Digital Revision of Alphabetic Text

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Overview

This assignment is one of the culminating projects in an English ed class (specifically ENG 402: Methods of Teaching Composition). Over the course of the semester, students have composed (traditional, alphabetic, pen&paper/computer) in 3 genres: a creative nonfiction “short,” a literacy narrative, and a profile (typically of a person but can be about a building/space). After doing “deep revision” on all 3 of these texts, students select 1 and transform it into a digital text. The form of the final digital text is up to them, although most choose to do a video essay of some sort.

Learning Objectives

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will use digital media to produce writing, specifically attending to affordances and effect.</th>
<th>In-class activities, rough drafts, writing process documents</th>
<th>Digital revision, reflection on digital revision</th>
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<td>Students will reflect on the writing process and on the affordances of the media selected.</td>
<td>In-class activities, rough drafts, writing process documents</td>
<td>Digital revision, reflection on digital revision</td>
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<td>Students will enhance writing skills and strategies.</td>
<td>In-class activities, rough drafts, writing process documents</td>
<td>Process “folder” in final digital portfolio; digital revision, reflection on digital revision</td>
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Required Resources

A computer for each student; internet access.

Assignment Purpose

This assignment takes students through the writing process and acquaints students with a variety of digital platforms. In addition, the assignment’s emphasis on the affordances (of
different genres, platforms, and media) allows them to think about rhetorical choices they make in other modes of writing.

**Instructor Preparation**

The instructor should try out some of the “deep revision” strategies that the students will use as they experiment with the texts.

In addition, the instructor, ideally, will have done a digital revision of one of his/her own texts, both to have a classroom model available and to be able to anticipate the challenges students will face in undertaking this project.

Finally, the instructor should tinker around with a variety of free digital text creation platforms, both to be able to demo them for students and to have at least some familiarity with them in case a student encounters a problem. (Three to four options would be sufficient, to start.)

**Student Preparation**

Students should be familiar with the writing process and with the concept and purposes of revision.

Students should also be familiar with a number of different digital text creation platforms, if only as text consumers (having watched, scrolled through samples in class).

Students should have at least basic knowledge of file and media manipulation. (Saving, renaming, and uploading are the basics. Photo and/or video editing are a plus.)

**Unit Outline**

This project plays out gradually over a full semester, in part to enforce what we all know about revision: that it is letter if you can allow the original text to rest for a while before you return to it.

Therefore, in the early weeks of the semester, students will have spent time creating the 3 texts (short, literacy narrative, profile) for potential revision. The lessons below are spread out over weeks and generally begin in about Week 7 or Week 8 of the semester.

Much of the work below is done as homework, with the reflection on the process and the analysis of the texts happening in class.

**Step 1:**

As homework, over the course of two to three weeks, students will pick 2 of their 3 texts (they can “abandon” the 3rd) and will try out at least 4 different “deep revision” strategies (from the attached menu), trying at least 2 strategies on each of the 2 selected texts.
Step 2:
During class during those two to three weeks, the instructor will demo various digital text creation platforms. In addition, the instructor will share samples of students’ work or, ideally, the instructor’s own digital revision, emphasizing the affordances of the media and the choices involved.

Step 3:
After students have undertaken the deep revisions and have been exposed to various digital text creation platforms, as homework, they will begin creating a digital revision of 1 of the 3 original texts (short, literacy narrative, profile). I recommend an in-class component in which students plan: articulating and presenting (informally) the text they chose, the platform they’ve selected, and the reasons for those selections (focussing on the effect they hope to achieve and the affordances of the platform selected).

Step 4:
If time allows, students will engage with their peers’ digital revisions, possibly through a “gallery crawl” setup. This could be an opportunity for peer review prior to final submission.

Step 5:
Students will do a written reflection of the revision process (both alphabetic and digital) and on the affordances and effects of the final digital revision.

Assessment Suggestions
This assignment has been part of a much larger portfolio, with emphasis on the process and on the reflection itself, rather than on the technical or aesthetic brilliance of the final product. I can imagine a version of the assignment that articulates clear parameters for the digital revision, but that would be a challenge considering the variety of original texts and of digital text creation platforms.

Resources for Development
Troy Hicks in The Digital Writing Workshop (or, frankly, anything that Troy Hicks has ever done)
Daniel Keller, “Thinking Rhetorically”
Sean P. Connors and Racheal Sullivan, “It’s That Easy’: Designing Assignments That Blend Old and New Literacies”
Cary Bazalgette and David Buckingham, “Literacy, media and multimodality: a critical response”
DEEP REVISION MENU
ENG 402, Fall 2015
Professor Nolte & Dr. Carey
(adapted from an assignment created by Dr. Shirley Lumpkin)
a. Take one first draft paragraph, write that paragraph on the top of a sheet and write 2 new pages from there, not looking at your previous draft.
b. Take one incident in your draft and write it from another point of view, in another voice.
c. Write two pages on what preceded the events you recount in your draft or two new pages on what happened after the events recounted in your draft.
d. Choose places in your draft and write under, using the interior monologue or stream of consciousness of what you or someone else was thinking at that moment.
e. Change the genre of a draft.
f. Write a dialogue with a close friend about why you wrote a draft as you did, your purpose, your meanings, the results. Make sure the friend talks and asks questions.
g. Circle a key place or person or event in your draft. Put that place, person, or event at the top of a new page. Write a one to two page description of that place, person, or event without looking at your draft.
h. Underline a sentence. Put that sentence at the top of a page. Write one to two pages on that without looking at your draft.
i. Start or open the draft with something you have in the middle and write the draft from there OR start your draft with the last paragraph and write from there.
j. Choose a portion of your draft. Write it in a different genre, using the same information and adding or cutting as necessary.
k. Change dialogue to narrative or narrative to dialogue; see Murray Chapter 29.

*** VERY IMPORTANT: After using the technique, staple the new version to the old and write a brief reflection (on the new version) about what strategy you used and what the revision showed you about the draft.