



Skype in the Classroom is a powerful tool for learning! It's a cheap and easy way to engage your students and allow them to be creative within the boundaries of a project or assignment.

How We Do It: Tiger Talk!

We came up with the idea for Tiger Talk – a Skype based project for combining technology with English Language Arts and putting some use to the Accelerated Reader Program in our school.

The problem was: The kids were just not reading. And kids that aren't reading, aren't gaining vocabulary, increasing understanding or using their downtime effectively.

So Tiger Talk was born. It started with a cheap Wal-Mart webcam and a flip video camera along with access to my Skype account, that I wasn't using anyway.

We set up a project for each six weeks of the school year, the kids were to read a book, any book, and use that book for their project.

Six Weeks 1: Poetry.

Project: Read some poetry. Understand the basic vocabulary and formats of what the CScope curriculum required, then make it interesting.

So how do you make poetry interesting? You explain that the most effective type of poetry is found in song lyrics. Those are the "poems" that we understand and live with, this is the connection to the kids that are surrounded by some type of media 9 hours every day.

The assignment: Find a great poem. Study and research the songwriter behind that poem and be prepared to be interviewed about that person's life.

Skype the interviews, like the kids are participating in a newscast, "Tiger Talk" and film the whole thing.

Six Weeks 2: Authors

Project: Read a book. Research the author of the book. Study their life, their clothing, their vocabulary and motivation. Prepare a set of questions that one might ask the author in a real interview for tv and be prepared to answer those questions as the author.

Six Weeks 3: Characters

Project: Read a book. Choose the character that you most identify with and really understand them. Prepare a set of questions that one might ask of the character, not just a summary of what happens in the book. Be prepared to answer those questions as the character, in costume.

Six Weeks 4: Plan a vacation

Project: Research! Students plan and research a country and culture outside the U.S. They must plan their itinerary and budget and prepare documentation of their trip. They present their trip to the class.

Six Weeks 5: Children's Book

Project: Write and illustrate your own children's book. Print it, bind it and read it to the class, or Skype it to a class at the Elementary, Library, or pre-schools.

Other Skype Resources/ Uses in the Classroom:

- Skype in the Classroom on Facebook
- Collaboration between Classes using Skype from Room to Room
- Co-Teaching
- Daily News: Announcements and More using Skype
- Using Skype to Teach to Sick students that can't come to class
- Skyping with Authors/ actors/ innovators
- Connecting classrooms across the country or the world
- Conferencing with parents
- Attending a conference? Skype with the students in class so that they don't end up doing busy work with a sub.
- Virtual career day: skyping with professionals
- Getting feedback: having others watch you teach and give you advice or pointers.
- Present a performance to another class – great for sharing fun with younger students.
- EPals
- Tutorials: Getting kids together