Auto-e blog

Autoethnography or "auto-e" can range from the highly evocative to the highly analytic, but always calls attention to the self within a given context of study or inquiry. "Ethnography" involves the study of peoples and culture and "auto" can be traced back to the Greek word *autos* and literally means "self." Therefore, by definition, autoethnography studies the representations of the individual "self" performing the study while studying other peoples or cultures.

The following new literacies entry simultaneously performs a reflexive task and a digital one. In the spring of 2010, I designed and maintained a 36-entry blog that created an autoethnography of my reflexive experience as a graduate student and poet. Students in a secondary or post-secondary context can be asked to perform a similar procedure requiring them to autoethnographically examine themselves over the course of a term. The use of the "We*blog*" or blog genre in the classroom constitutes a new literacy being embraced by many practicing educators. However, combining auto-e with blogging adds another layer of new literacy and calls for the blogger to reflexively remain aware of herself while blogging and within larger audiences, affinities, and cultures of blogging.

The personal blog *Pathways & Ponds* models effective composition practices for students and allows students to see a sample of the work they may be assigned. The portrayal of a moment in time, and the capture of a life while living it on a blog, affords students the opportunity to see how their teacher uses new literacy to rhetorically communicate.

Students will be given a more personal look at aspects of their teacher's personal life, how their teacher presents these aspects in a public forum, and

perhaps will provide insight into how an author sees herself (or himself) in his or her own composition. *Pathways & Ponds* grants the reader access to a life and to a functional blog published to the World Wide Web from Writing@CSU (The Writing Studio). The present entry differs from other entries, such as blog-reports, in that it presents an actual portrayal of a graduate student over the course of an entire semester.

Click here to view the blog *Pathways & Ponds* or on the image below...

Assistant Professor of English Dr. Sue Doe displayed the work of E633 - Autoethnography on a wall in the Department of English at Colorado State University in the spring of 2010 (performed in the image below). Similar displays can also be used to present autoethnographic work of students in the hall of a middle school or high school.

Blog-reports

Book reports are a traditional and conventional practice that I have taken the time to reflect and meditate upon. The new literacies technique of "blog-reports" was conceived during this meditation to extend the practice of book reports in a digital age and to encourage process writing throughout the reading of a text. The blog-report challenges students to approach reading and writing as a process that occur together and over time as opposed to thinking that one first reads and then responds to a text. An assessment letter, addressed to the reader, discusses the thought process behind the project. A personal reflection follows considering the condition of possibility of using blog-reports in a twenty-first century classroom. "Blog-reports" was created as a sample blog for the purposes of generating a model of what students might use as an outlet to process through the thinking of an assignment.

Visit www.blog-reports.blogspot.com to see a sample of the original blog used to create this entry...

Go to “auto-e blog” to see a blog, or a "weblog," that was maintained over a period time.

The YouTube video, "Blogs in Plain English" by commoncraft, provides more information on blogs:

> "Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves."
>
> - Henry David Thoreau

Dear Reader,

The following piece, titled *Out in the Margins; Or, On the Genealogy on Book Reports,* was dreamed haphazardly. However, it was crafted intentionally into a two part structure. Admittedly, I was lost conceptually from the onset. I dreamed. I rode my bike. I walked to and from meetings. I played with my son, kissed my wife. I dreamed. I thought about the blog assignment the college composition students were doing at the time of the project's conception. I dreamed. The word "blogs" rolled off my tongue. It felt like "blah," but ended with the heaviness of a word like "log." I dreamed. I thought about the word "genealogy." I dreamed some more. I thought about Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*. That's a *good* title…and any title starting with "On the" sets a lofty precedence.

I thought about book reports. I tried to get real. What was my experience? I dreamed. My mind went back to high school and thought about Ms. K's class. Then the structure for the project hit me. Margins...I live in the margins of my mind. The piece then took shape into the first part I called "Inside the Margins" and the second part I called "Outside the Margins." I was rolling, but soon I would be scrolling. I wanted the project to be in a genre that went beyond a traditional argumentative paper. I began by writing the poem "The Alhambra Leaves," based on a book-report type

biographical interview project on Washington Irving that I did in high school. However, I wanted to stretch myself and write more than a poem. I thought about the blog genre. I dreamed.

So, reader, I would like you to know that the following work was crafted while simultaneously dreaming and crafting a blog. Visit www.blog-reports.blogspot.com to see an earlier version of this entry and the process of how the assignment was developed dated by blog postings (everything found at the above URL can be found within the entry you are currently reading). If I could blog my imagination I would. I first posted the assignment. I then added the poem I wrote and added the first draft of the assignment. After an in-class workshop, I posted email comments by my peers, the final draft, and the letter you now read. I feel the project was successful and will be something I use in future classrooms to evolve the age-old practice of book reports into a new literacies practice I have decided to name "blog-reports."

Above all, I hope you enjoy the writing and thank you for your time and conversation

Sincerely Yours,

Adam Mackie

Out in the Margins; Or, On the Genealogy of Book Reports

> "Thus ended one of the pleasantest dreams of a life, which the reader perhaps may think has been but too much made up of dreams."
>
> - Washington Irving

Prologue: A Writer's Early Development

Ms. K's tenth grade English class was a class that students talked about as being "hard" or "a whole lot of reading." I went into the class in the fall of 1995 as a short, slightly pudgy sophomore extremely nervous and intimidated. Nevertheless, I was excited because I knew I would be able to write and writing was something I enjoyed. The course was broken into historical units and students were to choose an author from each of the historical periods on a list, read one of the works, and write a book report or something similar. I read *Tales of the Alhambra* by Washington Irving, Ernest Hemingway's *The Nick Adams Stories*, and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* for the first time in Ms. K's class. Fondly, I have remembered the company of these authors. Not so fondly have I remembered Ms. K.

Students were required to compose reiterative expressions about the books they read by either retelling the plot of the book or providing some biographical angle. The books that I read in Ms. K's class and the authors who wrote these books changed me, but arguably not as a result of her teaching. Her approach to pedagogy and the "taken-for granted" writing practice of writing book reports may have not been the most effective approach to open me up to writing, but it had me writing. It has been said that any publicity is good publicity. The same can be said for writing.

I have looked back at some of these writing experiences in Ms. K's class and have realized that writing itself was beneficial. I became frustrated with Ms. K. and writing when the only response I would receive from my book reports was one of five of the first six letters of the alphabet. I usually received the second letter of the alphabet on most of my papers, but never

an explanation. I would read the books she assigned to the best of my ability, but in doubt would fumble through the bumblebee colored *Cliff's Notes* to make sure I was "getting it right."

Introduction: oing from Inside to Outside the Margins

In a section entitled "Inside the Margins," I have attempted to revisit a "taken-for-granted practice" of writing book reports. In particular I strived to examine a moment in Ms. K's class where it was made clear that I needed to go into a new direction with how I consumed and produced texts. "Outside the Margins," a second section, aimed to consider where the "new direction" beyond Ms. K's classroom carried me and how the taken-for-granted practice has shaped my development as a writer. I have chosen the particular taken-for-granted practice of book reports to achieve the purpose of exploring how the benefits of book reports have informed my current views and to speculate about the effect that teaching blog-reports, a new literacies book report method, will have in my own English classrooms.

Inside the Margins: Decoding, Comprehending, and Reading the Words on the Page

"No, you're wrong!" Ms. K. said sharply and called on the next student. "Climax of the story is..." Ms. K. continued, but I was too wrapped around the axel of self-consciousness to hear another word. *I thought I knew the climax of "The Devil and Tom Walker." Is there only one way to read a text?* I had come to my English class prepared. I had read the story for the day, read every line, and thought I comprehended it correctly. I guess not.

To say the least, I was crushed. I was upset at Ms. K. for not only correcting me in a tone that made me feel inadequate, but also for not providing the opportunity to discuss *why* or *how* I was "wrong" about the climax in Washington Irving's short story. The experience in Ms. K's class that day confirmed that I would transfer into The Seminar School (TSS, a school within a school, at my high school. Since my mother was actively involved as a parent helping with TSS, I had no prior interest because I thought it would be "uncool" to be in the same vicinity as my

mother and TSS students were the alternative, Goth types. After that day with Ms. K., I just wanted out. I was tired of being told I was "wrong."

The experience with Ms. K. was not an isolated incident. I turned in several book reports where often the only mark the teacher put on a paper was a letter grade. I even received an "F" from her for a completed assignment she simply did not like. Granted, I was a testy sophomore who rebelled with assignments for the sake of rebelling. However, it still hurt to receive failing blows.

So I stuck the semester out, book report after book report, and even though I had grown disdainful toward Ms. K. I learned from the books and still have some decent writing expressions to show for the class. I transferred out of the "mainstream" track of my high school and began to acquaint myself with teachers like Mr. Thoreau. I learned to "hear a different drummer" and began to imagine within those one-inch margins around a text. I found they could be used for much more than a place to make little doodles of the sun setting over the mountains, birds flying among the stars, and bug-eyed cartoon characters.

Outside the Margins: Marginalia + Small roup Discussion = Clarity and Understanding

The Seminar School did not require that students read books only to reiterate events with flawless accuracy in a book report. Instead, students were instructed to read chapters from texts and instructed how to underline, highlight, and write questions and comments in the margins. The act of communicating with the text as I read it was a significant departure from the way I had been reading and writing. I realized how I could have a conversation with Plato, a conversation with René Descartes, and conversation with David Hume, a CONVERSATION. No longer was I prescribed to report on what an author wrote, write about that author's life, or accept what the teacher thought about the work. Now I was finding the space between the page and myself, slowly crawling out from the margins.

Teachers in TSS would check and grade "coaching notes," a process where students were required to demonstrate that they had read the text

closely and generated annotations from the text. At the beginning of a class period the teacher checked our notes. After the teacher said a few contextualizing comments, small groups or "coaching groups" were formed to discuss the text. Coaching groups would read the text together aloud, stopping to discuss questions and concerns with the text, sometimes for several days.

Once all the groups had thoroughly read the text as a group, the entire class would convene for a seminar discussion based on student produced questions. These questions were often turned into thesis statements and then written about in argument form. This was significantly different from reading a book and writing a book report. As a result, I became intimate with the authors I read and understood what I was reading on a more critical level. Book reports taught me to read only for plot, identifying things like setting, characters, the action, *the climax*, and the resolution. Reading out into the margins shaped my writing and allowed me to develop my thinking in a more critical fashion. I now demanded answers from the text, from my peers, and from my instructors. If I was "wrong" about a central claim, the climax, or a main point, then a civil conversation was conducted and investigations into the nature of an understanding or misunderstanding were explored. I, therefore, understood what I was reading better, developed as a writer, and composed persuasive arguments.

Conclusion: Blog-reports and the Value of Process Writing

When I began to reflect on the genealogy of book reports and how the "taken-for-granted" practice of writing book reports has influenced my life as a writer I went immediately back to Ms. K's classroom. I may not have been fond of Ms. K. as a teacher, but I consider the experience to be invaluable. Book reports are an efficient method for teachers to hold students accountable for reading, check for how well they are decoding and comprehending the text, and simply to get them writing. It made me think about how I would use a similar method in a secondary English classroom.

A major problem I identified with book reports was that ultimately they leave little room for process writing. Students have often been asked to read a book, write a summary or report, and then be finished. I imagined a new possibility as if I was posting ideas on a blog. First entry: I wrote a poem entitled "The Alhambra Leaves." I mused about students writing a poem in attempt to summarize a text. The notion of "blog-reports" then dawned on me. What if students were to write summaries within the blogosphere or within a classroom blog space as they went through a text?

I watched as book reports transformed into blog-reports within the spyglass of my imagination. As I peered through the spyglass, I conjectured about how blog-reports could help a student process through reading material more effectively than book reports. In my experience, book reports did not permit process writing. In the current experiment, conducted as a blog-report, I have been afforded multiple opportunities to process across drafts, present peer-editing comments, supply samples of past book reports, and keep a blog that documented the entire process. I have speculated the use of a similar method in a future secondary classroom:

> Students would be asked to read a couple chapters as an assignment.
>
> Students would be shown how to create their own blog or post entries within a prefabricated blog setting.
>
> Students would post summary-like reflections of the chapters they were assigned. Students would be told to not only summarize plot details, but also to ask critical questions, fill their margins, and come to their blogs reporting the conversation they had with an author.

I have discussed blog-reports in the present fashion to emphasize value of the process writing. Students would not just be asked to read something and then reiterate what it said. Students would instead be encouraged to read slower, reflect, converse with the author of the text, and engage in a conversation with their instructor and a conversation with their peers. I have explored the possibility of a blog for blog-reports (See www.blog-reports.blogspot.com) and have theorized how blog-reports might serve as an effective tool in the twenty-first century classroom.

Epilogue: The Alhambra Leaves

By Adam Mackie

Arrive at last page close book in hands,

Tales of the Alhambra by Irving,

Lose track of time in faraway lands,

Turn over leaf attempt A-writing,

Lucid image of Granada sand,

Grains of plot pour into eyes to see,

Jots go down, precise action. I can

Only earn the average B.

Wonder lingers when lessons teach me

The difficulty for me to read

Students' struggle to rewrite forcefully,

Teacher steals chance to sow a dream seed.

A smoldering wick and bruised reed,

Not put out or broken. Follow space

To new methods that dare, must heed,

Boldly stare, into marginal face.

Writing, like reading, never quick race,

Embrace time, while writing a dream and

"The world is everything that's the case"

And gaze at space with pencil in hand.

See also:

Auto-e blog

Collaboration

> "...let the stars guide your sight..."
>
> - Adam Mackie

Christine Robinson, a fellow graduate student, and I were both taking E513b - Form & Technique in Poetry and E632 - Professional Concerns: Teaching and Learning in a Digital Age at Colorado State University during the fall of 2009. We were writing poems in various forms in our poetry class and learning how to teach using multimodal pedagogy and digital technology in E632 - Professional Concerns. Robinson decided she wanted to make a video for one of her final projects. She was telling me about it after poetry class one day and I was telling her about a poem that I had recently turned into a song.

I wrote the poem "The Ballade of a Boy and the Stars" to try my hand in a French form of the folk ballad. Noah, my four-month-old son, inspired me. My wife arrived home with Noah and set him down in the car seat next to where I was sitting outside reading about ballads. He was looking up at the sky and I imagined what he might see when looking into the heavens. I then put the lyrics to chords and recorded the piece with my son Noah making baby sounds in the background. Robinson said she would like to hear it and when she did she loved it. She asked me if she could use the piece in her project to create a video poem and I said, "I would be honored."

The collaborative work that Robinson and I did demonstrates what students might be instructed to do in a secondary English classroom. Twentieth-century technology affords new opportunities to collaborate in educational settings: over email, on blogs, in online chat rooms, and by

combining different sensibilities to create multimodal and digital texts. Partners or groups can combine their strengths and strengthen their weaknesses in collaboration and present their work in digital formats, as the following YouTube video demonstrates:

See also:

- Underserved populations
- Writing Project (CSUWPAI)
- YouTube

Digital natives

Digital Games "Talk Back"

Mark Prensky's articles "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" (2001) and "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Part II: Do They Really Think Differently," (2001) from *On the Horizon*, discuss how "students have changed radically" (1) and how educators must adapt with the times to teach effectively. Prensky labels students of the current generation as "digital natives" and teachers from previous generations as "digital immigrants." The use of methodology and content grounded in the digital immigrant's mode of thinking Prensky argues, to some degree, isn't as effective as teaching the content in a methodology more relevant to the lives of digital natives.

Other theorists have engaged in the conversation of digital literacy and learning raised by Prensky, such as James Paul Gee. Gee has written substantially about games and learning. Gee echoes a point raised by Prensky about *interactivity*. In a piece titled "Good Video Games and Good Learning," (Gee 2003/2007; see also Gee 2005, 2007), Gee references Plato's *Phaedrus* and comments on how Plato believed, "that books were passive in the sense that you cannot get them to talk back to you in a real dialogue the way a person can in a face-to-face encounter" (Gee 5). Gee says, "Games do talk back." The point affirms Prenksy's thinking that educators have the responsibility to establish a methodology, such as using video games in learning, to allow the content to "talk back," so to speak, to their students.

Gee recently visited Colorado State University and talked about schools that are using video games as the structure of the school itself. One school that uses video games for learning is the Institute of Play, which promotes "Gaming Literacy." I agree with Prensky and Gee that as educators we must engage students on the level that most effectively and successfully reaches their needs as learners. However, both Prensky and Gee contend that the games need to be "good" and designed not only to educate, but also entertain.

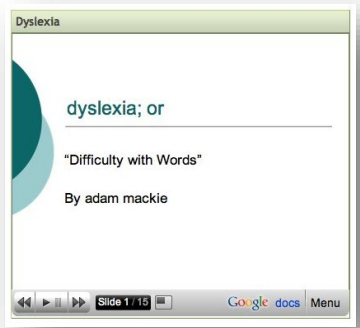
Further Reading

Folkestad, James. "Professional Networking: Technological Literacy." *EDUC331 - Technology and Assessment* PowerPoint Presentation. 2010.

Strickland, E. "A Win-Win Scenario: 'Game School' Aims to Engage and Educate." *Wired.*

Dyslexia

Dyslexia can be understood as a "different learning ability," a topic I discussed using a PowerPoint presentation. PowerPoint presentations have become effective pedagogical tools for visual learners and visual mediums of learning can be used to teach learners with different learning abilities. Prezi is a more recent Web 2.0 tool, which is gaining popularity in education. I designed a PowerPoint presentation to discuss dyslexia in EDUC275 - Schooling in the United States in the spring of 2009 at Colorado State University. The presentation averred that, given knowledge of new literacies, responsible teachers must be prepared to teach students with a "different learning ability," such as dyslexia, in as many different modes as possible. The following presentation discusses research of dyslexia and claims dyslexia "only becomes a disability if it goes unrecognized and the teaching is inappropriate" (Pollock, Waller, and Politt).



See also:

Twenty-first century composition

Extensions of the twenty-first century classroom

Digital Classrooms Via Ning; Or, Ning-like Platforms

Electronic and digital platforms, such as Ning or Google Sites, extend the twenty-first century classroom. Ning **was** a popular, free online platform, launched in 2005 that allowed many educators to create classroom networks. "Ning was co-founded by Marc Andreessen and Gina Bianchini. Ning is Andreessen's third company (after Netscape and Opsware)," according to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ning. Beginning in July 2010, however, Ning controversially became a fee-based service.

In October of 2004, Gina Bianchini and Marc Andreesen began development of the Ning Platform. The Ning Platform grew over the next three years and by the end of 2007 there were 144,000 Ning Networks in existence. To date there are "more than 2 million Ning Netwroks created and 43 million registered users." Nings, like Myspace or Facebook, bring millions of people together "to explore and express their interests, discover, new passions, and meet new people around shared pursuits" (http://about.ning.com/press/history.php/).

Nings can be used for educational purposes and serve as an online classroom, which is an extension of the traditional classroom. While enrolled in E632 - Professional Concerns: Teaching & Learning in the Digital Age at Colorado State University in the fall of 2009, I was introduced to a Ning Platform. Dr. Cindy O'Donnell-Allen, Associate Professor of English at Colorado State University, used a Ning to conduct

class business, hold online forums, and even conduct a class session. I learned how to use the Ning technology for my own purposes for the two major projects for the course. A fellow graduate student and I designed a Ning for an investigation into fan fiction, another form of new literacies. Unfortunately, the dictionary could not be hosted for free by Ning due to their changes to their once free policy.

The Ning Platform in O'Donnell-Allen's class proved to be an effective way to afford the space to bridge the gap between the physical, face-to-face classroom and what students could accomplish from other locations. The Ning provided a way for students to communicate or "interface" with the content of the course, their instructor and other classmates at any time, given a computer and an Internet connection. Nings have allowed instructors to create classrooms that are not dictated by a bell on the wall of a building. These Nings afford discovery and learning to occur beyond the classroom environment.

The extension of the face-to-face classroom will be an important literacy for teachers of the twenty-first century, whether using Ning, Google Sites, or another online platform. Twenty-first teachers will be required to reach twenty-first century learners. Nings are one way to revolutionize literacy in the classroom: other options are available. The online class meeting that O'Donnell-Allen held within the "chat" function on the Ning platform supplies evidence for how learning can take on new shapes. A couple of students, who were introspective and less talkative in the face-to-face graduate discussions at the university, were active, dominant players in the Ning chat.

The Ning chat posed some challenges, such as typing and text delays, the confusion of simultaneous conversations, and important contributions to the discussion sometimes got lost in the shuffle. However, the participants of the class all did their best to address these concerns by acknowledging them and attempting to be as conscientious of the others in the chat as possible. Discussion "norms" and/or ground rules would be necessary for an instructor to establish and engage with students in a Ning chat or online chat room discussion. Admittedly, it was refreshing to hear some of the quieter voices in the class "speak up" in the chat. Chats on the

Ning are unfortunately not automatically saved, but neither are live, face-to-face classroom discussions. However, by cutting and pasting before exiting the chat a participant can document and save what was said for future reference.

Time will tell if Nings become common among teachers in their various courses and the newly implemented fee alters the allure for many teachers. Nevertheless, encouraging students to interact and "interface" with a space that goes beyond the limited time available in an "official" class meeting only seems to possess positive ramifications. Negative ramifications may arise within an online space, such as students not being civil and respectful. These kinds of issues must be addressed and stopped immediately by the instructor or facilitator of the course. Since a Ning platform is an extension of the face-to-face classroom all policies of civility and respect expected in a face-to-face interaction theoretically would apply on an educational Ning platform.

Social networking sites (Facebook and Myspace) have taken the world by storm. Students of all grade levels are now discovering how to compose using texts of many modes with people across the planet. It only makes sense to take the principles used for nonacademic purposes and use these principles within the academic arena. Many students already know how to set up a user name and password, post alphabetic text, post images, and communicate in chats and forums. Therefore, teachers might consider capitalizing on this opportunity to tap into the prior knowledge of their students and align their classrooms to function effectively in a digital age. Now that there's a price tag attached to the Ning platform, Google Sites was chosen as an alternative to present this dictionary as a Master's project. Google Sites, in many ways, is proving to be clearer and more cohesive for the purposes of *A New Literacies Dictionary.*

See also:

Writing Project (CSUWPAI)

Xanadu-classroom

Fan fiction

> "To pretend, I actually do the thing: I have therefore only pretended to pretend."
>
> - Jacques Derrida

A Production and Exchange of Information

Rationale

Fan fiction units might be specifically applied by ninth grade English teachers to meet Standard 3 - Writing and Composition of the Colorado Academic Standards, but could also be modified for other grades and other purposes (fan fiction would make a great after school club). The following assignment and rubric could be adapted to any size school and to meet any curriculum, but would be most effective in settings that have access to a computer lab to meet the multimodal aspects of the assignment. Block periods would be optimal for the fan fiction unit. However, the unit could be designed to fit in a 50-minute period setting as well.

A concept central to the writing and composition of a fan fiction unit would primarily be for students to "master the techniques of effective informational, literary, and persuasive writing" (CDE 103). Students would be assigned to develop creative narratives based in the characters of assigned readings, such as in the contemporary young adult novel *Speak* and the canonized text *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Arguably, a fan fiction unit would focus more on process writing than the production of the writing. Fan fiction might be classified as what new literacies researchers have identified

"New Capitalist" writing or writing that assigns value to process and "the exchange of information," an alternative to writing that solely values production (Black 16).

Overview

Angela Thomas discusses fan fiction in "Youth Literacies: Understanding Self through Role-Playing the Other" in her book *Youth Online*. The author describes how fans "borrow" the work of others to create "new" fictional narratives of their own. Thomas describes the writing process of fan fiction writers:

> Borrowing settings, plots, characters and ideas from all forms of media and popular culture, fans weave together new tales, sometimes within the accepted canon (the real works from which they are borrowing), sometimes blending several ideas from different sources (i.e. Star Wars meets Middle Earth) together in a type of fiction called 'Crossovers', and sometimes imagining new possibilities for additional characters, different histories or different settings to build on existing stores, called 'Alternative Universe' fiction (Thomas 130 – 131).

New literacies researcher Rebecca W. Black, in a chapter titled "Digital Design: English Language Learners and Reader Reviews in Online Fiction," also discusses how:

> Scholarship within the New Literacy Studies (Cope and Kalantzis 2000, Gee 2004, New London Group 1996) has dealt with shifts from what is valued within the Old Capitalist/Industrial "mindset" (Lankshear and Knobel 2003) that centers on the production of material goods, to what is valued within social and work spaces rooted in a mindset "forged in cyberspace" (Lankshear and Knobel 2003, 3) (116).

Black implies that fan fiction, a genre forging its way in cyberspace with the popular site http://www.fanfiction.net/ and into secondary English classrooms, operates under a "New Capitalist" framework. She distinguishes between the "mindset" of Old Capitalism, a mindset focused on the production of goods, to the "mindset" of "New Capitalism" that focuses on "the production and exchange of information." Black said, "According to Gee there are 'three types of design that reap large rewards in the New Capitalism: the ability to design new identities, affinity spaces, and networks (pg. 97)'" (116).

Black states at the end of the chapter how she is "not suggesting that educators adopt popular culture and fan fiction wholesale into their curriculum, as this would certainly diminish its popularity with students" (134-135). As an alternative, incorporating a fan fiction assignment into a secondary classroom would allow students to begin questioning what counts as a text and what counts as reading, writing, and composing. Twenty-first century learners will need to be familiarized with glue-bound books in a traditional English classroom, as well as with digital, multimodal texts.

Educators who use fan fiction in their classroom will want to use the opportunity of teaching the assignment to expand how students read, write, speak, listen, view, and visually represent. The assignment will challenge students to closely and critically read the text of another author and then ask students to engage in their own process of authorship. A fan fiction assignment will allow students to explore and design "new identities, affinity spaces, and networks" (116).

Teachers at schools with access to computer labs and multimedia software, such as Audacity, Adobe Premier, Garage Band, and iMovie, may have greater ease in teaching a fan fiction assignment. A teacher of a fan fiction assignment becomes responsible for assessing the tools available at their schools and what access students have to digital literacies in and out of school. An assignment of fan fiction does not however necessarily hinge on digital spaces to function. A teacher need only to inspire students to become fans of a text being taught, whatever the mode of text may be, and give focused writing activities that appropriately balance the focus on "the production and exchange of information" with "the production of material goods" (116).

The assignment might include a final project of expression where the students process a piece of fan fiction over the course of a 4-week period. Students can be required to produce multimodal final projects or projects that include more than printed words on a page, such as an audio recording or podcast, a video segment or movie trailer, or a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation or theatrical performance. Students will be encouraged to share their final pieces on a public platform (i.e. http://www.fanfiction.net/) but will not be required to do so. A part of the final grade might focus on the

process work that led to the completion of the final production to emphasize the importance of how they are exchanging their information. Students can then turn in portfolios that trace their work from the beginning of the project to the end.

Purpose

The purpose of a fan fiction assignment will be to help students examine, use, and produce a meaningful text in the genre of fan fiction. Students will enter into the process of producing original pieces of fiction, based on the work of authors in the traditional literary canon, such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and the work of more contemporary young adult authors, such as Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* (1999). Students will have the opportunity to shift the way they think about words, images, pages on a computer screen, the use of voice in written language and audio/visual recordings. They will also challenge how the role of authorship results in new relationships between readers and writers.

The impact of teaching fan fiction within a secondary teachers' curriculum will lend to the purpose of developing twenty-first century producers of culture who understand how to examine traditional glue-bound texts as well as contemporary digital texts. A fan fiction assignment, as such, will prospectively aim to revise current instructional standards and promote general educational reform.

A fan fiction assignment with the above stated purpose will also be conducive to analysis in literacy action research. Through what Black states as "the production and exchange of information," students will take a single text or a couple of texts and demonstrate how they can create chains of texts. The students will perform within the "new identities, affinity spaces, and networks," in which Black describes by way of Gee, developing their literacy and literary practice (116). Students will be able to identify themselves as an author of fan fiction by the end of the assignment and, given the appropriate tools, be able to interact with classmates and other fan fiction writers worldwide in online affinity spaces and networks.

Readings

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 1999.

Print.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Warner Books, Inc. 1960.

Print.

Audience

The audience for students will be the instructor and fellow classmates, unless they choose to post their fan fiction piece to www.fanfiction.net or another digital space. Even though the teacher and classmates are familiar with the two texts that will spawn the fan fiction piece, students will need to give readers who are not familiar with the two texts enough information to contextualize the story. Therefore, some summary and background information will be necessary within the plot construction of the fan fiction piece.

Requirements

Students will be required to read the two texts, *Speak* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and write process work and fan fiction for both. However, only one of the two pieces will be polished for their final project. The fan fiction assignment will require a 4 - 5 page prose component coupled with a digital or new literacies component. The nature and length of the digital, new literacies component can be negotiated.

The following guide will be the chart for the course of the fan fiction assignment:

• **Week 1:** The fan fiction unit will introduce students to the assignment, will discuss the background and culture of fan fiction, and will present important terms of the genre. The students will be expected to read the first half of *Speak*. They will be assigned to write how they think the book will end for a weekend homework assignment.

• **Week 2:** Students will share their fan fiction pieces with one another, finish reading *Speak*, practice creating multimodal components to include with their fan fiction, and reflect on the composing process.

• **Week 3:** Students will have posted their reflections on the fan fiction class webpage. They will be introduced to Harper's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and will be asked to read the first half of the book. They will again speculate into the nature of the book's ending and write another piece of fan fiction.

• **Week 4:** Students will share their pieces of *To Kill a Mockingbird* fan fiction. The students will work on the multimodal elements of the project and decide which of the two texts they want to polish to hand in for the final project.

Assignment length

The assignment should be approximately 4 - 5 pages for prose component and approximately 3 - 5 minutes of digital material, such as audio recordings (podcasts), video recordings (movie trailers), theatrical performances (soliloquy or skits), or other creative new literacies activity.

Due date

The project will be due on the Monday following the fourth week of the unit.

Fan fiction grading rubric

Prose Component

Excellent

The piece of fan fiction demonstrates a close and critical reading of the text used to create the work. The fan fiction takes advantage of literary elements, such as conflict, climax, and resolution to tell a story of an alternative universe, an alternative ending, a crossover, or another literary fan fiction devise. The piece of fan fiction demonstrates strong character development and plot creativity, while adhering to the page requirements.

Satisfactory

The piece of fan fiction tells a story of an alternative universe, alternative ending, a crossover, or another literary fan fiction device. However, the story lacks necessary aspects of summary from the original text that allow a reader to contextualize the story. The prose may omit key aspects of a character or the story and/or the prose does not meet the necessary page requirements.

Unsatisfactory

The author of the fan fiction text did not present to the reader a close and critical reading of the original text. Therefore, the piece of fan fiction does not effectively construct a plot of characters in a meaningful way. The fan fiction piece is either too short and does not develop a coherent storyline or the reader remains confused as to what literary fan fiction device the author chose, i.e. alternative ending, crossover, etc.

Process Work

Excellent

The final project was compiled in a portfolio. The portfolio has included a polished, final draft, at least one rough draft, peer comments from workshop, and evidence of the process the writer underwent to create the new literacies component. Digital components are included and/or a URL to access the digital media is made available online.

Satisfactory

The final project lacks evidence of thorough development of the process the writer underwent to create the final piece of fan fiction, such as no prior drafts with peer comments or no evidence of what the writer did to create the new literacies component. The new literacies component is not included with the final project or is made difficult to find or access in a digital, online space.

Unsatisfactory

The writer has no evidence of process work and only submits a final project. The fan fiction writer did not turn in a portfolio and does not have prior drafts with peer comments, or fails to contribute in workshop. The writer has not worked as a collaborator with their peers to be useful to others within the writing community.

Style & Conventions

Excellent

The prose is clear, understandable, and has few grammatical or conventional errors.

Satisfactory

The prose, as a whole, would benefit from careful proofreading and editing for clarity.

Unsatisfactory

Grammar mistakes and readability obstruct the readers understanding of the prose.

Digital/New Literacies component

Excellent

The project includes a digital and/or new literacies component, such as an audio recording [e.g. song (.mp3, .wav), podcast], a video (movie trailer, music video, interpretive dance), presents a live theatrical performance (soliloquy, skit, or role-play), or creates some other form of expression beyond the alphabetic, printed page. The new literacies form of expression effectively accompanies the prose component and demonstrates an overall depth of thought, concern, and creativity.

Satisfactory

The project includes a digital and/or new literacies component, but lacks an overall depth of thought, concern, and creativity. Either the author and composer of the digital and/or new literacies text did not take the time to smooth out the rough edges of an audio or visual production or he or she does not show his or her audience the relevance of their content to the prose component and the original text in which the fan fiction is based.

Unsatisfactory

The project does not include a digital and/or new literacies component, or the digital and/or new literacies component fails to demonstrate any constructive thought or connection to the prose component and the

original text in which the fan fiction was based. The digital and/or new literacies text makes inappropriate suggestions and commentary to subject matters that could be potentially harmful for readers and viewers within the writing community.

Teacher Sample

See also:

- Role-play

eographic t our assignment

Jeans World Map used with permission

courtesy of http://www.vladstudio.com

The Voice of the 'Other'

Rationale

Geographic Tour Assignment: The Voice of the 'Other' is a unit designed to meet Colorado Academic Standards for twelfth grade. The assignment directly addresses Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes and Standard 3: Writing and Composition. The Reading for All Purposes Standard expects secondary students to master conceptual skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation of complex literary texts and to understand rhetorical and critical reading (CAS 56 – 57). For the Writing and Composition Standard, students are to master using ideas, evidence, structure and style to create persuasive, academic, and technical texts for

particular audiences and for specific purposes (94 – 95). Students will be given multimodal genre options in the course and be able to choose between traditional alphabetic-only forms of expression as well as other forms of expression, such as podcasting, visual portraits, performance art, theatrics, and/or zines.

Students will be divided into six groups and each group assigned a chapter a week for six weeks (either consecutively or spread out over a nine month school year). The selected texts have been chosen for students to read in part or in whole alongside any required texts within a given English curriculum. A text representative of a different continent aims to provide the voice of the 'other' and directly address one of the inquiry questions within the Reading for All Purposes Standard: "What specific techniques in a classic text elicit historic attention or appreciation? Why?" Many historical epochs have not given the voice of the colonized 'other' "historic attention and appreciation" within an educational system. Therefore, Geographic Tour Assignment: The Voice of the 'Other' aims to teach from a perspective that pushes beyond Western-only perspectives and ideologies.

Overview

The unit will span over the course of six weeks and would be ideal for a twelfth grade 75-minute block period schedule. The unit may be more suitable to spread out across an entire school year, breaking up the six weeks to fit in with the overall curriculum. Students will be divided into six groups and assigned a different text each week for six weeks. The students will be asked to read the text on their own, annotating and formulating discussion questions. Students will then be asked to read the text a second time in smaller groups during the first couple of class periods after the text is assigned. How the voices of the author, the colonizer, and the colonized are represented within the historical and literary texts will be a guiding question for all the groups as well other questions generated by the students. A map of the world will be displayed in the classroom and used as a visual reference while traveling on the geographic tour.

Students will be taken on a geographic tour around the world and through different time periods, with an emphasis of reading along with the

voice of 'other.' They will begin where they are, in North America, and read a chapter from the contemporary work *Pushing the Bear: After the Trail of Tears* by Diane Glancy. They will then "travel" back in time and to South America to read a poem by Pablo Neruda. Students will cross the sea and read an activist poem, "Aboriginal Charter of Rights," by the Australian writer Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Their travel through literature will then take them to nineteenth century India where they will read Pandita Ramabai's "The Cry of Indian Women." The unit will next take them from India to Africa where students will examine Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. Finally, students will read portions or the entire text of Andrea Levy's *Small Island* where England and the colonies from India to Jamaica are represented (if reading entire novels, assignment completion may take longer than a week).

Each week the six groups will have to write, compose, and produce an artifact and share their different interpretations of the same text with the class and the other groups. The writing and composition will be held to the expectations of the CAS for Writing and Composition. Multimodal genres will be highly encouraged, if not required. Students will collect process work in individual portfolios throughout the journey through each text and will all be assessed individually. Collectively students will be evaluated as a group after finishing each reading from each location. At the end of the unit, students will have six artifacts potentially composed in a variety of genres.

Purpose

The purpose of the Geographic Tour Assignment: The Voice of the 'Other' is for students to gain exposure to a variety of texts voiced from a colonized 'other' living in different cultures and time periods. The texts all connect with imperialism and students will have the opportunity to read a voice that for many years was silenced by colonial rule. Postcolonial studies emphasize how the 'other' or the colonized, in an imperial context, represent themselves and are represented in empire texts. The aim of the unit is to allow students to begin thinking about writers and ideas from different cultures. Throughout this process students will perform rhetorical

analyses and compose expressions of these complex texts in a variety of modalities.

Genre options

The group presentations are to be approved by the instructor and students are encouraged to think creatively and outside of the box. Traditional alphabetic pieces of prose and poetry are acceptable, but given the technology anything from podcasts to short video clips to interpretive dance can be presented by the groups. Groups should feel free to explore their creativity and express these texts in meaningful and inventive ways.

Audience

The audience for the group presentations will primarily be the classroom writing community, i.e. the instructor and student peers. However, if podcasts or videos are created, publishing to YouTube or Vimeo may be an option worth serious discussion and consideration. Twenty-first century composers have been given the opportunity to communicate with a worldwide audience via the Internet, which is a right not to take lightly.

Readings by continent and work*

North America

Pushing the Bear: After the Trail of Tears, Diane Glancy (2009)

South America

Canto General, "La United Fruit Co." Pablo Neruda (1950)

Australia

"Aboriginal Charter of Rights," Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1962)

India

"The Cry of Indian Women," Pandita Ramabai (1883)

Africa

Nervous Conditions, Tsitsi Dangarembga (1988)

Europe

Small Island, Andrea Levy (2004)

*Other works, of course, can be selected to fit the schema of the colonized 'other' and used within the framework of the assignment. Authors ought to literally and appropriately give voice to a colonized person. However, voices of the colonizer may also be selected to stimulate conversation about the ways the colonized voice and perspective differs from the voice of the colonized 'other.'

Requirements

Students will be required to individually read the assigned texts generating annotations and discussion questions

Students will close read the text in small discussion groups and discuss for understanding of plot and thematic elements

Students will keep an individual portfolio of their annotated copy of the text, their discussion questions, any process writing that occurs, and a reflection of their individual and collective experience

Students will participate in a group presentation, in a modality of the group's choosing, and present their work to the instructor and the class

Individual Portfolio & Group Presentation:

An individual portfolio of student work will be submitted for assessment

Participation and a checklist of criteria will guide the assessment of the group presentation

North America

Pushing the Bear: After the Trail of Tears, Diane Glancy (2009)

Biographical note

"Diane Glancy was born in 1941, in Kansas City, Missouri. She obtained a M.A. degree from Central State University in 1983 and an M.F.A from the University of Iowa in 1988. She is known for works in which she uses realistic language and vivid imagery to address such subjects as spirituality, family ties and her identity as a person of mixed blood. She is a poet, short story writer, playwright, essayist, and educator. She is assistant professor of English at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota" (http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/A35).

Notes on lancy

"*Pushing the Bear: After the Trail of Tears* tells the story of Cherokees' resettlement in the hard years following Removal. In this sequal to her popular 1996 novel P*ushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears*, author Dian Glancy continues the tale of one Cherokee family" (Back Cover).

- Religion; Christianity; Conversion; Assimilation; Oral Tradition; Language; Politics (i.e. Land acquisition, treaties, etc.

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF A PASSAGE FROM PUSHING THE BEAR... BY DIANE GLANCY

> "Remember walking. Remember the clouds walking with us. Remember the wind that walked with us. The cold. Remember the longing to stop marching. We have done that now. Remember the people we left in graves. Remember the voices that came from the sky. There is change. Change. Remember we knew that change was here. Remember the birds. Their voices came with us. Not the same birds, no, but the song of their voices. Remember the sound of wagons. The snort of horses. The protest of the land - not to us, no, but to the ones who made us walk. Remember the moon. Remember the corn. We will taste it again.

> Remember the need to listen, to hear, to live. Remember the sun that will cross the sky, that will plow the day again. Remember all things that will work again. The stars that will turn again. The cabins that will stand again. Remember the hills in the old territory that disappeared in the distance. Are they still there, far away?" (5).
>
> "What a rough road forgiveness was. What a muddy field. You couldn't walk away from it clean. Forgiveness stuck to you. Or the process of forgiveness. It plowed a field. It made way for a crop" (171).

Glancy's historical fiction tells a story of resettlement that occurred "from October 1838 through February 1839" and remembers how "eleven to thirteen thousand Cherokees walked nine hundred miles in bitter cold from the Southeast to Indian Territory. One-fourth died or disappeared along the way" (3. Glancy traces the lives of one family a nd the hardships they experienced trying to survive.

A religious tension between Christians and conjurers persists throughout the novel. Reverend Jesse Bushyhead was "a Cherokee minister who led one of the detachments" (ix and established a Christian chur ch in the new territory. Some Cherokees were converted to Christianity and were baptized, such as the central characters Maritole and Knobowtee and their children. However, the converted Christians still called on conjurers to help them when desperately digging a well at the end of the story. Glancy's deeply spiritual story enacts the reality of how Cherokees were forced into a new way of life and how everything changed, including their religion.

South America

Canto General, "La United Fruit Co." Pablo Neruda (1950)

> "You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming."
>
> - Pablo Neruda

Cuando sonó la trompeta, estuvo
todo preparado en la tierra,
y Jehova repartió el mundo
a Coca-Cola Inc., Anaconda,
Ford Motors, y otras entidades:
la Compañía Frutera Inc.
se reservó lo más jugoso,
la costa central de mi tierra,
la dulce cintura de América.

- Pablo Neruda, from "La United Fruit Co.," *Canto General*

Biographical note

"Pablo Neruda (July 12, 1904 – September 23, 1973) was the pen name and, later, legal name of the Chilean Communist writer and politician Neftalí Ricardo Reyes Basoalto. He chose his pen name in honour of the famous Czech poet Jan Neruda…Neruda was accomplished in a variety of styles ranging from erotically charged love poems like his collection *Twenty Poems of Love and a Song of Despair,* surrealist poems, historical epics, and overtly political manifestos. In 1971 Neruda won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Márquez once called him "the greatest poet of the twentieth century in any language." Neruda always wrote in green ink as it was the color of "esperanza" or hope" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pablo_Neruda).

Notes on Neruda

- His poems resist the imperialistic mistreatment of Latin America
- His Communist affiliation and exile from Chile in 1948 provides an opportunity for socio-political readings of his poems

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF NERUDA AND "LA UNITED FRUIT CO.

It rebaptized these countries
Banana Republics,
and over the sleeping dead,
over the unquiet heroes
who won greatness,
liberty, and banners,
it established an opera buffa:
it abolished free will,
gave out imperial crowns,
encouraged envy, attracted
the dictatorship of flies:
Trujillo flies, Tachos flies
Carias flies, Martinez flies,
Ubico flies, flies sticky with
submissive blood and marmalade,
drunken flies that buzz over
the tombs of the people,
circus flies, wise flies
expert at tyranny.

- Pablo Neruda, from "La United Fruit Co.," *Canto General*

The bricolage of the first stanza of Neruda's poem (i.e. calling the corporations of "Coca-Cola" and "Ford Motors" out by name) sets up a thematic atmosphere of oppression. Neruda's goes further to say, "The United Fruit Company reserved for itself the most juicy piece, the central coast of my world, the delicate waist of America." Here Neruda personalizes the actions of the corporation and establishes himself not only as poet, but also as victim. A discussion of oppression and what Neruda means by "the sleeping dead," "unquiet heroes," and "the dictatorship of flies" might also be further discussed in thinking about the second and third stanza. Finally, due to Neruda's Communist political affiliation, reading the poem within a critical framework of Karl Marx's historical materialism may be fruitful to consider.

Australia

"Aboriginal Charter of Rights," Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1962)

> "Make us equals, not dependents"
>
> - Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Biographical note

> "Stradbroke Island is one of the beautiful islands that form part of the Great Sandy Region of southeast Queensland. The Noonuccal people inhabited this island for countless generations. They called it Minjerribah. On 3 November 1920, the newest Noonuccal descendant had just been born...I arrived about a week before expected, at the home of white friends where there was a wedding in progress; and the little black baby stole the show from the star performer, the bride. They named me Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska" (Cochrane 3).

Notes on Noonuccal

Oodgeroo was a poet who claimed her voice and fought against Australian subjection. Many of her poems could be used in a secondary classroom to explore themes of how a colonized or subjected individual "writes back" and resists the oppression of colonial powers." Aboriginal Charter of Rights" was written as a contribution to the proceedings of the fifth annual general meeting of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Adelaide" (165).

THEMES IN "ABORIGINAL CHARTER OF RIGHTS" BY OODGEROO NOONUCCAL

We want hope, not racialism
Brotherhood, not ostracism
Black advance, not white ascendance:
Make us equals, not dependents…
You dishearten, not defend us.
Circumscribe, who should befriend us.
Give us welcome, not aversion,
Give us choice, not cold coercion,
Status, not discrimination,
Human rights, not segregation…
Though baptized and blessed and Bibled
We are still tabooed and libeled
You devout Salvation-sellers,
Make us neighbours, not fringe-dwellers…
Must we native Old Australians
In our own land rank as aliens? (166)

Many themes from racialism to alienation could be interrogated and expanded. Oodgeroo gives voice to the colonized, silenced by the British colonizer. She posits what the aborigines deserve: "welcome," "choice," "status" followed by what the aborigines received. She references the religious indoctrination and how even after being Christianized the aborigines of Australia were still "tabooed and libeled." Students will be able to take Oodgeroo's poem in numerous directions, perhaps even in digital, visual interpretations.

India

"The Cry of Indian Women," Pandita Ramabai (1883)

Biographical note

> "In the mystic's spirit of seeing the world in a grain of sand, one may find Pandita Ramabai's whole life (1858 – 1922) encapsulated in a photograph of her during her last year's, head bowed over her Marathi translation of the Bible" (Kosambi 1).

Certainly there was much more to Pandita Ramabai than the image described in this photograph and even her remarkable accomplishment of translating the entire Bible into Marathi. She was a religious figure who spoke against the oppression of woman in late-nineteenth century India, writing many pleading letters. Her books include *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* and *Our Inexhaustible Treasure*.

Notes on Pandita Ramabai

> "She presented a graphic picture of oppressed Indian womanhood to Western readers with a trained ethnographer's eye, but without sacrificing her nationalist pride and right to interrogate colonial rule: and she brought news of exciting social and political reforms in the far-off United States of America to her Marathi readers with empathetic understanding of the prevailing local conditions. The ease with which she straddled the East and West was unique in the heyday of Empire and Orientalism" (3).

- Converted to Christianity, married an Indian Christian, part of early 19th century feminist movement; sole survivor of famine that wiped out her entire family (Brinks 17 Feb. 2010).

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF A PASSAGE FROM "THE CRY OF INDIAN WOMAN" BY PANDITA RAMABAI

> "…people rid themselves of their daughters by marrying them [off] at an early age, following the general practice. When a girl has attained the age of ten or eleven, she has to live with her husband's family. For the time they live with their parents they pass a tolerably happy life. But when these girls are married there is a life of misery in store for them in the future. Those that lead happy lives after marriage are very rare, and are considered to be very fortunate. Young children, not even able to speak well, are snatched away from the lap of their mothers and thrown into the crush of worldly life" (107).

The treatment of children and women during this time must be analyzed with careful emphasis not to stereotype all of Indian men as oppressive. Research on the caste system in India might help with fully understanding the context of Ramabai's world. Ramabai discusses her involvement with the Arya Mahila Samaj Association and states that "the objects of the Association are three – 1st, to put a stop to the marriage of children; 2nd, to prevent a man re-marrying while the first wife is living; 3rd, to give help to destitute women; and to encourage female education" (112). Conversations could be held about the oppressive structure of the patriarchal system in India. However, this becomes complicated when considering the way the British government in India used various "reforms as a wedge issue and promoted themselves as liberators of India's oppressed women" (Brinks). Ramabai begs for Government involvement and "the consent of the entire community" (112). Another cultural practice perhaps worth discussing might be the sati practice, where widows of deceased husbands were burned on the funeral pyre. Ramabai staunchly opposed this

practice and it would be worth connecting her ideas of woman oppression to cultural practices in the West.

Africa

Nervous Conditions, Tsitsi Dangarembga (1988)

> "The condition of native is a nervous condition."
>
> - Frantz Fanon

Biographical Note

Tsitsi Dangarembga is a "Zimbabwean writer, whose novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) has become a modern African classic. It was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1989. Tsitsi Dangarembga has dealt in her works with the oppressive nature of a patriarchal family structure and a woman's coming-of-age."

"My soul is African," Dangarembga said, "it is from there that springs the fountain of my creative being" (http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/tsitsi.htm).

Notes on Dangarembga

Jean-Paul Sarte says, "At first it is not their [the natives] violence, it is ours [the colonizing powers] which...rends them; and the first action of these oppressed creatures is to bury deep down that hidden anger...If the suppressed fury [of the colonized subject] fails to find an outlet, it turns into a vacuum and devastates the oppressed creatures themselves (Brinks 26 March 2010).

- Linguistic Acquisition; Code switching; Illness; Outlet v. Disconnection

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF A PASSAGE FROM *NERVOUS CONDITIONS* BY TSITSI DANGAREMBGA

> It's not England any more and I ought to adjust. But when you've seen different things you want to be sure you're adjusting to the right thing. You can't go on all the time being whatever's necessary. You've got to have some conviction, and I'm convinced I don't want to be anyone's underdog. It's not right for anyone to be that. But once you get used to it, well, it just seems natural and you just carry on. And that's the end of you. You're trapped. They control everything you do (Dangarembga 119).

The above passage is taken from a conversation between Tambu and Nyasha. Nyasha proves to be a character of resistance who resists the patriarchal ideologies of her father Babamukuru, an English educated, financially successful Zimbabwean. By means of starving herself and acting out to the point of hysteria, Nyasha shows how the power structures of colonization can lead the colonized to the point of illness. In turn, her resistance exposes the illness of the patriarchy and power structure itself. Standing up to her father, Babamukuru, demonstrates the lack of control he has over members of his own household despite whatever successes he has experienced in the world.

Analyzing the four central female characters in *Nervous Conditions* provides a point of entry into considering the larger social and cultural themes present in the book. Nyasha, for instance, raises many avenues for discussion. Her character forces the voice of the 'other' to be heard in the generational conflicts she experiences with her father and mother, in the control and politicization she performs with her body, the suffering she experiences as a result, and the alienation she experiences from going to England and returning (Brinks).

At the end of the book, Nyasha has been pushed to the point of hysteria. She continues to starve herself and replaces the consumption of food with the consumption of history in books. The climax at the end,

where Nyasha acts out, shows that her sickness is symptomatic of the oppression caused by colonialism.

Europe

Small Island, Andrea Levy (2004)

> "In the widely cited words of the feminist poet and social critic Adrienne Rich, we need "to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history" (Friedman 263).

Biographical note

> "Born in 1956 to Jamaican parents, Andrea Levy is the author of three previous novels and has received a British Arts Council Writers Award in addition to many other distinctions. She lives and works in London" (Levy 443).

Notes on Levy

Questions, issues, and instances of migration can be used as a thematic guide to perform an analysis of *Small Island.* Susan Stanford Friedman's "Migrations, Diasporas, and Borders" might serve as a critical text to guide students. Other themes involving migration might be:

- Assimilation
- Culture Clash; Colonial Alientaion
- Intermarriage
- Hybridity

THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF A PASSAGE FROM *SMALL ISLAND* BY ANDREA LEVY

> The angry bees, amassing to a black smoke, trailed the bucking mule before entirely enveloping it. I was standing still because if you stand still you cannot be stung. 'Gilbert, you wan' see us eaten alive, man?' Elwood shook my shoulder as he struggled to pull on his veil and tuck up his clothes with gloved hands. A doodlebug - that's where I had heard the sound: the bees droned resonant as those flying bombs (Levy 169).

The metaphor and image of bees remains highly suggestive in any discussion of mid-twentieth century colonial studies and is but one that can be chosen from Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. Thinking of Britain as "Mother" or "Queen Bee," and the British colonies that filled nearly a third of the globe as locations to exploit, can be used as an entry into thinking about empire. This image of bees and mules may allow for further reflection on the family and matriarchal relationships, between the peoples of "Queen Bee" England and the colonized peoples of Jamaica and India, in *Small Island.*

In the above passage, Britain might be read as representative of "the angry bees" and Jamaica (or other colonies) as "the bucking mule" (169). The somewhat poetic reading suggests that if the colonized 'other,' such as Jamaicans or Indians in *Small Island*, complies with the will of the colonizing Britain, then they will be treated the way Queenie treats the community of Jamaicans throughout the novel. Queenie "protects" and takes Jamaicans "under her wing" (or at least so she thinks) and acts as a matriarch figure. However, one might be suspicious of the matriarchal "bee" family attacking when "the mule" begins to buck or resist the wishes of the *status quo* or "the angry bee" (Bernard) decides he doesn't want Jamaicans living in his house.

Gilbert's comparison to the sound of the bees to flying bombs connects to the war Britain was currently engaged in with India, during the year the novel is set, in 1948. A historic connection to bees can be related to New

Zealand, another of Britain's colonies, in a news article appearing five years after the time of the novel's setting. A June 1, 1953 news piece in *The News Chronicle,* titled "The New Elizabethan," discusses "a bee farmer from New Zealand." The bee farmer is praised and named a hero for his "conquest" of Mt. Everest. The article states, "there are no heights or difficulties which the British people cannot overcome" (*The News Chronicle).*

logster

Glogster is a Web 2.0 tool for designing online posters. It is an excellent way for students to introduce themselves in a twenty-first century classroom and perform twenty-first century composition. The above Glogster poster was designed to give students and readers of this dictionary insight into the person I am professionally, personally, and poetically (Click here or on the poster above to view a teacher sample created on Glogster).

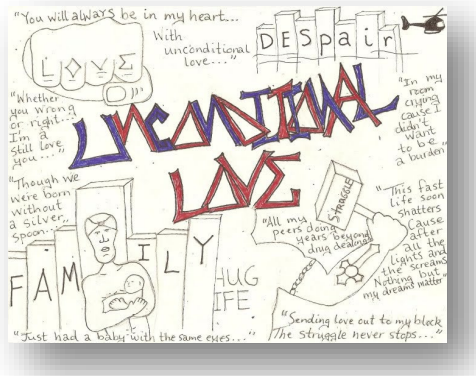
raphic narratives

Professor of English at Colorado State University Dr. Louann Reid once distinguished graphic narratives from graphic novels by explaining that an author need not write a novel to communicate graphically. Reid used a book created by William Ayers and Ryan Alexander-Tanner titled *To Teach: The Journey, in Comics* to teach various teaching methods in language arts. Ayers' narrative can serve as an effective pedagogical tool for imagining alternative ways to approach teaching. Messages communicated with the medium of graphics can be communicated in almost any genre of writing. For instance, students might be given the choice to either respond to a reading assignment with a traditional alphabetic mode of summarizing or be shown how to create a 6-panel summary response. The below teacher sample was created in response to chapters from Jim Burke's *What's the Big Idea* and Peter Smagorinsky's *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units* (Click on image to see a larger version).

Hip-hop lit

> “Hip-hop is a vehicle.”
>
> - Talib Kweli

> "Some folks don't understand hip-hop because they don't know how to listen. The two main principles to keep in mind when listening to hip-hop are the patterns and intricacies of rhyme and what is called the flow, the way the words fit with the music or beat. Like rhyme and flow, the effects of the genre push one's ear forward" (223).
>
> - Tracie Morris



The teacher’s sample above was designed for E402 - Teaching Composition at Colorado State University, taught by Dr. Cindy O’Donnell-Allen. The class was prompted to design their own graffiti after reading the hip-hop text "Unconditional Love" by Tupac Shakur (Click on image to see a larger version).

BookNotes

BookNotes were a method O'Donnell-Allen used in both her E632 - Professional Concerns: Teaching & Learning in a Digital Age and E402 - Teaching Composition classes. O'Donnell-Allen assigned "jigsaw" groups where several different groups were given a different book to read over the course of approximately a month. Groups would have a conference and be required to supply BookNotes as individuals and complete a group form documenting the conference.

BookNotes for Marc Lamont Hill's *Beats Rhymes + Classroom Life*

Chapters 1 – 2

The group's method to read *Beats Rhymes + Classroom Life* by Marc Lamont Hill was to use a question mark, comma, and exclamation point method that was presented by O'Donnell-Allen:

(?) = *A moment in the text that raised a thought provoking question*

(,) = *A moment in the text where I stopped to pause*

(!) = *A moment in the text that I felt strongly about or became excited*

I paused after reading Gloria Ladson-Billings' "Foreword." Billings commented on Hill as a teacher:

> "Marc Lamont Hill distinguishes himself by not merely using hip-hop as a vehicle for study, but by making hip-hop the very object of study. Hill's own connection to hip-hop as a defining strategy for identity development allows him to use hip-hop for exactly what teachers should use literature for – developing the thinking and expanding the worldview of learners" (Hill viii).

The notion of "identity development" merits a big exclamation point! Identity development became a focal point while reading Hill's text. It supports the thinking that a teacher's role in the classroom is not only to deliver content, but also to transform culture and be a catalyst for enacting positive change in their students both inside and outside the classroom.

Hill leads into his "Shout Outs" section with lines from Tupac Shakur's "Dear Mama," saying how Shakur cannot pay back his "mama" for what she has done for him. I was touched by the way Hill used similar lines to describe a mentor of his at Morehouse College saying, "I owe more to you than I could ever pay back" (xii).

A question that I asked myself while reading Hill's "Preface" was – **How does the way students define themselves help or hinder their education experience?** The above thinking about "identity development" can be linked to this question and the notion of identity seems to be at the center of Hill's "Hip-Hop Lit" (i.e. Hip-Hop Literature). Hill is deeply invested in "the relationship among youth, popular culture, identity, and schooling" (xviii). As teachers, how can Hill's deep investment in "identity development" be translated into our own classrooms and how can teachers effectively contextualize identity exploration?

In reading chapters 1 – 2, I found myself frequently at pause. I paused at one point to consider my own "a priori understandings of the relationships between youth and hip-hop culture" (4). There was a point in my own experience where I was a avid listener of hip-hop music, wore hooded sweatshirts with logos of hip-hop groups, and identified myself within hip-hop culture. Hill goes on to consider how "youth use hip-hop text to negotiate particular conceptions of self and the social world" (5). In contextualizing his work in chapter 2, I was particularly drawn to the choices Hill made for the texts to use in his "Hip-Hop Lit" curriculum in The Howard High School Twilight Program. The way Hill broke the curriculum down into categories and found a way to connect these current texts to conventional literary interpretation seemed to be highly effective, thought provoking, and something I would like to use in my own secondary English classrooms.

Chapters 3 - 4

> "It ain't nothing like hip-hop music ...You like it cause you choose it..."
>
> - Wu Tang Clan

Exclamation Points

Hill continued to talk about "identity work" (32) in chapter 3, what constituted "real" hip-hop, and the students in his learning community at the Twilight Program in Philadelphia. Thinking about how students form their identities in the classroom, whether studying Hip-Hop Lit or another subject, remains an aspect of pedagogy I feel merits an exclamation point. Also, when Hill started chapter four with a quote by Henri Nouwen and spent the next 35 pages talking about teachers as wounded healers I knew I chose the right jigsaw book. Anyone who knows me knows I'm obsessed philosophically and metaphysically with the human condition of being wounded.

'Save the drama, leave a comma'

I paused many times throughout reading chapters 3 - 4, however, found myself pausing in particular at the close of chapter 3. Hill used the phrase "essentialist notions of culture" (64) and I paused to think about what essentialist notions of culture I possessed as a teacher.

Questions

Where should we as educators draw the line as far as personal disclosure is concerned within the classroom? When are times in our lives where we've disclosed too much in a professional setting? When were times that we were too reserved, like perhaps in the way Hill described Mr. Colombo to be with the Twilight students?

How will we (re)negotiate 'otherness' in our classroom, whether it's otherness related to race, class, gender, religion, or sexual orientation?

What does being a "wounded healer" in the educational setting mean to you?

Chapters 5 - Appendix

Hill's chapter entitled "Bringing Back Sweet (and Not So Sweet Memories: The Cultural Politics of Memory, Hip-Hop, and Generational Identity" was prefaced with a quote from Michel Foucault and Talib Kweli. Hill discusses the emergence of "generational identity" within what Foucault might call an "episteme." The notion of generational identity in the context of Foucauldian "history" and hip-hop led me to many exclamation points, question marks, and commas. One exclamation: "Yes!" It makes me so happy to see Foucault in juxtaposition with Talib Kweli. A question I asked the question: **"How do we as teachers embrace a student's lived experience?"** A moment I found pause was during the discussion of "historical exceptionalism" or the conversation about how generations, both young and old, may suffer from terminal uniqueness.

The remainder of the text (Chapter 6 - Appendix) discussed "Pedagogies of Hip-Hop," "Pedagogies about Hip-Hop," and "Pedagogies with Hip-Hop," as well as a kind of meta-discussion on Hill's research experience. I became troubled by Hill's notions of "authenticity," "realness" or "representin(g)." In any ethnographic study, such as this one, the researcher inevitably has privilege over the one he or she is studying. Hill spends ample energy justifying the merit and credibility of his research, but perhaps could have gone further into how successful and/or challenging Hip-Hop Lit was for the students he studied.

See also:

New literacies

ISTE; Or, International Society for Technology in Education (Standards):

"ISTE is the premier membership association for educators and education leaders engaged in improving learning and teaching by advancing the effective use of technology in PK-12 and higher education" (www.iste.org).

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity

Teachers use their knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and technology to facilitate experiences that advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments. Teachers:

a. promote, support, and model creative and innovative thinking and inventiveness.

b. engage students in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources.

c. promote student reflection using collaborative tools to reveal and clarify students' conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative processes.

d. model collaborative knowledge construction by engaging in learning with students, colleagues, and others in face-to-face and virtual environments.

2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments

Teachers design, develop, and evaluate authentic learning experiences and assessment incorporating contemporary tools and resources to maximize content learning in context and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the NETS•S. Teachers:

a. design or adapt relevant learning experience that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity.

b. develop technology-enriched learning environments that enable all students to pursue their individual curiosities and become active participants in setting their own educational goals, managing their own learning, and assessing their own progress.

c. customize and personalize learning activities to address students' diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources.

d. provide students with multiple and varied formative and summative assessments aligned with content and technology standards and use resulting data to inform learning and teaching.

3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning

Teachers exhibit knowledge, skills, and work processes representative of an innovative professional in a global and digital society. Teachers:

a. demonstrate fluency in technology systems and the transfer of current knowledge to new technologies and situations.

b. collaborate with students, peers, parents, and community members using digital tools and resources to support student success and

innovation.

c. communicate relevant information and ideas effectively to students, parents, and peers using a variety of digital-age media and formats.

d. model and facilitate effective use of current and emerging digital tools to locate, analyze, evaluate, and use information resources to support research and learning.

4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility

Teachers understand local and global societal issues and responsibilities in an evolving digital culture and exhibit legal and ethical behavior in their professional practices. Teachers:

a. advocate, model, and teach safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology, including respect for copyright, intellectual property, and the appropriate documentation of sources.

b. address the diverse needs of all learners by using learner-centered strategies providing equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources.

c. promote and model digital etiquette and responsible social interactions related to the use of technology and information.

d. develop and model cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with colleagues and students of other cultures using digital-age communication and collaboration tools.

5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership

Teachers continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources. Teachers:

a. participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning.

b. exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others.

c. evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning.

d. contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community.

***ISTE content used with permission**

NETS for Teachers:

Juxtaposition

A Linksys Router and a rotary dial telephone are juxtaposed at the Wild Boar Coffee in Fort Collins, CO.

Just possessing and teaching the technical ability to use tools in the twenty-first century, such as word processors, photo or video editing programs, slideshow applications, the Internet, and social networking sites do not necessarily meet the literacy needs of the twenty-first century learner. Aristotle says in his *Treatise on Rhetoric,* "the written style ought to be easily read and understood" (221). This is a maxim that held true for writing in Greek on papyrus paper and arguably holds true for housing information and meaning in digital, binary code on Internet websites. All the essentials of Aristotle, and the descriptive developments of composition since the time of the influential Greek philosopher, still apply when entering the digital arena. Furthermore, juxtaposing these time tested, essential, principles of rhetoric and composition remains a critical task for English and language arts teachers in twenty-first century classrooms.

New literacies researcher and assistant professor of English at Central Michigan University, Troy Hicks, emphasizes the importance of understanding and teaching author's craft in a digital age in his book *The Digital Writing Workshop* (2009). Hicks echoes Aristotle's maxim relating to the necessity of teaching the essentials of writing craft. However, Hicks goes further to realize:

> Writing multimedia texts both honors our traditional understanding of what good writing is while at the same time offers us new definitions of what makes...a compelling lead, effective characterizations, and successful use of repetition for rhetorical effect. The elements of author's craft in new media writing can be seen as a combination of how filmmakers, photographers, radio producers, musicians, website designers, and, of course, writers think about getting their points across in a chosen medium (54-55).

Critics of new literacies and teaching in digital mediums may contend that teaching students how to compose a digital story, for instance, simply makes students better filmmakers and neglects fundamental and essential writing skills. The question might be asked, **"How does a new literacies English and language arts class teaching digital storytelling differ from a technology class or a filmmaking class?"** The answer, in a word, is *juxtaposition.* In other words, the difference lies in juxtaposing English content with digital technology.

Twenty-first century English teachers and students are faced with a task of deliberation and juxtaposition, or the task of deliberately juxtaposing a digital text with standardized English curricula. Henry David Thoreau talks at length of how readers and writers must practice deliberation in reading, writing, and in their lives. Thoreau says in his chapter titled "Reading" in *Walden* that, "Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written" (82). The same principle of reading deliberately and reservedly applies to digital texts today, including podcasts, digital stories, visual portraits, quests on the Web, dictionary websites, *et cetera*. Jonathan Levin, an Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Fordham University and writer of an introduction to *Walden*, works to define deliberation for the reader of Thoreau's seminal text:

> *Deliberation*, it turns out, is also a kind of measuring, being rooted in an etymology that traces back to the Latin *de libra,* the scale best known today from the astrological sign Libra. Thoreau, as attentive to the roots of words as he was to the roots of plants, would surely have known this when he claimed to want to live his life deliberately. As a professional surveyor, he knew the value of weights and measures and the knowledge they impart, of the close inspection and careful demarcation of the physical conditions of things; as a writer, he searched constantly for ways to connect material and mechanical processes to the deeper psychological and moral purposes of a life lived deliberately (xxxii - xxxiii).

The word "connect" and how Levin describes Thoreau's search for connecting "mechanical processes to the deeper psychological and moral purposes of a life lived deliberately" helps in understanding not only the word "deliberation," but also the necessity of *juxtaposition* of teaching, learning, reading, and writing in a digital age. To juxtapose, or to perform the action of placing an object near or next to another object, involves comparison, contrast, and synthesis. The very act of a living, breathing human being using an inanimate computing machine to type an essay on juxtaposition, itself, is a form of juxtaposition. Thoreau's well-cited adage to live life deliberately perhaps goes beyond a simple explanation of why he went to embark on a writing experiment in the woods.

Teachers in the twenty-first century might do well to apply Thoreau's thinking to their pedagogy and enter the classroom with the same kind of relentless deliberation or, perhaps better, with the same kind of relentless *liberation* (Dan Beachy-Quick helped me think about this dictionary as "deliberation" minus the first syllable). Budding student writers, however, need to be taught how to deliberately juxtapose when writing. According to Hicks, teachers can teach students to deliberately juxtapose by starting with a mini-lesson on author's craft and essentials of writing, then by teaching students how to apply author's craft skills to new mediums. Mediums might include recording aural orations or podcasts, sequencing a series of digital photographs in a photo essay, or making a short digital film. Juxtaposition is the key to *how* the essential skills for literacy and writing, which are as old as Thoreau and Aristotle, can be fitted into the twenty-first century keyhole and turned to unlock new and exciting forms of literacy in the twenty-first century.

Kinesthetic literacy

> "All things change, nothing is extinguished. There is nothing in the whole world which is permanent. Everything flows onward; all things are brought into being with a changing nature; the ages themselves glide by in constant movement."
>
> - Ovid

Kinesthetic literacy, the effective movement of the body in the classroom while learning, has been a pedagogical method I have been interested in ever since I decided to become a teacher. I was not sure going into this lesson how it would turn out. However, some evidence was gathered for a long-standing educational hypothesis. The hypothesis involved the effectiveness of using the classroom as a site for kinesthetic literacy. In other words, I asked myself the following inquiry question to move closer to a hypothesis: **Why will a classroom with more kinesthetic activities run more successfully than one that does not and does this multimodal approach contribute to student literacy?** My hypothesis speculates that a classroom that involves movement runs more successfully and engages in an effective literacy process. The following observations were made after giving a lecture on narrowing issues from topics, itself an act of movement, and having students perform an individual writing activity or a "Write-to-Learn."

I called the activity "Inquiry Question 30 Second Interviews," but could have just as easily called it "Speed Dating." In fact, one student said, "This is like speed dating!" I said, "Yes, yes it is..." and smiled. I created four rows, where the inner two rows faced the outer two rows. The students then spent 30 seconds telling the person across from them what they were

interested in exploring for sustained inquiry. The partners switched and I requested that the outer row rotate counterclockwise. I spent about 15 - 20 minutes on the activity and the outer row was able to fully rotate around the classroom. Halfway through the class I asked a question: **"Now that you've told a few people what you are interested in researching, do you feel you have a more concise and clear idea of what it is you want to do?"** The class said, "Yes!" I then used the remainder of class time for students to take notes on what they talked about with their partners and to indicate which inquiry question they would like to research.

As I reflected on the lesson, I couldn't help wonder about the kinesthetic effect of the activity. I wondered how the activity of moving around the classroom and repetitively stating an idea in the formative stages affected student literacy. I was once told in a newsroom that if you cannot go into the editor's office and state your story idea in 30 seconds, you might need to rethink your story. **Why is this important?** Students seemed to respond positively to active engagement with one another, to getting a chance to interact with peers they may have interacted with for the first time, and to moving around the classroom. **Also:** Having a set timeframe to communicate an idea helps one become more specific and precise in what exactly he or she wants to communicate.

I found this lesson highly effective and productive and want to think about more ways to get the class moving into the direction of more precise, critical thinking. The kinesthetic literacy activity uses multiple forms of literacy, especially the traditional form of literacy: writing on a piece of paper with a pen or pencil (this form of literacy can be used to lead students into other forms of literacy). Students were able to expand from a literacy they were familiar with and begin tapping into the prior knowledge of other students. They were able to collectively access the knowledge of a group, explore an uncharted textual site, and solidify their thinking. Combining multiple forms of literacy proved to be effective in the kinesthetic classroom activity: a method aptly termed "kinesthetic literacy."

See also:

Multimodal pedagogy

Literacy

> "Literate readers and writers must be willing to pick up any stick they can find to interpret any message communicated and write in any stretch of sand without a thought of the inevitable tidal surges of change to come."
>
> - Adam Mackie

The "sociocultural perspective on literacy" addressed by Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel (2007) provides insight into what is meant by "new literacies" and literacy of the twenty-first century. Lankshear and Knobel define and defend the "sociocultural perspective on literacy" and say that such a perspective "means that reading and writing can only be understood in the contexts of social, cultural, political, economic, historical practices to which they are integral, of which they are part" (1). Like it or not, students and educators alike are integral in the "relationship revolution" (12) noted by Micahel Schrage in 2001 and discussed by Lankshear and Knobel. The fact that Lankshear and Knobel defend Schrage's modification of the term "informational revolution" to "relationship revolution" may help to better understand "the second mindset" of literacy as relational, sociocultural, and how the reading of "books" has changed in the twenty-first century. Privileging one mindset over another, such as a first more "essentialist" or traditional mindset mentioned by Lankshear and Knobel, or a second more "reconstructionist" mindset, may leave educators at risk of creating a false binary in their thinking.

David E. Kirkland (2009), a new literacies theorist, considers classroom spaces and implies that twenty-first century literacy allows for a more

hybridized understanding of the “in-school” and “out-of-school” space in an article titled “Researching and Teaching English in a Digital Dimension.” Lines are becoming redefined and a greater number have begun to occupy an overlapping space within the John Venn diagram of "in-school" and "out-of-school," which Kirkland uses to describe this relationship. However, more Venn diagrams can be drawn within the overlapping space, ad infinitum, to the point where even “the second mindset” discussed by Lankshear and Knobel can create an equal or greater amount of hegemony imposed on "people who grew up under the hegemony of the book..." (14).

The book remains present, as present as a fossil record can be, and an effort to make books (textbooks) available online simply widens the availability of a fossil record to a larger audience. Imagine I take a digital photograph of an arrowhead I uncover from the earth, scan it, and upload the image to the Internet. The content of the arrowhead does not change. Does it? However, the information becomes more widely accessible and how individuals relate and respond to the information can take on new forms. A collective group of people from all over the world can now view the arrowhead and provide comments on the different aspects of its surface. Similarly, a group of students could participate in posting comments in online communities about a countless variety of other texts.

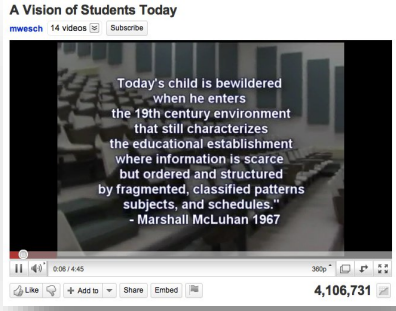
Therefore, questioning our meaning of the word “book” might be a worthwhile pursuit. I was once told I may be the only book another ever reads of a given text. Whether I read a text online, like I did the Kirkland article, or out of a book, such as Knobel and Lankshear's *A New Literacies Sampler* (2007), I should be able to decode, comprehend, and critically analyze the information in both contexts to consider myself literate, right? However, the process in which I go about reading the material does differ due to the recursive nature of hyperlinks and a large number of students are teaching themselves to read digitally in this fashion well before entering into secondary "in-school" settings.

For teachers to effectively teach online literacy, inside and outside their classrooms, they must themselves be “literate” in reading digital content. Educators that embrace "the relationship revolution" and make pedagogical shifts to teach using digital technology may be called to

reflectively invest themselves in the pedagogical process in many new, unforeseeable, and time consuming ways.

I will admit that I have cringed at the thought of removing glue-bound books entirely from the classroom and have a prejudiced resistance to the "control and intellectual expertise" of those capable of using digital technology more effectively than myself. However, as free thinkers, we must be willing to read and write in the sociocultural medium of the day and continue to aim at best serving the needs of all twenty-first century learners.

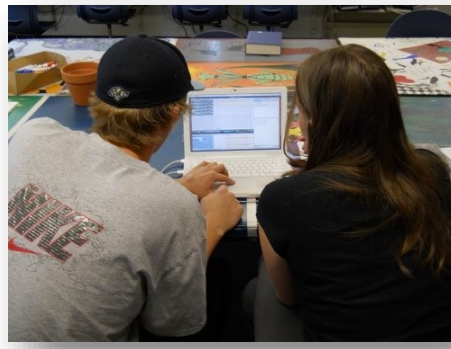
Below are two videos that supply statistical information about how twenty-first century students read. These videos are being shown in twenty-first century classrooms by practicing new literacies educators across the United States and help further define the term new literacies (Click on images below to view videos on YouTube).



See also:

Blog-reports

Multimodal pedagogy



A Colorado State University teacher candidate works with a Centennial High School student in Fort Collins to edit a podcast in GarageBand.

"...multimodal does not have to be digital..."

- Carrie Lamanna

Assistant Professor of English Carrie Lamanna has been working on multimodal course redesign for 300-hundred level composition courses at Colorado State University. In a personal interview, Lamanna addresses concerns regarding how technology has been implemented in the Rhetoric and Composition program at CSU. Lamanna also spoke briefly about material constraints related to the implementation of technology, such as the shortage of staffing of computer labs, lack of funding, and physical plant

issues. According to Lamanna, instructors teaching in the twenty-first century must demonstrate a relevancy for digital technology to retain funding for the technology. Lamanna shows legitimized concern over how not embracing multimodal pedagogy and digital technologies in the composition classroom will limit the kinds of compositions students create, hinder students' ability to perform, and not provide students with the compositional skills they should take with them after graduation. Many students, says Lamanna, will need multimodal composition and technological, digital skills in the workplace for a variety of careers, from public relations to business marketing to graphic design. Aiming to accurately distinguish the term "multimodal" from "digital," Lamanna says:

> I do want to make a distinction that *multimodal does not have to be digital*: Someone doing performance art, is doing something multimodal without any of it really being digital, but in the twenty-first century we often see those two things overlap. When students are working with audio, they're most often working with a computer. They're doing podcasting. When we're working with images, we're asking students to work with a program, such as Photoshop or to put their images into slideshows. The importance is that this is not just the future, it's here...We've, actually, limited our usefulness of what we can teach by limiting ourselves strictly to teaching students how to write argumentative essays (Lamanna 09 Mar. 2010).

Lamanna references a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) online discussion between Cynthia L. Selfe and Doug Hesse to ground her claim that instructors of composition limit a student's composition skills by ignoring multimodal and digital forms of composition and this can become "a discrimination issue in some senses" (09 Mar. 2010). The argument Selfe raises addresses the limitation of strictly teaching students only to compose print-based text. Selfe's argument advocates privileging non-written forms of composition alongside traditional print-based forms of composition.

Selfe argues: "...our contemporary adherence to alphabetic-only composition constrains the semiotic efforts of individuals and groups who value multiple modalities of expression" (616). I find myself valuing more "multiple modes of expression" the more I teach. As I continue to teach and gain professional skills, I come to understand myself more distinctly as a teacher willing to take the chance to incorporate multimodal pedagogy in

the classroom. Selfe establishes that the history of composition, composition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, has formed a false binary between writing and aurality. The false binary Selfe mentions might be argued as an ideological fuel that fuels the fire of "alphabetic-only" forms of composition that in many circles remain privileged. Privileging "alphabetic-only" forms of composition ignores the extraordinary number of new modalities and ever-evolving possibilities for composition in the twenty-first century.

Hesse, however, responds to Selfe's argument and states that Selfe may be begging the question of what defines the "curricular space" that the field of composition instruction inhabits. Hesse questions whether composition instruction ought to inhabit the curricular space of "rhetoric/composing" or "writing/composing" and wonders whose interests a composition class should serve (603). Hesse's notion of how an instructor (or a Graduate Teaching Assistant) "inhabits" the space of the composition classroom as well as the notion of the "third spaces" or the overlap between the "formal" and "informal" composition classroom applies directly to the experience and activities at CSU (Kirkland 12).

GTA James Roller says he may move away from using digital technology and argues that, "Students engage better through more traditional conversation." However, Roller admits that, "I have to adapt my behavior to cultural expectations…They [students] are culturally conditioned to approach technology with passivity" (13 April 2010). Roller raises a point I have often considered in deciding whether I should use PowerPoint presentations in my teaching. Some of my students have said that they would like to see more PowerPoints used throughout the composition course. However, I agree with Selfe and the New London Group for new literacies who aver that composition classes are "places where students *begin* the complex process of learning" (606, emphasis added). The complex process of learning might begin with a slideshow that effectively displays the rhetorical triangle and calls for the instructor effectively to explain all the elements of purpose, audience, and text.

It has been my experience as a student, and now as a teacher, that knowledge makes much more sense when I embody the knowledge by

doing and then am asked to articulate what I'm doing. James Paul Gee, a literacy theorist at Arizona State University, visited CSU in the spring of 2010 and talked at length about how video games, such as *Portal*, teach players embodied knowledge. He explains that a player gains embodied knowledge of physical principles by playing the game, but if they want the physics articulated then they must visit various online communities for these explanations.

In teaching twenty-first composition and taking classes to become a high school English teacher, I find composition a process of both embodying and articulating knowledge. In other words, knowledge performed followed by knowledge articulated has proven to maximize effectiveness. Students might be asked to compose a slideshow that effectively communicates a specific purpose, to a specific audience, for a specific occasion and then asked to present their design. Such a strategy is arguably more effective than stopping short and simply verbalizing a model of a triangle within a circle for students to only incorporate into an alphabetic argument.

See also:

Digital natives

Twenty-first century composition

New literacies

> New literacies researcher William Kist has worked as a middle and high school English teacher, teaches adolescent literacy, works as a consultant and trainer for school districts nationwide, and works in film and music (http://www.ncte.org/consultants/kist).

Kist gives readers a look at schools and at teachers in the United States and in Canada that are using new literacies on a daily basis in their classrooms in *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media* (Click on the "L" entry for more definition regarding the "sociocultural perspective on literacy"). Kist explains that teaching new literacies will require more than asking students to do a PowerPoint presentation. **Students must use multimodal texts as primary tools for classroom production to engage in new literacies.** Kist gives lesson plans in this text, shows how some students put together projects (such as an annual film festival at a school in California), and stresses how reading and writing go far beyond the written page. The following BookNotes may prove useful for generating discussion surrounding new literacies:

BookNotes for William Kist's *New Literacies In Action: Teaching and Learning in Multi media*

BookNotes for *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multi Media* by *William Kist* were a method Dr. Cindy O'Donnell-Allen, Associate Professor of English at Colorado State University, used in both her E632 - Professional Concerns: Teaching & Learning in a Digital Age and E402 - Teaching Composition classes. O'Donnell-Allen assigned

"jigsaw" groups where several different groups were given a different book to read over the course of approximately a month. Groups would have a conference and be required to supply BookNotes as individuals and complete a group form documenting the conference.

BookNotes I (Chapters 1 & 2)

David Bloome quotes the poet Charles Olson in the "Foreword" of William Kist's *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media* and comments on a metaphor of SPACE applied to America, the Plains, and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Bloome seemingly extends the metaphor to "our daily lives, in our interactions with each other, and in our classrooms" (ix). Olson's notion of SPACE, however, can be read to have included Bloome's extension and perhaps a quote further down in Olson's *Call Me Ishmael* will help subtilize the context. Olson said, "Some men ride on such space, others have to fasten themselves like a tent stake to survive" (Olson 12).

In considering Bloome's notion of space, especially in connection to Kist's text and his research in "new literacies," educators might consider if they are "riding" the space of multiple literacies or if they "have to fasten themselves like a tent stake to survive" with the twenty-first century changes in educational theory and pedagogy.

The first chapter of Kist's book takes a personal experience of the author, with Woody Allen's film *Manhattan*, and relates a perception to a paradigmatic shift in literacy. Kist admits that his interest in new literacies was spawned by his "own wonderment at these highly individualized unique statements made by artists via media that are non-print and nonverbal in nature" (1), such as Allen in *Manhattan.* Kist outlines in the remainder of chapter one the framework in the chapters to come, involving his research and investigation of classrooms that use "new literacy" (which he uses David Reinking's definition to help define) on a daily basis. Kist paraphrases Reinking and says, "...the act of print reading is changing in these new times" (5). If this is so, and I think we all can agree it is, one "talk question" or question for discussion might be a question Kist poses: **"...should some**

kind of official curriculum objective be the ulterior motive behind bringing new literacies into the school" (9)?

In Chapter 2, Kist jumps into his research. Kist recounts a case study he conducted of a program called Arts Seminar. The no longer existing program was at a high school in Parma, Ohio in 1998-1999. **Kist observed how three teachers involved in the Arts Seminar program used new literacies on a regular basis without any formal new literacies study. The chapter gave lesson plans and showed how the teachers required the art students to rely on multiple modes of text, "project-based classroom work," and "student-led research" (26 - 27).** Kist interviewed the three teachers and many of the students to get a sense of the work they were doing, such as building abstract monuments in dedication of famous people like Dr. Seuss. Kist effectively gave multiple perspectives and provided the view of students concerned about "not learning as much content in the project-driven course" (29). Therefore, a second discussion or talk question might be: **How do educators balance content retention with the ability to use new literacies and engage in meaningful "project-driven courses?"**

BookNotes II (Chapters 3 & 4)

Kist mentions two of his influences, Paulo Freire and Naomi Klein in his chapter titled "Designing Space in a Rural Classroom" from *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media.* Being familiar with Freire, I did not go running to the library shelves for *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. However, I did go running for Klein's *No Logo*. Walking out of the library with a solid black book with the red letters, "NO," and the black letters, inside a white box, "LOGO," I opened up it to about the fifth page. On a page to itself there was a standalone quote written July 16, 1998 by the Indonesian writer Y.B. Mangunwijaya: "*You might not see things yet on the surface, but underground, it's already on fire."*

I was moved by the quote because it seems to be precisely what Kist talks about in a book that documents schools around the United States where teachers are using new literacies. New literacies may not be on the surface of all educational systems, but underground (so to speak) in many schools new literacies are on fire! In a school in Canada, Kist reports how a

teacher in a small rural village of approximately 1,300 people has integrated new literacies into his curriculum. The word integrate raises questions about how the "information revolution" or "relationship revolution," seems to be experiencing similar resistance on some levels as racial desegregation experienced in the past. Nevertheless, there are two questions (and of course many more) I think are worth discussing in ongoing dialogues. One question has to do with SPACE and the other has to do with socioeconomic EQUITY.

How do we talk about the notion of space in new literacies and in our current and future classrooms?

How do we as new literacies educators deal with tensions created by "top down" curriculum and administrations that have formed resistance to new literacies?

In chapter four, titled "A Dot-Com with Salsa," Kist shows us a progressive school in San Fernando, California. Much larger than the school in Canada, the California school possesses the capability of a professional multimedia studio. Many of Marco Torres' words, a teacher of the San Fernando Educational Technology Team, were strikingly profound. At one point Torres said, "Technology is not just a tool, it is part of our lives" (62).

What does Torres mean when he says, "Technology is not just a tool, it is part of our lives?" What does this mean for new literacies educators?

BookNotes III (Chapters 5 & 6)

In Chapter 5, Kist observes a new literacies librarian, Sandy Bernahl, at Peacock Middle School in Itasca, Illinois. Bernahl comments on the leadership and responsibility of "old-fashioned" school librarians. Two questions for talk and discussion I considered were:

What are and will be the leadership roles and responsibilities of all new literacies teachers, librarian, and/or administrators?

How will new literacies teachers work with libraries centers in schools?

In Chapter 6, I began thinking deeply about "reading" and found it extremely encouraging that an English educator, Lee Rother, was teaching

"reading" beyond the medium of printed text. The students in his class learned to read Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* frame by frame and "read" the film closely. Also, Rother provided a lesson for his students where they analyzed the Disney version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* with more contemporary versions. However, Rother instructed his students to read other written versions of Snow White from varying cultures. Therefore, Rother did not abandon print completely. A question that arose while reading this chapter was:

Why is it important to understand multiple literacies as "reading," not viewing, watching, listening, speaking, or visual representation?

See also:

Hip-hop lit

Literacy

Online communities

Online Community Flash Fiction Unit

Differentiated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Bloom's Taxonomy

Objective

Students will learn and demonstrate an ability to access an online community on the Internet (http://www.makeliterature.com/). They will read story lines written by other writers, construct their own story lines, work collaboratively in groups to expand a story line into a piece of flash fiction or a brief 1 – 2 page fictional narrative (approximately 500 - 750 words), illustrate the flash fiction piece collaboratively, and present their work to the instructor and their peers.

When flash fiction is explained to students, teachers might consider explaining the genre as a "snapshot," a "character sketch," or a "painting of a landscape." A pre-writing activity to help break the ice for writing flash fiction might include imagining a snapshot or photograph from childhood and writing everything that can be associated with the picture, including what is remembered of the photograph and the feelings attached to the snapshot. Flash fiction might also aim to capture a mood, a moment, or a momentum.

Standards & Expectations

Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes and Standard 3: Writing and Composition of the Colorado Academic Standards will be addressed in the Online Community Flash Fiction Unit. The unit can be adapted for grades

7 – 12. However, it might be most effectively applied to high school students.

The Reading for All Purposes Standard expects secondary students to master conceptual skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation of complex literary texts and to understand rhetorical and critical reading (CAS 56 – 57). For the Writing and Composition Standard, students are to master using ideas, evidence, structure and style to create persuasive, academic, and technical texts for particular audiences and for specific purposes (94 – 95).

Students will be expected to analyze, interpret, and evaluate the story lines of other writers and then apply their analysis, interpretation, and evaluation by creating their own story lines. In groups, students will be expected to collaborate with their peers, delegating roles of writers, illustrators, collaborators, and group communicators. The students, both individually and as a group, will be held to the tenets of the reading and writing Standards.

Anticipatory set

How do writers, illustrators, and storytellers hone their craft? **Hint:** They don't do it alone. They hone their craft by reading and collaborating with other writers. "Let's Make Literature Together" is an online writing community that gives writers of all shapes and sizes an opportunity to practice their craft. If you don't like writing, then you have the opportunity to be an illustrator, a storyteller, or an effective collaborator and/or team player. So sharpen your pencils, pick out some colors, and "let's make literature together" in a flash.

Teaching/Instructional process

Students will first be assigned to individually familiarize themselves with the online community "Let's Make Literature Together!" However, the teacher will need to provide instruction on what to look for within the online community and how to critically analyze, interpret, and evaluate the material. The teacher should navigate the site with students in class, if

technological resources are available, thereby modeling the interaction with the online writing community. The site provides writing samples of various lengths, such as story lines, chapters, and whole books. The goal of having students visit the online community is to see the work of other writers, who are living and breathing, and get a sense of how other writers compose a story line.

Teachers will want to familiarize students with conflict, climax, and resolution of narrative writing to help students understand the "flow" of a story line.

Students will be asked to keep a writer's notebook, diary, or journal of the different story lines that strike or intrigue them (this will be an assessment method for the teacher to check for understanding).

Every student will individually generate a participation only sample of a story line and an illustration of their story line. They will bring their samples to class and be fitted into teacher-chosen small groups. The groups will then collaboratively decide on one story line or a combination of story lines to develop into a 500 – 750 word piece of flash fiction.

Groups will collaborate to form an illustration of the flash fiction piece, either by delegating a single illustrator or by illustrating collectively.

When flash fiction pieces are completed, edited, and illustrated, groups will present their work to the instructor and the peers. Individuals, peers, and the instructor will have the opportunity to evaluate every piece of work based on a rubric.

Guided practice and monitoring

The instructor will monitor the individual experience of the online community through student journals. Once groups are formed, the teacher will then conference regularly with all the groups to track their progress and provide any additional guidance individuals or groups may need.

Closure

The presentations of the flash fiction pieces, with accompanying illustrations, will provide closure for the unit. Encouraging students to submit work to the online writing community's website might be another way to give closure and open the door to future audiences of the work.

Independent practice

Students can be reminded that no matter the writing situation, there is always a potential audience. Ask students, **"Who is the audience of a given writing situation?"** The writing situation may be a piece of flash fiction that they just successfully wrote in collaboration with their peers, a text message they send to their friend after class, or an email they write that evening.

Differentiation discussion

The Online Community Flash Fiction Unit can be differentiated or tiered for three types of learners, who can be identified using Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Zone of Proximal Development." Writers coming into this unit will be somewhere between three stages of development: *comfortable* with reading and writing story lines, in a *growing* period with their reading and writing of story lines, or *absolutely uncomfortable* and/or unable to read and write story lines. Presenting Vygotsky's model may be an effective way for the teacher to gauge where students think they are with their reading and writing and may inform how groups are determined. Some students may not know if they are effective writers and/or illustrators or may think they are not. The purpose of the participation only sample is simply to get students writing. The collaborative nature of the project aims to give students some choice in how they want to perform in the group dynamic. Some will naturally gravitate into leadership roles, while others will fall back and be more passive. The teacher conferences in the groups will need to assess what social developments are occurring and if any guidance or encouragement of individual students is needed.

Benjamin Bloom's famous *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: the Classification of Educational Goals* (1956) gives not only a rubric, but a way for the teacher and students to differentiate. The below diagram, based on Bloom's model and Diane Hecox's interpretation of the model, provides a differentiated structure that teachers and students can use to tier the expression of the instruction (See figure below). Perhaps students are English Language Learners and are still learning acquisition of the English language. These students might feel overwhelmed by going to an online community and reading the story lines. The teacher can guide these students to focus on the "knowledge" or "comprehension" category of the taxonomy and ask focused questions like, "What do you notice about the language in the story line? Make a list." The teacher might then ask, **"What conflict can you see occurring in a story line?"** The teacher can even provide story lines to these students where conflict, climax, and resolution are clearly explicated. Some native English speakers might be able to effectively decode and comprehend the language, but are having difficulty synthesizing the information to create story lines of their own. These students can be categorized in the growth zone of Vygotsky's model. "I don't know what to write about," they might say. Teachers can attempt to relate to these students and make the assignment relevant by instructing them to put something that happened to them the day before into a story line and work with that example. The students that excel at the assignment might be strategically placed as "directors" of different groups and might serve to provide student instruction and help to their peers.

Challenge Levels Based on Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*

Level	Definition	Action	Activities
Synthesis	Put together a story line in a different way	Create an original story line	Compose, hypothesize, design, formulate, create, invent, develop, refine, produce, transform

Level	Definition	Action	Activities
Evaluation	Determine the worth and value of the story lines on the online writing community	Make judgments about the quality of the story lines on the online writing community.	Judge, predict, verify, assess, justify, rate, prioritize, determine, select, decide, value, choose, forecast, estimate
Analysis	Examine the story lines on the online writing community critically	Examine the story lines on the online writing community closely. Pay attention to not only the content, but also the grammatical structure of the sentences	Compare, contrast, classify, critique, categorize, solve, deduce, examine, differentiate, appraise, distinguish, experiment, question, investigate, infer
Application	Use your story lines to create flash fiction and illustrations for your flash fiction	Use a story line or a combination of story lines in groups to generate a collaborative piece of multimodal flash fiction	Demonstrate, construct, record, use, diagram, revise, record, reformat, illustrate, interpret, dramatize, practice, organize, translate, manipulate, convert, adapt, research, calculate, operate, model, order, display, implement

Level	Definition	Action	Activities
Comprehension	Show understanding of a story line and narrative structure	Understand a story line by writing a story line, developing a story line collaboratively into a short piece of flash fiction, and illustrating the narrative visually	Locate, explain, summarize, identify, describe, report, discuss, locate, review, paraphrase, restate, retell, show, outline, rewrite
Knowledge	Recall facts and information	Know the intricate elements of a narrative, (i.e. conflict, climax, and resolution)	Tell, list, define, label, recite, memorize, repeat, find, name, record, fill in, recall, relate

The above model, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, was appropriated from Diane Heacox, Ed. *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom: How to Reach and Teach All Learners, Grades 3 - 12 (2002); Free Spirit Publishing Inc.*

Poetry and pedagogy

> "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be "the expression of the imagination": and poetry is connate with the origin of man, [woman, and child]."
>
> - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Through the Overhead Projector

The word "pedagogy," scanned as containing four syllables and a trochee repeated, evokes many images when spoken in the context of education. To write an essay calling attention to the prosody of words throughout would prove perhaps arbitrary and unnecessary, but might reveal something of rhythm and music within an essay's composition. An act, as such, might be a worthwhile pedagogical exercise in a classroom to help a writer call attention to his or her prosody. If (one syllable and unstressed) I (one syllable and stressed) were (one syllable, unstressed) to (one syllable and unstressed) do (one syllable, stressed) this (one syllable and unstressed); it would get progressively confusing and really annoying. Therefore, I will refrain from calling direct attention to the syllables and meters of any more words in this essay. I am grateful, however, for the opportunity to imagine a possible poetry exercise for a future classroom, which I am in the process of exploring here and now.

In talking about poetry and pedagogy specifically, the "and" conjunction in between "poetry and pedagogy" will first be addressed. With an "and" conjunction, the word "pedagogy" can be attached to virtually any other general or specific discipline of study. The combining of "X" discipline and "pedagogy" essentially creates a new discipline or

philosophical pursuit. Whether it is "science and pedagogy," "biology and pedagogy," "microbiology and pedagogy," "art and pedagogy," "painting and pedagogy," or poetry and pedagogy, the word "pedagogy" or "the method or science of teaching and instruction" itself alters the content of the conjoined discipline. That is to say, science no longer remains science when conjoined with pedagogy, biology no longer biology, art no longer art, poetry no longer poetry. The disciplines become a meta-study of sorts, a study beyond the study, or a study of the method of teaching the discipline of study.

The act of attaching "and pedagogy" might be thought to function in a similar fashion as attaching "philosophy of" before a given discipline in grammar. Of course, "pedagogy" and "philosophy" differ in meaning and the grammatical function of "and" and "of" perform different acts. However, in the qualifying enactment and precision, the two sets of word units latch onto the word of a discipline in strikingly similar ways. For these purposes, we will consider "poetry and pedagogy" together and in particular. The secondary-level pedagogue of poetry, and poets alike, arguably must balance whatever comes after the words, "poetry and." In the case of "poetry and pedagogy," the teacher or the poet must balance – accurately and precisely – the content, the method, the technique, and the form to successfully consummate a genuine "poetry and pedagogy" within his or her classroom or poem.

In *Poetry and Pedagogy: The Challenge of the Contemporary*, Lynn Keller considers poetry in terms of Edward Hirsch as "the literature of depths" in the chapter titled "The Centrifugal Classroom" (30). In reading countless lines of poetry, discussing poetics in a graduate setting, and writing poetic experiments of my own, I have seen in my experience that poetry lives in more dimensions than depth. Poetry, as traditional poetry and pedagogy might demand, also lives in the kind of centrifugal width that Keller defines. This is not to say traditional poetry has not always lived its life simultaneously in widths, depths, heights, time, and other metaphysical dimensions. My awareness, however, has been widened, deepened, heightened, and has become more longstanding to the necessity of understanding space in poetry and pedagogy. A poem or poetic experiment

functions within the perimeters of a certain space, governed by the laws of width, depth, height, time, and other imaginable dimensions. In a similar way, pedagogical experiments, or simply teaching, are also governed by the same rules and laws of physics.

To examine "depth," for instance, one can observe a number of senses from the downward, backward, or inward measurements to the more abstract profundity of thought often colloquially used for a given piece of poetry as well as for pedagogical lessons and lectures. Depth often becomes relative depending on the position and perspective of the observer. This is also true of width, height, and time and can be speculated as true for other imaginable dimensions outside the scope of this discussion. In fact, many ways of considering the various senses of dimensions are outside these present scopes. However, poetry at a minimum must be both measured in depth and measured in width. When measuring poetry's width the image of measuring fabric from selvage to selvage seems appropriate.

Keller opens her essay with a discussion of how Hirsch regards a lyric poem in *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry*: Keller explains how Hirsch sees lyrical poetry as a vehicle to open the reader to the external world and the word in a new way, his emphasis falls strongly on defining the lyric as an "instrument of…inwardness" (18); the poem's energies, then, pull centripetally down and toward the center of the individual reader, enabling a private experience of "sacred mystery" (16).

Keller juxtaposes this principle of the energy of a poem moving "centripetally down and toward the center of the individual reader" with a teaching and reading strategy involving centrifugal motion. Keller evokes the notion of a "centrifugal classroom," which relies on "a collective rather than privatized reading process," rethinking traditional roles of classroom "authority," and "the class being drawn toward the world outside the poem and how language works there" (31 – 34).

Keller, fully aware of the precarious binary distinction and tension between centripetal and centrifugal force, nevertheless gives the pedagogue of poetry, literature, and reading in general much to consider. Rethinking the classroom reading process in terms of collectivity and reworking traditional classroom hegemonies might bring many pedagogues out of their

comfort zone into a realm of growth. However, in a poetic and didactic sense the pedagogue does have a certain responsibility to serve as window for student transformation. Paulo Freire suggested teachers to be "cultural workers" in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, thereby teaching students to be their own creators and producers of culture. Teachers of poetry, students of poetry, and poets all presumably aspire to experience the world and record and inspire their experience in language through making, creating, and producing lessons and poems. The process of making, creating, and producing, whether it's a lesson or a poem, involves a process of imagination and a writing of that imagination into the world. The language of imagination or a language I call "wound-language" exists in another discussion entirely. The process of writing a poetic, composing a poem, and practicing sound pedagogy in a twenty-first century high school classroom, for the purposes of this discussion, will surely require a deep, wide, and heightened awareness and application of a Keller-like centrifugal classroom motion.

An analogy might help begin to illustrate and see the necessity of seeing not only deeply, but widely and more clearly. Overhead projectors have lived in-and-out-of-focus between blackboards, white boards, and laptop projectors. Overhead projectors are a tool teachers teaching in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have grown to know quite well, whether they possess a deep love or a wide hatred for the illuminating machine. In helping students adjust their width and scope of an inquiry or narrow a given topic to a narrower issue, which in a concrete sense helps them learn how to measure width in their research, I have used this analogy of focusing the lens on an overhead projector. I tell them that if their subject of inquiry were to go onto a blank transparency and held up to the light of the eyes of another, part of their work is to appropriately adjust their purpose and audience like the lens on the overhead projector to bring their conversation into focus.

The point of the analogy helps students see that by slightly adjusting the focus on an overhead projector allows the viewer to see the object of inquiry more clearly. Poets might contend that there is much to be seen in the blur and perhaps there is a way of adjusting one's eye more effectively to

an image out of focus. What has been true for my experiments of writing poetry has been a process similar to adjusting a lens of an overhead projector to see an image I am working with projected through light more clearly. The same has been true for designing effective and transformative lesson plans. An image in a poem or a lesson I desire to communicate becomes more clear and succinct given a slight adjustment of the projector's lens. It is easier to see an out of focus transparency blown up on the projection screen in a classroom, than it is to see an image within a poem that needs adjustment. For example, when a descriptive image in a poem gets adjusted to become an enactment, the new image can be seen clearly and precisely.

Another analogy or example of how focus or lack of appropriately adjusted width applies to pedagogy was revealed to me when preparing for a class. I sat in my office and stared at a transparency I intended to use on the overhead projector. Moving two sheets between my fingers, the transparency and the original 8.5'' by 11'', computer printout back and forth in my fingers, a realization dawned. When the transparency rested slightly above, below, or to either side of its original fabrication, the language became illegible. However, in aligning the transparency and the original in my fingers in a certain precise fashion allowed the words printed on the two sheets to be seamlessly aligned and legible. I thought about how precise poetry and precise pedagogy perhaps functions similarly. So, I have begun to think about poetry and pedagogy as a precise enactment in focused reading and writing.

A precise enactment in focused reading and writing, whether in the enactment of a poem or the enactment of a lesson plan remains somewhat broad and abstract in the sense that reading and writing still remain unclearly defined. To merely say a poet must read an object or idea in the world and write their imagination in a deep and wide fashion in order to birth the object or idea into a poem does not precisely define the enactment that must transpire. Poetry, as much an art of accurate reading as writing, must rely on imagination to interpret sensory and bodily information. How a thing in the world or object is read will grossly determine how a thing in the world or object is written about in poetry. Therefore, reading in certain senses determines writing. However, if a certain kind of imaginative writing

takes place in a poet's act of experiencing, then writing and reading are occurring simultaneously.

Likewise, all teachers are teachers of reading. Whether a teacher teaches math, science, social studies, or English, a teacher is responsible for teaching their students to read and understand the given discipline. Precision and accuracy in reading numbers, trends, histories of cultures, or poetry will determine the precision and accuracy of the writing the students produce. However, in the instance of poetry, students must be taught not only to read with precision and accuracy but also with creativity. Students are often exposed to Emily Dickinson or Walt Whitman in high school or in lower-level undergraduate literature classes in college. They might be taught how Dickinson capitalizes nouns and how Whitman uses anaphora and parallelism. These formal elements are vitally important to precisely and accurately read the works of these great poets. However, hearing a silent rhyme of a Dickinson poem and her pre-semiotic understanding of language requires a level of poetic and creative reading not as often practiced.

Within a high school English classroom, where poetry inevitably will be studied, teachers might do well to consider how their readings of a text or a poem will influence the writings of their students, poetry and otherwise. Helping students adjust scope from abstract thinking to concrete thinking, such as the above example of the overhead projector illuminates, is important. Teaching students to adjust scopes within their imagination is equally important. Scopes of the imagination may not as easily be focused as turning the knob on an overhead projector. Scopes and lenses of imagination may require a certain kind of wounding within traditional forms of reason and understanding. Classical education should be embraced and not discarded. Ways of cutting into a classical text is a task teachers must be prepared to attend. Sharpening tools such as precise, accurate, and creative reading skills might be a way of cutting into the epic accentual verses in *Beowulf*, the *terza rima* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and through the sonnets of Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Milton.

Poetry and pedagogy, therefore, can be understood as a study of reading, writing, and teaching deeply and widely that aspires to enact the

imagination onto the study. A poet writing a poem and a teacher delivering an outstanding lesson are engaged in two different activities entirely. Nevertheless, the two different activities similarly require enacting imagination onto and into the activity. The poet writing the poem uses the parameters of the space given on a page, the parameters of the form in which he or she is working, and the parameters of his or her imagination to enact a poem whose form lends to its content in an inspiring and exciting way for the reader. The instructor teaching a class uses the parameters of the space of a given classroom, the parameters of the curriculum in which he/she works, and the parameters of his/her imagination to enact a lesson whose form lends to its content in an inspiring and exciting way for his or her students.

Much of poetry contains didactic qualities and great teaching often crosses into realms of being poetic. The lines between the circle of poetry and the circle of pedagogy can overlap like in a John Venn diagram. To apply a poetic, which involves the precise writing of a metrical verse using sound and rhythm, in a pedagogical setting must necessarily enact an imagination. Such imagination was missing from many of the classrooms of my formative years. Teaching the first lesson of a poetry unit in verse might be one way to break the ice with students rigid to the language of Chaucer or Shakespeare.

As tedious and annoying as the activity may seem of having students literally deconstruct the syllabication and stressing of a given text, it would legitimately be a valuable start to hearing the words on the written page. Likewise, the present conversation aspires to be a valuable discussion in considering how poetry can influence pedagogy and how pedagogy can influence poetry. Keeping the two studies in close proximity seems to only enhance the other when a teacher decides to implement poetry into their practice or when a poet decides to implement a didactic message into a poem. By conjoining "poetry and pedagogy" with an "and" conjunction will inevitably deepen, widen, and heighten the two disciplines, either in the writing of a poem or the teaching of a class.

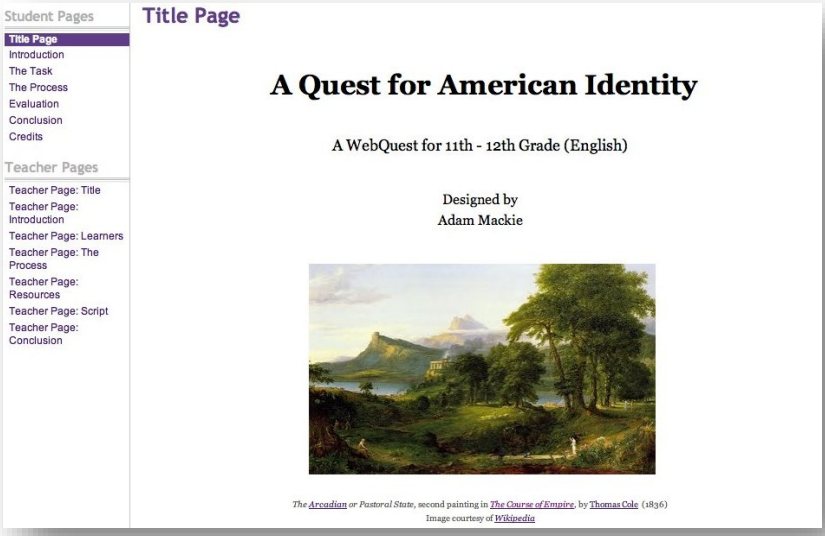
Quests on the web; Or, WebQuests:

Quests on the web or what are more commonly called "WebQuests" are a digital and exciting way for twenty-first century teachers to present a lesson or a unit to their twenty-first century students. I was introduced to WebQuests in EDUC331 - Technology and Assessment, a course taught by Dr. James Folkestad, Associate Professor in the School of Education, at Colorado State University. Teacher candidates were assigned the task of creating a WebQuest for their content area. The model Folkestad used in his technology course was based on a model designed by Bernie Dodge in the mid-1990s:

> A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web. The model was developed by Bernie Dodge at San Diego State University in February, 1995 with early input from SDSU/Pacific Bell Fellow Tom March, the Educational Technology staff at San Diego Unified School District, and waves of participants each summer at the Teach the Teachers Consortium.
>
> Since those beginning days, tens of thousands of teachers have embraced WebQuests as a way to make good use of the internet while engaging their students in the kinds of thinking that the 21st century requires. The model has spread around the world, with special enthusiasm in Brazil, Spain, China, Australia and Holland (http://webquest.org).

Folkestad provides explicit instructions to design a WebQuest using Google Sites (Click here to see the EDUC311 WebQuest wiki page. The below WebQuest, titled *A Quest for American Identity*, takes students back in time to nineteenth century America to explore literature of influential authors. Simply click on the image of the Webquest's title page below to examine the "Student Pages" and the "Teacher Pages" of the WebQuest

designed for eleventh through twelfth grade English. However, the WebQuest could be modified for any grade level from kindergarten through post-secondary:



Role-play

"All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts"

- William Shakespeare

Role-play was a favorite pastime of mine as a small boy (above I am dressed up as Indiana Jones at the site of an archeological dig). I would play dress-up, make-believe, or pretend for endless hours. There was a large wooden box in my parents' house filled with all sorts of capes, hats, and what seemed like endless costume combinations. I imagined myself as Superman, Captain Hook, or Indiana Jones, and the fate of the universe

always rested on my shoulders. At an early age, I was already performing myself onto the world stage around me.

New literacies researchers Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel include a chapter in *A New Literacies Sampler* (2007) by Angela Thomas. Thomas' chapter, titled "Blurring and Breaking through the Boundaries of Narrative, Literacy, and Identity in Adolescent Fan Fiction," discusses how different genres of narrative can become blurred. Thomas examines the lives of two teenage girls, Tiana and Jandalf, who experiment with genres of "role-play" and fan fiction. What Thomas found was that these two girls would blur "role-playing" to create a new literacy and form of narrative. Thomas stated:

> "I have observed role-playing communities, and fan fiction communities, but had not seen any young people who were crossing over from one practice to another. Tiana and Jandalf seemed to be pushing the limits and blurring the boundaries in a number of ways, including blurring understanding about narrative as a distinct form, blurring the boundaries of reality and fantasy and challenging all notions of what it might mean to be literate in a digital age" (140).

I realized when reading Thomas' research, in Knobel and Lankshear's text, that the art of "role-playing" itself could be used as a way of writing a continuation or alternative perspective of a story into existence. An activity in a future classroom might ask a student to role-play with another student to develop alternative story lines, new perspectives, or alternative endings. With a purpose to ultimately construct a piece of fan fiction, students could be assigned to role play a narrative from a text that they were closely and critically reading. Since fan fiction encourages on some levels multiple, creative, and imaginative readings of a text, issues of "story" and "plot" can become wonderfully complicated through role-play and students can really see what Christopher Norris describes in *Deconstruction* as the "variety of possible relations between language, text, and reality" (132). The future of fan fiction in the classroom may indeed assume the guise of teaching students how to better complicate and problematize language. Norris commented on story and plot,

> "Structuralist theory was clear enough about the basic distinction between 'story' and 'plot', the one an implied (and imaginably real life) sequence of events, the other a pattern imposed by the requirements of narrative form.

> They represent two different kinds of reading: the latter is attentive to structure and device, while the former rests on a willing - but not necessarily naïve - suspension of disbelief. To see them locked in conflict or paradox is to mistake the conventions of narrative for the rigours of logical discourse. The tactics of 'double-reading' automatically generate the kind of paradoxical impasse they set to find" (132).

Educators might do well to teach students that they have the critical capacity as performers (writers) of role-play and fan fiction to underpin an author's intent. The idea of deconstructing an author's intent doesn't necessarily have to mean a Roland Barthes-like "death to the Author." A more fundamental deconstruction analysis might simply include examining elements of plot and authorship. These techniques will be invaluable to students in future classrooms for constructing narratives of fan fiction, for future research of their own, and in their lives as critical thinkers and world citizens. Students in a unit of fan fiction might have the opportunity to learn the advantages of unraveling an inter-textual paradox for their own creative and generative purposes. Acts of deconstruction, through acts of role-play and fan fiction, serve as a useful pedagogical tool in a future classroom to successfully teach a unit. Of course, teaching students traditional lessons about plot structure will be necessary to build a foundation and a preliminary understanding for the student to perform a task of close and critical reading. However, pushing and encouraging students beyond a simple plot analysis into a place where they can genuinely "suspend disbelief" will help young readers and writers make the necessary breakthroughs to begin writing their own narratives.

Arguably, students are always and already writing these narrative long before entering a middle school or high school classroom, where a fan fiction unit might be assigned. In my case, I was "blurring the boundaries" of role-play and fan fiction from an early age. I can remember dressing up like Indiana Jones and writing my own adventures of archeological digs. These adventures went on and beyond the films that spawned these narratives (See picture above). I was not yet writing these stories alphabetically, but I was performing these stories (writing unknowingly) and imagining narratives.

The role-playing of Indiana Jones and the performance-based writing of the adventures I was constructing were enacting a process that teachers of English can replicate. The process can be replicated for the purposes of "in-school writing, including fan fiction, graphic narratives, and zines (a form which "blurs" the "in-school/out-of-school" dichotomy). Educators could perhaps teach a unit of fan fiction where the rhetorical situation of writing a *Star Wars* and Titus Andronicus "crossover" might be matched with a letter writing activity where students write George Lucas and William Shakespeare for the permission to use their characters in their story. I think Titus would qualify as crazy enough to fight, and even take, Darth Vader.

See also:

Fan fiction

Graphic narratives

Zines

Storybird: Fly Web 2.0 with *Storybird*

Storybird is a Web 2.0 tool that allows you to make your own stories and collaborate on stories with other people. Perhaps you are a poet and you know someone else who has a keen eye for graphic design and visual arts or drawing graphic narratives. Together you can collaborate and create fantastic digital stories and visual portraits with just a joining of minds and a click of a finger. You don't have to even be sitting down together at the same computer! You can start a *Storybird,* invite a friend or colleague, and then he or she can log on from another computer and make changes. It's kind of like a wiki in this way...

The website states, "Storybirds are short, visual stories that you make with family and friends to share and (soon) print" (Storybird). If I start a story, titled let's say *reflections,* I could invite my wife or anyone else I choose to become a collaborator on the story. Once a collaborator is invited to work on a story, they can then access the technology. The templates are pre-established by various artists, so you choose an artist and begin the process. *Storybird* is fairly easy to use and could be used with all ages of students.

Current teachers are using this tool with children as young as kindergarten. Susan Haninger said, "I have used it to write a silly, simple little story about same and different and used it with a kindergarten class. We had a wonderful time with it" (*Classroom 2.0* "Storybird"). Another teacher on the online, Ning forum "Storybird" had success using it with fourth graders.

Storybird, in a word, is fantastic. Check out my *reflections* piece if you have time. (You can click on the hyperlink from the word "*reflections*" above

or click on the image below to view the story from *Storybird's* website). I just took a poetic verse and whipped up four pages to have an experience with this wonderful Web 2.0 tool. It's a tool that children, young and old, will have a great time exploring while learning some vital lessons of collaboration.

See also:

- Collaboration
- Fan fiction
- Graphic narratives
- Visual Portraits

Twenty-first century composition

> "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions of their life, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way."
>
> - Karl Marx

Twenty-first century composition was a topic I chose to discuss with Assistant Professor of English at Colorado State University, Carrie Lamanna. The interview explored the ongoing conversation of multimodal pedagogy and the importance of digital technology in a twenty-first century composition program. Lamanna referenced a current dialogue within the field of multimodal pedagogical research, citing the importance of multimodal composition and how it taps into the prior knowledge of students. She also said multimodal pedagogy and digital technology prepares students for their lives beyond the academy. A podcast of the interview with Lamanna was created on 9 Mar. 2010 at CSU (The "Carrie Lamanna Says..." podcast can be listened to here and corresponds with a slide in the below PowerPoint Presentation).

As part of the performance aspect of autoethnography and the nature of my autoethnographic presentation that accompanied the below slideshow, I wanted to turn the act of the presentation itself into an autoethnographic experience. (See "auto-e blog" for a definition of autoethnography.) The

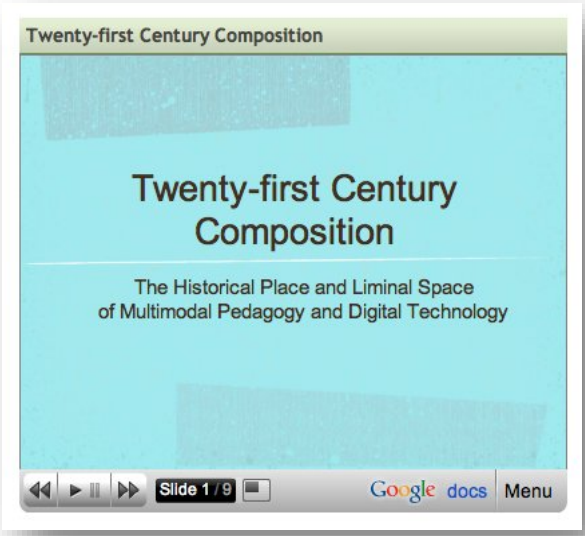
PowerPoint presentation attempts to balance the ethnographic with the autobiographic to enact an autoethnography of myself within the context of a twenty-first century composition classroom and curriculum. I examine myself as a composition instructor in the twenty-first century and how I use multimodal and digital technology with my composition students, how other graduate teaching assistants use technology, and how other full-time composition faculty use new literacies.

My experience has taught me that if I don't embrace multimodal pedagogy and digital technology in my career as a college composition instructor and as a secondary teacher of English, I am ultimately doing my students a disservice as they enter into the world as twenty-first century composers. However, to achieve the above stated goals, the material conditions of the classroom and institution must align with these ambitions. Lamanna also suggests that failing to teach students how to compose using many modes of composition may raise discrimination issues. To be an effective teacher in the twenty-first century I will be required to teach beyond traditional, alphabetic, print-based modes of composition. Otherwise, I risk limiting the kinds of composition my students will be able to produce. In researching my autoethnographic experience as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) at CSU, I considered the following in context of how I used digital technology in the classroom:

- I used Marx's historical materialism as a framework to gain a sense of "real individuals," "their activities," and "the material conditions of their lives."
- I collected data from my students, other GTAs, and full-time faculty instructors to establish a sense of the cultural context of "real individuals," myself and my collective "activities."
- I spoke with information technology specialists at CSU to become more familiar with some of the material conditions of digital technology at the university.

A brief PowerPoint presentation for a course taught by Assistant Professor of English Dr. Sue Doe at CSU, titled E633 – Autoethnography, can be viewed below. The PowerPoint was used as a visual aid to discuss a

paper that autoethnographically examined the relationship between the material conditions of digital technology at the university and the implications of this relationship on me as a student and GTA. Below I have included a PowerPoint Presentation and a link to a podcast with Carrie Lamanna:



Click here to listen to a podcast of Carrie Lamanna

See also:

- Auto-e blog
- Dyslexia
- Multimodal pedagogy

Underserved populations

Two Centennial High School students in Fort Collins work together on a MacBook during a "Saving Our Stories" podcasting project.

In the spring of 2010, Rudy Bryan, Sara Erfurth, Natalie Laughlin, Adam Mackie, Meggan Mears, and Carson Warner formed a collaboration as a team of teacher researchers during E402 - Teaching Composition*

Dr. Cindy O'Donnell-Allen, Associate Professor of English and instructor of E402, assigned groups of Colorado State University students to practice teaching with digital technology and work to reach an underserved population at Centennial High School in Fort Collins, CO.

***The below document combines the writings of all group members mentioned above and is written in the style of the American Psychological Association for the purposes of the class assignment:**

SOS Project: Linking Writing and Podcasting

Rationale

Understanding the Colorado Academic Standards for Oral Expression and Listening, allows one to understand that it is within language that our logical thinking develops. It is this faculty of logical thinking that allows for higher levels of thought such as reasoning and invention. Thus, recording the stories of individuals is a means by which we can better understand each other's minds, as well as our own, and develop superior writing traits in a medium other than traditional writing: podcasting.

Troy Hicks claims podcasting – a commercialized word for audio streaming – Is a way for writers to deliver the intended effect of their writing, and the expressions the writer achieves in his/her writing are enhanced through auditory characteristics (2009). It is for this reason that we begin our Calendar Assignment Sequence (CAS) by listening to examples of podcasts and, in doing so, facilitate student understanding of both form and content. When students begin hearing examples of storytelling podcasts, we can help them "question the ways in which a text is being produced" (Hicks, 2009), thereby providing concrete examples of techniques they might later employ.

In the next phase of the CAS, providing time for exploration of the podcast recording and editing equipment is essential to the cultivation of the relationship between the students and the iPod/software. Our mini-lesson references the mini-lessons Rebecca Bowers Sipe and Tracy Rosewarne use to teach aspects of "meaningful reading and writing" in *Purposeful Writing* (2006). We have taken into account that students are familiar with digital technology, but aim to build upon their techno-savvy knowledge by introducing them to the basics of GarageBand and how it works with an iPod. Then, by providing students the chance to try out the software on their own, we give them a sense of self-mastery. We also allow ourselves (the instructors) to take advantage of the multiple entry-points style of learning (Tomlinson, 1999). What separates this academic podcasting from other forms of podcasting, though, is the research that is

put into preparing the podcasts. The students will have researched cultural and historical material significant to Fort Collins, CO, and will have used similar crafting techniques inherent to writing research papers. This type of podcasting is a research paper with heavy emphasis on voice and keeping it personal.

Accordingly, the bulk of our group's CAS is devoted to students' actual recording and editing of stories. This time allotment is necessary for student creation of a finished piece—similar to how writers set aside time to create and polish their writing. This finished piece will reflect personalized and culturally relevant ORAL stories that demonstrate higher-level logical thinking and reasoning. Differentiation may also be necessary in this area of the assignment, as some students might prove more proficient than others. In addition, variations of style and format could require different timeframes for development.

The following is a list of the specific Standards our CAS addresses under the main heading of Oral Expression and Listening:

12th Grade

1. Effective speaking in formal and informal settings requires appropriate use of methods and audience awareness

2. Effective collaborative groups accomplish goals

11th Grade

1. Verbal and nonverbal cues impact the intent of communication

10th Grade

1. Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience

2. Effectively operating in small and large groups to accomplish a goal requires active listening

9th Grade

1. Oral presentations require effective preparation strategies

Calendar Assignment Sequence for Podcasting

Day 1

- Students listen to podcast examples as a class and then reflect for ten minutes through free writing
- The class then goes to the computer lab and the students are introduced to various online podcast collections of stories, which they are able to explore and listen to for the rest of the period

Day 2

- The instructor presents a mini-lesson on how to use the iPod Touch for podcasting purposes
- The students are then given an opportunity to practice using the iPod Touch. The instructor also presents a mini-lesson on using GarageBand for the purposes of editing podcasts, after which students are given time to explore GarageBand and practice editing podcasts

Day 3

- Listen to another *StoryCorps* podcast (or other podcast)
- Discuss as a class the contents and form of podcast
- Review yesterday's mini-lesson and "how-to" instructions of using equipment in groups
- Give students time to conduct interviews with community members (remind students to take the picture of their interview subject with the digital camera to include with audio file)

Day 4

- Provide however much time necessary to complete the recording of interviews

- Begin importing audio files onto laptops and into GarageBand
- Students will be prompted to review the recording and edit their podcasts down to 2 – 3 minutes (i.e. splitting, deleting, and merging audio highlights from the longer recording)

Day 5

- Give however much time necessary to complete the editing of podcasts in GarageBand
- Prompt groups to export files to disk and create a folder that includes the audio file of the polished podcast and the corresponding digital photograph of the community member

  (They will then be ready to publish on an online platform)

Mini-Lesson on Using iPod Touches to Podcast Digital Stories

Name of Activity	**Podcast Digital Stories**
Standard and Outcomes	Colorado Academic Standards in Oral Expression and Listening for Grades 9 – 12: **Twelfth grade** *Oral Expression and Listening* 1. Effective speaking in formal and informal settings requires appropriate use of methods and audience awareness 2. Effective collaborative groups accomplish goals **Eleventh grade** *Oral Expression and Listening* 1. Verbal and nonverbal cues impact the intent of communication

Standard and Outcomes (cont.)	**Tenth grade** *Oral Expression and Listening* 1. Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience 2. Effectively operating in small and large groups to accomplish a goal requires active listening **Ninth grade** *Oral Expression and Listening* 1. Oral presentations require effective preparation strategies
Description of the Class	Language arts class at Centennial High School with students grades 9 – 12
Purpose of Activity	To inform students how to use iPod Touch technology to record an interview/digital story To inform students how to download and edit recordings To inform students how to upload these recordings to their class Ning for the public to hear
Materials	iPod Touches; microphones, Mac computers; Interview questions; Sample podcasts
Procedure	Hand out instructions on how to use the iPod Touch and microphone Instruct students to get into pairs or groups of three – approximately 5 groups Hand out iPod Touches to each group Ask students what they already know about

Procedure (cont.)	how to operate iPod Touch devices and if there are any helpful ideas they could give to their fellow classmates Ask each pair to choose one person to be an interviewer/recorder and one person to be an interviewee Have students practice going through the instructions on the accompanying handout to make sure they understand how to record (about 2 times through) Introduce students to the topic of "When I was younger_____" and instruct them that they are to fill in the blank with a memory they have from the past that was particularly important to them. Each student does this and writes it down on a scratch sheet of paper Ask the students who are acting as interviewers to pick two questions from their "Interview Questions" handout, which relate well to the topic, to ask their partner Students ask the questions they picked and an interviewee answers, using their notes if necessary. The interviewer records the conversation using the iPod Touch Each pair then imports their recording into GarageBand on a Mac laptop As a team students edit the recording and talk about their decisions for editing the way

Procedure (cont.)	they did After the pairs have edited their interviews they post it to the class Ning as an example The partners switch positions (i.e. the interviewer/recorder now becomes the interviewee and vice versa) and repeat the process so that each student has practice with the technology.
References	Troy Hicks

Podcast Digital Stories!

Now that you've gotten the chance to learn a little about how podcasting works and what goes into it, it's time to put that knowledge to use!

Each of you will work with your partners to put together your own podcasts. You will be expected to put to use some of the skills we've

covered, such as recording using an iPod Touch, transferring the recordings, and editing the material on GarageBand. It's important to not only learn how to use what we learn, but also how to apply what we learn. Therefore, we will be using digital technology along with other speaking skills.

For your podcast you will get with your partner and you will be conducting an interview. Each of you will be taking turns being the interviewer and interviewed.

- You will be putting together or able to use questions provided on the Interview Questions handout.
- Topics must be of appropriate material. The main idea is to come up with a memory of an important event in your life.
- The person interviewing will share their questions with the person they're interviewing before they actually begin the interview. It's only fair for the person to know what to expect. Each person, while being interviewed, will be able to use their notes on that memory to help while being recorded by their partner.

Keep in mind that both individuals in each group will be expected to participate in every step of the creating of the podcast. Remember that just because one person may excel in one area of the process does not mean that they'll be doing all of it!

Don't worry! We will be helping each other formulate interview questions and will work in collaboration with any technical difficulties that might occur along the way.

Also: Each of you will be required to turn in a reflection sheet regarding this assignment, including your feelings and thoughts about the digital technology being integrated into assignments.

This will be a graded group assignment worth 55 points of your grade.

At the end of the project your group will be expected to turn in:

- Podcast interview from each member of the group that clearly shows equal work from everyone in the group. Everyone will have been the interviewer and the one being interviewed.
- Reflections (one from each group member) that touch on any feelings about the assignment as a whole, especially on the integration of the podcasting technology you used to create it. These reflections should be approximately one, typed, double-spaced page.

Note: This is an adaptation of the assignments presented in Troy Hicks' book *The Digital Writing Workshop* (2010).

Possible Interview Questions

Use these interview questions for your interview with your partner. Use them as they are or use them to generate your own ideas! These questions are a guiding tool to work through the interview with your partner.

What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?

Who was the most important person in your life? Can you tell me about him or her?

Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did they teach you?

Who has been the kindest person to you in your life?

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

What is your earliest memory?

Are there any words of wisdom you'd like to pass along? If so, what?

What was a moment in your life that made you proud?

Can you describe it?

What is your first memory?

What is your best memory?

What has been your greatest loss in life?

What would you ask _____ if _____ were here today?

What do you miss most about _____?

How do you think _____ would want to be remembered?

What were the biggest obstacles you overcame in your life?

What about _____ makes you smile?

What did _____ look like?

Did you have any favorite jokes _____ used to tell? What were they?

Do you have any traditions you honor? Explain.

Group Podcasting Grading Sheet

Content (35 points)

_____/ 10: The podcast is within the time limits of 2 – 3 minutes.

_____/ 20: The content is clear, concise, and detailed. It addresses appropriate issues and free of media grammar errors. The recording gives insights into the interviewed person's life.

_____/ 5: Developed material shows groups unique style and voice.

Technology (10 points)

_____/ 10: Group was able to use and apply digital technology of podcasting to the best of their abilities. They were able to record and transfer their material. The final project shows evidence of editing.

Reflections (10 points)

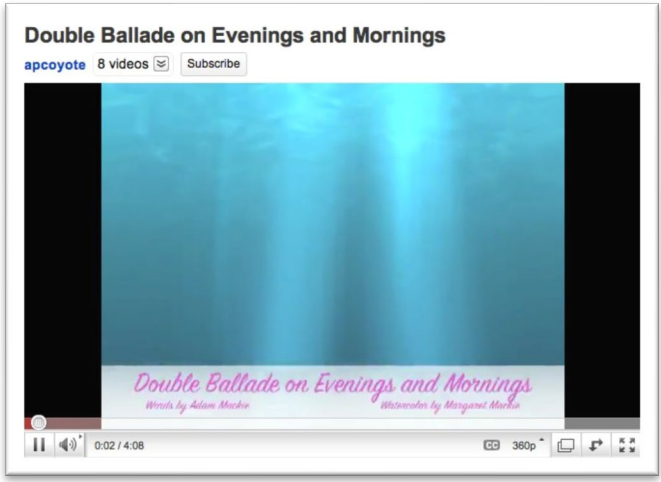
_____/ 10: Reflection was turned in and shows that the student put thought into their answers about the material and assignment. Reflection meets length requirements.

Total (55 points)

_____/ 55 points

Comments:

Teacher Work Sample



See also:

- Collaboration
- Writing Project (CSUWPAI)

Visual portraits

> "It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students use technology to serve the story and not the other way around."
>
> - Jason Ohler

"Visual portraits" came about while imagining a concept for digital storytelling. Jason Ohler, author of *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity* (2008), acknowledges that "digital storytelling" is a difficult term to define because of the vagueness of combining the already vague terms of "digital" and "storytelling." However, Ohler describes "digital storytelling" (DST) as an activity that "uses personal digital technology to combine a number of media into a coherent narrative" (15). Moreover, Ohler qualifies his description of digital storytelling by adding that "digital stories in education are typically driven by an academic goal, use low-end technology that is commonly available to students, and usually are in the form of short (two- to four-minute) quasi movies that an audience watches via computer or other digital means" (15-16). A teacher sample of a finished digital storytelling project, based in Ohler's instruction, can be accessed here).

Originally, I conceived of shooting the below scenes with a camcorder and reciting the epitaphs to create a legitimate digital story. I saw myself entering from stage left, reading the lines like a bard and exiting stage right. However, after storyboarding each of the statues and matching the epitaphs, with the intention to return to the site of the story's setting, I realized the still-images more effectively enacted a tombstone-like effect. Since epitaphs are engraved on tombstones I felt like the story must be told with still images. I was convinced the story could not be told any other way, such as

by means of digital storytelling. The technology, in this case, was "to serve the story and not the other way around" (Ohler 6). On that day, a "visual portrait" was born. I applied Ohler's thinking of digital storytelling with a more conventional storytelling method of the photo-essay to create the poem presented below.

Visual portraits might be used synonymously with the term "digital photo-essay," for a digital photo-essay can become a visual portrait. Yet visual portraits could be constructed by non-digital means. Ink illustrations and various forms of collages can be used instead of a digital camera, but the below story and poem was indeed designed with a digital camera. Consequently, *Epitaphs of a Sculpture Park* can be literally considered a "story" or narrative told "digitally."

Digital cameras are effective tools for teachers to use with their students because they sidestep the tedious work of having to scan images on a scanner to upload them to a machine. Most digital cameras are now equipped with a USB cable that allows images to be imported quickly and effectively onto nearly any personal computer. Also, many students own cell phones with built in cameras that could be successfully transformed into learning tools.

The idea of visual portraits aims to be received and used as an innovative vehicle for creative juxtaposition. For instance, what if students could use photos cut out from travel magazines and *National Geographic* or other popular magazines to inspire them to write creative stories, such as one using fan fiction and/or role-play? Pictures, indeed, could become a springboard for students to write 1,000 words! Students might be given a series of five pictures (or assigned to take their own pictures) and then prompted to write a story, a poem, or a series of epitaphs that correlate to the images. (See below.)

The below "visual portrait" or digital photo-essay was a poem put to still images shot at Benson Sculpture Garden in Loveland, Colorado. The combination of alphabetic poetry and pedagogy as well as photographic images demonstrates a new literacies activity that can be effectively used in a middle school or high school classroom. Activities, such as the one above of cutting photos out of a magazine or the one below of taking pictures and

combining them with poetry, teach twenty-first century composition to students using twenty-first century digital and multimodal rhetorical skills.

Epitaphs of a Sculpture Park; Or, A Visual Portrait

I

SCULPTURE OF A BARD WITH MIRROR

Here stands a man

Who said the world is a stage

Alone he stands

Forever trapped in his gaze

II

Sculpture of children in circle

Here play the children

They dance around and sing

They reach out their hands

For you to join the ring

III

Sculpture of faithful buffalo

Here traverses a buffalo

Caught between sky and open field

Even when family disappears

Faithful buffalo does not yield

IV

SCULPTURE OF WOLVES AND SCENT OF FEAR

Here roam wild wolves

They keep in tight pack

Smelling subtle fear

There's no turning back

V

SCULPTURE OF A BIG SNAKE

Here slithers a big snake

Who loves to tie the tongue

Only when you confess

Can his spell be undone

VI

SCULPTURE OF A WOMAN PRAYING

Here prays a woman

She searches for a Truth within

If you sit with her

She will show you where to begin

VII

SCULPTURE JAZZ

Hear the jazz

Fill the space

One two three

Treble bass

VIII

SCULPTURE OF SHEPHERD BOY

Here muses a shepherd

In the field with his flock

Works beside the sun

Never looks at his clock

IX

SCULPTURE OF A NAVAJO

Here endures a Navajo

He stands facing the West

Patiently awaits amends

In aftermath of conquest

X

SCULPTURE OF THE GALLANT MARE

Here straddles a gallant mare

He crosses his own actions

Looking down at his four hooves

To see if they're the right ones

XI

SCULPTURE OF THE RAVENS

Here perch seven ravens

Hungry for nourishment

They pray and meditate

To receive fulfillment

XII

SCULPTURE OF MAN ON A BENCH

Here sits a friend

He said that he would watch

A visual portrait

On a laptop

EPILOGUE

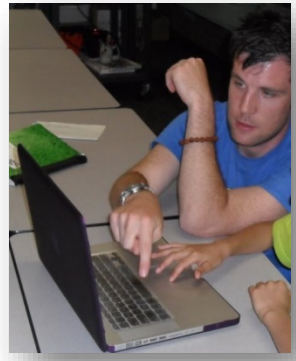
Here lies Adam Mackie

A student, a teacher

A poet, an author:

Wounded renderer

Writing Project (CSUWPAI)



Adam Mackie assists a 5th grade student at Johnson Elementary School edit an ode that the student recorded as a podcast, in GarageBand, on a MacBook Pro laptop.

While attending the Colorado State University Writing Project Advanced Institute (CSUWPAI), in the summer of 2010, I worked with classroom teachers and elementary school students to create digital stories and podcasts:

The above video, used with permission of PSD Channel 10, was aired in July of 2010 (Click on image to view broadcast. **Also:** visit the Poudre School District's Website at http://www.psdschools.org/ for other related stories about teaching twenty-first century composition.

The CSU Writing Project is a part of the National Writing Project (NWP), a nation-wide organization designed to provide teachers with ongoing professional development. The podcasts served as an opportunity to save the stories of eight English Language Learners and ten students that were native English speakers. Students wrote 5Frame stories similar to the example provided under the "Y" entry as well as poetic odes that they recorded into GarageBand on Mac laptops. They added jingles, music, and sound effects to give their podcasts mood, tone, and emotion. Discussions with in-service teachers and pre-service teachers can be listened to below (along with a sample created by a 5th grade student):

1.) "Teachers on Technology (Part I)

2.) "Teachers on Technology (Part II)

3.) "Hair"

See also:

Twenty-first century composition

Underserved populations

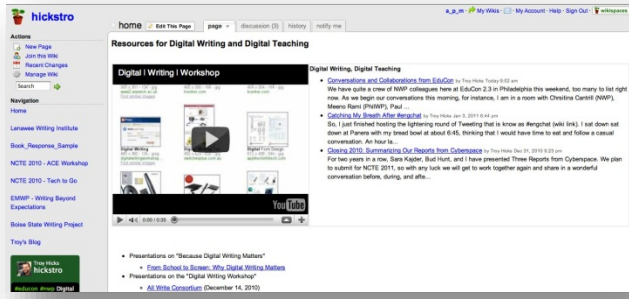
YouTube

Xanadu-classrooms

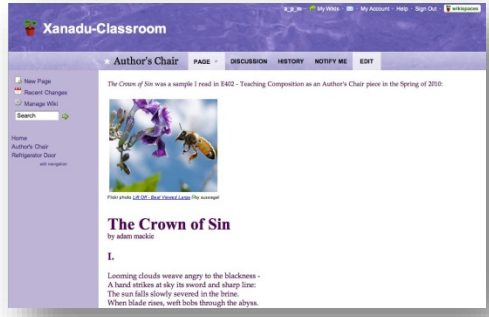
Xanadu-classrooms or a "perfect" and "idyllic" classroom might be averred to be a dream every teacher secretly (or not so secretively) wishes to one day inhabit. The term "Xanadu-Classroom" was inspired by the Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem "Kubla Khan" (1798) and was conceived to emphasize that an ideal classroom environment occurs not only in "formal" academic face-to-face classrooms, but also extends to other spaces, outside the classroom. The distinction between "formal" and "informal" classroom spaces has begun to overlap and "formal" learning has been seen to occur in what traditionally might be considered "informal" educational space (Kirkland 12).

Teachers can consider making a wiki of their own (for instructions view "Wikis in Plain English" by commoncraft shown below). You can also visit the Xanadu-classroom (click here) to see a working wiki that will be used as a future space for an extension of a face-to-face high school classroom.

Also: For another fantastic wiki resource, visit Troy Hicks' wiki page for digital writing and digital teaching:



Currently, there are spaces provided on the below wiki for "Author's Chair" and "Refrigerator Door" simply to serve as examples. The "Author's Chair" and "Refrigerator Door" activities were presented to me in E402 - Teaching Composition. Every student in the class signed up for a day to read a piece of writing of their choosing, which was given the name "Author's Chair." Students then were instructed to post their writing sample online so their instructors and their peers could access the sample in its written form. I read "The Crown of Sin," seven sonnets I wrote in E513b - Form & Technique in Poetry. "Refrigerator Door" was an ungraded, online space where students could post and present any writing they wanted to share. I posted a sonnet, titled "Noah's Crystal," on the "Refrigerator Door."



See also:

Extensions of the twenty-first century classroom

YouTube

> "I have to be able to put myself in the place of the writing. I have to become the writing."
>
> - Adam Mackie

I

The below digital story, or what Jason Ohler describes as an activity that "uses personal digital technology to combine a number of media into a coherent narrative" (15), was conceived, shot, and edited in less than an hour by Marianne Thomas, Rudy Bryan, and Adam Mackie during a workshop with Troy Hicks at Colorado State University in 2010. Troy Hicks' book, *The Digital Writing Workshop,* advocates the use of digital storytelling in the twenty-first century classroom and provides assessment tools for the purposes of evaluation.

II

In the summer of 2010, I completed EDUC331-Technology and Assessment. I created the below video as an experiment with digital storytelling, with the help of my wife Margaret and my son Noah. We travelled around to several locations in Fort Collins, including the Wild Boar Coffee the CSU Gardens, and a restaurant in Old Towne.

III

The below story was created as an exercise while attending the CSU Writing Project Advanced Institute in the summer of 2010. The video was based on the 5Frame story model. Examples of 5Frame stories can also be viewed on a Ning titled 5FrameStorytelling. A Fort Collins High School English Teacher and I first created this 5Frame story in iPhoto, added music and viewed as a slideshow. Later, that same afternoon, we assisted a group of 5th grade students in the same activity. I then imported what we did into iMovie and uploaded the YouTube video available below:

I

II

III

See also:

Auto-e blog

Collaboration

Writing Project (CSUWPAI)

Zines

Students might be shown samples of zines, such as contemporary zines *The Deeper They Bury Me the Louder My Voice Becomes*, *Got Art? Got Music?,* and *Olympus Mons*

VIVA LA REVOLUTION!

Zine Writing, Publishing & Distributing

Prefatory Purpose & Rationale Statement

Zine production, a multimodal lesson that does not have to be digital, offers students twenty-first century composition skills and opportunity to write honestly and from the heart about issues relevant to their lives. Zines are difficult to define because they can take on an infinite number of shapes and forms, based in the imaginations of their authors. However, some

general comments about zines are provided by Mark Todd and Esther Pearl Watson in *Watcha Mean, What's a Zine?: The Art of Making Zines and Mini-Comics*:

> Zines can be by one person or many. They can be any size: Half-page, rolled up, quarter sized...
>
> Zines are read by anyone willing to take a look, from concert-goers and the mailman to people on the train. They are sold at bookstores, thumbed through at zine libraries, exchanged at comic conventions, and mailed off to strangers.
>
> Zines are not a new idea. They have been around under different names (Chapbooks, Pamphlets, Flyers. People with independent ideas have been getting their word out since there were printing presses.
>
> It's a great feeling to hold copies of your zine in your hand. Go ahead, there is no wrong way (12.

The Viva La Revolution! Zine Writing, Publishing, & Distributing assignment will allow students to experience empowerment as authors and producers. They will gain literacy skills to better understand of purpose, authorship, and audience in the rhetorical situation of zine writing.

An argument that teaching zines in the classroom compromises the form of the genre can be posited. Zines inherently are an underground, urban, street form of expression. However, opening the dialogue about the differences in genre will perhaps widen a student's rhetorical understanding about context: purpose, audience, and text. The production of "authentic" zines in the classroom may prove to be a challenge riddled with complication. Nevertheless, the unit can be used to fulfill the Standard 3: Writing and Composing of the Colorado Academic Standards. Students can be taught to understand that even though what they create "inside" the classroom may not meet the standards of street credibility "outside" the classroom, the writing and composing skills are transferable. Students can be further taught that these "in-school" and "out-of-school" lines can become intermingled (Kirkland).

Introduction

Toward the beginning of a young adult text titled *Hard Love* by Ellen Wittlinger, the reader meets a protagonist named John (who goes by a pen name of Giovanni). John is a sixteen-year-old, high school junior reminiscent of J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield who has begun writing a zine called *Bananafish.* John feels trapped between a mother who is on the verge of remarrying Al, who John describes as "a skinhead Mr. Rogers" (Wittlinger 11), and a book-publishing playboy father who he visits on the weekends. He finds himself confused and coming of age in the shadow of his parents' six-year standing divorce. John's only consolation has become his zine writing and his best (only) friend Brian. However, John later finds himself in the middle of a confused romance with another teen zine writer and lesbian named Marisol. John thinks to himself early in the novel of how his "life didn't seem quite so yawningly empty as before" (3). In context, John does not tell Brian about the excitement of his zine writing because he thought Brian would not understand that, "reading things somebody wrote in a magazine could change you" (3).

John becomes attracted to Marisol's zine titled *Escape Velocity*. The young man, feeling trapped in his situation, was looking for escape. Wittlinger's book accounts for how young adults, like John and Marisol, can discover their identities and become transformed by writing and reading zines. John, for instance, isn't interested in a heterosexual relationship with any of the girls at his school, doesn't really know for sure if he is homosexual, and ultimately falls head-over-heels into heartbreak for his lesbian friend Marisol. Upon meeting Marisol, John is introduced to a publication titled *Factsheet Five*. In the novel, both Marisol and John get to see their zines reviewed.

Factsheet Five, in fact, is a nonfictional zine review developed by R. Seth Friedman in 1982. The zine review gives zine writers an opportunity to have their zines read and reviewed in the same fashion as John and Marisol's zines were reviewed in Wittlinger's fictional narrative. The front matter of Friedman's *The Factsheet Five Zine Reader: The Best Writing from the Underground World of Zines* states the background of the publication:

> ...Since 1982 *Factsheet Five* has been documenting the ever-expanding universe of zines...
>
> ...Each huge 152-page issue of *Factsheet Five* is packed with reviews of more than 2,000 independent and unusual publications. Every issue catalogs and reviews an abundance of zines - complete with price, critical reviews, and ordering information. Additionally, it includes information articles on zine culture and tips for budding zine publishers ("About Factsheet Five," Friedman).

Up-and-coming, zine writers can visit http://www.factsheet5.org/ to submit their zines for review.

John's inner monologue about how "reading something somebody wrote in a magazine could change you" offers an important message of hope for young writers and teachers passionate about teaching young writers to be transformers of culture. Students all too often can fall prey to a notion that the writing they do "inside the classroom" cannot be used "outside the classroom." Zine culture continues to press against false dichotomies, such as the "in-school" and "out-of-school" distinction, discussed by Kirkland. At the core, zine writing has been conducted on the fringes of society and often serves as an outlet for rebellion or activism. Bringing zines into a secondary English classroom may problematize the traditional notion of zines.

True as it may be that zines challenge the mainstream and often go against traditional norms, English teachers can still serve as positive models for writing and composition. By arming students with the personal empowerment to become self-publishers and by teaching the necessary pragmatic skills to achieve this end will help students to learn basic composition techniques. These techniques include the consideration of rhetorical situations and how to find one's own voice as an author as well as using software for computer layout and the physical construction of the zine artifact. Learning these skills, as well as others, might help students see the relevance and importance of possessing composing skills as they apply them in their daily lives. Many adolescents, as seen in the fictional story of John and Marisol, are hungry for venues to direct their emotions about family life, questions of sexuality, and heartbreak just to name a few.

On the surface, one may assume that zines are a contemporary happening. In the introduction of *The Factsheet Five Zine Reader,* Friedman said he "discovered music fanzines back in the '70s." However, The *S.F. Examiner* provides a succinct historical summary that helps put the evolution of self-publishing into perspective:

> "The name 'zine,' short for 'fanzine,' a science-fiction fan magazine, may be new, but small, self-published pamphlets and newsletters date all the way back to Ben Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*, which was launched in 1757. Dadaist manifestoes of the early 1900s continued the trend and started a design style adopted by many of today's zine editors. Science-fiction zines proliferated in the 1920s and '30s, followed by punk rock zines in the 1970s. Today's zines cover political rantings, sex and sexual politics, hobbies, music, movies and just about every other topic that's conceivable - and many that aren't" (Vale 4).

Zines: A LESSON PLAN

Title of the Lesson

Viva La Revolution! Zine Writing, Publishing, & Distributing

For secondary level English teachers

Rationale

See "Prefatory Purpose & Rationale Statement" above

Overview of the Lesson

Zines are a way anyone, anywhere can express themselves, self-publish, and circulate their message to others. The Viva La Revolution!: Zine Writing, Publishing, & Distributing assignment will ask you to write about topics that are meaningful and important to your life, including life at home, life at school, life with friends, etc (See What's a zine again? below).

Phase I - Imagining Your Zine

You will determine what kind of zine you create. It's important that we allow the content to reflect aspects of life that are most important to us and learn how to appropriately prepare messages about ourselves for a public forum. The zines done for this assignment may differ from zines seen elsewhere. There may be some limitations of what we can produce for the purposes of this assignment, which undoubtedly contradicts zine culture, but once you go your own way you'll find the skills you've gained here to be transferable.

To prepare for this assignment, we will start by reading *Hard Love* by Ellen Wittlinger, issues of *Factsheet Five* and keeping a journal of our experiences throughout the day. The topic will be narrowed down to something meaningful to the author and the intended audience. For instance, avid snowboarders might consider writing about their lives on and off the slopes, electric guitar players might give readers an insight into the life of being a musician, and up-and-coming models might write about what it takes to walk the catwalk.

Viva La Revolution! Zine Writing, Publishing, & Distributing will be a three to four week unit for a class meeting Monday – Friday. The unit will be broken into three phases where you will read the assigned young adult text *Hard Love*, start keeping a daily journal, and begin imagining your zine. By the end of the first week, you should have an idea of the focus of your zine and will be ready for phase two. The underground, anti-mainstream, culture of zines has a record of exploring any and every topic imaginable and pushing societal norms. For the sake of the assignment some content restrictions might be enforced to uphold the school's code and conduct. You will, however, be encouraged to continue exploring any topics you decide on your own after the assignment and for future independent zine projects.

In phase two, you will begin thinking about how you intend to layout your zines after you have selected a topic or focus. For the graded aspect of the assignment, you will be asked to fulfill the minimum requirement of creating a half-size zine using two pieces of paper. If you chose you can add

supplemental material, such as a quarter-size zine insert: Finally, phase three will cover matters of distribution.

Phase II- Layout and Construction of Zines*

Note: Having a copy of *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?: The Art of Making Zines and Mini-Comics* by Mark Todd & Esther Pearl Watson for classroom use might be effective in aiding students during this phase of zine development.

You will have the choice to write prose articles, poems, or design visual portraits (e.g. original drawings, photographs, and/or permissible Internet images. Other alternatives to the quantity of c ontent can be discussed on a case-by-case basis. In-class writing workshops will be held and time in the computer lab will be given. Phase three will include a final construction period and a discussion of possible venues to distribute and circulate finished zines. Assessment will be based on a check (pass/fail system and you will be evaluated on how well you engaged the assignment.

Phase III - "Places to Leave Your Zine: For Free! For Fun!"*

Hide 'em in newspapers
Leave 'em at movie houses
Subway...On a nice park bench
Coffee Shops...Soda Machines
Copy stores
The airplane
Bus Stops
Farmer's Market
Wedge 'em into lockers.
Leave 'em at the doctor's office
Library
Laundry mat
Arcades
Thrift Stores
Telephone booths
Car Windshields
Places where people sleep
Concerts
Tie 'em to helium balloons
Record Stores
ANY PUBLIC PLACE
(Todd and Watson 95)

Note: Teachers will want to carefully consider this phase of the unit because of the safety issues involved with exposing their students (minors) to the general public. It would not be a bad idea to write a disclaimer and/or get parental permission before sending a student out to distribute their zine. Often zines will have the author's name and a contact address for the reading public to communicate with the author(s). Another option might be to seek permission from the school to have all correspondence conducted through a public site, such as the school itself, and encouraging students to use pen names might be one way to foster anonymity and protect privacy. The important thing is to keep the conversation open between parents and administrators and clarify to students and parents that they have the option of not dispersing a zine into a public space.

Objectives

Students will learn…

- How to generate and compose original content
- How to write and compose in multiple literacies
- How to layout and produce a zine

Students will be able to…

- Effectively express through writing in a popular and cultural medium
- Begin to see themselves as citizens capable of producing culture

Materials

- *Hard Love* by Ellen Wittlinger
- A recent copy of *Factsheet Five*
- Sample zines and zine resources, such as *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?: The Art of Making Zines and Mini-Comics* by Mark Todd & Esther Pearl Watson
- Notebooks/Sketchbook for journals
- Pens/pencils to write/draw in journals
- Scissors/glue for scrapbooking
- Access to a computer lab (with word processing and photo editing software)
- Flash drives or some system for student file saving and storing
- Access to a 12" reach stapler

Students will be shown samples of zines, such as contemporary art zines *The Deeper They Bury Me the Louder My Voice Becomes*, *Got Art? Got Music?*, and *Olympus Mons* (See image above).

Books

- *The Factsheet Five Zine Reader: The Best Writing from the Underground World of Zines,* Seth R. Friedman (1997
- *Hard Love,* Ellen Wittlinger (1999
- *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?: The Art of Making Zines and Mini-Comics,* Mark Todd and Esther Pearl Watson (2006

What's a zine again?

Zines can be by one person or many. They can be any size: Half-page, rolled up, quarter sized...

Zines are read by anyone willing to take a look, from concert-goers and the mailman to people on the train. They are sold at bookstores, thumbed through at zine libraries, exchanged at comic conventions, and mailed off to strangers.

Zines are not a new idea. They have been around under different names (Chapbooks, Pamphlets, Flyers. People with independent ideas have been getting their word out since there were printing presses.

It's a great feeling to hold copies of your zine in your hand. Go ahead, there is no wrong way (Todd and Watson 12.

See also:

Graphic narratives

Literacy

Multimodal pedagogy