

## ABSTRACT

JULIANA KOCSIS. “There Wasn’t Much Writing Involved”: Teaching a Multimodal Project in a FYW Course. (Under the direction of Dr. Susan Miller-Cochran.)

In the First-Year Writing (FYW) Program at North Carolina State University, instructors have in recent years incorporated more and more multimodal projects in the English 101: Academic Writing and Research course. One popular assignment is a Digital Autoethnography video project, which many instructors teach as part of a social sciences unit within the program’s Writing in the Disciplines curriculum. Scholarship on multimodal composition tends to take a critically optimistic stance toward multimodal projects, and instructors in our program speak well of the Digital Autoethnography assignment. Missing from the discussion, however, are students’ perspectives on this video project—specifically, its effectiveness in meeting learning objectives and improving their writing abilities.

Drawing from works emphasizing the importance of including students’ voices in our theoretical and pedagogical works (Ball, Bowen, & Fenn, 2013; Denecker, 2010; Salvatori & Donahue, 2009), I distributed a survey to students in two sections of English 101 that completed the Digital Autoethnography project in the fall 2013 semester. To examine the pedagogical gains and losses of this video project, and to engage students in our conversations about such assignments, the two-part survey asked students to reflect on and respond to questions about what they believed they learned in the project. This study was my attempt at bridging a possible gap between what we, as practitioners and theorists, believe about student learning, and what the students think, with the goal of better aligning our praxis with the relevant theory—and with the students we teach.

In this project, I present the results of the survey and offer a discussion of the video project’s strengths and weaknesses. I also explore future revisions for the project, raise considerations for the FYW program and other programs, and examine broader implications for instructors and scholars who teach multimodal projects. Finally, I offer my own critical reflections on having composed this project multimodally as a webtext, contemplating the place of multimodal works in our scholarship and teaching and considering more closely what we ask students to do in these projects.

The full project is available at <http://julianakocsis.com/capstone/pages/index.html>.