

Allison Dixon
Ilana Finkleman
Ashlee Petrucci
Shannon Smart

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Multiliteracies Project #1: Hypertext poem

Description of the Project:

Knowing well that high school students today are interested in media beyond the written texts traditionally taught in English language arts classes, our team set out to adapt a text to include multiple forms of media. Using one of Lewis Carroll's poems, we've created an updated version of the text: a kind of "Jabberwocky 2.0." Using our own understandings of Carroll's well known work, we used hyperlinked images, audio, video, and other texts to infuse the words with new meaning. Hopefully, this added content will make the poem more accessible to some students.

In the classroom, assessment would follow students' ability to rationalize their choice of hyperlinks (see draft rubric for question 4). We also considered that this project can be done 1) where a teacher either assigns one poem to the entire class and then students are given the opportunity to compare the different artistic choices and and interpretations different their fellow classmates took with one poem or 2) where students are given the liberty to select their own poem and to hyperlink it (and again, rationalize their choices of links).

The blog for version of "Jabberwocky 2.0" is accessible at
<http://bythetumtumtree.wordpress.com>

Our Design Process:

1. What process did you use to develop your idea? *Include any brainstorming prompts and approaches.*

We started by considering which text we were interesting in studying more closely and examining in different forms of media. Initially, we had considered using the text *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, but we reconsidered as the content is very sad and addressing it through varying media requires an ethical consideration of Holocaust representation which might have been too weighty for the short duration of the course (and subsequently, the short amount of time we have to prepare our project). We then settled on a poem (and something more playful) - Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" - as we all enjoy the poem and it provides a lot of wiggle room for re-representation and exploring across different media.

We were really drawn to the idea of mounting the poem across both web and physical forms and thought that a translation from a web-mounted version (we were drawn to the idea of hyperlinks) of the text to a more concrete version of the text (with hyperlinks represented physically on a canvas) would show the translation of web to print. As typically traditional texts first appear in

print form and then may be translated into a representation in digital form, we thought that it would be interesting to follow the transition of the text in the opposite direction - from hyperlinked digital form to concrete physical form. We discussed and were intrigued by the idea of text translation moving in the opposite direction and considered that with new forms of emerging technology and the decline of print materials, likely more and more texts will be first conceived of in digital form and then may be re-represented into a concrete, physical medium.

It was from here that we started to discuss the details of our two media projects.

2. What other pre-production strategies did you employ? For example, if you completed a video, to what extent did you “storyboard” and how did you develop the script? **Include any templates for storyboarding or other pre-production activities.*

Our hypertext poem is very much a living document. As such, the process of creating the project was more of an ongoing process than one that could be broken into pre- and post-production. Once the poem was posted on Wordpress, we were all given access to it and were able to link any images, videos, text, or other content that we felt was related to it. Each time we individually revisited the poem and saw new links added, our understanding of the poem changed and grew. This, in turn, led us to make new connections and add more links.

In terms of strictly “pre-production” strategies, we mainly relied on a collaborative brainstorming session in which we discussed what sorts of links or media we could include (video, other text, images, gifs, definitions, etc.). We also made sure to go over the mechanics of the Wordpress blog in order to ensure that all group members understood how to use it and how our poem and its hyperlinks would be formatted.

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

Group members offered to take on different tasks and work was distributed evenly. Time was managed effectively, and we think it will be more time efficient (and also more interesting) to have a project that builds on itself and progresses between its two different media conceptions.

4. What approaches would you use to assess this activity that take account of the following: a) the multimedia nature of the assignment; b) the collaborative nature of the assignment. **Include a draft assessment rubric.*

This is an individual assignment that may be shared with a small group or with the whole class (time dependent) upon the project’s completion. If the class works on the same poem, it would be interesting to draw students’ attention to how different readings of the same poem may arise, and how there may be similarities in some of their classmates’ opening up of the poem.

We will use a **self-assessment** form which will ask students to answer.

Student Self-Assessment Form

SECTION I : Checklist

Circle Yes (Y) or No (N)

- 1) Y / N - Did you include a link to a video?
- 2) Y / N - Did you include a link to a news or magazine article?
- 3) Y / N - Did you include a link to a word's definition?
- 4) Y / N - Did you include a link to a song / music video (can be the same as link used for question 1)?
- 5) Y / N - Did you include a link to a map / landscape / something featuring a setting?
- 6) Y / N - Did you include an image?

SECTION II: Questions for students to answer:

1) Do you think your additions to the poem will help the poem's reader improve his/her understanding of the poem? Why? (3-4 sentences)

2) What did you choose **not** to include in your hyperlinked text? Why?

Rubric for teacher's use:

Students will be marked on their ability to defend their artistic choices in their artist's rationale. The full rationale will be marked on a six-point scale:

6 = student makes clear that their artistic selection is well-considered and meaningful to the poem; able to explain how the selected link provides insight into the poem and adds to the richness of the poem; student's writing is clear and concise

...

1 = little thought has been put into the selection of hyperlinks; hyperlinks are not consistent with the poem's content; writing is hard to follow and unclear.

5. What are the greatest challenges in using this approach in a classroom and can they be ameliorated through careful instructional design? What learning opportunities does this activity afford? **Include a formal statement describing your goals in completing this assignment along with the drawbacks and affordances of the approach. All references and materials for this project should be included in a bibliography employing APA or MLA format.*

This activity was created with two possibilities in mind: having the class work on the same text, or offering the students the option of selecting a text of their choice. As a result, one of our earlier design challenges involved decisions surrounding the text length that students should select. Would there be a difference in depth and exploration if a student selected a 15-line poem versus a haiku? In order to overcome this, we decided that our assessment should be based upon the number and variety of hyperlinks involved (including their relevance), which therefore removes the question of text selection. Otherwise, this activity allows students to not only select a text of personal value but also reflects their day-to-day engagement with technology and internet.

Furthermore, students have opportunity to explore their peers' work, possibly hyperlinking to other blogs and subsequently deepening their understanding of the same or different texts,