

Something Creative: Developing the Well-Rounded Writer in the High School English
Classroom

A Study of the Multi-Genre Project

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“Writing means sharing. It’s part of the human condition to want to share things—thoughts, ideas, opinions.” –Paulo Coelho

What makes a piece of writing “good” writing? Dawn Latta Kirby and Darren Crovitz, veteran English teachers, define a key element of writing that I’d like to discuss before you read further. They write, “Good writing has a voice. Good writing talks to you with a real voice; it has the recognizable imprint of the author on it” (Kirby 99). For a piece of writing to be effective, for it to truly grasp the attention of its audience and deliver its message, the piece of writing must have a speaker whose voice is prevalent throughout the paper. In understanding this, and in knowing what message I would like to get across to you, the reader, I am making a deliberate choice as the writer/speaker to address you, the reader/audience, in the first person. Rather than look to the formal, academic verbiage of the stilted third person, I am going to take Kirby and Crovitz’s advice and let this writing have an authentic voice of my own.

When was the last time your social media was updated? A Tweet sent or a status updated to Facebook, a snapshot posted to Instagram? What about the last time an essay or a scholarly article found its way into your reading list? The last time you read a newspaper or a magazine? When was the last time that you wrote a letter detailing your daily thoughts and conveying your ideas? In a poem? In a short story? In song lyrics? What about the last time you jotted down a grocery list or sent a quick text? Like you, I find the number of interactions with literacy immeasurable. No matter what I’m doing in the day, there is some type of writing involved. The multitude of written genres surrounding our everyday existence is of an unfathomable number, and yet, when we think of writing in high school classrooms, most often all that comes to mind is essay writing and then perhaps the occasional half-attempt of a sonnet for the two week unit on

Shakespeare. Pause. Think about what it meant to *write* in high school. What did it mean to physically demonstrate your thoughts and understanding onto paper?

The problem is, looking back, most of us only remember writing those five-paragraph essays meant for the standardized test at the end of the year. If we're lucky, we took a few AP courses and remember writing five-paragraph essays that were not supposed to be five-paragraph essays, but that, let's face it, under pressure, always turned into five-paragraph essays because that's all we had to fall back on. We wrote *safely* in high school. We wrote to pass the exams and to make our teachers happy. Some students didn't even make it that far. With the pressure of exams and the urgency behind learning to write one way, some students failed to make it to graduation. The time for writing *safely* must stop. As teachers, we must encourage our students, even dare them, to begin writing for themselves and for their future success. We must dare students to take risks. The five-paragraph essays are building blocks, foundations in the repertoire of writing skills, but in order for students to graduate high school and be successful in college and in their careers, teachers must challenge their students to think beyond the structured writing parameters and start thinking creatively outside of the box. Teachers must challenge students to use rhetoric to their advantage and to understand how to write in varying genres rather than prescribe only one remedy to send a message. It is time to put the five-paragraph essay on the shelf, and to enrich students' writing abilities by teaching multiple genres.

Investigation of the Problem:

The issue of well-rounded writing due to a lack of creativity by both educators and students within the public high school English classroom is a problem that has been a large part of scholarly conversation amongst many educators for the past few decades. With the increase of technology and "teaching to the test", standards for writing excellence have decreased as a whole

across the nation. Kelly Gallagher, English teacher and author of *Write Like This: Teaching Real-World Writing Through Modeling and Mentor Texts*, writes about the current situation of writers entering the real-world and looking for employment:

While numerous studies currently point to the importance of teaching our students to write well, and while the workforce is begging for more people who can write effectively, and while politicians are decrying the lack of preparedness of our graduates, what is happening in our schools? Though certainly there are exceptions, I can say without hesitation that in an attempt to teach an unrealistic number of standards, a vast majority of schools in this country are driving students through an unrealistic amount of material, putting a lot of pressure on educators to spend an unrealistic time preparing for multiple-choice exams, resulting in scores printed in the newspaper that give parents an unrealistic notion of how prepared (or, more accurately, unprepared) their children are upon exiting school. And while this cycle perpetuates itself, writing—arguably one of the most important skills students will need upon entering adulthood, a basic requirement for participation in civic life—is getting placed on the back burner. (Gallagher 4)

Rather than seeing students think about their writing aloud or write in genres other than an essay format, we see such teaching strategies as the “Five Paragraph Essay” and the “6-8 sentence paragraph”. In my experience working at our University’s Writing Center with incoming freshmen students taking English 101, I have seen that students come to college completely unprepared for college level writing and are often at a loss when it comes to scholarly writing. Many students do not understand the ways in which rhetorical choices affect the message and delivery of a piece of writing. When asked about personal writing styles and ways of exploring challenging writing prompts, students are not able to coherently talk about their writing styles

and writing processes. Oftentimes, students do not even understand that the writing process is unique. Instead, teachers seem to offer one *correct* way to write *one* type of paper. By the time students begin their undergraduate year in college, they hit a wall; if it is not test-derived writing, students are unsure of how to best approach their writing assignments albeit the five paragraph essay. This wall is the lack of ability to write in other genres than the five-paragraph essay. Once getting into more advanced academic rigor in college, the five-paragraph essay no longer serves the purpose of completely informing the reader. Students rely too heavily on its use, and fail to realize that outside of high school, there really is not a place for this type of writing anymore. There lies the problem of students writing just well enough to “get by”, and this is applicable to even the most gifted and exceptional students.

There are many myths about writing and writers. For example, some people assume that people who are good at writing do not have to spend a lot of time learning to write—that they just naturally know how. Others assume that “real” writers write perfectly the first time, every time, dashing off an essay with minimal effort. Writers’ testimonies, however, together with extensive research on how people write and learn to write, show that writing can—indeed, must—be learned. All writers work at their writing. Some writers may be more successful and influential than others. Some may find writing easier and more satisfying than others. But no one is born knowing how to write (Axelrod 4).

The time to change the teaching of writing is now. The time for assumptions about who writers are and aren’t, what writers do and don’t, and what makes a writer and what doesn’t is over. Jim Burke, in his book, *An English Teacher’s Companion*, writes about the current state of things in our society. He writes,

“Students spend more time studying English than any other discipline. Ours is the only subject students are required to take every year. Nearly 1300 hours of English classes over seven years; up to 4000 or 5000 hours, in the case of some students, if one includes the time spent on homework” (Burke 1).

With students spending this much time in our English classes and with our classes being one of the more focused and important courses for a student’s academic career, it is time that we reevaluate how we are teaching our students. As teachers it is our job to change the way that writers in the classroom develop. We must change the way that we teach writing.

There is a lack of creative variety in writing in the high school English classroom, in that, writing is no longer for the student’s personal educational and scholarly success, but rather for the student’s, and ultimately the school’s, benefit of passing the state exams. There becomes a battle of personal academic accomplishment versus state-mandated success. Common Core and state and national standards seem to have left many teachers at a loss of how to teach writing that is not merely for the purpose of passing the state exams. Without intentionally meaning to cause detrimental effects on students, many teachers are not prepared for the complexities that come with preparing writers for the real world beyond the tests. Teachers do not have the time to create inventive assignments while also adhering to the standards that are put in place. There is often not time within the semester to explore writing in deeply complex and creative ways. The fault does not lie in the students nor the teachers, but rather, the educational system as a whole. When it comes to writing, we are failing students, and something needs to be done to effectively prepare students as writers.

I argue that Multi-Genre Projects in the high school classroom that incorporate additional methods of structured self-reflection and discussion of writing through Teacher-Student

conferencing and appropriate and effective Peer Reviews are one way to begin to remedy this problem. Exposing students early on to multi-genre writing will increase awareness of the writing process and how to effectively convey a message. The Multi-Genre Project is a multi-faceted approach to writing that incorporates multiple genres of literature over the course of a single unit. Tom Romano, one of the leading researchers of Multi-Genre Projects, defines this method of writing as:

A multigenre paper arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images, and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's. The trick is to make such a paper hang together.

(Romano x)

In layman's terms, the Mutli-Genre Project (MGP) is a multi-faceted approach to writing that incorporates critical literacy and research through writing in multiple genres. For the English Language Arts classroom, students take a text or novel and analyze the message of the novel through critical literacy. Students will write about the text through a literary lens in multiple genres to articulate their understanding of the message. While there are multiple ways to utilize the MGP, Romano's focus on incorporating multiple genres to convey one overall message is the easiest and most effective way to enhance student success in writing. In order to give structure to what could otherwise be construed as a free-for-all writing project, students choose to write from the voice of a repetend speaker. While Romano does not focus on the use of a "repetend", I have found in my studies that this convention is helpful in bringing cohesion to the project. The term

“repetend” refers to a convention of a tie that strings all of the genres together in one cohesive project. The repetend can be a running image, fictional character, line or phrase, or larger metaphorical message. For each writer, the repetend looks different, but it still functions the same; the MGP must have a repetend to give cohesion and clarity to the writing. The MGP does have many self-contained pieces, each piece potentially could stand alone. However, the pieces are meant to be read together in order to give a larger critical understanding of a nuanced message found within the larger text.

To break down the MGP and give some clarity, I will provide an example from my own MGP that I did for The University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s Teacher’s Academy. I created my MGP in the Spring of 2013 for ENG 322 “The Teaching of Writing” with Dr. Jeanie Reynolds. I have since worked vigorously to strengthen and polish my project, and present it with this undergraduate honors thesis in a much more developed state than would be seen in a typical high-school classroom. While this project is an example of a completed MGP, it should be noted that this is merely *one* example of what the Multi-Genre Project can look like. Because of the creative nature of the project, there is not a correct, textbook way of completing the project. My project is just one way of conceptualizing this multi-faceted approach to writing. My personal project will appear through examples later in the paper as well as an addendum for reference. While the project is meant to be digital, it can be printed and viewed in hard-copy. For full effect; however, the MGP should be viewed in its original context which can be found through this hyperlink: <http://trkane.wix.com/whose-choice-is-it>.

While these projects are a more creative and non-traditional form of teaching writing, they do provide many benefits such as: improved writing standards, improved sense of self-awareness in writers, creative flexibility, greater awareness and realization to genres of literature,

developed writing skills (mechanics and grammar), advancements in digital literacy and technology, adherence to Common Core, national, and state standards, and feelings of accomplishment for students and teachers.

Before delving into the Literature Review, it is important to note the rhetoric at work in this thesis and to provide a brief disclaimer. This thesis is merely an accumulation of my studies into English Education pedagogy, philosophy, and practice as well as some observations while at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It is important to note that the theories expressed are not my own developed theories, but rather, an accumulation of educational pedagogy that I have found to be extremely effective for me as a student. None of the work appearing in this thesis is that of a student other than myself; no high school student's work was used in the creation of this project. Throughout the paper, citations will be provided to hone the reader into further research and study on the methods presented.

This thesis also does not seek to discredit any current teachers or pre-service teachers in their teaching of writing and educational pedagogy. Rather, this thesis is to serve as a resource and a call to action for teachers to engage in innovative writing practices with their students and to ensure a successful future for young writers. This thesis aims allow teachers to investigate more risqué forms of teaching writing that resemble writing students will encounter outside of the classroom. With technology and digital literacy becoming more and more important, and with schools offering very little advanced training for teachers, it is important, as teaching colleagues, to share our research together and to continue to develop the larger conversation of what it means to teach English and to teach writing.

There has been a shift in the academic world, a shift that has brought education into the political arena more so than it has ever been before. This shift requires schools to pass

predetermined tests and to keep up with the legislature involved in education. What this shift has done is leave teachers ill-prepared to educate students on the critical literacy and digital literacy that is so imperative for successful writers in today's ever-advancing world. Where is the pedagogy changing? Why is the pedagogy not being addressed fully in schools? How can we remedy this gap of knowledge for students and still continue to be in line with curriculum standards? Fortunately, there is a way to create a bridge for this gap, and with further investigation and implementation, we can ensure, as teachers, that we are providing the best methods of writing engagement for our students.

Literature Review of Tom Romano's Multi-Genre Project (MGP):

In order to better understand the Multi-Genre Project (MGP) and the benefits that it can offer students, it is important to examine the sources of the research behind the MGP. Tom Romano is one of the founding educators who developed and integrated the MGP into his classrooms. In this section, his work will be examined for definition, benefits, and any nuances. This section will review and critique the works of Romano as well as examine the practicality of the MGP in the high school English classroom.

Blending Genres, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers

“Many teachers do not consider writing poetry or fiction cognitively rigorous. So the irony persists that while teachers might read plenty of imaginative literature—even revere it as some of the best word work people have produced—they funnel students’ writing in its opposite direction” (Romano 22). Romano’s work, *Blending Genres, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers* gets to the heart of what the MGP really is. This text works to sort out what is and is not a multigenre paper, demonstrating multiple ideas and examples from Romano’s own students

and of his colleagues and their students. Romano takes the stance that teachers rely too heavily on expository writing in high school classrooms. With this, I agree. In my experience interning and student teaching, as well as with my own experience of once being a high school student, the primary writing that was done was expository, five-paragraph derived writing. Students became masters at argumentative and persuasive essays, but few had written short stories or poems. Romano sees the problem in this lack of variety and turns to the MGP as a way to bridge the genre-gap as well as to produce students who are experienced writers.

Romano's examples range from a variety of sources, from his colleagues, fellow English teachers, who have utilized the MGP in their own classrooms, to some examples of MGP work done by his students. Teachers explain their excitement about the MGP and how it has been useful in demonstrating student growth as well as shaping writers into critical thinkers. Some teachers even claim that it is "fun" for them to observe, facilitate, and even, surprisingly, grade (Romano 4). This text is filled with testimonies and examples, many of which Romano's own students created under his guidance. To share a few testimonies about the impact of the MGP on learning to write:

The best things I've discovered are the way the writing becomes so interesting on all levels. Word choice and sentence variety step up at least a notch or two...students' inventiveness is triggered. They recognize the interactions between form and meaning. They [students] ask really important questions about how to set a concept into a form they are discovering (Romano 5).

And perhaps one of my favorites, "A primary reason that I use the multigenre format is selfish—the quality of writing that I get to read is often so much truer in its feel" (Romano 5). The fact is that the MGP is meant to be rewarding to both the students and the teacher. Allowing students

the opportunity to create writing that has meaning for them and is relevant to their lives is one of the fundamental benefits that the MGP offers. Students are able to experiment with various genres in order to find their own voice and express their own stories and literacies.

Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres

Romano focuses the majority of this text on the idea that writing is meant to be passionate for the writer and the reader. This book continues to replay the balance of expository writing and creative writing echoed in Romano's previous work, with Romano pulling many of the stereotyped nuances of creative writing. He writes,

The assumption, this stranglehold, really, that exposition exerts on the way writing is used in every subject area has tyrannized students and narrowly defined the nature of acceptable academic writing. Many teachers view nonexpository writing as frivolous and softheaded. 'Real' writing, they maintain, is cognitively rigorous. 'Real' writing emphasizes analysis and argumentation (Romano 3).

This preconceived notion that creative writing is not rigorous enough to meet standards or to hold a significant amount of weight amongst writing deemed as "more academic" holds no grounds in the conversation about writing. Romano argues that creative writing, which in essence is really just regular writing, actually demonstrates a higher use of critical thinking and literacy skills. Creative writing forces students to address rhetorical choices in their writing in order to create a desired effect on the reader. Writers must be aware of their audience as well as the message they want to get across. In this sense, creative writing and academic writing blend well together, requiring the same skillset necessary for effective writing conventions.

Romano further discusses that creative writing holds passion for students. He writes about the need for teachers to embrace the passion of their students and to model with them how to utilize that passion to create powerful writing. “As a language arts teacher my responsibility is not to censor, but rather to discuss the language people use and the diverse topics they write about. I seek to put language and subject matter into an intellectual context so we can talk about them” (Romano 140). Romano recognizes the importance of creating passionate writers because passion is a driving force that can cause students to achieve amazing results as writers. As teachers, we should follow in the footsteps of Romano and help students find their voices, find their passion, and express themselves through their own genres.

Fearless Writing: Multigenre to Motivate and Inspire

This text by Romano is perhaps one of the most useful and inspiring for the inclusion of the MGP into the classroom. Romano writes this text utilizing various genres to relay the importance of incorporating passionate writing and multiple genres in the classroom. By writing his book in the form of multiple genres all plugged together, Romano is able to capture the full effect of what the MGP is while discussing how to implement the MGP; MGP Inception at its finest! Romano’s text argues that students must be motivated writers and that they must be inspired to write. In turn, once writers are motivated and inspired to write, they will produce writing that is motivational and inspiring in their own ways. When asked “Why read *Fearless Writing*?” Romano answered: “It will rouse your passion for excellent writing. You will resonate to many written voices singing their songs. You will think. You will question. You will learn.” (Romano 4). This same idea can be applied to why students should write in multiple genres. Students will get passionate; they will relate to many perspectives; they will think; they will question; they will learn.

Romano offers an additional definition of the MGP that coincides with the one in his previous book *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers*. Romano defines the MGP again:

A multigenre papers arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected to the other pieces by theme and content and sometimes by repeated language, images, and genres. A multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's. The craft then—the challenge for the writer—is to make such a paper hang together as one unified whole (Romano 8).

Romano recognizes the complexity within the MGP and reassures his readers that it is not only possible to incorporate this advanced, sustained piece of writing, but that it is highly beneficial. He discusses the benefits that he sees in the multigenre paper through the values that he sees students achieving.

I valued good faith participation—hard, dedicated, risk-taking work. I valued writing that sang on the page. I valued voice—after all, I'd written a book about it. I valued students learning the craft of writing, essential skills like choosing topics well, focusing, elaborating, sharpening, and tightening language. I also valued deft touches like humor, metaphorical language, allusions, and sentences that sounded like good talk (Romano 160).

These observations that Romano had about his students came to be the skills he valued. By acknowledging these skills and giving them weight and value, Romano was able to effectively engage his students in advanced writing.

For Romano, who has been invested in these projects for several years now, the MGP is not just another assignment in the classroom; it is an investment for the future of all successful students. It is a convention that can transform students who do not identify as writers into writers, and students who know they are good writers into better writers. The MGP encourages students to take critical literacy seriously and to investigate problems in a not-so-conventional way. It forces students to stop writing safely and to get messy, to think creatively outside of the box.

The Solution: Example and Explanation of a Completed Multi-Genre Project (MGP):

The Multi-Genre Project is difficult in itself to explain, so as with other teaching practices, utilizing the concept of modeling will best demonstrate what these projects can look like and the amount of work that goes into them. The MGP provided below is one that I created for my undergraduate coursework at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My MGP has been developed over the course of one year, through the ENG 322 course and then again through my Independent Study for this Thesis. While this is more extensive than may be expected from high schoolers, it is an accurate example of the potential the MGP has for student creativity and results. My MGP is meant to be viewed digitally in its original medium, and so, the link to view the MGP platform is such: <http://trkane.wix.com/whose-choice-is-it>. For the purpose of explanation and analysis, I will provide the written components of the MGP with commentary below.

To begin with some context, the MGP stemmed from a small group book club. Our book club read the novel *Unwind* by Neal Shusterman. This novel is a fictional young adult dystopian text that focuses on the result of The Choice War, a fictitious war fought between groups of Pro-Life and Pro-Choice supporters. As a result of the war, dystopian society must now live with the consequences of the illegalization of abortion. As a compromise, families may now have their children “retroactively unwound” once the child turns thirteen. If a family chooses to have their children unwound, the children are then taken apart limb from limb and donated to science. The children are conscious while this is done, but this practice is not looked upon by society as immoral or unethical. This is their normal way of life. The novel follows the stories of three children on their journey to escape their unwinding.

My MGP looks at this novel through the critical lens of feminism and through the choices that women in this new society have and do not have. My MGP follows the story in the novel through a character of my own invention, Alice. Alice serves as the repitend of my MGP. She is the link that ties all of the genres together. The MGP is written from the point of view of Alice and each genre of writing is meant to be her voice. Below, I will share some of the genres along with commentary of the process and how this could be effectively implemented in the classroom. For the ease of reading, all text in blue is that of the original MGP and the commentary for the purpose of this thesis will be in black print.

Dear Reader/Letter of Intent

To begin the MGP, I included a two-part introduction for my viewer: A “Dear Reader” letter and a “Letter of Intentions”. These two letters served as an introductory background for my audience to let them know what they were getting themselves into. The language that is utilized in these introductory texts is language discussed by Peter Elbow in his work *Sharing and*

Responding. Elbow discusses ways in which writers should give their readers background knowledge and context before asking for feedback (Elbow 352-354). In the case of my MGP, I wanted readers to understand what was going to be happening in each portion of the work.

As teachers, we can incorporate strategies such as this model to demonstrate to students the importance of having a connection with their audience. Allowing the audience to debrief for a moment and gather their thoughts will allow them to view the piece without confusion. The “Dear Reader” and “Letter of Intent” will also give purpose to the audience of what the intended message of the piece is supposed to be. This helps to set parameters for the audience so that unnecessary thoughts or biases do not occur. These strategies also help to limit the audience’s outside prejudices or misconceptions. Below are the original “Dear Reader” and “Intent” letters for my MGP.

Dear Reader:

Greetings!

My name is Taylor Kane, and I am an English Education student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. What you have stumbled upon is my Multi-Genre Project for Young Adult Literature in the High School Classroom. I have created this project with the help of some fantastic classmates and the fabulous Dr. Jeanie Reynolds for ENG 322.

I would like to begin by stating that this project is to be read from the lens of my Repetend, Alice. Please read more about her story here. This project is meant to be a creative look at social issues that I believe to brought up in Neil Shusterman's young adult novel, *Unwind*. With that in mind, please look to the Research section in this website to find all credit and resources that I have used to help guide Alice's story.

In these first few introductory paragraphs, the reader is made aware of three rhetorical conventions: the speaker, the audience, and the message. Introducing these concepts in the beginning of the first thing that your audience comes across allows for clarity and cohesion. This strategy allows writers to take ownership of their work and to set their own parameters on what they want their audience to understand. This is also an excellent way to introduce the repetend so the reader understands the purpose of this convention.

While this project is based around the world created by Neal Shusterman, the works you see within this domain are merely creative licenses that I took to create a fictitious character and her world. I hope you enjoy browsing this site as much as I enjoyed creating it. You will find multiple genres of literature that I have written/produced that I hope will provoke your mind. *There is content that may be uncomfortable to some readers. It is not my intention to offend anyone, nor to disrespect anyone's personal viewpoints. I am merely hoping to offer a critical look at some of the social issues in the novel, as well as in our current society.*

Here, I have included a disclaimer on my project so that my readers are aware of what they are getting into. This strategy is imperative to teach to students because it not only outlines credit for the work (who all has assisted and where the ideas came from), but it also allows the writer to let the reader know of any material that might be controversial or uncomfortable. This is also an excellent area to re-introduce the repetend so that the audience understands that the writer is not to blame for the ideas shown. Writing about sociopolitical issues can make some students uncomfortable, by giving them space to have their own voice shine through before the repetend, teachers can encourage students to write in a way that is more risky for them, thus increasing the benefits of this type of writing style.

Many of these genres were difficult, and I took many challenges as a writer. As a writer, I am proud of my work, but I am always open for suggestions, further ideas for expansion, and to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to use the side message board to send me some feedback if you'd like, to strike up a conversation, or to let me know of any reactions you felt while reading.

Please enjoy, and never stop asking questions.

Warm regards,

Taylor Kane

After reading the “Dear Reader”, I let my audience move into the letter of intent for the project. This section outlines what I, as a writer, wanted my reader to get out of each genre. By making the purpose of each genre clear at the very beginning, readers have no room to confuse the genre’s message for something else. Because creative writing can be very interpretive, this next step is crucial for students to have ownership of their writing. This is also a way that teachers can check for self-reflection in the larger work. Students must articulate here what they have done and defend the choices they have made.

Intentions:

The intention of this website is for it to be read chronologically through the genres. As a writer, I'd like you to start with the Homepage, move to the Prologue (as prompted) and then, hopefully you should have made it here. Next, please visit Alice's story by choosing "Alice, The Repetend" at the top of the screen or by clicking here. After that, feel free to browse the genres as you'd like, although, I have listed them in a way that may help you understand Alice's story a bit better. Feel free to peruse the site at your own discretion. Below you will find some helpful information about what each of the genres is supposed to do for you as a reader. Enjoy

Repetend: Alice Doe is a young woman who has an inside look at what it means to make reproductive choices in the world of 2045. An introduction, a sort of mini-autobiography, has been given to help you see inside of her world.

Here I have outlined exactly the order in which I want my reader to navigate the website, as well as helpful tips for getting the most out of reading the project. This is especially helpful for readers who might not be as familiar with the digital platform.

From the Desk of Alice Doe: This piece demonstrates excerpts from Alice's personal online journal. She has pasted some of her entries for you to read about a time in her life where she had to make some very difficult decisions. This piece should be read as the first genre because it will help you as a reader to understand more about her life and the types of choices she has had to make.

The Report: This is the report that Alice wrote about reproductive choices for her Ethics course in college. This report helps to show a student doing some serious questioning and critical thinking. This genre was difficult to write as there is not much research for a future, fictitious world. However, this piece was also based on the current state of affairs.

Encyclopedia: This genre will serve as a resource for you, reader. All terms relevant to this project have been defined as well as brief examples/explanations given. This piece is meant to help you understand what is happening within the project. Hopefully, you will be able to see how limiting the choices are that are listed. I have also included some commentary from Alice on each of the Reproductive Choices.

Public Enemy #1: This genre serves the purpose of giving visual pieces of rhetoric as well as demonstrating some of the more ridiculous aspects in which federal governments use language and strategies to appeal to their audiences. The two pieces under this genre will give

you an example of visual rhetoric that would be available in Alice's world, as well as what could potentially be flawed.

Poetry: This genre shows some of the more personal and emotional feelings of Alice. These three poems express some of the feelings that Alice felt during her pregnancy and directly afterwards. The poems are meant to merely serve as a more abstract form of thinking about choice.

To Peter, With Love: This is a letter that Alice wrote to Peter after his death and after the storking of her daughter, Grace. This letter serves as a bit of closer for Alice, a coming-to of her acceptance of what happened in her life and the choices she made. This is Alice finding a way to move forward and say goodbye, not only to Peter, but to her innocence and, to you, reader.

Each of the above sections describes to the reader exactly what to expect within each of the genres. By incorporating this, I have allowed my reader access into my own thinking process behind the works. A benefit from this is self-reflexive practice. Students must articulate their process as well as any challenges that they may have come across.

The Repetend

After reading both the “Dear Reader” and “Intent” letters, my audience is then directed to move forward into the introduction of the tourguide for the MGP, the repetend. As previously mentioned, my repetend takes the form of a fictional character that I created named, Alice. Alice is the lens for which to view the piece as a whole and through which the reader can gain access to a world they are unfamiliar with. As teachers, we cannot only teach our students of the power of a repetend, but also model what this tourguide looks like and how it can be implemented into the MGP. Emphasizing the importance of clarity in the MGP is crucial. In my own experience, one of the defining characters of a successful MGP is the cohesion of the piece as a whole.

Without a repent, this would be impossible. Therefore, helping students to successfully incorporate this concept from the very beginning will likely lead to less anxiety, less confusion, and more power in writing! Below is the introduction in the voice of my repent, Alice.

They always told us we were the "land of the free"

My name is Alice, and I'm twenty years old. I created this website after completing a project for my Ethics course during my freshman year of college. I had to question a lot of things that I took as fact and took at face value in our society. When I began asking questions, I began questioning answers. I found myself lost and spinning. I'm hoping that by sharing my findings, perhaps you can also start to question your own world and the choices you make each day.

Here you will see the real transition begin in the writing. No longer am I writing from the voice of Taylor Kane, English Education student. Rather, the voice of Alice comes through. This deliberate transition makes it impossible for the writer not to think creatively. In this process, I had to come up with a completely fictitious character and then take on their life. I had to give Alice a name, a backstory, a life history, a past, a present, a future. I had to figure out her motivations and her fears; I had to step into the skin of someone completely new. In doing this, I was forced to think more critically than I ever had before. This was no longer a viewpoint that *I* was defending; this was a viewpoint of someone entirely different.

When I started to ask questions, people started to get angry. I found out a lot about myself that I thought I already had figured out. When you're a teenager, life seems so cut and dry. Everything is spoonfed to you. You don't question what others tell you to do...you just take them as right and do them...especially if it's your parents.

And that's what I did. I got pregnant at fifteen, in my sophomore year of high school. I didn't really have any options of what to do...when I found out, my boyfriend had just recently been Unwound. He wasn't exactly able to be around...and so I had to make the decision that would be best for me.

I ended up having to stork my baby. I kind of thought it all through...talked to my mom....we had this long chat and turns out I was storked too when I was little....so then, it just felt like it was the right thing to do. I was storked...and I had had a pretty good life, you know? Lots of kids are storked. It's the easiest way to make *those* kinds of problems go away...so I did....and now? Well, now, I've been thinking a lot....and I wrote this paper for my Ethics class...one of those silly research ones that you start to BS for the teacher to get a good grade but then halfway though you kinda go....oh damn....

Reading through, as a reader, you can see the shift in voice, tone, and diction. Writing as Alice, I had to take on a completely new vernacular. This encourages students to think critically about the English language. How do we talk when we're with friends? When we're interviewing for a job? When we're Alice, writing personal thoughts in an auto-biography? This method of writing forces students to consider rhetorical conventions of their purpose, audience, message, and ultimately, speaker.

Yeah....that's what happened to me. And now, maybe it will happen to you...

From the Desk of Alice Doe (Journal Entries)

From this point forward, the MGP is told solely from the point of view of the repitend. Each genre is meant to have been written from the point of view Alice, not of myself. This complicates writing for students and really requires them to think outside of their safety nets. Not only must students craft writing that is complex and detailed, but they must do so from a point of

view that is not theirs. This level of complexity allows teachers to see that students are actually engaging in critical thinking and higher-level learning. For this genre, I chose to investigate Alice's "Diary" so I wrote several journal entries depicting her life and her inner thoughts on what was happening within the world of the novel.

But they always say to set yourself as an example for others....if that's what it takes to make a change....I'm willing to give it a try. I took most of these off of my personal blog that I kept on Tumblr....so many are just copied and pasted from a previous Blog...but I figured that was a good way to get my story out..these are all actually from when I was in high school...so please excuse the horrible writing. I would go back and edit them, but it's almost amusing to see how I wrote then, and how I'm writing now. I didn't post all of my HS blogs...that would be a lot of ridiculous ranting and nonsense about a bunch of things that no longer matter. Instead, I've posted the ones that matter the most. Anyway, these are evidences from my journey and the difficult decisions that I had to make.

I began the diary genre by having Alice introduce what her thoughts were of reading her diary a few months after writing it. By doing this, I can have Alice be reflective of her own work, thereby demonstrating my reflection as a writer, but through another voice. Having students write an introduction to each genre offers clarity for the work as a whole and encourages students to make deliberate decisions about the incorporation of each genre; students must justify why the genre is a part of the MGP.

[Akron High School Blog: March 2041-August 2041](#)

[Entry 1:](#)

I guess this is the part were I decide to right a blog about my feelings. I dont really think I would start one of these ever...there really soooo pre-Heartland. I don't understand the need to

right about ur feelings when you can just talk to your computer and record everything. Maybe this will help me work on my writing. My English teacher, Mr. Doors, always tells me to work on my writing because apparently it's not that great. Whatever. I don't think he knows what he's talking about. Just kidding, Mr. Doors. I can improve. I guess. Anyway, this is my 1st post so hopefully I get credit for just doing it. Im so ready to just graduate.

In this first entry, we get a look at Alice and how her writing is very different than my own writing. I establish in this first diary entry that Alice is not a great writer, she has multiple mistakes in her grammar and syntax and does not follow the rules of Standard English. This entry allowed me as a writer to set a starting place for Alice. Because I established her as a student, I was able to have her improve her own writing throughout the work, which benefitted two-fold: 1) I could demonstrate that *I, Taylor Kane the student*, understood Standard English and its uses in formal writing and 2) that I could switch between myself and Alice with a level of clarity. By writing from a voice so different than my own, I was able to showcase to my reader the effects of speaking from someone else's point of view. This is a great teaching moment as it allows for conversation amongst students about stepping into someone else's shoes for a moment and understanding the world from various perspectives; a key component of critical literacy that will be addressed further in this thesis.

Entry 2:

Last week Mr. Doors said that I didn't write very good in my blog post so I had to redo it. So lame. Let me start over: Hi, I'm Alice. I'm a sophomore at Akron High School. I'm dating Peter James who is a JUNIOR. We are in love and are planning to get married when we graduate. Peter is the best. I mean absolutely the best. I love him so much and I cant wait until we get to leave this dunghole of a town. I know a lot of girls say that they love somebody and

people think that they are stupid and dumb. But im not. Me and peter are going to make it. We love each other too much.

Entry 23:

Well, today has been absolutely awful. Found out this morning that Peter is set to be unwound in the next month. His parents told him last night that they signed the paperwork...they wanted him to know so that he could prepare himself. I think its really selfish of them to just rip him away from everything he has here. I mean, don't they see that I love him and that hes everything to me? I was there when it happened...they said that we couldn't possibly love each other because we were too young, but they don't know anything about it. They say that Peter is "too much trouble" but hes really not. He just doesn't focus in school the way that other kids do...hes different...but hes not "trouble". He hasn't done anything bad in his whoel life. Except one time his parents thought he was smoking...but he really wasn't...I was there...I swear he wasn't. but they don't care about any of it. Theyre unwinding him and theres nothing I can do about it. I cant live without peter...I really cant.

In the diary entries, I give further voice to Alice by telling her story and describing her relationship with Peter. This genre came first in my MGP because it is the genre that best gives context to Alice's life and background. Without this genre, the reader might be lost and would not understand who Alice is or why she is important. If I were to have written this genre as an essay, Alice's voice would be lost. Writing in this genre allows me as a writer to make creative choices that can fully demonstrate who Alice is, a young, frightened kid at best, thus highlighting her situation as one more tragic. If this were in an essay format, Alice's voice would be lost as would her passion and her feelings.

Entry 41:

It happened. Peter is gone. I'm alone. And hes gone.

Oh, and its Christmas and I just found out im going to have a baby. peters baby....

Entry 82:

I'm so sick all of the time. All I do is throw up.I feel miserable, and awful, and my head is always pounding. I miss Peter and the little bloop inside of my stomach is always moving, always I can feel it. And it disgusts me, it worries me. It makes me feel dirty and alone and scared. I don't want this little bloop, but I know that I don't have a choice. It was my fault for getting pregnant. I really don't know what to do about it. I have a meeting with a counselor soon, one of those state ones. She should be able to help me decide.

In the last entry, I establish the main problem for the reader. This is the conflict which will drive all of the other genres in the MGP. Alice finds out that she is pregnant and that Peter has passed on. She is at a loss for what to do, and so she must make a decision, thus plummeting her into ther research that led her to create the website (the MGP itself). By setting up the conflict in this genre, I give Alice motivation and drive to create the MGP. Without such, there would be no purpose. As teachers, moments like this can serve as learning lessons for having strong rhetoric in a paper; who is speaking and why are they speaking?

The Report

Because the MGP is not a free-for-all creative writing party, there are opportunities for students to explore expository genres. While Romano writes more so in favor of steering away from exposition in the MGP, I firmly believe that incorporating some type of research/expository essay is perfectly acceptable, and even, helpful. When all is said and done, students do still have to take a final test at the end of their grades to pass state curriculum standards. In these standards,

students are required to be proficient in all of the requirements necessary to write an effective argumentative and expository essay. From the Common Core Standards Initiative:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.B

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.A

Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make

important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.B

Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

While these standards can be relatively interpretive, they call for a very specific writing style in assessment—argumentative and explanatory writing, which is most typically taught via the “five-paragraph essay”. However, the MGP can still achieve these same standards, but in a newer and more creative way. Requiring students to devote one of their genres in the MGP to an expository essay is a great way to incorporate state standards! Students are still able to write creatively and work on honing their skills for standardized writing. Students are also able to get a jumpstart in doing academic research in the critical lens of their MGP. Below is the expository essay that I wrote (as Alice) for my MGP.

Well, I told you it all began with an essay. So here's a copy. Dr. Jones wanted us to "explore a topic in which making a decision is not as easy as right/wrong". I was going to write about smoking cigarettes....because you know how illegal they are...and how all the kids kind of still try them without their parents knowing? But God forbid Dr. Jones show it to the Dean or something. So I wrote about Storking instead....and then Dr. Jones told me to do more research about what life was like before storking...apparently in a research paper you need research....so then...I wrote this. It was really frustrating at first because I storked my baby and I always thought that I made the right decision. But then I kind of started to think more about it, and I think I made that decision because it was the only one available to me. I didn't have any choices, not really.

In the first paragraph, like many of the other genres written by Alice, an introduction to the genre is given. As a student, this was my least favorite genre to write because I am not a fan of writing formal essays (shocking, right?). However, by creating this genre, I was able to give weight to the argument that Alice was making. I had to do my own research and come to my own conclusions, and do so all while maintaining Alice's voice. If you thought writing a research paper was difficult, writing one in the voice of someone else is even more challenging. This challenge encourages students to take a serious look at the research they are doing and the argument they are making. In doing so, students must know their argumentative stance forwards and backwards and be able to defend their reasoning.

Alice Doe

PHI 211

Fall 2045

Making the Choice

Deepak Chopra once wrote, “When you make a choice, you change the future.” Choices are an integral part of our everyday lives. We wake up in the morning and decide whether or not to get out of bed, whether or not to brush our teeth in the shower, what shirt to wear, what brand of cereal to eat for breakfast, and by the time we decide to walk out of the door, we are on our way to making an endless number of decisions just before our mid-morning smoke break. Needless to say, all of these decisions have a direct impact on our daily lives, as small as these decisions may seem. If the smallest of decisions can change the course of one day, what does this say about the bigger and more ethically controversial decisions that we may one day be forced to make? In particular, as women, there will come a time when every one of us will have to make a decision. We are the wombs of the universe; we provide life and we bring it forth to the world. And when we become pregnant, we are forced to make some decisions that can be very difficult.

In our current society there are three choices in regards to what to do with a baby once you find out you are pregnant. You can: carry the baby until birth and keep it, carry the baby until birth and stork it, or carry the baby until birth, wait until it turns 13 and then have it “retroactively unwound”. Regardless of the decision, women must carry the baby until birth. Since the Heartland War, what were formerly known in the old days as “abortions” are no longer legal. All women who test positive for pregnancy must carry their fetus until birth, at which time, only then, can the woman decide the fate of the baby.

This genre gives further background of the context behind Alice’s point of view, but through a more formal approach. This section allows the reader to begin to understand fully what Alice believes; that women’s rights have been impeded upon and that there is a problem in the current society. This meets further requirements of true critical literacy by giving weight to the

disruption of the commonplace. Alice is unhappy with the way things are and is writing in an attempt to change her surroundings.

Making the decision of what to do with a baby once it is born is a tough decision for any woman. Determining whether to keep the baby and raise it or to keep the baby and then have it retroactively divided for the greater good is a choice that many women (and fathers) must take into careful consideration. For some; however, storking seems to be the best option. The idea of storking a baby came from the myth told to many children back before the Heartland War about “where babies come from”. It was said that a stork would carry a baby for a mother and then drop the baby in a bundle on the doorstep. The mother would then take in the baby and raise it as her own; the stork left the precious gift of newborn life. In Greek mythology, these storks were often represented to be carrying the soul with them, dividing souls to families in order to spread them across the universe (Today I Learned). Ironically enough, our society does not believe in Greek mythology, the soul, or any other form of mythical creatures. Also, children don’t ask silly questions like “where do babies come from”.

Our society has tried to promote Storking and Unwinding as methods of effective post-pregnancy contraception. Our government has made claims that these forms of “post-birth decisions” are the safest, healthiest, and most ethically appropriate for women. Propaganda and spokespersons strive to convince the public that before the Heartland War, all women were ruthless and careless in their reproductive decisions which led to waste and immoral choices...choices that would send women to hell along with their unborn babies. I am discussing now of course, the taboo subject of abortion.

After Alice defines what it is she is arguing and gives definition and background to some of the more confusing terms and ideas, Alice is able to establish her own position. In this sense,

from a teacher's perspective, the component of argumentative writing is apparent. By encouraging our students to spend a genre writing in the argumentative style, in an essay format, we are allowing them to still meet the criteria they must know to graduate. Utilizing a research paper in the MGP allows students to see other ways in which an essay could work in the world outside of the classroom. For Alice, this purpose was convincing her audience of her authority as a writer. In this same venue, we, as teachers, can encourage our students to use their argumentative essays for more than just a passing grade.

Before the Heartland War, women had a few more options than women do now. Women were allowed to get abortions if they did not want to go through with their pregnancy, and in some cases, women were allowed to take post-conception contraception such as the Plan B pill that was outlawed right before the Heartland War started due to increased dangerous side effects. It seems as though women had many more choices than we do today. Instead of going through a pregnancy and then having to decide to keep, wait, or drop the baby off on a doorstep, women could save the time, pain, and money and simply terminate their pregnancy in the beginning. However, now that this is no longer a viable option, women are left with decisions that are out of their hands.

The federal government makes the decisions for the women, nowadays. A woman can either keep her baby, stork her baby, or have it retroactively aborted once the child turns thirteen. But who do these choices really benefit? If you can't afford to keep a baby, you are forcing your burden on another family...who is to say that they can take care of your child? And retroactively aborting? We're expected to live with our mistakes for thirteen years, develop relationships with them, AND THEN have their lives terminated? Or we could always just keep the babies, right? That's what the "good" women do. They grow up and do what needs to be done. But what about

those who can't afford to? Birth control isn't accessible. Are we supposed to just refrain from sex? It's 2045...back in 2014, maybe...but now? Everybody's doing it. It's safe now...they have cures for any diseases...there are multiple forms of contraception...it's just difficult to get.

Unintended pregnancy is still a large issue though. "750,000 teens become pregnant each year – the vast majority (82 percent) of these pregnancies unintended" (Advocates for Youth). The amount of underage teens is rising and the amount of storked children is at an all-time high. It's shocking...and it's unnecessary. There need to be healthier, safer options for women to use as resources. There need to be safe places for women to go. It's absurd that in this day in age, there are no safe options. Why are there not federal programs to help young mothers? It's because those who are making the decisions are those who sit pretty with enough money to raise the children their wives become pregnant with. And so it becomes an issue of morality. Those who do get accidentally pregnant do not have options, they do not have money, they do not have ways to live with their mistakes in healthy manners. They are judged; they are scrutinized; they are labeled; and they are left helpless. Something must be done. Something must change.

Furthermore, in this genre, students must also acknowledge additional components of rhetoric such as the three appeals: logos, pathos, and ethos. Students will have to think critically about what to include in their paper in order to effectively convince their reader of their argument. Students will utilize conventions of research, looking up information, finding scholarly sources, and implementing facts and support, to further push their own point. Doing this through the repetend has the added benefit of ensuring that students truly know what their point is and can defend it from another point of view.

Change starts as a simple decision. Change starts as a voice speaking up. Change starts as a spark to a fire. You could be that change. You could make that decision. The decision not for

Abortion or Storking or Unwinding or Adoption or even giving birth. But the decision to question: Why are there no realistic options? Why are women being cast aside? Why don't we matter?

An Encyclopedia of Terms

Halfway through creating my MGP, I began to run out of genres that would be useful for my overall message. While searching through lists of genre ideas from Kelly Gallagher's book that I opened this thesis with, I stumbled across an idea for creating a dictionary of terms. Instead of creating an entire dictionary, I decided to create a genre revolving around the concept of identification of terms. This genre turned into a mini-encyclopedia that not only defined key terms used in the novel and in the world of the novel, but also gave Alice's critique of these terms in regards to women's choices.

Below you will find some terms that I have defined in reference to what I am calling the "Choice Revolution". It's difficult to make informed decisions when you don't know what's going on. I've laid out each of the choices that women have had or still do have in regards to their reproductive rights. In green, you will see where I have listed some problems with each of these choices...and they really aren't choices at all...

It is important to note here that there will be two types of commentary in this genre. First, you will see the Encyclopedia that Alice created (in blue) and then you will see the commentary that Alice made on her Encyclopedia (in green). Finally you will my commentary, as Taylor Kane the Thesis writer, in black. Understanding this before reading ensures that the reader will be able to differentiate between voices in the writing. This skill is very valuable to students because it allows them to understand not only what it is that they are writing but who they are writing to and ultimately, why they are writing in the first place, foundations of rhetoric.

Abortion

"The term "abortion" actually refers to any premature expulsion of a human fetus, whether naturally spontaneous, as in a miscarriage, or artificially induced, as in a surgical or chemical abortion. Today, the most common usage of the term "abortion" applies to artificially induced abortion." (1)

Before the Heartland War, women were allowed to terminate their pregnancy in medical environments. The environments were supposed to be safe places for women to make informed decisions about the future and health of themselves and the baby. However, many women were often harshly judged for making decisions that were the best option for them. Two sides began to emerge: those who were Pro-Life (found Abortions to be immoral and acts of murder) and those who were Pro-Choice (found the decision to be solely up to the woman). These two sides fought for many years and eventually began the Heartland War. As a result of the The Bill of Life, Abortions became illegal. Women are now forced to carry their babies to term before making any decisions.

While this is now illegal, when it was allowed, many women were still harshly criticized for this choice. These women were thought of as "baby killers", of women without morals, of murderers. Women who thought abortion was the only choice for them, were still not free to make this decision. Many states began to pass laws outlawing these abortions (2). Women had a time limit as to when they could abort their fetuses. Women had to decide quickly, and often, without much help. Many women also were unable to find safe ways to abort their babies. Women had to resort to coathanger abortions, unsafe clinics, drastic measures. The World Health Organization believed, before the war, that this was one of the easiest pandemics to

solve...creating an environment for women to make healthy decisions about abortion...yet that never seemed to happen before it was made illegal (3).

By incorporating Alice's comments on the Encyclopedia definitions, I establish them as first-hand sources and her commentary as second-hand sources. Alice is able to provide weight to her argument by providing these definitions (which would have been written by another source, the fictitious encyclopedia writers...which brings about another level of analysis). Her analysis of these definitions is the real source of argument as she is able to critique the social norm (the definitions) and provide her own ideas of enacting social change (her commentary).

Adoption

Adoption was often a process that many used in the days before the Heartland War. Before the War, this process was seemingly easy at first glance. You didn't want your baby, you gave your baby away. However, an issue arose in that many babies were not able to find homes and those that did were often faced with difficulties. Since the Heartland War, Adoption has withered out as a way of dealing with a baby. Adoptions now are expensive. Women often have to pay other families to take in their babies...and the higher the price, the better the family. Unfortunately for many women, this leaves them with choices of spending their life savings on the baby in the hopes that the family will take care of it, or most common, women simply cannot afford to place their children in safe homes. As an alternative to Adoption, Storking has become the new way in order to "give up" one's baby.

Well, this option would be a great one, yet a mother is forced to give up her child and hand them over to a family who would be "more deserving" and more appropriate. Women have the burden of finding someone to adopt their child, oftentimes having no choice but to place their child in the care of the state. These women are also harshly judged, typically by their upper-class

counterparts who see these actions as irresponsible. However, I personally find it to be one of the most responsible choices a woman can make. If a woman knows she cannot care for a child, she should be able to have resources to offer her baby a safe place to live and grow.

Birth (Vaginal/Caesarean)

When a woman carries her baby full-term to birth, the baby can be born in one of two ways: through the vaginal canal or through surgery known as a Caesarean Section (C-Section). Typically a Caesarean Section procedure is done if the baby's or mother's life is in danger.

"A cesarean section is the delivery of a baby through a cut (incision) in the mother's belly and uterus. It is often called a C-section. In most cases, a woman can be awake during the birth and be with her newborn soon afterward." (4)

If this surgery is not needed, most women pass their babies through the vaginal canal. This procedure can cause excruciating pain and can last anywhere from 20 minutes to multiple hours. (3)

This choice is typically taken up by the upper-class counterparts, those who are in the "right place" to care for a child. Although, with the new Unwinding and Storking laws, all women must now undergo child birth if they test positive for pregnancy. However, this law fails to take into account those mothers who would not be able to safely deliver a baby full-term, mothers who became pregnant through rape and violent crimes, or mothers who have miscarriages. The law and government do not take into consideration those women who physically and mentally cannot give birth. Are they supposed to never have sex? Is it their fault? Why make these women suffer when they shouldn't have to?

Storking

A legal option after the passing of "The Bill of Life", Storking has become a staple way for a mother to alleviate herself of the burden of raising a child. Once a mother has carried her child to term, the mother may then wrap the newborn in some type of blanket or covering and then leave the baby on the doorstep of any family of their choosing. If the mother is able to successfully leave the baby on the doorstep without being caught, the baby becomes the responsibility of the family whose doorstep it was left on. If the family catches the mother in the act of leaving her child, the mother must take the baby back and either care for it herself, or pass it along to another family.

Families who find storked babies must take these babies in. There are laws that prevent families from "Re-Storking" children, but it is sometimes difficult for these laws to be enforced. There have been cases of babies being storked around so many times that the babies have fallen ill and passed away.

Well, here's what I did. And looking back, this was a horrible choice. I essentially left my baby for dead on a stranger's doorstep. This is what we have legalized? Just dropping babies on the doorsteps in the cold night to unsuspecting families? What if that family cannot afford to feed another mouth? What if that family is on vacation and can't take in that baby and it dies on its own? Looking back, I often wonder what happened to my daughter. How could a mother just drop her baby like a piece of cardboard onto a concrete step? How can the government allow this to be the case?

In this section of the Encyclopedia, we see Alice questioning the commonplace and the authority that the government has over the commonplace. Alice questions the legislature and the laws that are in place. This questioning further allows the readers to see Alice's point of view

and how she is addressing and counter-arguing her opponent's point of view. This builds Alice's credibility with her reader.

Unwinding

The newest choice offered to women, Unwinding, is a solution that allows parents and guardians to retroactively abort their children through a medical process that divides the child and utilizes the pieces for pro-active societal use. "The Bill of Life" states:

...human life may not be touched from the moment of conception until a child reaches the age of thirteen. However, between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, a parent may chose to retroactively "abort" a child...on the condition that the child's life doesn't "technically" end. The process by which a child is both terminated and yet kept alive is called "unwinding". Unwinding is now a common and accepted practice in society. (5)

To Unwind a child, parents sign a form in triplicate ending the legal responsibility and handing the child officially to the state for Unwinding at a Harvest Camp. This process is irreversible.

Because this choice makes the most sense, right. WRONG. You aren't ready to be a mother? No worries, instead of having a way to end your problem immediately, let's have you carry that unwanted child for 9 months and then live with that child for 13 years. Develop a bond and a relationship with your child, and then when they turn 13, boom. Unwind them. Go ahead and just erase the last 13 years of their life and yours. Now YOU are the bad guy. YOU are the cruel, evil person who had their kid Unwound. Because this choice makes SO much sense. Right. Okay.

By writing the opposing view and counter-argument in the genre that I did, the reader is able to see tangible texts that they are familiar with. While the opposing view and counter-argument could be written in an essay format, having them in this more casual genre allows the

readers to interact in a different way. The believability is established further by using another voice (that of the Encyclopedia writers) to give credibility to the world that Alice is in. Alice's commentary is then fitting as she is commenting on documents that are real in her world. As teachers, modeling this type of writing can show students that their creativity has no limits when it comes to creating genres. Students can build their own world within the novel, further analyzing and expanding upon the text's content.

Public Enemy #1 (Visual Rhetoric)

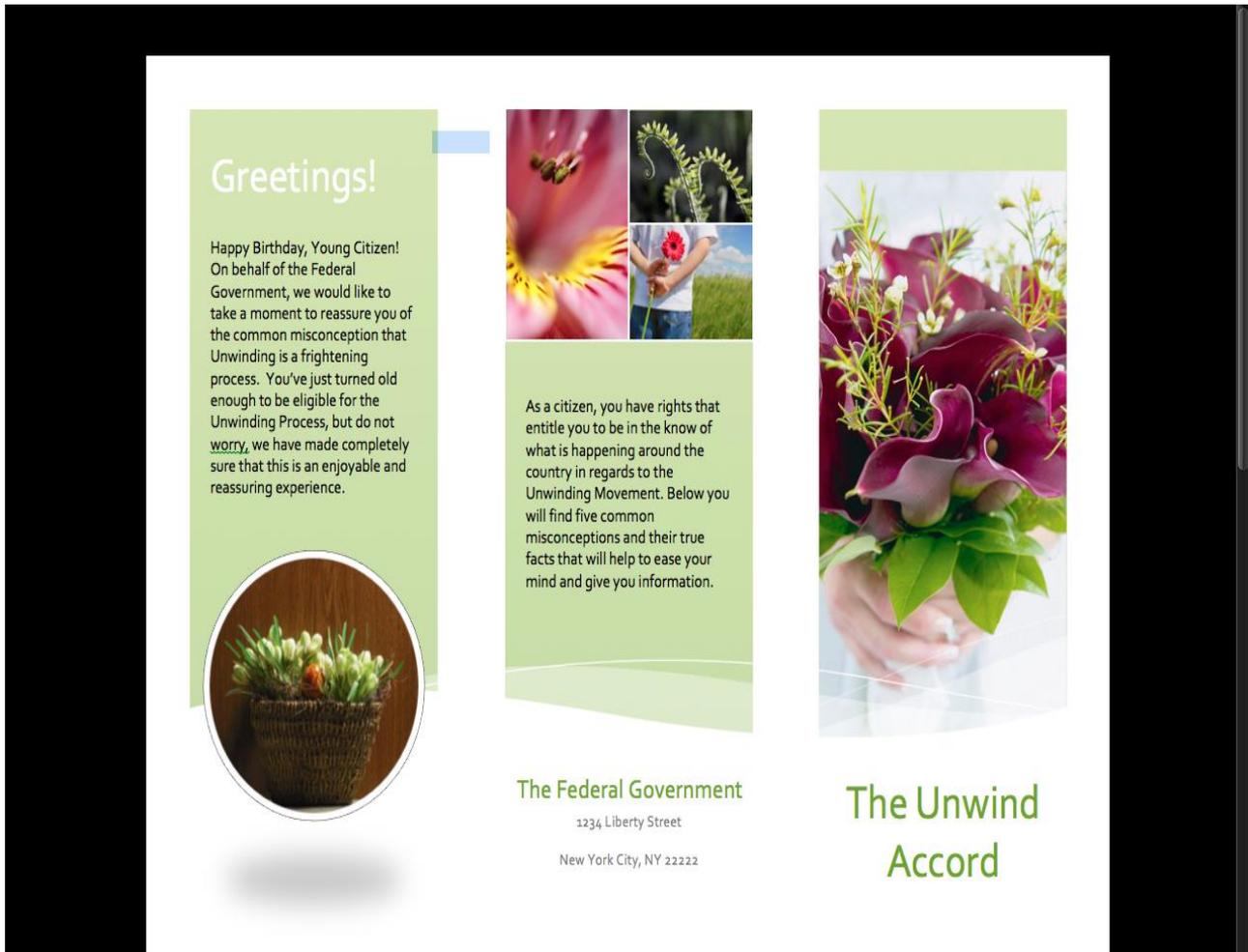
Another common standard that is required of many students is the ability for students to effectively communicate using visual rhetoric. From the Common Core Standards Initiative:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Incorporating visuals into the MGP is excellent for adding creative touches, especially since most MGPs tend to be created on digital platforms. If the MGP is crafted on a digital platform, then there will be a higher tendency for students to explore additional genres, thus ultimately increasing their knowledge base. For my MGP, I decided to incorporate some "government propaganda" as a means to express what the other side of my argument had to say. I had to carefully analyze the opposing side of the argument (against feminism) and create visually persuasive pieces. By thinking about the choices I was making, I was able to effectively create visual rhetoric through propaganda posters.

Image 1: Pro-Government Brochure (Front)



For this genre, I wanted to further explore the voice of the opposing side. I decided to create a brochure that appealed to parents who were thinking of having their children unwound. In creating this brochure, I had to carefully choose my images and writing style. I wrote from the voice of a government official, and so, the language was much more elevated and highly stylistic. In this genre, Alice's voice disappears and the voice of the opposing side arises.

Image 2: Pro-Government Brochure (Back)



Happy 13th Birthday!

We hope that this information gives you a steadier piece of mind and allows you to see more effectively the methods behind Unwinding. Should you have any questions regarding the process please feel free to get in touch with your local representatives. All the best to you on your Birthday!

Myths About Unwinding and The Facts

1. MYTH: Unwinding is painful. FACT: Our trained surgeons and Unwind Technicians have been thoroughly trained to make the Division Experience as comfortable and care-free as possible. Once you are admitted into one of our facilities, we offer therapeutic rest and counseling sessions to ready you for your Division. During the procedure, a number of analgesics and anesthetics are given as well as complete talking step-by-step guidance from one of our trained specialists.
2. MYTH: Unwinding is sac-religious. FACT: Many of our candidates for Unwinding are being Unwound for the very purpose of religion. In cases such as this, we offer these tithes a complete experience suited to their personal needs. At our facilities, we offer religious leaders of all sects as well as spaces for meditation, reflection, and worship. These services are also offered to any other Unwind who would like to utilize them during their stay.
3. MYTH: Unwinding is immoral. FACT: Many philosophers have debated over the years whether or not the process of Unwinding goes against the nature of humanity and the question of right/wrong. Studies have shown that the betterment of society outweighs the betterment of the individual. Therefore, through theories of philosophy such as Utilitarianism and the Social Contract, we find that Unwinding is actually a morally just way to preserve and better society as a whole.
4. MYTH: The soul is lost during the Unwinding Process. FACT: There is no scientific evidence to suggest that a soul even exists. Our trained specialists are sure to save all parts of the human body that are usable and valuable. In this process, there have been no documented accounts of such an item as a soul existing. Should evidence prove otherwise, the process will be re-evaluated to ensure its preservation and division to a new human.
5. MYTH: Unwinding is gruesome and inhumane. FACT: Unwinding has been proven to better the lives of thousands of humans every day. Unwinding is the sole reason many citizens are able to live and be healed. If you find you are to be Unwound, consider it an honor to serve such a vital role in society. Rest assured that no piece of your body will go unwanted or unused. You will not rot away under ground or burn and turn to ash; instead, you will find yourself helping to save and preserve the human spirit for many more years to come.

This genre was a bit difficult to write because it required me to write against the argument I was trying to make in my MGP. I also had to be aware of what would be visually appealing to a reader. Understanding that the government would make different choices than Alice was imperative for deciding what kind of rhetorical choices I, as the writer, would need to make. Having students incorporate visual rhetoric in their MGP not only meets additional standards, but also ensures that students are fully immersed in the world of their text. Visual rhetoric can also add an elegant touch to the digital platform, thus further involving the reader into the world that the writer has created. Visual rhetoric is also another genre that students are exposed to on a daily basis through advertisements, media, and the Internet. By having students

engage in visual rhetoric, they are learning skills that will allow them to question and critique their own worlds around them.

Image 3: Governmental “Storking” Poster

So... You Want to Stork Your Baby?

5
Reasons It's a Good Idea

DISTRIBUTED BY
Your Federal Government

1. **Your baby will be safer.** You will get to choose the environment that your child will grow up in! You have the say in what neighborhood, schools, and people your baby will be around as they grow.
2. **Your baby will have better parents.** If you're considering storking, you know that having and raising a baby is not the best option for you. You know that you need to allow a family who you have researched and can trust to do the job for you!
3. **You can rest at ease knowing that your baby will be loved.** You won't ever have to worry about being "good enough" for your child. You know that a new family will be graciously accepting of your baby.
4. **You will be free to continue on with your life plans, uninterrupted!** Odds are, you weren't prepared for a baby anyway! Now you can continue on with your life! You can attend school, start a career, and wait for the right time to have your own family.
5. **You will have given a gift to an unexpected family!** Think of the honor and excitement a family will share knowing that you have trusted your precious bundle of life with their care!

The final piece of visual rhetoric that I incorporated into my MGP was a propaganda poster of why women should stork their babies. This piece of propaganda further solidified the

opposing side of Alice’s argument and allowed the viewer to see what would have been effective in the world of the text to convince young mothers like Alice.

Poetry

Perhaps the most creative genre that I incorporated into my MGP was my poetry section. This was a huge risk for me as a writer because I do not consider myself to be a proficient poet. I am not confident in my poetry writing abilities, and at first, I really hesitated sharing this section with the class and in my small peer conference groups. However, this is the purpose of the MGP, for writers to take risks and to explore unfamiliar genres. Through writing the poetry, I was able to see that there was value to my writing in this genre and that this genre was able to convey my message in an entirely different way than any of the other genres did. Encouraging students to take on an unfamiliar genre is the essence of a successful MGP.

“Simplicity”

Running and running and running away

Hot air sticking to my face.

Dodging and panting and chasing and jumping

Cannot breathe. Air so thick. Sun so hot.

Sweating and panting and gasping and grasping

I taste of salt and dirt and blood

Running and leaping and crashing and falling

Ground so cold, dirt so hard, failure so simple

“Grace”

The night is dark.

The wind is cold.

December air

crisp and

harsh.

A woman's skin is not meant for such cruel weather.

I reassure

this is the best choice.

I am not wrong.

The light is on.

A mother is home.

A woman's mind is not meant for such cruel thoughts.

Ding-dong goes the bell.

Pitter-pat go my feet.

I run and dodge and duck and hide.

Hands tremble.

Breath still.

A woman's heart is not meant for such cruel decisions.

It's a man.

He looks down.

Quiet.

Still.

A deep sigh.

A woman's eyes are not meant for such cruel tears.

He picks her up.

My precious bundle.

Grace.

He smiles.

Pinpricks.

A woman's soul is not meant for such a cruel life.

“Stolen”

No more rights, they were stolen.

My body no longer, stolen, stolen.

Met a boy, fell in love.

Late one night, fell in love.

The next morning, one big mistake.

My purity no longer, honest mistake.

Confused and alone, unsure and scared.

Tired, lost, afraid, and nobody cared.

Before the war, problems went away.

Unwanted mistakes, gone the next day.

I am alone, the boy gone.

Hurt, tired, alone, innocence gone.

Must pull through, nine long months.

Must be strong, nine short months.

Cry. Hurt. Tears. Pain: so tired.

Tired. Tired. Tired. Sleep. Tired. Tired.

Cannot kill it, my rights stolen.

Cannot keep it, its life stolen.

The time has come, push, cry.

Left on a doorstep, to die.

Can't go back now, time stolen.

No longer a girl, childhood stolen.

No longer a woman, rights stolen.

By incorporating poetry into my MGP, I was able to tell a more aesthetic version of what Alice was experiencing than I would have with any other genre. Because Alice's experience is deeply emotional, and her emotions play one of the key motivations that drive her choices and her argument, exploring those emotions in poetry was a fascinating experience. This exploration allowed me as a writer to take some risks in exploring Alice's inner voice. As teachers, allowing students the freedom to engage in genres known more commonly as the "fiction genres", can open up many doors into their analysis of the text as a whole.

To Peter, With Love (A Letter)

Because I began my MGP with two letters, I thought it best to end the MGP with a final letter. In this closing letter, Alice is able to complete her journey for her audience by coming to peace with what has happened in her life and with that of all women in her world. This letter allowed me, as a writer, to bring my argument full circle and to close out the piece with a larger

message for my readers. Encouraging students to be intentional in their closing piece can bring to light the key cornerstone of what critical literacy is: enacting change within society.

I'm not quite sure where to begin. I'm not even sure if you can read this letter. Maybe the person who has your eyes will stumble across it. Or the person who has your brain. Or perhaps the person who has your ears will hear this read aloud. I truly hope the person who has your heart finds their way to these words. It's crazy of me to think that you will understand this, that you will know what I'm saying...what I'm trying to convey. But Peter, I have to try.

I need you to know how much you meant to me...how much you still mean to me. I need you to know that I love you, and I will always love you. It's terrible what happened to you. It's horrible the things that they did to you, Peter. You were the most beautiful person I ever knew...inside and out. You were honest and true and good and if souls are real, yours was perfect.

I hope where you are is beautiful. I read in a book once, "Thomas Edison's last words were 'It's very beautiful over there'. I don't know where there is, but I believe it's somewhere, and I hope it's beautiful." I hope you are there Peter. I hope you are in that beautiful place. I know your body and your mind are still here, roaming this Earth lost and scattered. But I hope *you* are someplace quiet, and beautiful, and perfect.

I'm writing twofold, Peter. I miss you of course, but I also need you to know about Grace. She was your daughter, Peter. I found out just two weeks after you were gone. Oh, Peter. If you were still here things would be so different for us. I had to stork her, Peter. She's gone now. But I know that you're watching her from up there. I know that you're going to take care of her, Peter. And I tried my best...I found a nice house, a nice family for her to stay with. They're the Lassiters. Do you remember them? I think the youngest boy went to school with your brother.

Troubled kid, but a good family. I know that they will take care of her, Peter. I know that she will be everything that she was meant to be.

I didn't have a choice, Peter. I wanted to keep our baby girl, but I couldn't do it alone. I'm so young...and we made some stupid decisions. But looking back, they really weren't that stupid. Consequences don't seem real when you're so young and alive....we had the whole world to look forward to. But things changed so quickly, and I had no options. I did what was best for her; I gave her up. Please don't be upset with me, Peter. If you were still here, it'd be so different. If you were still here, we'd be a happy family.

I think of you everyday, Peter. I see you in everything around me. You're in the trees and the wind. You are in every single breath that I take. I love you, Peter. And I miss you more than I could ever put into words.

I will never forget you.

With love,

Alice

This final letter from Alice brings closure to the reader. Alice is able to come to terms with her place in society and with the things that she cannot change. She is able to give her voice a place to resonate, and she is able to leave some impactful departing words on her reader. For students, a closing genre (whether a letter or something else) is important to bring the piece to close. Working much like the conclusion paragraph on an essay, the final genre can restate the main argument as well as leave the reader with a sense of significance for the piece as a whole. This concluding letter from Alice leaves the reader with a sense of closure; we know what Alice did and why she did it. The reader also might walk away feeling a bit disturbed by this piece

overall. There is definitely something wrong in Alice's society, and Alice has now encouraged the reader to take part in the social change.

Teaching Strategies for New Teachers: So How do We Implement This?

The Multi-Genre Project (MGP)

So, the larger question that comes from all of the research about the Multi-Genre Project is how to effectively implement it into the high school English classroom. With all of the standards that must be met, many of which are continuously changing, incorporating such an extensive project might be difficult, right? Actually, the MGP is very effective in reaching students on a multitude of levels in a short amount of time that could not otherwise be reached by normalistic types of teaching. Harvey Daniels, Steven Zemelman, and Nancy Steineke in their book *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide* also discuss the benefits of higher-thinking that are achieved through the MGP. They write:

Multigenre projects are the very embodiment of the going-deeper-and-thinking-higher mindset. And remember, though these projects feel like a refreshing departure from the old-style term paper, MGPs incorporate all the same cognitive tasks... Kids have to put their findings *into their own words*, and do it across many different text formats. Careful documentation and attribution are required at the end of each project. Spelling, grammar, and style definitely do count—after all, this is formal, public writing. Plus, multigenre projects are 100 percent plagiarism proof. What's not to like? (Daniels 205)

The MGP incorporates the higher levels of thinking and offers students a means to investigate critical literacy in a holistic way than through multiple assignments that might be disjointed through a unit. While these projects are a more creative and non-traditional form of teaching

writing, they do provide many benefits such as: improved writing standards, improved sense of self-awareness in writers, creative flexibility, greater awareness and realization to genres of literature, developed writing skills (mechanics and grammar), advancements in digital literacy and technology, adherence to Common Core, national, and state standards, and feelings of accomplishment for students and teachers.

The MGP requires students to investigate multiple genres and engage in those multiple genres through a critical lens for only one text. Many English classrooms now focus their units based around texts, moving from one text to another and incorporating formal assessment in the form of an exam or an essay (which usually takes on the form of five-paragraphs with textual evidence). The MGP allows teachers the structure of continuing to teach via texts but also gives them the flexibility to incorporate many genres at once.

So how exactly can the MGP be implemented into a classroom? In my own classrooms the plan that I envision would be to have the MGP be the end-of-term final assessment. Thereby, allowing the MGP to be a work-in-progress throughout the semester that students build on. Students would add to their MGP as our class worked throughout the term. I would have my students in small book groups that would also become their peer-conferencing groups for writing workshops. Each group would read a novel from an approved list and create the MGP based around that novel. I would allow for weekly time dedicated for the groups to meet. Students would add genres, based around their group novel, throughout the term as we studied them as a full class. For example, during week eleven, my class will complete a unit on poetry. We will study modern poetry, Petrarchan sonnets, and Shakespearian sonnets. At the end of this unit, or week, students would work in their book club groups to come up with a poem or two of their own devising (based on the new knowledge they have gained about poetry conventions) to add to

their MGP. This would continue on as our class studied multiple genres and styles of writing. In this way, the information that is needed to be taught, can be taught, and students can still reap the advantages of having a long-term project they can fully engage in.

Critical literacy is a key factor in the process and completion of a successful MGP. Critical literacy is also one of the fundamental concepts that students must be able to partake in. Lewison writes extensively about critical literacy and encourages students to take “four steps: 1) to disrupt the commonplace, 2) interrogate multiple viewpoints, 3) focus on sociopolitical issues, and 4) take action and promote social justice” (Lewison 382). These four components of critical literacy are met in the MGP as students must take a stand and disrupt the status quo by interrogating the problem through a lens of their choice, typically one with which they either do not identify or that they do not know much about. Students are then able to focus on sociopolitical issues and take action in the form of creating a project geared around some type of social justice. In my MGP, I disrupted the commonplace by questioning the rights of women in dystopian society and interrogated points of view of my own (feminism) and those against (anti-feminist, governmental views) my own. I further went on to focus on the sociopolitics of gender and women’s rights and finally made a call to action through the creation of the MGP for an audience to engage with. The MGP is able to achieve all four components of critical literacy in one go, engaging students fully with larger educational pedagogy.

In particular, the MGP can be done in either its full form, in small groups, or can even be condensed to a mini-version. One of the greatest benefits is that it is highly elastic, meaning that it can be used for virtually any curriculum or unit plan needs. Tom Romano writes on this subject, “The time students spend on the multigenre project varies depending on the other demands of the curriculum and the teacher’s goals” (Romano 16). Romano has seen teachers

expand the multigenre project over the course of an entire semester and over the course of a few weeks. Fortunately, the MGP has unique properties which can allow it to extend over the entire course of a semester, or merely over the course of one text or unit. As high school English teachers, we can utilize the MGP to our advantage by incorporating it into our lessons in whatever fashion we see best working for our students.

Troy Hicks, technology educator, writes in his book *Crafting Digital Writing*, "The question is no longer whether we should use technology to teach writing; instead we must focus on the many ways that we must use technology to teach writing" (Hicks 2). The MGP fully incorporates digital literacy within the classroom. As so many teaching standards are requiring more and more exposure and proficiency in technology, the MGP is an excellent way to incorporate these technological conventions into the classroom. Placing the MGP on a digital platform such as a blog or a website is a way for students to keep their work organized, easily edit/revise/change their work, and to get more creative with their rhetorical choices. Digital platforms allow students the ability to incorporate images, audio, video, hyperlinks, resources, and interactive engagement. With students who are growing up at an alarmingly fast technological rate, it is important to ensure that digital literacy is taught in our English Language Arts classrooms. Students need to understand the choices behind digital rhetoric and how those choices benefit or detriment their message.

Teacher-Student Conferencing

As exciting and innovative as the Multi-Genre Project is, it cannot be completed to its full potential without the assistance of teacher-student conferencing. Because the Multi-Genre Project is largely an independent piece of extended writing, it is important to ensure that students have support to come to with questions and with ideas for completion. Setting aside time for

individual teacher-student conferencing does take a lot of time, often, time that we might not have to spare with how many other assignments and lessons we must do in the unit. However, ensuring that students have a chance to receive feedback from their assessor is imperative. With how extensive this project is, it is important that students are able to meet with their teacher in order to 1) clarify any questions about the project guidelines, 2) seek feedback in the form of “checking in” to ensure that they are on-track for completion, 3) to discuss their grades for the project, and 4) to advance their writing repertoire and to have a safe space to discuss experimental writing and more risqué writing choices. These four outcomes provide a foundation for students to succeed with the MGP. Students need to have a chance to discuss with their teacher each of these four components in order to produce the best possible MGP. Each of these four components offers multiple benefits for student success.

First, having a time for students to meet to ask questions and to clarify project deadlines is important in ensuring that students are clear of what they are expected to do. The MGP is a very complex piece of writing. It requires students to write in multiple genres (genres that are often unfamiliar and new to students), think critically about a text, and find a cohesive way to string together all of the genres. Because of the complex nature of this project, there is quite a bit of room for students to become confused or to not clearly understand the criteria for completion. Alleviating these concerns for students not only shows care and dedication to their understanding of the project, but it also allows the teacher to serve as a resource for students during completion of the project so that students have every opportunity to succeed.

Second, teacher-student conferencing allows students to seek feedback and “check in” with their projects. Due to the unique nature of every student’s project being different, there needs to be a way for students to ensure that their project is working well to convey their overall

message. Providing a space for students to talk about their writing and receive feedback about whether or not their ideas are working from an outside view is especially important for the fluidity and the cohesiveness of the overall project. Oftentimes students hit road blocks with the MGP and need a higher source of feedback than simply their peer writing groups. As teachers, we have access to knowledge above our students' understanding and we have the means to offer them objective, outside feedback. This type of feedback is essential to help students understand the rhetoric of how an outside reader sees their project.

All writers, including student writers, need to draft out and revise their work. Students also need non-graded feedback on these drafts...as teachers, many of us may be hesitant to give up the pressure of a grade for fear that our students will not take the writing seriously. Again, I say that we must trust our students (Urbanski 84).

There is an importance in providing students with a safe space to ask questions. Especially with a piece like the MGP, there *will* be questions. Students must know that they are in a place where these questions are valued and that they will receive helpful feedback to answer these questions.

Third, grades hold immense value for many students. Many students see grades serving as the "payment" for the "labor" they do. Unfortunately, the system of education and the politics of education have left students with the impression that they are only in class to earn a certain grade. While teachers know that there is much more happening in a classroom than students earning a numerical score or letter, for students, the difference between an "A" and a "B" can feel like the end of the world. Taking the time to have one-on-one teacher-student conferences is a great way to instill into the student that the grade is much less important than the growth that is demonstrated during the process of the project. For these students, allowing them the opportunity to discuss their concerns about grades can alleviate unneeded stress to allow the student to focus

their energy on creating the best project possible. This is also an excellent time to explain to students some of the pedagogy behind grades, allowing them to understand that if the work is done well, then the grade will surely follow right behind.

Finally, teacher-student conferences allow for perhaps the most important benefit—giving students a safe-space to discuss advanced writing techniques. For most students, writing in any genre other than an essay can be very challenging. There are a lot of risks involved and many students will be leaping out of their comfort zone. In these conferences, teachers can share their own MGP progress and their own rough starts as a way to encourage students that their writing *will* get to a polished stage. Setting up these conferences as safe spaces for writing process discussion will build trust in the teacher-student relationship as well increase the awareness of the student as a writer. Having conversations that take a step back from the politics of teacher-student relationships and the formal behaviors that accompany this relationship, will allow students to see their teacher as a fellow writer, thinker, and human being. Breaking down the wall, while remaining professional of course, can encourage students to take risks with their writing and to experiment to find what skills will work best for them in their own writing process. For many students, this process is new and uncharted waters. Having a conversation with someone who has already swam much of those waters will allow students the confidence to dive in the deep-end headfirst.

Peer Conferencing

The incorporation of small group work for peer writing conferences can prove to be one of the cornerstones of a successful MGP. Because the MGP does involve so much writing, and because that writing is so stylistic and often very new for students, it is helpful, and even beneficial, to encourage students to share their work in progress with others going through the

same situation. Students should have support systems while completing a project of this caliber. Therefore, the MGP works best when paired with effective peer conferencing. Peer conferencing can be quite a difficult task to have high school students undertake, especially when peer conferencing has not been previously taught or modeled. Incorporating the idea of collaboration is an effective strategy when it comes to engaging students in peer conferences.

Theories have shown that the best way to improve writing is through collaboration and peer conferencing. Andrea Lunsford, Writing Center theorist at Stanford University discusses collaboration in *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*. She identifies key benefits of collaborating during the writing process:

1) Collaboration aids in problem finding as well as problem solving. 2) Collaboration aides in learning abstractions. 3) Collaboration aids in transfer and assimilation; it fosters interdisciplinary thinking. 4) Collaboration leads not only to sharper, more critical thinking (students must explain, defend, adapt), but to deeper understanding of *others*. 5) Collaboration leads to higher achievement in general. 6) Collaboration promotes excellence. And 7) Collaboration engages the whole student and encourages active learning; it combines reading, talking, writing, thinking; it provides practice in both synthetic and analytic skills (Murphy 73).

While teacher comments and teacher-student conferences can be helpful, students conferencing with other students offers benefits in terms of getting helpful and realistic feedback. Encouraging students to conference together is an excellent way of not only ensuring that students are receiving feedback, but also, that students are able to give effective feedback. In this way, students are able to articulate their knowledge two-fold. Students must be able to give feedback

that is relevant and correct in terms of Standard English, and students must be able to receive criticism and implement the changes and new ideas effectively into their writing.

By utilizing the language of Peter Elbow, students are able to get the most out of their peer writing conferences. Peter Elbow, an English professor and Writing Program director at The University of Massachusetts Amherst, discusses in his book *Sharing and Responding*, the many ways that students can offer each other effective feedback in peer conferences. Elbow's methods rely very heavily on the importance of students using specific language and knowing exactly what type of feedback that they want to hear from their peers. Allowing students to choose the feedback that they want to hear serves two purposes: 1) it ensures that students are getting feedback that is useful to them and 2) it provides an avenue for students to claim their own agency over their writing. By allowing students to choose the feedback that they think will be most helpful to their own writing, students are able to receive valuable feedback to improve their writing; feedback that will help them achieve the results they desire. If a student feels confident about their introduction but lacks confidence in their transitions between ideas, the feedback that would be most useful would be feedback on ways to improve transitions and to help the paper read smoothly. When students choose the feedback that they want, students are able to create a sense of pride in their writing; they become more invested with the success of the writing and with the development of the writing process.

Final Thoughts and Impacts:

The purpose behind this thesis is not to tell teachers how to teach their students or to claim which type of assignments work best. The fact is that every classroom is different, every teacher is different, every school system is different, and ultimately, every learner is different. The larger purpose behind this investigation is to articulate ways in which the MGP works to

teach writing in a new and creative way. The MGP is an effective tool to incorporate students of any grade, learning level (Inclusion, Honors, Gifted, Regular), ability, gender, race, sexuality, and language. Unlike other assignments, the MGP does not discriminate against any population of student. Its rigorous standards call for every student to go above what is expected of them in their own ways; this project pushes the boundaries and standards and forces students to think critically and creatively.

The benefits of this type of teaching are four-fold: 1) students have access to higher level thinking, 2) students have a project in which they must demonstrate growth and will ultimately have a sense of pride about, 3) students are pushed to succeed and surpass any restrictions that might have otherwise been placed on them, and 4) this project does meet all standards already in place in the classroom that have been deemed necessary as skills for students to learn. Apart from these student benefits, teachers also reap benefits of 1) assessing individual growth in student projects, 2) assessing unique projects that are not repetitive, therefore keeping grading accurate and fresh, 3) building relationships with individual students as well as with the larger classroom community, and 4) acknowledging and taking part in the ever-changing educational pedagogy, investing in teaching as a profession and ensuring that students will be successful.

Multi-Genre writing, paired with effective teacher-student and peer conferencing is an innovative teaching practice that immerses students in critical literacy skills that will follow them throughout their lives, whether they attend college or go straight into the workplace. The MGP is merely a stepping stone into the vast world of high school writing. However, it is a solid stepping stone that does not sink under the pressure of mediocre and repetitive writing instruction like the “five paragraph essay”. There are places for the type of writing that is test-derived and while that type of writing is a great foundational skill, it does not allow for students to achieve their

maximum potential as writers. Therefore, placing those foundational skills on the tool belt of writers and giving them the blueprints to something greater, something creative, will ultimately ensure that they are not building houses made of sticks, but rather, building castles out of crystal and marble and any other substance they can think of.

Accepting the fact that the pedagogy of English teaching is changing is essential. As teachers, we have taken a vow, an oath to teach students to the best of our abilities. As such, we must take the time to sharpen our abilities and to ensure that we are up-to-date with what will make our students the most successful. Dawn Latta Kirby and Darren Crovitz, two past English teachers and Writing Program directors, write in their book *Inside Out: Strategies for Teaching Writing* about the importance of doing writing rather than talking about writing.

That's our model for teaching writing. We don't just *talk about* writing; we write. We don't just *talk about* various texts and genres; we write them...we understand by *doing*, not by having a flyover. Get in and get dirty and get to work with the writing, reading, reflecting, drafting, crafting, and learning to be a more literate person (Kirby 88).

It is time for us to stop talking about how we're going to teach writing, and time for us to actually take action to teach writing in new ways. Incorporating creative writing and student-led assignments like the Multi-Genre Project allow students the opportunities to succeed and create their own successes. Daring to get messy in writing is imperative. Providing students with the instruction, tools, and support to stop writing safely and to start writing creatively is the first step in preparing students for the real world. It's time to stop writing safely and to start thinking creatively outside of the box.

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