Comparing Notes:

A Multimodal Co-Authored Essay

Length requirements: At least 1500 words, or the "digital equivalent," which includes work done in the other four modes of communication that meaning can be derived from objectively, in addition to the mode of language.
Sample due dates, from an 8-week course (your syllabus has the dates for your class):
Rough draft due: Week 4: Friday before class (have access to your file during class for continuing writing or for workshop in groups).
Revision due: Week 5: 11:59pm Sunday. (One member from the group must submit the assignment.)

Assignment Overview

After completing your autoethnography assignments, you will get in groups of 3-5 people (preferably your current workshop groups from your first paper's workshop days), re-familiarize yourselves with each other's papers, and then compare your writing/reading processes. You will then create a digital essay: a project that tries to compare/contrast/report your group's writing/reading processes/content from your autoethnographies. You will "present" these pieces to the class as well. This is a co-authored essay, similar to others which we may look at in class.

Or tell a story. Your group can also invent a character (or characters) who shares some of your qualities and tell the story of their reading and writing process. That's allowed, and it can be a lot of fun, as long as your papers are in it: the character's habits, workspaces, struggles, and successes should come from what your autoethnographies found.

Your digital essays may take the form of any of the following: a short film/video, a webpage, an infographic, a digital collage, or a comic or graphic novel chapter. Due to previously "phoned-in" or otherwise "bad" powerpoints, **I do not allow PowerPoint to be used as the final deliverable for this assignment** (though it can be used as a rough draft if absolutely necessary if your form takes longer to complete).

If you'd like to create something other than what is listed above, please run it by the professor before beginning too much work on the project.

Why This Assignment?

We are engaging in the recursive writing process in this course. Working with others to "get things done" (Wardle) is one of the main reasons we do any sort of "writing" in the first place; this will happen at work and throughout your life. This assignment helps get you used to both engaging in the writing process as a group and engaging in the writing process to accomplish tasks for a group.

This assignment also continues work from your previous project, the autoethnography. Using that data, we are continuing your writing processes into another project, or "recursively" engaging in the writing process. Many writings start off in one form and end up in another. Have you ever written a Facebook post and turned it into a longer post for a blog or a discussion board post into a paper? That's engaging in the recursive writing process.

Comparing Your Data

You are likely already familiar with your group's writing and autoethnographies, so use that to your advantage. If you've already read each other's work during a workshop session for the first project, you can likely begin comparing your writing processes right away.

Some examples of things to look for:

- Were there similarities or differences in the environments chosen to gather your data for your autoethnographies?
- Were there similarities in the issues you've uncovered about your writing and/or reading and/or meaning-making habits?
- Did anyone do anything differently from the group that stood out as something helpful that the rest of the group would like to try for their next paper?
- Were there positives in common across your group's processes?
- You may also discuss what "modes of communication" you engaged in while gathering, analyzing, or working with your own autoethnography projects individually. (Remember to "cite" Gagich or the New London Group when discussing these.)

Things to be careful of: **remember, we're not discussing the current group dynamics or your processes in this project** (however, that can be discussed in your third project).

Presentations

A day will be given to present your projects and how you used the modes of communication in them to the class before we dive into our third major projects. Remember to not simply "read from" or "let your video play" to speak for itself during the presentation. Being given an opportunity to present work is an opportunity to frame the work, and to not require it to speak for itself on its own (as your autoethnography projects had to).

Things to consider for your presentation:

- Primarily, your presentation should make it clear how your group used the modes of communication in your piece.
- Keep presentations between 5-7 minutes.
- Decide beforehand how you'd like your presentation to go as a group. Is there a main speaker while the others chime in once or twice? Are you each covering specific, equal sections? Is it better for someone to take the wheel and drive the technology while others speak?
- Remember to not simply "read from" your presentation with your head turned away from your audience. Utilize the gestural modes of communication.
- It's best to discuss "portions" of your final project, not try to fit relaying the entire project to the class. This means you'll need to think about the audience and purpose of your project and figure out the most important components to share during your presentation.

Things to keep in mind for your final projects themselves:

- The main goal of this assignment is to utilize the other 4 modes of communication, in addition to the mode of language. While you will need to utilize the mode of language in some way, **do not rely on the mode of language entirely**. Attention to how you use these other modes of communication will be required to do this project successfully.
- Make sure everyone in your group is carrying their share of the group load. We're all adults (or being treated as adults in a college writing course). This is a chance to practice working in a group, engaging in group dynamics, and figuring out social cues to help "get things done with writing" (Wardle).
- It's recommended that you spend a little time outside of class to work on this project, and to utilize your university's technology resources that are available.

As always, you're free to reach out to me for assistance as needed, and you're free to continue revisions beyond the 1st revision due date for your final portfolios throughout the semester as needed up through the due date of the final portfolio at the end of the semester. For example, during the third unit–the final standing challenges project–you may find yourself wishing you'd made different decisions about your autoethnographies or done different work with the modes of communication for this project, either as a group or individually. (Professionally, it's best to reach out to your group to discuss this, as this project is a co-authored "essay.")

Works Cited

Wardle, Elizabeth, and Doug Downs. *Writing about Writing*, Fifth Edition, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2023.