importance in assessing where, from whom, and how they are accumulating their knowledge.
   - Students need to develop the application of critical thinking skills in every day situations, such as surfing the web for information.

c. Assessments
   - Completion of "Evaluating Online References" Handout
   - Participation in discussion

d. Objectives
   Students will be able to:
   - Gain exposure to researching on the Internet
   - Assess selected websites for reliability
   - Discuss their thinking process when researching (What observations did they make?)
   - Take advantage of lab time allotted during class time to begin their research

e. Tasks
   (5 minutes) Bring students down to lab. Remind them of behavior (not checking e-mail, facebook, etc.)
   (5 minutes) Briefly introduce lesson's activity. Pass out handout and discuss main points/ideas with students. Ask if students have any questions or issues with getting online/computer issues.
   (40 minutes) Students complete handout through evaluating online resources (to be completed by the end of the hour). Remainder of time left for multi-genre inquiry project.
Periodically check with students to see who is still working on their evaluation handout. If/when students have completed their assignment, have them briefly discuss their findings in pairs/small groups.

With a few minutes remaining, pull in whole class for discussion and ask students how will this affect their research for their inquiry project? How can they use the evaluation criteria from today's lesson to assess information elsewhere (non-Internet)?

f. Materials
   • "Evaluating Online References" Handout
   • Computers (1/student)
   • Internet Access

g. To-Do List
   • Schedule lab time for entire period
   • Prepare handout, make copies (1/student)

h. References
   • MDE Michigan Merit Curriculum, Course/Credit Requirements, English Language Arts: Grade 11 (See unit overview for web address reference)

i. Relevant Handouts
   • See attachment to end of document

Lesson 15: ACT Writing Prep, Why It Matters

a. Goals
   • To make the ACT Writing relevant to students' lives and fun (I'm optimistic!)
   • To prepare students for success on standardized texts through understanding the structure and assessment that it entails, but acknowledging its limitations in assessing authentic writing.
   • Students will grasp the main ideas (testing rationale, structure, assessment) of the ACT Writing component in order to do well on the practice in-class writing assignment for the following class period.

b. Rationale
   • Most students begin preparation for the ACT in their junior year of high school, therefore integrating standardized testing preparation into the eleventh grade English curriculum is relevant. Writing has always been and will continue to be one of the essential skills for college readiness and success. Though the ACT Writing component is not necessarily connected to an authentic writing experience, as an educator it is my responsibility to provide students with the necessary knowledge to perform well on standardized tests. Through reviewing the positives and negatives of ACT writing, students will have a better perspective on why ACT is used, how it is graded, and how to transition from ACT essay structure as a building block towards more authentic and developed writing. Through critically examining the structure and purpose of standardized testing, students will be able to strengthen critical thinking skills that will complement the final inquiry project.
c. Assessments
   • Participation in discussion- Are students sharing and engaging in the "debate"?
   • Students will be assessed on the knowledge they learned in this lesson in the following lesson when they are asked to apply the guidelines and objectives of the ACT Writing test when writing an in-class essay.

d. Objectives
   Students will be able to:
   • Gain a basic understanding of the importance of standardized testing to schools and the community (AYP, perceptions of school, funding, etc.)
   • Acknowledge that though the ACT writing structure (5-paragraph essay) may limit authentic writing, it can serve as a building block for more authentic and developed writing.
   • Balance a critical understanding of standardized tests while understanding how to perform well on them.

e. Tasks
   (10 minutes) Ask students about opinions/anxieties about taking the ACT exam. Discuss: How do they feel about it? What sections are they most worried about? How can they prepare? What motivates them to do well?
   (10 minutes) Explain to students why the test is important- its implications for their school and community (AYP, perception of school, funding, etc.). Discuss main purposes of ACT writing component as described on official website (show site to students). How do students feel about this? Do they agree?
   (15 minutes) Show Sarah Rohlfs (modified) "Fast Food Essay" PowerPoint to relate the ACT writing essay to a fast-food chain: Though we may not agree with our customers, how can we please them? Allow students to comment.
   (15 minutes) Give overview to students about the mode, audience, and purpose of the ACT essay (MAPS). How does this differ with the classroom? With real life situations? Introduce following lesson (after the weekend) in which students will be asked to write in class on a technological topic. Remind students to consider the lesson's main points and utilize them as they write on Monday. Answer any questions if they come up. Remind students that their multigenre inquiry project is due Monday.

f. Materials
   • Computer/Internet access (to show ACT site)
   • SmartBoard/Projection screen (for PP)
   • "The Fast Food Essay" PP

g. To-Do List
   • Obtain PP from S. Rohlfs
   • Familiarize myself with ACT Writing site (in order to address relevant points and students' questions)
   • Make sure there is access to computer/Internet/projection screen or SmartBoard
h. References
   • Rohlfss, Sarah. "Making the ACT Writing test work: Promoting Critical Awareness and Success with the ACT Writing Test." <rohlfss@charlottenet.org>.
   • MDE Michigan Merit Curriculum, Course/Credit Requirements, English Language Arts: Grade 11 (See unit overview for web address reference)

i. Relevant Handouts
   • None for lesson
   • Students may take notes on relevant information

3. Discussion
   a. Describe and explain your online genre and how it works. What makes the form you’ve chosen logical given your audience and purpose for the MG Research Unit? Be explicit and give examples.

      Last semester I created a Ning that could be utilized as an organizational and communication tool for my future students. When considering my digital genre for this assignment, it seemed particularly fitting that I use it, though I made some formatting/layout changes. I made the background a lighter color (so it's easier to read) and the most important information is toward the top of the site with supplemental material toward the bottom. The Ning is an online educational tool that students will be able to use to check the updated class schedule, syllabus, upcoming assignments and announcements. It is also a place for peer communication. In this unit students will be utilizing the Ning on a regular basis to exchange thoughts about the text, technology/science related topics, and the merging of the two. Students are also encouraged to post questions/suggestions related to the multi-genre inquiry project on the Ning to obtain peer feedback and to assist students who may be struggling to find information, etc. Relevant videos can also be posted to the site to aid in students' research (i.e. Youtube video, "Did You Know 3.0). The Ning is a logical mode to utilize in the classroom because it is fairly easy to navigate (Though this is an 11th grade course, some students may still lack technological skills) and it promotes a dialogic learning experience through blogging/posts. It is also familiarizing students with Internet usage, as this will be their primary tool when researching for the final inquiry project.

      Web address: http://englishexplorations.ning.com/

b. How does this unit ask students to engage in multiliteracies? What are the strengths and challenges of planning with multiliteracy objectives? Be explicit and give examples.

      In this unit, students are engaging with traditional text literacy, digital literacies (surfing the web, blogging, researching), as well as visual literacies (films and images), just to name a few. Focusing a unit to engage with multiliteracies gives students an opportunity to connect to the material through different modes (see attached mode chart) that celebrates multi-intelligences within the classroom. For instance, for those students who are artistically enabled, they are given an opportunity to not only explore with this "intelligence" through choosing an appropriate mode for their final project, but they are also given the opportunity to showcase their talents through the lesson "It's Still Alive" where students are asked to create their own monsters. But this lesson also brings up a challenge with incorporating multiliteracies into planning. For instance, in this particular lesson students who aren't necessarily artsy (are lacking in this "literacy") can still participate through using magazine clippings to create their monster, but adaptations aren't always that easy in every lesson. I believe that through backward
planning, multiliteracies can be balanced within the unit to scaffold students for their final assessment. For instance, the multi-genre inquiry project I assigned asks students to engage with different modes of research (text, Internet, advertising, etc.) and encourages students to explore different modes for their project presentation (PowerPoint, iMovie, Newspaper, etc.) Students are constantly engaging with multiliteracies through grasping knowledge through different "texts" or "modes" and they are developing a better understanding of those modes and thus supporting those multiliteracies. Their Ning literacy grows to a literacy involving blogging/online posting, which supports the digital literacies they are developing that will assist them in researching for their final project. In this way, literacies are built on one another to create the multiliteracy effect.

c. Reflect recursively on what it means to plan inquiry-based experiences for students. Be explicit and give examples.

From my own educational experiences, I feel that the opportunities for genuine inquiry were few and far between. For this very reason I feel it is essential to incorporate genuine opportunities for students to explore topics that are relevant and important to them, but that also connect to our communities and our society as a whole. In planning for inquiry-based experiences, it was important to incorporate backwards lesson planning because I needed to know how I would scaffold my students through their inquiry process. How would I know that my students were building on their knowledge and searching for deeper answers? A goal I had was to utilize technology (i.e. Ning) as a means of communication, but by extending that communication to inquiry, students are encouraged to utilize this tool to engage with one another and search for possible answers and new information together. Utilizing the Ning also familiarizes students with Internet usage, which is a key component to their research project (as a means of research). Since this is an eleventh grade classroom, I also wanted to incorporate some aspect of ACT preparation, and utilizing aspects of Sarah Rohlfs ACT lesson presented another inquiry-based experience as students were asked to inquire about the relevancy of standardized testing and its place (if there is one) in authentic writing experiences. As a whole, I believe that my lessons are continually asking students to push beyond the given and to explore different perspectives. Through assessing myself through these lessons, I will need to continue to come back to my main emphasis on inquiry to ensure that my students are indeed engaging in a genuine, inquiry-based experience.

d. How does what you planned account for the development of procedural knowledge in your students? How does what you planned on a daily basis connect to the overall plans for the unit and vice versa? Be explicit and give examples.

A main emphasis in my unit is the integration of technology as a tool (how ironic that is it also a main topic within our unit) and I created a scaffolded unit plan that would ensure that students are prepared and comfortable in using the Internet for surfing, blogging, and researching. Through taking time (an entire class period) to introduce the Ning, how it works, why we're using it, etc. I am preparing students to be successful when completing posts, which assists in researching, which (hopefully) results in a thorough, well researched project. My objective was to utilize Frankenstein as a literal text to build on the main themes of technology as potential for human enhancement and that pursuing science/technology has unforeseen consequences. In returning to the importance of incorporating technology usage into the classroom, I believe it is essential to develop these skills so that students are able to utilize them in other realms- both inside and outside their educational experiences. Students will use the Ning to post questions and respond to their peers, but in that same moment, they are also developing a digital literacy that will enable them to use the Ning for other purposes as well.
Technology and the Ning are tools, not unit specific class requirements. They can be applied in endless ways and giving students the opportunity to utilize these tools will help in developing that procedural knowledge.

e. What makes what you’ve planned dialogic? What are you learning about the challenges of dialogic teaching? How specifically could you improve these plans in this regard? Be explicit and give examples.

I don't think that anything is more important to a classroom than communication, and fostering a dialogic atmosphere within the classroom is critical to student engagement and development. My unit revolves around student led discussions, based on Ning posts/responses/questions, because I believe it's important that students acknowledge the connection between communicating online with communicating in the classroom- that what they're doing on the Ning isn't in vain and serves a genuine purpose in creating a dialogic classroom in which they can debate, inquire, and grow. Smagorinsky also agrees that unconventional writing opportunities can foster personal growth and inquiry in students through creating a place where exploratory thinking and writing can take place. I have structured this unit around an eleventh grade curriculum, so dialogic discussion seems to be easier than with middle schoolers (for scaffolding and modeling is a must during these years), but there are also challenges that come with it. For instance, an issue I thought that can/will be very relevant to my future class is that students just don't read. So how to deal? How can I expect my students to discuss topics, themes, and larger ideas focusing on science and technology with one another when they haven't read? There goes my whole lesson. For this reason I tried to utilize the Ning posts, because I can gauge where my students are going- what they're thinking and what they want to talk about in class the next day. I believe this can assist in promoting dialogic discussion, because essentially, I’m not involved-it's the students who are raising the questions and exploring answers. Another method I thought would be beneficial was in-class reading. Though I know this is an eleventh grade class, I, one, believe that there will be a greater chance of discussion since I know everyone read it, two, will lighten the heavy reading load that comes with most upper level classes, and three, will be just plain relaxing and fun because honestly, who doesn't want to be read to once in awhile? These are just a few examples of how I aim to foster dialogic learning within the unit as well as address its potential challenges.

Note:
It was interesting to plan this unit by only selecting 3-4 lessons to fully flesh out. I found it challenging to do this because I wasn't able to completely see (moment-to-moment) how each lesson would go and how I would transition fluidly between lessons. I was able to take more time to develop my larger ideas, and this helped with planning, but the teeny-tiny details and transitions that are so unique to in-depth lesson planning are absent and can create a void for another reader/educator who's perusing my unit plans. Guess I'll just have to fill in the blanks when I have more time 😊.

Feedback Questions:
• Am I trying to accomplish too many things? (Literature, ACT prep, Inquiry Project, etc.)
• Do you have additional comments/ideas for lessons that would scaffold students better in preparing for their final project?
• Do my lessons build off of one another in an effective, organizational way?
Multi-Genre Inquiry Project

Technology: Potential for Enhancing Human Life

A central theme that circulates throughout Frankenstein focuses on the pursuit of knowledge and how scientific exploration has the potential to improve human life. Framing the text in this way we are able to explore essential questions that deal with science and technology, exploring their progress as well as potential consequences.

For your multi-genre inquiry project, investigate the pursuit of knowledge involving one of the topics below or get teacher approval to explore a relevant topic of your choice. Include the following:

- The origins of the topic
  - Why was it needed? What was the initial problem to be solved?
- Its objective
  - What was it intended to do? How would it solve the problem at hand?
- How it has transformed our society today and what debates are currently behind this topic
  - Include both stances, for and against
  - Include personal connection to topic- How does it affect your life? Your family? Your community? What's your personal take on it? etc.
- Predictions
  - What is your prediction of what will come of this topic? Will it continue to transform society or will it create new problems? etc.

These topics affect our lives on a daily basis and we can gain insight into new topics and discussions through sharing what we have learned. At the end of the unit, you will give a 5-7 minute presentation sharing your findings. There will be time for brief conversation and responses from peers afterwards. You may choose to present your inquiry project through any mode (PowerPoint, iMovie, WebQuest, article form, etc.) but you must extend yourself beyond the traditional paper (We all know how much you love those!) and incorporate multiple genres (image, video, text, etc.). An outline (format of your choice) will be completed in approximately one week that addresses the basic structure of your project (topic, mode, sequencing, main points). Feel free to start addressing the questions above, but you are not limited to them. The bulk of your research should be done utilizing the Internet and other non-traditional research sources, though at least one book source should be included. Make sure to cite all sources of information (including film clips and images, if relevant).

Possible Topic Choices:
- Artificial Intelligence
- Stem cell research/Genetic Engineering
- Biofuels
- Nanotechnology
- Genetically Modified Crops and Gene Flow
- Weapons of Mass Destruction/Biological Weapons
- Public Surveillance Technology/Government intervention into private sector network security
- Digital Rights Management (DRM)

IMPORTANT DATES:

Inquiry Project Assigned: Thursday, April 9th
Outline Due: Friday, April 17th
In-Class Lab/Research Time: Tuesday, April 14th
Tuesday, April 21st
Inquiry Project Due: Monday, April 27th
In-class Presentations: April 29th, 30th, May 1st
Multi-Genre Inquiry Project

Assessment

Your final grade will be composed of three parts:

- Outline (10%)
- Multi-Genre Inquiry Project (70%)
- Presentation (20%)

It is based on a point system (i.e. Outline = 10 pts, etc.) with a total of 100 pts for the entire project.

Your grade will be based on:

How well you address each component (Origins, Objectives, Transformation, and Predictions). For example, if you just tell me what you found through researching without engaging with the information and speculating/exploring the findings, you may be marked down.

Did you utilize the mode you chose in a creative way? Does it suit the situation (form= audience + purpose)? Does it incorporate multiple genres?

Were all assignments (Outline, Project) turned in fully completed and on time?

Overall, did you engage with your topic and push yourself to explore it through multiple lenses?

Good luck and have fun with it 😊!
Evaluating Online References

Should you believe everything you read?

There's a lot of good information on the Internet, but you will also find many opinions, misconceptions, and inaccurate information. How will you judge the quality of Internet resources?

Use Wikipedia to look up "verifiability" of information. You should be able to check the material you find against other reliable sources. Content that is likely to be challenged should contain multiple sources of evidence that have been carefully cited.

ACTIVITY

Please visit at least five of the following websites to explore the issue of Internet content. Which sites are reliable? Which aren't? What makes the site reliable or unreliable? How can you tell? Feel free to use the resource sheet attached to this handout.

Please type up your responses on a word document or write them on another sheet of paper to be turned in at the end of the hour.

- Aluminum Foil Deflector Beanie, http://zapatopi.net/afdb/
- Should we ban dihydrogen monoxide (DHMO)? http://www.dhmo.org/
- Did the Holocaust happen? http://www.jimloy.com/history/holocaust.htm
- The Faked Apollo Landings, http://www.ufos-aliens.co.uk/cosmicapollo.html

When researching information, it is imperative to evaluate the quality of information you find not only on the web, but also books, magazines, televisions, and other medias. Consider the following ideas:

Authority. Who says? Know the author.
- Who created this information and why?
- Do you recognize this author or their work?
- What knowledge or skills do they have in the area?
- Is he or she stating fact or opinion?
- What else has this author written?
- Does the author acknowledge other viewpoints and theories?

Objectivity. Is the information biased? Think about perspective.
- Is the information objective or subjective?
- Is it full of fact or opinion?
- Does it reflect bias? How?
• How does the sponsorship impact the perspective of the information?
• Is a balance of perspectives represented?
• Could the information be meant as humorous, a parody, or satire?

**Authenticity.** Is the information authentic? Know the source.
• Where does the information originate?
• Is the information from an established organization?
• Has the information been reviewed by others to insure accuracy?
• Is this a primary source or secondary source of information?
• Are original sources clear and documented?
• Is a bibliography provided citing the sources used?

**Reliability.** Is this information accurate? Consider the origin of the information.
• Are the sources truth worthy? How do you know?
• Who is sponsoring this publication?
• Does the information come from a school, business, or company site?
• What's the purpose of the information resource: to inform, instruct, persuade, sell? Does this matter?
• What's their motive?

**Timeliness.** Is the information current? Consider the currency and timeliness of the information.
• Does the page provide information about timeliness such as specific dates of information?
• Does currency of information matter with your particular topic?
• How current are the sources or links?

**Relevance.** Is the information helpful? Think about whether you need this information.
• Does the information contain the breadth and depth needed?
• Is the information written in a form that is useable (i.e. reading level, technical level)?
• Is the information in a form that is useful such as words, pictures, charts, sounds, or video?
• Do the facts contribute something new or add to your knowledge of the subject?
• Will this information be useful to your project?

**Efficiency.** Is this information worth the effort? Think about the organization and speed of information access.
• Is the information well organized including a table of contents, index, menu, and other easy-to-follow tools for navigation?
• Is the information presented in a way that is easy to use (i.e., fonts, graphics, headings)?
• Is the information quick to access?

Be prepared to share your thoughts and findings with the rest of the class if there is time left 😊.

Finding Website Evaluation Information

As you explore information on the web, keep in mind that there are many different types of information from research data to opinions. Start with an overview of the contents of the page. Can you determine the purpose and audience of the page? Does the page focus on information, news, advocacy, sales, or a mixture?

Search for Clues. Start by examining the page itself. Look at the web address (URL). What kind of domain (.edu, .gov, .org, .net, .com) is it? This doesn't always help, but it may provide an indication of the sponsor. Is it a government site, school resource, museum, commercial or private web project? Try to determine who published the page. Is it an individual or an agency? Can you find a name attached to the page? Look at the core page for the entire website (everything between the http:// and the first /) and see who sponsored the site and how information was selected. You might also try truncating the website address to see each level between slashes. Sometimes you can answer these questions by reading the creation information at the bottom of the main page. Look for a name, organization, or email address. If you can't find the answer there, see if you can locate a page that tells "about the website." Sometimes there's a "contact us" page. The author of the page and the Webmaster may or may not be the same person. For information about the content of the page, look for a link to an author biography, philosophy, or background information. Another hint about the quality of the website is the copyright date. When was the page originally posted? When was the last time the page was updated? This information is generally at the bottom of each page or at least the first page of the website.

Look for sponsors. Does the site use banner sponsors? What do they sell? Is a well-known organization a sponsor? Consider whether the site's sponsors could impact the perspective to the website. In most cases, a company wants the information at their site to reflect positively on them.

Ask Questions. If you still can't determine the quality of the information, consider emailing the Webmaster and asking about the site's content. You will be amazed at the range of answers that will be provided. Some webmasters post anything that's given to them, while others are experts in a content area field.

Track Backward and Forward. Another way to learn more about a website is to see "who links to them" and "who they link to." Use a search engine to search for the "URL" or author of the website in question. Does it appear on a "favorites" list? If so, whose list? Is this list credible? If the site has won an award, what's the criteria for the award and how is the award given? You can also track forward. In other words, look at the links that are used by the web developer of your site. Do they go to good or poor quality sites? Is this website cited in subject guides such as About.com or Librarian's Index?

Cross-Check Data. In addition to the act of evaluating a single page, students also need to learn to cross-check information. In other words, there should be three independent resources confirming each piece of questionable data. This cross-checking can be done different ways. For example, if you are using a graphic organizer, you could star each item that has been doubled or triple checked. Consider using a variety of information formats including encyclopedia, magazine articles, videos, experts, and web pages.

Filtering Information

When filtering information, you need to understand the spectrum of options between fact and opinion. Issues of perspective, point of view, and bias must be discussed. One of the advantages of using the Internet is the availability of so many examples. You can see misinformation and propaganda in action. Take the opportunity to question your findings and discuss your concerns.