

The Process of My Process

Ugh, another multimedia project. Do these things ever end?

Maybe I will buck convention (who me?) and do something low tech (ie, using a paper and pencil).

Hmm, I did a ‘zine in the last class but...no, I can’t do that again.

Maybe something with a poem—I love poetry and no one else really seems to...

Maybe something with images—this is about “visual literacy” after all.

What to do...what to do...?

What about something with poetry and images. Or, no wait! Sentence trees!!!

Kevin: “You hate all social media, don’t you?”

Me: “Yes, yes I do.”

My Project

For my first multimedia project, I have chosen to work with Instagram and poetry. While it is true that I eschew all forms of social media, Instagram was the one I used for a long time. I signed up for FB way back when but deleted my account pretty fast. Twitter was necessary for my businesses once upon a time but I have since deleted those accounts as well. That said, I do have a Twitter account for my “professional” image. But I rarely check it. Instagram, however, appealed to my inner photographer and I had my account for the past 4 and half years. I only recently deleted my account, which was—to their credit—a painless and thorough process. I had to, of course, sign up for another account for this project, however. We will see how long it lasts.

I chose to use Instagram because the advent of digital mobile photography has made everyone and their dog an expert image capturer and editor. I say this sarcastically but the quality of what is being produced and disseminated online via social media platforms such as Instagram/FB is actually quite good. I have seen some amazing work via these media that I would not have seen had they never existed in the utterly annoying way that they do. I say annoying mainly because there is also a lot of self-serving, narcissistic crap out there. But maligning that aspect of human existence is not the aim of this project. Rather, I have devised an activity that allows students to engage with the social media they are already using in a creative way that mixes visual and capital ‘L’ literacy. This activity seeks to make poetry more accessible/less intimidating to students by pairing it with visuals of their own making and utilizing a mode of expression they understand in order to write the lines of the poetry.

In a classroom this would ideally be accomplished using new IG accounts but this isn't always possible. The obvious drawbacks regarding Wi-Fi accessibility and speed can also be an issue. But, in the perfect classroom, where each kid has her own device and the means and blessing to use it for the completion of assignments, this project might be either an activity or final project for a unit on poetry. I do not feel that instruction on the media would be tricky. Indeed, the students could easily teach the mini-lessons on that themselves. What would need pre-writing activities and scaffolding would be the actual production of the piece.

For instance, even though my final product exists online, careful "story-boarding", so to speak, needed to be done before the final posting of the material. Because one views material on IG backward, from most recent to least recent, the poem and its accompanying images (or the images and its accompanying poem) must be posted from the finish to start. That said, the user can delete his post if she so chooses so, nothing (online) is necessarily unable to be fixed. To minimize the need to do and re-do, however, the skill of planning and rough copy work will need to be taught and enforced through classroom scaffolding activities.

Activity

Using 10 photos you have taken or saved on your device, post each to Instagram in reverse order with a caption that is inspired by a part of the image and which comprises a single line in a 10 line poem. Effective use of hashtags is allowed.

OR

Write a 10 line poem and post images along with each line as a caption. The images must be inspired by the line of poetry. Effective use of hashtags is allowed.

*I wait with the patience of a thousand loyal canines
Heart on my sleeve and in my words
Feeding the inexorable sadness of pencils
But your reticence
and resolve undo me
Lonely but in crowds
I ache to watch your careful chewing
But room enough for one
While the sun streams past the foliage
Once again alone.*

Assessment

To assess this project I would provide feedback with each part of the task, and I would adapt the rubric for Poetic Literary Writing from the Grade 10 BC Performance standards: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/writing_g10.pdf (p. 467) for the final summative grade.