Historic Rap Throwdown

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In pairs, students chose and then researched a controversial historical figure that had both a positive and negative impact on history. Students created a fact sheet and eventually wrote a persuasive essay. Next, the names of the historical figures were randomly selected out of a hat to create the rap battle pairings. Teams of four students now worked together to create lyrics for a rap battle. While the majority of the research and writing was being done in Humanities class, students worked on creating a beat suitable for a rap battle in their Multimedia class. Students then recorded their written lyrics over their beat, created costumes, and filmed a music video in front of a green screen and then edited to create an entertaining video that was exhibited on YouTube.

Teacher Reflection:
We both share an affinity for the YouTube channel Epic Rap Battles and, while the original content may not be appropriate for school, we thought it would be a great place to start for a project idea. Our goal was to support our students in creating rap battles that were not only school appropriate, but that were more historically accurate than our inspiration on YouTube. It was a great opportunity to have students demystify historical figures, seeing that even heroes have flaws and villains aren't complete monsters.

Student Reflection:
The most useful aspect that I learned from this project was something that wasn't intended. I did learn a lot of history and multimedia, but the biggest thing I got out of this project was how to not care about looking silly. At first I held back and was afraid of making facial expressions and doing funny dances. As I got more comfortable, not only did the clips become better but I felt better and had more fun while being filmed. After completing this project I feel extremely proud and satisfied about my final YouTube video.   —Hana

To view videos go to http://www.youtube.com/multimediahti