Bridges, Not Walls: Speculative Fiction, Technology, and Social Justice

Guide for Curriculum Unit 19.01.04
by Aron Meyer

In this unit, students will explore a variety of reading material and other media in order to connect technology with issues of social justice. Over the course of three phases, students will consider how technology may be used to facilitate tangible change within communities. Students will first explore a range of science fiction texts and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the advanced technology described in each. They will then focus on a variety of social justice issues in fiction, news articles, and poetry. In doing so, students will determine what issues are most important to them, and think about what steps they might take to raise awareness about these topics. The unit culminates in a project-based learning experience for students, in which they will collaborate and use various forms of digital technology to initiate tangible change, inspired by the readings and discussions from our class sessions. Overall, the unit asks students to consider what it means to be active and responsible citizens within a community, how literature can inspire real societal progress, and what role technology can play in accomplishing that goal.

(Developed for English I, grade 9; recommended for English I-IV, grades 9-12)