Jonathan Gallo #8

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Weekly Reflection

In class we were talking about classroom environment. We mentioned safety and procedures such as fire drills and lock downs, as well as furniture and resource arrangements. One resource that I would really want in my classroom is a computer with internet access. I am an auditory learner, and I really connect to music. Song lyrics easily get stuck in my head, and I think using music is a fantastic way to teach history. Last year in my Educational Technology class we had to create a lesson plan using SMARTBoard. I did my lesson on the Cold War, in my lesson I included two songs (Washington Bullets by The Clash and the Ollie North Song from the television show American Dad). The song Washington Bullets mentions U.S. involvement in Latin America during the Cold War, and one of the verses mentions the Bay of Pigs invasion. “And in the Bay of Pigs in 1961, Havana fought the playboy in the Cuban sun, For Castro is a color, Is a redder than red, Those Washington bullets want Castro dead For Castro is the color......That will earn you a spray of lead.” The beauty of this verse is that it rhymes, and it makes reference of Castro’s political ideology and the United States’ response. I also know songs about Vietnam and the Kent State shootings (Ohio by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young), and we are all familiar with Billy Joel’s We Didn’t Start the Fire. All these songs contain historical reference, and offer students a new way to learn history. Not every song needs to make direct reference to historic event. Ideally I would play a song as my students come in, I want them to come in and guess what the lesson is going to be on. I would even use popular songs that my students like. I am willing to make abstract connections with lyrics. The song Power by Kanye West makes no direct reference to a historic event, but it does contain the lyric “No one man should have all that power.” I can use this quote as an introduction into a lesson about absolute monarchies or about Mahiavelli. I want my students to make connections with history, and ideally with their own music. If the music is too vulgar, and I cannot find a censored version, I can always hand out sheets with the relevant lyric. If my students get too rowdy, or off topic, I will do the same thing and hand out the lyrics, in lieu of listening to the song. I firmly believe that starting a lesson off with music, will help get students interested.