

## Media Project #1: Hyper-texting Green Grass Running Water

I created a hypertext of an excerpt from Thomas King's *Green Grass Running Water* that combines a variety of mediums (audio, images, other parts of the novel, scholarly articles, google documents etc.) to add a deeper understanding and perspective to the excerpt. I also liked the mixing of mediums within the blog and being able to create a multidimensional experience for the reader.

By adding in links, the reading becomes much more fluid and things that may be read over quickly without clarification (what is the Sun Dance?) are made accessible. This is especially true for this text as Thomas King employs allusions and puns that link to historical and biblical references very often. In addition, the original text is quite fragmented, therefore through hypertext, I was able to link different excerpts of the text to each other which becomes a different perspective of the text.

The use of blogging also creates a collaborative community that can add their input through comments or through editing (if working in groups) to show a variety of interpretations.

What process did you use to develop your idea?

I knew that I wanted to work on hypertext because I was interested in the idea that reading can become a much more interactive experience, as well as changing the text in a way that adds more information and perspective to the reading. I also like the platform of a blog since there is more of an interactive experience with the comments and it can extend beyond the blog posts with external links. I wanted to use Thomas King's *Green Grass Running Water* because the book itself is written in fragments, with characters talking **at** each other but not necessarily **with** each other. With the hypertexting, I wanted to link certain passages of the text together and also bring in background information to the allusions and puns that King uses throughout his writing as well as information about First Nations' traditions and celebrations.

What other pre-production strategies did you employ? (storyboard for a video and how did you develop a script)

The pre-production strategies that I used was first figuring out which excerpt I wanted to use for the hypertext and then brainstorming what keywords I wanted to link to other mediums/information. I also researched the blog settings to have more control over how readers would experience the blog (I made sure that the links would not open in a new tab and would instead load on the one page they were on. I did this to insure that readers would be focused on what was on the page rather than having multiple tabs open).

How did you assign tasks or roles within your group? How did you manage time?

Since I chose to work on this project alone, I completed the project by myself. However, I found that the more things I added onto the blog, the more links and passages I wanted to include. I think if I was given an unlimited amount of time the whole project would continue to grow and grow until it would be linking things that would be very far off from the original page. When I was beginning to get overwhelmed with the different links and pages I had made, I realized I had to stop (at this point the blog had taken around 4-5 hours).

What approaches would you use to assess this activity that take account of the following:

a) The multimedia nature of the assignment

I would focus on how well students used the blog and the hypertexting to create meaning and link meaningful information. This would also include which words they decided to link and to what link and how this would change the interpretation of the excerpt and content. It also allows for use of multiple mediums and would require a multilayered approach to knowledge and understanding. This would also be something that I would assess in terms of how meaningful and explained the links they used are (which would be in their rationale as well).

b) The collaborative nature of the assignment

This project could be done individually or collaboratively. I think it would be really interesting if a collaborative option was that each group member would take the same excerpt and interpret it in their own way and find a way to link them together. Another thing that could be used as a collaborative project would be to take different excerpts from the same text and try to find a way to weave them through. Different ideas and themes can be discussed and it can become a really creative way of engaging with the text that incorporates multiple perspectives.

What are the greatest challenges in using this approach in a classroom and can they be ameliorated through careful instructional design? What learning opportunities did this activity afford?

I think one of the greatest challenges in using this in the classroom is the risk of inputting technology in the classroom just for the sake of using technology and not explaining how the hypertext is being used to extend information and understanding. To deal with this problem, the teacher would need to know clearly how hypertexting works and to explain this explicitly to students so that they can 'properly' utilize the hypertext function to bring more into the literature that they are hypertexting. If I was using this in my classroom, I would also have a written section allowing the students to give their rationale behind the links that they connected specific words to or how they planned the layout of their blog. This not only helps me assess their understanding but also demonstrates their processes as well as letting students reflect on their decisions. This would also eliminate the risk of students simply linking in any links to reach the requirement because they would have to justify their choices.

Another challenge in this activity would be access, since this activity would probably need a computer lab or a laptop cart, as well as internet connection. I wonder how BYOD would work in this context and how to mediate with students who may not have their own devices. In addition, I would have worries about motivation, focus and accountability during work periods. I would feel that I would have to circulate constantly during work periods and perhaps establish rules at the beginning of the unit. I would preface the unit with a discussion about how students can use their devices and the computers only if they use their time wisely. If not, I would offer another assignment that would not include the technological element.

The learning opportunity that this activity offers allows students to learn and demonstrate their technological knowledge as well as showing their train of thought. In addition, one excerpt from a text can be hypertexted in unlimited ways, which also highlights the creative ways that students interpret

text. Since it is in the medium of a blog (or at least is online), students can see the work that their classmates have made and also experience a variety of perspectives in thinking.