

Invented Dialogues

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Introduction: These activities can be facilitated in face-to-face, online synchronous, and online asynchronous learning modalities. They are intended to complement course assignments that foster close readings of texts from an anti-racist perspective. They are designed for lower- and upper-level undergraduate literature courses.

Sample learning goals with which this activity can be aligned: Invented dialogues foster creative and critical thinking and synthesis and integration of the literary elements and an author's life, intersectional identity, and social context.

Assessment: These formative activities are part of the engaged learning grade for the course, and as such, students earn full credit by participating in them. The skills that are gained in doing these activities can be assessed more formally in summative assignments that assess critical thinking, such as essays, research projects and portfolios.

Description: Assigning students to create invented dialogues (Angelo and Cross) about the authors and social context that they're studying aids in their viewing the assigned texts as exciting cultural artifacts. In an invented dialogue, students assume the persona of an author or character and imagine a conversation that they may have had. Students use their knowledge of the social context as well the author's or character's personality and mode of expression. Students typically choose to adapt the conversation to some form of social media, such as texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tinder, a blog, an e-mail, etc. In small groups, students create and present their dialogue as a visual, which they share with the class.

Citation: Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*. 2nd ed., Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Assignment:

Rationale: By inventing dialogues, students think critically and creatively to synthesize their knowledge of issues, personalities, and historical periods into the form of a carefully structured, illustrative conversation.

Directions:


- You will write a short dialogue that speculates on the thoughts expressed by a character or a conversation that might have taken place in [insert text and/or social context] or by the authors themselves.
- You will invent reasonable quotes that fit the character(s), the speakers of your invented dialogue, and the context of the literary text.
- You will want to capture the essence of the characters' personalities and styles of expression as well as your understanding of the social context.
- Have fun and be creative. Feel free to adapt the conversation to texting, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, a blog, Tinder, Pinterest, Snapchat, an e-mail, etc.

- Write down your dialogue, as you will share it with the class. If you'd like to include visuals with your dialogue, especially if you're creating a social networking scenario, you're welcome to do so.


For fun examples to share with students, see Mallory Ortberg. *Texts from Jane Eyre: And Other Conversations with Your Favorite Literary Characters*. Henry Holt, 2014.

Student Sample Invented Dialogues:


Invented Dialogue based on Jonathan Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room" and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "The Reasons that Induced Dr. S. to Write a Poem Called "The Lady's Dressing Room"




Jonathan Swift @therealswiftyswift
 August 13, 1728: OMG! Just found out girls #poop. #gross #rich #girls
 August 13, 1728: Why are u so gross @therealcelia? # poop #clean ur room




Celia @therealcelia
 August 14, 1728: @therealswiftyswift. Why were you in my room? #creep




Jonathan Swift @therealswiftyswift
 August 14, 1728: @therealcelia, smelt something weird, thought twas Stella? #did something die in there #forever alone



Celia @therealcelia
 August 15, 1728: @therealswiftyswift, nothing died except ur manhood #burn #200 more years till Viagra

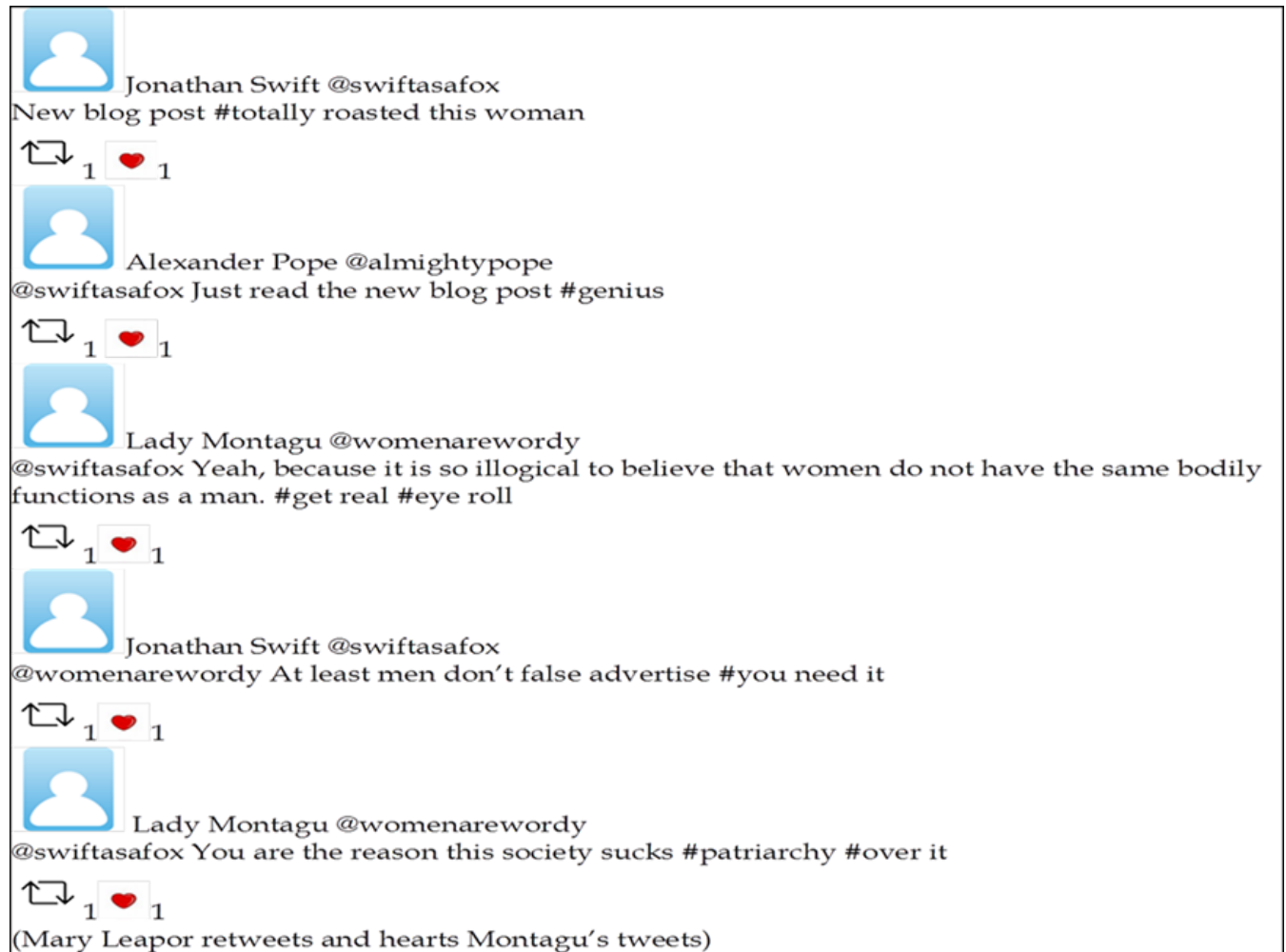


Lady Montagu @ladyawesome
 RTW @therealcelia. You go girl. Don't let the patriarchy get you down. #down with the patriarchy #equal poops #I'm with her



Alexander Pope @catholic power
 @ladyawesome, ur only cool cause you have money #rich girls

Invented Dialogue based on Jonathan Swift's "The Lady's Dressing Room," Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "The Reasons that Induced Dr. S. to Write a Poem Called the Lady's Dressing Room," "Alexander Pope's "Epistle 2. To a Lady: Of the Characters of Women," and Mary Leapor's "An Essay on Woman"



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