

This is a pre-print version of Elkie Burnside's webtext *A Review of Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 20(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/20.1/reviews/burnside>.

DTC/ENGL 355 ~ Multimedia Authoring: Exploring New Rhetorics

Arola provides an overview of how she developed a three part sequence of assignments using the concept of slow composition. The assignment descriptions can be found on [Arola's website](#). You may want to follow the link before listening to the clip. (length 5:35)

Arola: I'm going to show you a couple student examples and explain to you probably the biggest thing I learned by using this book for the first time this spring in one of my classes, which is the concept of slow composition. That is, taking the time to actually do the work that students need to produce multimodal texts that they can be proud of and that you can feel good about having worked with them on. This is for a course called DTC355: Multimedia authoring. So it is a 300 level course, however, truthfully the way that I taught it, it could probably be more a 100 and 200 level, I'm not sure this assignment would quite retrofit into a 101 in the slow way that I'm talking about, it might. So you might just be thinking about ways that you could do that. I'm going to talk about it in the context that I taught the course.

This class had three projects. The first project in this course was an introductory website and design justification. This was really just teaching them to do HTML and CSS, so this was more of a techie based assignment – learn some code, introduce yourself, and then talk a little bit about why you did what you did. The second project was similar but with video, and so messing around. We just did iMovie in this class, we were going to do FinalCut and time got weird. So we just did iMovie, which was fine for the needs of the class. Some people think it is a little too simplistic, I think students can do just as good or horrible a job with iMovie as they can with something much more advanced and expensive. And then the final project, which I'm going to talk about. You'll notice how the percentages here build to the final project as this big thing. So really they're just getting some technical chops at the beginning and then for the entire second half of the semester, even a little more, I think it was about 9 weeks for me, students worked on this final project.

And the final project was an informational campaign. This was pretty broad, so when we were talking about genre, I chose the genre for them sort of, I chose the big umbrella genre, which is informational campaign. It was up to them to choose the smaller genre within that. So are we talking about informational health related campaigns, are we talking about sort of environmental issues, are we talking about information in terms of travel tips, things like that. How are you defining information? So it was up to them to choose.

Their job was to create an informational campaign geared towards this community here on the Pulouse, so Moscow, Pullman, maybe WSU. The topic was up to them, I gave them some ideas, but what they needed to do in these – I think it was 9 weeks – they needed a logo and a clearly defined color scheme and graphic identity. They needed a 30 second to one minute video that served either as an introduction to the campaign or as an advertisement. And they needed written components consistent with their genre of informational campaigns. So it was pretty broad, but what the book allowed me to do was to walk them through those steps to get them to the end point. So you'll see: "in order to get to this final project you need to complete the following steps." Part one was a genre analysis report and this is coming out of kind of the first three chapters of the book,

where students are grounded in some terminology. They are doing some assessment of genres out there and figuring out what a genre looks like, what are those conventions, what colors do cancer awareness sites tend to use? What kind of images do they tend to use? What kind of language do they tend to use? We do this stuff already but it was kind of formalizing it and slowing it down a little for them.

So they were in groups for this project and each group had to write a genre analysis report along with an appendix with examples. You can look at how I did that if you are interested. After doing that work they needed to create a pitch proposal. So what are **you** going to do in your group? So with the genre analysis they had to kind of have an idea, we think we want to do a save the whales sort of thing. So they will go out and look at other save the whales type of campaign because that is what the genre analysis report is on. The pitch is on what are they going to do. So we looked at a bunch of save the whales campaigns and learned these things and this is what we're going to do and we're going to be a little different or we're going to take these best practices, we're not going to do these things because these things, we didn't think worked and here's how we're going to frame it. So the pitch was part two and they got feedback on that from their classmates and from me as well. Then they had a team contract, they had to decide who was going to do what in the group, who was going to be in charge. They tended to break it down, although not all did, by their strengths and skill set. So we had the communications person was doing a lot of the writing and the script writing. And a visual person doing a lot of the graphic identity, a web person doing some of the web work, sometimes a video person. They sort of worked it out in their team. Then we got to mock-ups and storyboards. So the mock-up would be for the website itself, what's the website going to look like? The storyboard was for the video and we did some peer reviewing with that. Then we have a rough draft, then we have a final draft, and a presentation. The presentation was where in this case the students did a justification. In some ways it was more, it was a justification insofar as I wanted them to imagine we were the clients and they were pitching their informational campaign to us. Why should we choose this informational campaign to use for your imagined organization?