

Work in Linguistic Justice: Contextualizing Code-Meshing

Instructor Note: This activity could be used in any course that is open to code-meshing in student (and professor) writing, ideally in conversation with other work related to linguistic justice. The learning outcomes include being able to identify code-meshing and its inclusive aims in Green's piece, and also in students' own lived experiences, with the goal for a future, larger writing project to be including code-meshing in a work of public-facing scholarship. Please note that—following Green—I deliberately used a non-scholarly/colloquial expression in questions 4 and 5, which might not feel like a code-meshing move that works for everyone. However, I would encourage instructors to employ some code-meshing in the questions to both model this for students and to reinforce the tenets of Green's essay. Please also note that the assignments listed in question 5 might differ in your course and could need adjusting.

Please read Green, "THE RE-EDUCATION OF NEISHA-ANNE S GREEN: A CLOSE LOOK AT THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF "A STANDARD APPROACH," THE BENEFITS OF CODE-MESHING, AND THE ROLE ALLIES PLAY IN THIS WORK" *Praxis* 14.1 (2016), available at <http://www.praxisuwc.com/green-141>.

1. How does Green describe language as embodied (how does she relate it to her hair, for example, or other physical conditions)? What does this suggest about the relationship between language and identity?
2. Based on Green's essay and your own experiences as a writer/student/human being, what assumptions do people make about one another based on their use of language? Does your perspective about these situations change after reading Green's essay? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. What are the names of the four different varieties of English Green identifies as the codes she uses? What different varieties of English—or other languages—can you speak? How many different forms of language do you use on a daily basis, and do you find yourself having to change your code based on who you are speaking with?
4. How does Green define code-meshing? Please list at least three examples from Green's essay where Green uses different codes. What purpose do you think they serve? What meanings do some of these moments capture that might not be available in "Standard American English" or "the Queen's English" (for me, it's the difference between saying an exuberant "Hells Yeah!" compared to "Sounds great!")? How do you, as a reader, respond to these examples of code-meshing?
5. We all employ code-meshing in our everyday life. Have you ever used code-meshing in a school assignment? You are welcome to do so in my class—Hells Yeah!—especially for forward-facing scholarship like the Discipline Project and/or the Final Multimodal Project, because these can help you connect with your audience. If given the opportunity to use code-meshing in your writing for my class, would you try it? Why or why not?

ENGH 302: Final Assignment: Multimodal Project

The final Multimodal Project for my ENGH 302: Advanced Composition courses were developed in conversation and collaborating with my colleagues in the composition program, Jessie Matthews and Tawnya Azar. I wanted to provide a final writing project for the ENGH 302 Advanced Composition

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course that would help springboard my students into their chosen field with confidence in their critical thinking, reasoning, and writing abilities.

Thus, in consultation with my colleagues, I sought to develop a final writing project that would serve my students well as they embarked on the job market and in their career paths. The final multimodal project offers students the opportunity to put together a project—a podcast, a video with animation and/or voice-over, a PowerPoint presentation with audio recording, to cite a few examples—in their chosen field that demonstrates their research knowledge and advanced skills in composition. I encourage students to use this presentation as an example of their work in the field when they apply and interview for jobs, and I have had former students report to me that they have been awarded jobs due to the fact that their potential employers were impressed by their multimodal project from my class as exemplary of their work. The project uses the same scaffolded approach, including the Annotated Bibliography assignment, the Issue, Audience, and Genre worksheet—both developed by the Composition Program—as well as a draft that tries out two different multimodal approaches before development of the final multimodal project itself.

I believe that it is important to help our students think beyond the university, as Mason encourages students and faculty both to do, and I believe that this final multimodal project connects my students to crucial aspects of their field and profession—especially as they have the latitude to choose to write about whatever subject in their field that they feel is of greatest interest, importance, and urgency to them. By offering a multimodal format instead of a more “traditional” five-paragraph or the like writing assignment, I am encouraging them to use modes in their field that will be of use and relevance to them for many years—and I am able to provide feedback to them in the lower-stakes classroom environment (compared with on-the-job itself). By offering several different modes for them to complete this assignment, I also encourage them to think about which modes (PPT, a poster, a podcast, a video, for some examples) would be the most useful to them in the career paths. Some students who are really gifted in tech, for example, create beautiful in-depth web pages. Students who are more familiar with business and marketing tend to want to create a PPT. And, students who work in more creative fields seem drawn to video presentations. However, while playing to students’ own strengths and the expectations of their fields, I also ask them to try out at least two different modes as they are drafting this project—because I do want them to flex their intellectual muscles to think about different ways they might present the same information, and sometimes they even choose a different modality after experimentation!

ENGH 302: Final Assignment: Multimodal Project

Overview

The final project for this course (worth 20% of your final grade) is a multimodal project, a public-facing composition that uses **multiple modes of communication to reach a popular audience**. It also interweaves what you have learned in our course about **public scholarship, scholarly research, and rhetorical situations**, in addition to the work that you have already completed in your Discipline Project, Annotated Bibliography, and Issue, Audience, and Genre Analysis. **The goal is to share the research that you have already completed through these assignments AND your ideas for future research on that topic through a multimodal genre of your choice.** You will present your final multimodal project to the class on Canvas.

I include this introduction to the project to help orient students to the task, the purpose, the trajectory, and the learning outcomes listed above (highlighted).

This project will ask you to consider: (1) your audience (using the questions you answered in the Issue, Audience, and Genre Analysis as the foundation) and (2) your digital technology options for

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creating engaging multimodal compositions. Below is a list of viable options for this kind of project, but you may also propose an alternate genre to me if you have another idea.

Multimodal simply means “multiple modes or forms of communication.”

Some modes include:

1. Linguistic: vocabulary, structure, grammar of oral/written language
2. Visual: color, vectors, and viewpoint in still and moving images
3. Audio: volume, pitch, and rhythm of music and sound effects
4. Gestural: movement, facial expressions, and body language
5. Spatial: proximity, direction, position of layout, and organization of objects in space.

This list helps define several different broad areas for what can count as “multimodal” for the purposes of my class—and beyond.

Wherever your career path takes you in this digital age, it is highly likely that you will need to be able to produce professional content in different online formats; additionally, communicating scholarly research to a wider audience is an important skill, especially as it can provide a valuable link between the academy and a wider public.

I think this paragraph is of particular importance, given that it states directly how I imagine this project contributing to students’ achievements beyond our classroom and in their chosen fields.

Whatever genre you choose, you will need to actually create your multimodal project you propose, using appropriate software, and share it with the class in a format that is easily accessible to us (in other words, please do not share links or file types that require us to set up accounts or have specific types of software to access—accessibility is one goal of this kind of presentation after all!). You are welcome to take screenshots of your Tweets, for example, or share a video-recording through a YouTube link, among many other forms of access.

Yes: accessibility is a really important facet of this project, so encouraging students to think about things like captioning, clear and appropriately sized texts and images, and other ways that a diverse population can access their materials sets the tone now for work that students will complete for my class—and beyond it, too.

Assessment

Your grade will be based on the following criteria, which encompasses the quality of your content, the quality of your mode of presentation, and your attention to conventions of accessibility and citations.

Your Multimodal Project should:

1. Clearly present the research that you completed as part of your Annotated Bibliography assignment
2. Make a strong and persuasive case for your proposed future research
3. Be both engaging and professional
4. Meet the accessibility guidelines outlined in our Blackboard module
5. Include only original or ethically source media with appropriate attribution

I think it is important to be clear about both the expectations of the assignment, and what I will be looking for as I score and comment on the presentations. This short list helps students see the information quickly, and the longer discursive section below helps students dig into these matters with more detail and precision.

Form as well as content matters in this assessment. Even if you have an excellent script, if your video is blurry or fails to include the other genre requirements of a digital video (like a channel name, episode name, description with citations), it will not receive full marks. The same goes for the opposite scenario—a high quality video with poor information.

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The main criteria for grading the Multimodal Project is that your digital content meets the genre conventions for the genre that you chose, that it is substantial (in other words, not just one tweet if you chose that form of social media, for example), and that it communicates your knowledge in an engaging manner.

Because ENGH 302 is, after all, a writing class, I include this paragraph to make it clear that the expectations are for a developed, sustained, well-researched project. While it can—and should be—an enjoyable and even creative experience, I want to be sure that students are also aware that there should be depth and development to whatever mode(s) they choose.

Assignment Components include:

1. Your Project Plan
2. Draft Content
3. Multimodal Proposal
4. Multimodal Project itself
5. Replies to your peers

This short list gives students a checklist that they can follow as they complete the different components and stages of this project.

Assignment Rubric:

Presentation of Research	Points: 5 Argument's scope is clearly defined and limited through a provocative thesis; each paragraph/point examines an aspect of this thesis; argument proceeds logically, in an organized manner while maintaining readers' interest; strong conclusion that expands on	Points: 3.75 Argument is clearly defined, but may exceed a given topic or some important points remain implicit; thesis is interesting but may be obvious; demonstrates some organization, but the links between paragraphs/points and thesis could	Points: 2.5 Argument is interesting but may be broad; unclear organization and/or unclear transitions. Conclusion merely restates the thesis.	Points: 1.25 Argument is overly broad. Connections between paragraphs are implicit rather than defined by unfolding the argument in logical fashion.
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	some of the broader implications of the thesis derived from the Literature Review.	be stronger.		
Proposal of Future Research	Points: 5 Presenter makes a clear case for the importance of future research in this arena, and both defines their proposal of future research and uses compelling evidence to supports their proposed area of inquiry.	Points: 3.75 Proposal of future research features some ideas for further inquiry; these may require more evidence or explanation, and/or connection to the Literature Review.	Points: 2.5 Presenter gestures toward areas of future research, but these remain underdeveloped, too general, or opaque.	Points: 1.25 Proposal of future research is merely mentioned, though not developed or explained.
Tone and Style: Engaging and Professional	Points: 5 Few, if any, grammatical or mechanical errors; clear, lucid, elegant writing/presentation style.	Points: 3.75 Some grammatical or mechanical errors; presenter demonstrates knowledge but not necessarily mastery of style.	Points: 2.5 Several grammatical and/or mechanical errors; some broader and/or repeated stylistic errors.	Points: 1.25 Multiple grammatical and/or mechanical errors; little demonstrate of style.
Accessibility	Points: 5 Presentation is accessible to a wide and diverse audience; attention has been paid to various needs and includes meta-data that is accessible via screen readers, captions, appropriate fonts and sizes for text, and general clarity and neatness of organization	Points: 3.75 Presentation is generally accessible to a wide audience; some attention has been paid to various accessibility needs, but one or two may have been omitted.	Points: 2.5 Attention has been given to accessibility needs, although in only a single form, or in an incomplete way (i.e., providing captions only for headings but not an entire oral script in a video).	Points: 1.25 Presentation lacks attention to accessibility needs, which strongly impacts their audience's ability to engage with the content.
Appropriate Attributions	Points: 5 Presenter has	Points: 3.75 Presenter	Points: 2.5 Some effort has	Points: 1.25 No attention

	supplied complete and properly formatted attributions for every single piece of content that they did not generate themselves; this information is clearly formatted, organized, and easily accessible.	includes most bibliographic information for their sources and includes this information in a reasonably clear and accessible format.	been made to provide appropriate attributions for content, but these may be incomplete or unclear.	has been given to attributions; no source information is provided for images or other media used in the presentation.
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I include this rubric with the final multimodal project to help students see how I am assessing their project, what dimensions I am looking at and for, and for them to use as a guide to assess their own work—as I mention to them and have them do in the draft stage through a reflective assignment. I think that rubrics offer some very clear guidance for students to not only think about how they are working through this project for my class, but how they design, execute, and assess their work and others’ in the future as well.