Benefit to Student

1. Students gain a deeper understanding and connection to what they read.
2. Students actually read what is assigned because the readings have a greater relevance to them as producers of the podcast.
3. Students engage in collaborative and project-based learning that is authentically assessing their understanding and ability to synthesize what they read.
4. Students are able to practice planning and implementing critical pedagogical approaches that they get to practice in a low-risk and safe environment.
5. Students receive feedback on their work from their classmates and the instructor.
6. Students engage in innovative technology, exposing many (mostly K-12 teachers) to technical tools and strategies they had never been exposed.
7. Students have a tangible and easily accessible archive of their class through each episode of the podcast that is published.

Active Learning Technique Description

Previously I had students complete reading responses each week that were often completed at the last minute and didn’t demonstrate comprehension or analysis of what was read. I wanted to find a way to reimagine the reading assignments and create an avenue for students to engage with each other regarding what they read.

In my CI 6123 Critical Perspectives in Curriculum & Instruction course and I came up with the idea to produce a class podcast, Transformative Talk: Critical Conversations for Teachers. I have my graduate students plan and produce weekly episodes of Transformative Talk; and the project has students engage with the course readings, practice problem-posing pedagogies in class, and create something that is authentically their own and a demonstration of their knowledge, analysis, and synthesis of what they read in class.

Active Learning Technique Steps/Components

To produce each episode of Transformative Talk, I form the class into Triads or Pairs (depending on enrollment) and each group will choose a week in which they want to create an episode.

The project is broken up into several parts that must be completed to successfully produce an episode of the podcast. First, each student will read the readings for the week and complete a dialogic reading journal where they "have a conversation" with the readings that week. The journals are written in whatever format makes sense to the student, academic language is not required in their journal since it's intended to be in reaction to the reading and authentic to each student. I have had students write their journals in English, Spanish, with GIFs, and through the inclusion of other multimedia that they linked into their document. The journals are kept in a Google Drive folder linked to Blackboard, and everyone has access to everyone's journals. Every student completes a reading journal for each week of reading.

Then, when it's their week to produce the podcast, the groups will review the dialogic reading journals submitted by the class to look for common themes that emerged, and/or questions/wonderings that were asked.

Based on their reading of the readings and what they gleaned from the class's journals, the production team will then plan a 45-minute Reading Facilitation that the class will engage in. The facilitations should be based on problem posing and critical pedagogical methods to elicit from the class the essence of the readings and to leave them with more questions than answers.

After the facilitation, the groups then meet to plan their Podcast based on what they saw in the readings, the class’s journals, their facilitation in class, and their own life/work experience.

Groups record their podcast episode using Zoom and they upload the raw audio to the Transformative Talk Google Drive Folder where Dr. Haddad reviews the episode, makes any edits to the audio, then uploads, edits, and shares each episode using the Anchor.fm platform.

Production Teams must meet twice synchronously to plan their facilitation, once with Dr. Haddad to help plan the facilitation (since they are essentially co-teaching with me that week), and twice to plan and record their episode. All meetings must be synchronous, and they must be documented to ensure accountability and equity of workload.