

MULTIPLE STUDENTS, MULTIPLE EXPERIENCES, MULTIPLE POSSIBILITIES:

MULTIGENRE PROJECTS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

by

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Abstract

Research projects are typically not the most anticipated assignments during the school year by both students and teachers alike. Students do not look forward to all of the work and concerns about formatting that go into the projects, and teachers do not look forward to reading lackluster writing that students threw together just to get the assignment completed. But what if there were a way not only to get students excited about learning new ideas to share with their classmates, but also to offer a more entertaining way for them to showcase these ideas? What if there was a way for teachers to actually enjoy grading these projects as well? Some teachers would say there is a solution to this problem; they are the ones who have discovered the potential of using multigenre projects in their classrooms.

By exploring the ideas behind why students pursue research projects and how that has shifted in secondary schools in Chapter 1, the reader gains a foundational knowledge to help them understand what goes into a multigenre project and how it can be derived from traditional assignments. Chapter 2 offers an outline of *Blending Genres, Altering Styles* by Dr. Tom Romano, a text thought to be one of the most comprehensive in the realm of multigenre research, as well as other articles that offer different approaches to multigenre projects. Chapter 3 focuses on how teachers can integrate multigenre projects into their own classrooms and what needs to be considered before implementing the assignment. Chapter 4 is where the author discusses her own experiences with multigenre type projects throughout her academic career, and the final chapter explores arguments teachers may encounter when considering using multigenre projects in the classroom. The appendices give the reader examples of different types of projects they may want to consider for their classes.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis work to my family and friends to whom I owe a great deal of gratitude. First, I would like to thank my mom for showing me every day what it means to be a strong and tenacious woman, and my aunt Peggy for pushing me in my studies and supporting me every step of the way. I would also like to thank my grandmother for raising them that way and always offering words of encouragement.

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Chapter One: Introduction

When thinking about the act of writing, most students view it as a means to an end. Putting pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard is simply a way to get from point A to point B, from a short reading response log in an English class to a final research paper for Biology. For many students, writing assignments are irritations that must be entertained for the sake of the teachers assigning them—or so students would have you think. The groans of agony they bellow when there is even a mention of some sort of research project are enough to transport the imagination to a battlefield of wounded soldiers, waiting for the end. But what if there were a way to make the “misery” more bearable? What if there were a way not only to get students excited about learning new ideas to share with their classmates, but also to offer a more entertaining way for them to showcase these ideas? Some teachers would say there is; they are the ones who have discovered the potential of using multigenre projects in their classrooms.

The concept of multigenre projects was made famous in the education field by Tom Romano, a professor at Miami University in Ohio. Romano notes that he was initially influenced by a small book titled *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* by Michael Ondaatje. The work, first encountered by Romano in the summer of 1986, is a mix of fiction and nonfiction, comprised of poems, photos, newspaper articles, and prose that tells the story of outlaw Billy the Kid, his allies, and the law enforcement officers who spent their careers chasing him (*Blending Genres* 3). Upon reading the work, he was struck by how Ondaatje created what Romano called “genre snapshots...to recreate part of the *factual* world of Billy the Kid but also the *imaginative* world of dramatic scenes and characters’ emotions as we see life unfold without, for the most part, an author’s explicit interpretation” (*Blending Genres* 4). He began to wonder if this was something his students could do with their own writing and interpretation of research

and found the method worked well for his high school students as well as the college students he taught later.

In Romano's book *Blending Genre, Altering Style*, one of his many on the subject of multigenre in the classroom, he discusses how these assignments are useful not only to teach students about writing and research skills, but also to help teachers learn from their students. He reveals that "he's gotten better at learning from his students" (*Blending Genre* x) over the years in the realm of multigenre projects and that his students have helped him expand his knowledge about the assignment as a whole, as well as "pass on what [he has] learned, to help teachers at any level of education support their students in writing multigenre papers that are informative, moving, inventive, and clear" (*Blending Genre* x). With what he gleaned from Ondaatje, his research, and his own students, Romano has worked to make the world of multigenre projects easily accessible and adaptable for English teachers at all levels of education.

In his first book on multigenre projects, *Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres*, Romano delves into the idea of teaching students to share their research findings through narratives rather than relying on the traditional research essay. Often when students write for class they are limited to a professional, reporting style that asks them to be straightforward with their information and not embellish their research; however, Romano's text, as well as multigenre assignments in general, are based on the belief that using narrative writing as the vehicle for students to present their work provides opportunities for them to analyze and argue ideas just as well as expository writing. Romano argues, "good writing, regardless of the mode of discourse, causes writers to think. That thinking involves a productive dialectic between analysis and synthesis" (*Writing with Passion* 6), which is ultimately what most teachers want

for their students—a way to bridge the gap from simply reporting their findings to looking at their research through a critical lens.

As the goal of a research project is for students to learn new information about a subject, it should also stand that this is an opportunity for them to learn new things about themselves as well. A past student of Romano’s wrote that “a writing teacher’s main goal should be to open up the channels in students, to let them put their ideas and emotions and personality on paper” (*Writing with Passion* 25), which would not seem like an accomplishable task through many traditional assignments found in the English classroom. Through the use of multigenre projects, students would be able to research a topic and present it in a way that not only makes sense to them, but also allows them to express the information in a way that reflects their personalities and interests. The same can be said for the use of multigenre assignments used in place of the traditional book report or book talk.

Giving students the opportunity to branch out from traditional assignments also offers teachers a chance to help students explore different genres of writing. In her book *A Teacher’s Guide to the Multigenre Research Project*, Melinda Putz makes an argument for introducing students to various genres of writing or what she calls “alternative styles” from the beginning of the school year. Throughout her teaching career, she has found that discussing these different styles of writing are beneficial not only to what objectives need to be covered by curriculum standards, but also because “once students get into the flow of their research, they don’t want to be bothered with stopping to learn all this” (Putz 50), “all this” meaning the different genres of writing. Putz’s solution to this is having students write responses to the literature they study in different genres so they are well acquainted with alternative styles before getting the multigenre research assignment. Some of the genres she discusses throughout the year include memos,

press releases, recipes, manifestos, interviews, advertisements, birth announcements, business letters, radio broadcasts, etc., but a more complete list of genres she teaches can be found in her book on the subject. This gives students the opportunity to focus more on uncovering new information on their topic as well as how they want to exhibit their findings rather than having to learn about the different genres as well.

Romano discusses in *Writing with Passion* that he has seen the keyword “passion” bring out “strong positions, critical thinking, further analysis, and stirring often eloquent language” (25) among his students, but it also must be accompanied by balance and moderation. Although the idea of allowing students to take whatever they are passionate about and run with it might make some teachers and their administrators uncomfortable, Romano, Putz, and many other educators believe it will prove beneficial in the long run to allow students the chance to demonstrate their understanding in a way that is most meaningful and authentic to that specific student. An example of this can be seen in Nancy Mack’s article when she discusses her student Jeff. She says,

Jeff rewrote his mother’s obituary to include information that was not mentioned in the original newspaper article; both obituaries, the actual and the revised one, were placed side by side to emphasize the revision. Jeff’s added details demonstrated many types of analysis: historic, gendered, economic, personal, and ironic. (Mack 93)

Through his foray into multigenre, Jeff was able to write a powerful piece to honor the strength of his mother while also commenting on the status of women during the early seventies by using an unconventional genre. This is only one of the many ways students can explore a topic and showcase it in a creative way through the use of multigenre.

Chapter Two: What the Literature Says

Although Tom Romano is one of the names most commonly associated with popularizing the use of multigenre assignments in the English classroom, he was not the first educator to brave this unfamiliar path. In her article “The Multigenre Paper: Increasing Interest, Motivation, and Functionality in Research,” Margaret “Cookie” Moulton chronicles the beginning of multigenre papers beginning in 1978 when W. Keith Kraus had his students research “unsolved murder cases and the times in which they occurred through newspapers on microfilm; solutions were presented in a narrative format that still allowed for formal documentation of sources” (528). She next cites the use of Ken Macrorie’s I-search paper in 1980, “which allowed students to research a topic of personal interest, using both print materials and interviews to present the research in a personal narrative about what and how they learned” (Moulton 529). Moulton goes on to cite two other teachers who encouraged their students to think about their research projects in a more creative way before getting to Romano and his work with multigenre projects.

Since the concept of multigenre activities started gaining ground in the academic community, scholars in various disciplines have discussed these projects at conferences and in academic journals worldwide. Although much of this work focuses on the use of these assignments in the English language arts (ELA) classroom, they are able to be adapted in other content areas as well in order to enhance student learning such as social studies or writing-heavy electives, just to name a few. Within most of the literature on the subject of multigenre, the consensus is that giving students an assignment that showcases their more creative side while also allowing teachers to check their understanding of the content is beneficial for all involved. Since there is no singular way to go about assigning a multigenre assignment, instructors are able

to adapt the task to their classroom needs and students are able to take liberties, to a certain extent, with how they pursue their work. Teachers who have already incorporated these projects into their curriculum have seen the impact these assignments can have on their students.

In her article “Multiple Voices, Multiple Genres: Fiction for Young Adults,” ELA teacher Candida Gillis talks about how teachers have found success in helping students embrace the idea behind multigenre projects by first introducing them to multivoice novels (works with more than one narrator) and stories written in the multigenre style, such as *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel and Avi’s *Nothing but the Truth*. Introducing students to different genres in both reading and writing lessons gave them a better idea about how each works and their “different audience, purpose, and feel” (Gillis 58). Gillis goes on to discuss the importance of using multivoice and multigenre styles of literature to better acquaint students with the idea of writing in different styles as well as from different perspectives. An interesting way she introduces multivoice is by having students compare television shows that use multivoice narratives, such as soap operas and reality shows, to the literature they read. Gillis says, “By analyzing how viewers process information, students are able to see that different programs require different viewing strategies, and that the viewers themselves create meaning when characters are not always to be trusted” (56). She continues on to say that

Only the viewers know the truth behind the secrets, schemes, and lies because they witness actions other characters do not see and because soap characters think out loud for the benefit of no one but the viewer (as do Shakespeare’s characters in asides and monologues). The “dramatic irony” is easy to grasp. (Gillis 56)

Gillis remarks how reality shows such as *Survivor* give its audience a similar role when it comes to the video diary portions of the program. Using television programs such as these can help

students understand the portions of texts such as Shakespeare's plays where characters confide their ideas to the audience or works that have multiple narrators. She also recommends having students practice writing from different perspectives with an activity called "Versions of reality". She has students attempt this

By writing about a recent event or moment in their lives from at least three perspectives (their own, other peoples', even the perspective of an object) [so] students become aware of how multiple perspectives enrich both writer and reader's knowledge of an event and its significance. (Gillis 57)

Gillis also suggests that having students read retellings of fairy tales could enhance this understanding of different perspectives and "reinforce the concept that the story is in the eye of the beholder" (57).

She offers examples of texts teachers may want to consider for their classroom, such as *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel (dual first person narrative), *Bat 6* by Virginia Euwer Wolff (multivoice first person narrative), *The Chocolate War* and *We All Fall Down*, both by Robert Cormier (what she calls "over-the-shoulder" narratives), and *Up the Down Staircase* by Bel Kaufman, which is an early example of a multigenre narrative, just to name a few. In addition, Gillis discusses several activities she has used to give students an idea of what it is like to read and create multigenre assignments. The aforementioned "Versions of reality" is one of these activities but a few others ask students to interpret and analyze information about various scenarios such as when they infer ideas about the perpetrator of a crime based on the evidence left behind ("Crime scene investigator"), figure out what happened at an event by getting information from their classmates who are witnesses with only partial bits of intelligence they need to piece together ("Witness"), or creating a multigenre story by telling about an important

event through scrapbooking (“Scrapbooks”) (Gillis 57). Each of these assignments has value in the ELA classroom to help students develop an understanding of how perspective, multivoice, and multigenre work in the realms of reading and writing, respectively.

One idea educators may want to rethink from Gillis’ article, however, is the slow pace she believes the unit should have when introducing multivoice and multigenre works to students. She states that “the multiple genres or narratives may seem a jumble of disconnected voices, devoid of the familiar ‘coherence’ of identifiable protagonists, antagonists, settings, linear chronology, and clear beginnings, middles, and ends” (Gillis 55). In the age of graphic novels and multigenre novels holding spots on the New York Times Bestseller lists (i.e. Ransom Riggs’ *Miss Peregrine’s Home For Peculiar Children*, a novel interspersed with strange, vintage photographs the author found throughout his travels), is this even an issue anymore? Students deserve more credit when it comes to piecing together the clues multivoice and multigenre works provide them and could be considered the gateway to their creating their own projects using ideas from both categories of literature.

Although it is not Romano’s first publication on the subject, *Blending Genre, Altering Style* is his work that is most often cited as the text educators consult when working with multigenre assignments. In the book, Romano begins by discussing what he calls his “multigenre stirrings” and how he wanted to see if his students could create a project like Ondaatje’s work, which he soon found that “they could, of course” (*Blending Genre* 4). Later on he also cites Jerome Bruner’s idea that there are two paths of thought, paradigmatic and narrative, as helpful in his exploration of multigenre. He says,

Instead of explaining or analyzing as paradigmatic knowing does, narrative knowing renders experience or phenomenon. Narrative knowing shows. We read a novel and

leave the world. We read a poem and feel a sharp, emotional surge. We see a painting and meld into it. We dream of falling and jolt ourselves awake. (*Blending Genre* 22)

Students encounter this narrative knowing quite often since it is present in the texts they read for class as well as pleasure, so it would make sense for teachers to encourage this idea that students are familiar with in the context of their writing.

In addition to encouraging students to write using the vehicle of narrative knowing, Romano spends much of *Blending Genres* detailing the various genres students might be familiar with and choose to use as part of their multigenre projects. He dedicates entire chapters to openers (introductory type pieces), dialog, prose fiction, and poetry, and also breaks these topics down further to delve into different types of each genre students may want to try. His inclusion of explanations of these different types as well as examples of each make the text accessible to teachers who may have limited experience with working with these genres or are not sure how to introduce the diverse types of writing to students.

For example, Romano's chapter on poetry entitled "The Many Ways of Poems," discusses various types of poems in depth such as found poetry, haikus, photograph poems, prose poetry, and poems for two voices, and exhibits examples of how his past students have used each. This chapter is quite a bit more in-depth than the others devoted to specific genres, which may be due to students usually having a very tentative relationship with poetry. Romano claims, "Poetry is a place of precision and imagination in language. The genre requires visual thinking and exercises our capacity to synthesize, analyze, construct meaning, and feel emotion—a marvelous combination of cognition and affect" (*Blending Genres* 91), which is why it is a genre that lends itself well to being utilized for students' multigenre projects.

In addition to the great explanations this chapter includes, many of Romano's most striking student examples also come from this section on poetry. One such example is a poem for two voices by Jenn Reid as a response to the issue of rape on Miami University's campus:

The Last Word

He said

You were drunk.

You passed out,
you slut.

I knew what you wanted;
I know everything about you,
don't I?

I knew you once

I can't stand you.

You're ruining my life
making such a huge deal of
One stupid night

Whenever I see you on campus,
You squirm inside, don't you?
Why are you so uncomfortable?
Why are you crying?

No matter how hard I try,
I'll never understand

All the control
is mine now, isn't it?
I didn't just invade your body,
I invaded your life.

I can't
believe this;
you're overreacting!
I never meant to hurt you.

She said

You were drunk.

I was drunk.
I drank so much

I passed out.

I knew you once—
I never thought you'd do this.
I don't know who you are now.

I can't stand you.
You're ruining my life.

One stupid night—
one I'll never forget,
thanks to you.
I don't know who to blame
You haunt me

Whenever I see you on campus.

No matter how hard I try,
I'll never understand
why you felt you had the right
to do what you did.
And now you have

All the control.

—My life
will never be the same.
It's not fair—
you can sleep with the lights
off;

I can't.

I didn't do anything wrong!
You never said no!

I didn't do anything wrong!

I never said yes.

(Blending Genres 106-7)

Jenn's poem is a great example of how truly powerful the vehicle of poetry can be to convey emotional topics while also drawing the reader's attention to an important cause. Although this is not the only way this medium can be used, the choices Jenn made with her work, i.e., choosing the genre of poetry as well as using a poem for two voices to tell this moving story, work together to create a truly memorable piece for both writer and audience.

Another powerful poem Romano shares in this chapter is that written by Allison Olsen after a brainstorming method called "quick writes", which involves students free-writing to a small prompt for two minutes. During this exercise, students were asked to complete the line "When I was ..." with a year of their lives and discuss it. Romano's student Allison wrote, "When I was 19 I was already married and divorced. I—we—knew it wouldn't last but did it anyway. After a week of marriage he mentioned divorce. It finally happened a year and a half later" (*Blending Genres 92*). From this quick write, Allison mapped out images she wanted to include in her final product, and ended up with a powerful poem that exhibits the heartache she still feels about the situation:

She Knew

You took me to California
and I touched the ocean
for the first time.

We rode the carousel
on the boardwalk
and you asked me to be
your wife.

I said yes
and we drove
home for two days.

Your mother flew round trip
in one day
to see our wedding.
Her eyes were so swollen
from crying
that she didn't
take her sunglasses off,
even once.

She was crying for us,
for you.
She knew you would hurt,
and cry,
when I left you.
(*Blending Genres* 93)

At the end of the course, she expressed that writing this poem as well as the rest of her poetry for this project was the hardest thing she had to do all semester; however, she also said she learned a lot about herself as well as her writing process (*Blending Genres* 93).

The chapters teachers may be interested in looking over carefully in the text when beginning multigenre units are those dedicated to structuring the assignments. Romano spends a chapter discussing ideas regarding how a typical multigenre unit could be planned out as well as a brief glimpse of a daily plan teachers may want to use for the first week of the unit. Like Gillis, he also recommends texts instructors may want to show their students to give them an idea of what a multigenre work could look like. By discussing Avi's *Nothing but the Truth*, Ondaatje's *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, or any other book in this genre Romano gives his students a glimpse into the vast possibilities that multigenre can afford. Discussing these texts with emphasis on why the authors may have chosen to display the information using the genres they chose should help them see the importance of selecting which genres to use in their own projects. However teachers choose to structure their unit on multigenre, Romano makes it clear that it is necessary to give students models not only in the form of multigenre novels, but

examples of multigenre projects. He also suggests treating the class as a workshop so that the teacher is made available to assist students with their individual pieces.

His next chapter “Teacher Expertise: Requirements and Strictures” is an excellent follow up because it is comprised of quotes from various teachers who have put his theory into practice when it comes to planning multigenre units. He ends the chapter by saying, “Your teaching of the multigenre paper will take on the contours of your district, department, and classroom culture. Add to that the wonderful, personal idiosyncrasies of your students” (*Blending Genres* 32), which solidifies the idea that multigenre units will be just as varied by classroom as the individual projects students create. Although short, these two chapters are well worth the time to read, especially for educators who may not yet be convinced that multigenre assignments can be adapted to fit any classroom.

One thing evident in Romano’s work, especially in “Chapter 16—Teacher Expertise: Branching Off,” is that multigenre projects can take on a life of their own when put to the test by students’ imaginations. This short chapter has testimonies from teachers who have used multigenre projects in their classrooms and been surprised by the lengths students take the assignment to as well as the amazing effort they have seen them put forth. Teacher Sirpa Grierson from Brigham Young University states,

Even the form that the writings come in has taken on a life of its own: photograph albums, journals, scrolls, Nerd’s candy containers (Roald Dahl, of course), and canning jars have appeared as I have asked students to tie their final product together in some manner. Responses often take on the time period or personality of the subject. A red beach ball plastered with crots hangs in my office for Ray Bradbury’s *Martian Chronicles*, on my shelf is a sheaf of handmade papers in an antique container for

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, and a quilt on 1800s reproduction fabric representing Jo in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. The variety has been endless. (*Blending Genres* 111)

When given the chance to let their creativity flourish in the classroom, it is clear that many will take this opportunity and run with it, surprising their teachers and maybe even themselves. The examples shared in this chapter may not be typical of what every instructor experiences (even Romano says he has not seen this showcasing of various intelligences shining through his students' work) when giving students creative freedom to explore subjects through multigenre, but no matter what products students produce, the assignment will be memorable.

How Teachers Are Adapting Multigenre to their Needs

With the variety of sources and applications there are for multigenre projects in the classroom, it should come as no surprise that teachers use this method of research in many different ways in order to meet the specific standards of their area and particular needs of their classrooms.

One way multigenre assignments can be used is as a strategy to help teachers reach more of their students. In Colleen Ruggieri's classroom, she first used multigenre projects as a way to further enrich her students' understanding of transcendentalism. The unit began with readings from *Self-Reliance*, *Nature*, *Walden*, and *Civil Disobedience* in order to give students a basic idea of the concept, but then the unit took a turn when Ruggieri asked her class to make connections between transcendentalist ideas and comic strips. By using comics in the classroom, Ruggieri gave her students insight on how different genres can have similar themes to what they were already studying. She asked students to not only find comic strips that connected with the ideas of transcendentalism, but also asked them to find songs with these ideas as well. The unit continued on when she assigned students the task of reading from three different genres and to

discuss what they found in terms of transcendentalist ideas and culminated in a project on multiple intelligences where students could choose projects based on their strongest areas of intelligence. The project options Ruggieri suggested were based on different intelligences so students could choose which ones worked best for them:

Linguistic: Write a portfolio of short stories or poetry that contain Transcendental ideas and themes; develop and deliver a speech.

Logical-Mathematical: Design a series of Transcendental puzzles; perform a series of nature experiments in which you document the results; design a Web page.

Spatial: Create a photo/art exhibit; make a video/documentary; make a scrapbook.

Bodily-Kinesthetic: Stage a performance (dance, act).

Musical: Create songs; perform for the class; compile a “Name that Transcendental Tune” list of thirty songs that were not discussed in class.

Interpersonal: Do an environmental survey of at least 100 of your peers, documenting the results.

Intrapersonal: Spend an hour outdoors for at least a week and design a nature journal based on the ideas gained from you classroom readings.

Naturalist: Create a nature guide for the local park, using passages from the readings for inspiration; create a garden.

(Ruggieri 66)

She ended up with quite an array of projects. One student’s project consisted of a comic book depicting how contemporary society views Thoreau’s ideas on life while another’s used photography as a way to interpret scenes from Walden. Although her findings may not be the

case in every classroom that employs multigenre projects, Ruggieri demonstrates that this system worked well for her students and helped them to get a better grasp on a complex topic.

A unique example of how teachers have adapted multigenre assignments for their classrooms comes from English teacher Benjamin Dziedzic who applied the concepts behind multigenre to an elective film and literature class. The course revolved around books that had been made into movies and he “proposed the idea that film revisions of literature are just another means of critical interpretation” (Dziedzic 69) that students could compare to the analytical essays they had been asked to write about literature in the past. Dziedzic used *Reel Conversations* by Alan Teasley and Ann Wilder to introduce students to the idea of “reading” films since the authors cite the “*literary elements* of films as theme, dialogue, symbol, etc., elements that films have in common with novels, short stories, and even poetry” (70). Using concepts familiar to them from previous English classes, students looked at various texts including *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo as well as the film adaptation, *Memento* and the short story it was based on entitled “Memento Mori” by Jonathan Nolan, as well as other adaptations.

The types of multigenre writing assignments Dziedzic incorporated into his class in addition to traditional analytical essays and responses included screenplays and film reviews. He found that after students had studied various book to film adaptations and wrote screenplays of their own based on texts they read in class, “interpreting scenes from the novel forced the students to make their own choices and led to a new respect for the difficulty of creative interpretation” (Dziedzic 72). Not only did this assignment give students the chance to explore a genre not typically taught in the English classroom, but it also allowed them to see the work screenplay writers must do when creating a film adaptation of a novel. Once the course was finished, Dziedzic said he believed each of the multigenre assignments could be considered a

success in his classroom and “brought a fresh perspective to textual interpretation and allowed the students to explore for themselves how the constraints of a genre of writing...enable and define the expression of their ideas” (73). Although the focus of this class was the use of film as an interpretation of literature, the idea in itself as well as the writing assignments Dziedzic chose to incorporate make the entire course an interesting venture into multigenre and show another way in which these ideas can be applied.

Chapter Three: Easing Multigenre Into the Classroom

Adding multigenre projects to an ELA curriculum can be a big change from the traditional assignments both teachers and students are familiar with, so it may be best to ease into the idea. One way teachers may want to consider introducing the idea of multigenre assignments to their students is through alternative book report projects. Much like multigenre research papers, alternative book reports are a creative spin on a conventional assignment, the age-old book report. Rather than asking students to either write or give an oral report summarizing the book they read, alternative book reports allow students to *show* their classmates what they read and maybe even get others interested in the text.

Alternative book reports can take on the form of many different genres or mediums. When first introducing the idea to the class, teachers should give students a list of projects they can choose from, which may or may not be the same list of options for other multigenre assignments. As with other multigenre projects, it is important that instructors have examples for students to use as models to help them see what is expected of them as they work on the task. In addition to using the same genres teachers encourage students to try when writing their research papers, there are genres of writing that simply lend themselves better to discussing a book than a research topic, such as a book talk podcast, mobiles, soundtracks, polls of who has read the book they have read and what these readers would recommend for others to read next, a book trailer, dressing up as one of the characters, etc. Also, since most of these projects do not readily contain a writing component, teachers may want to either include some sort of written response as part of the requirements or put a heavy focus on the oral aspect of the report, which does in turn require a script of sorts. Rather than having students stand up and stiffly discuss the book they read, instructors should encourage students to discuss the product they have created and its

significance in a show-and-tell style of presentation. If these alternative book reports are presented throughout the year, students should be more comfortable talking in front of their peers as the year continues, making the presentations increasingly livelier and more interesting.

Multigenre Research Projects: A New Twist on an Old Tradition

Traditional research papers at the secondary level tend to be the standard five-paragraph essay, also called the “hamburger essay”, “one three one”, or a “three-tier essay”. Whatever term educators may use for this structure, it usually involves five paragraphs—an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph—with each made up of a topic sentence, three supporting sentences, and ending with a concluding sentence that should, when done correctly, sum up the current point while transitioning into the next. This type of writing may be helpful to guide students with writing their first few research essays, but what bearings does this genre have outside of the classroom? As Moulton suggests, “The standard five-paragraph essay and documented research paper are oriented toward academicians only. Real life writing seems to be made up more of letters, memos, invoices, maps, recipes, directions or instructions, flyers, and other practically oriented documents” (53). Since that is the case and in many areas students choose to enter the workforce after graduating high school rather than attending college, incorporating alternative assignments to increase students’ practice with these genres would be beneficial to students no matter their post-graduation plans.

Choosing a topic

With any type of research project, both in and out of the English classroom, the first piece that needs to be considered is the topic. Multigenre research projects are a “strategy that can be used to create an autobiography; to conduct a literary analysis; to assess eras, events, places, and figures in history; or to comment on contemporary issues” (Cate 158), so the assignment is

applicable to quite a broad range of topics. An interesting element of multigenre projects is that they allow for students to write from different perspectives, so choosing some of the aforementioned topics and writing about them from a background different from their own could be an invaluable experience. Giving students this opportunity will allow them to demonstrate their understanding of their subject by representing it in many different ways through multiple genres.

In addition, there are many topics outside of the English classroom that could benefit from being explored through a multigenre assignment; the aforementioned *Collected Works of Billy the Kid* is as much a historical examination of Billy the Kid's life as a literary exercise. Multigenre offers teachers a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with other educators outside of their discipline to continue developing student writing and research skills across the curriculum.

In my freshman composition course last semester, I used multigenre projects as a way to enhance our discussion of subcultures in Ross Haenfler's *Gamers, Goths, & Grrrls: Deviance and Youth Subcultures*. For their topics, students were asked to choose a subculture we had read about in the text or another that they wanted to learn about. I allowed students choose both familiar subcultures such as prep, Goth, and hipster and others that were less well-known, such as Riot Grrrls, virginity pledgers, and impersonators. It was important for each student to choose a subculture that they found to be interesting, which was in turn reflected in the way they carried out the rest of their project.

Teaching different genres

Once teachers and/or students have decided what the topic of their research will be, students must take on the task of figuring out how they will showcase their knowledge about these topics through different genres. Gillis emphasizes that “generally speaking, the more

‘multi’ the genre or voice (and the more complex or unfamiliar the genres), the less firm the ground for the reader” (56) and in this case the writer, so it is important for teachers to make sure students have at least a basic understanding of the different genres they can use. Some instructors worry that going over only a handful of genres in the classroom will stifle the creativity meant to be a part of this assignment, but students should have some frame of reference for what writing in these genres entails. When it comes to actually choosing which genres to include as part of their projects, students should have free reign, but with instruction leading up to this step students will have a better idea of what genres they are interested in using. As stated before by Gillis, this will give students a firm foundation to begin building their projects. It may be a good idea to review some genres students have worked with in the past, but instructors should not need to spend a lot of time on them.

For teachers who decide to incorporate multigenre projects into their curriculum after the school year has begun, all hope is not lost, but there might be a little more work involved to prepare students for writing in different genres. To combat this, teachers might consider incorporating mini-lessons on the various genres that will be acceptable components of students’ overall projects. When deciding what genres to include on this list, instructors may want to begin by asking students for suggestions of different types of genres to see what they are already familiar with. This will help teachers see what genres they will need to do more work with (the less familiar ones or ones students did not mention in their brainstorming) and what genres they can assume students have a grasp on. This list can also be generated by, or in collaboration with, the state and district standards required for the classroom. An index of different types of genres teachers may want to include can be found in Appendices A and B. Please note that this is by no means a definitive list of genres applicable to multigenre projects, so instructors may still want to

consult what students and state/district standards recommend. It is important that when teachers create a multigenre assignment for their curriculum that they include how many different pieces of writing students are to create for their projects. Some instructors ask for a certain number of projects in general, while others require a certain number of projects that utilize a specific number of genres. No matter what amount of work teachers deem appropriate for their grade level, it is important to communicate these requirements with students.

Although the purpose of multigenre research projects is for students to learn different ways to convey the information they have learned about through different genres to develop their writing skills, some teachers familiar with Romano's methods have been allowing their students to branch out. In *Blending Genres*, Romano discusses how he has heard from teachers that their students come up with ways to take their projects beyond writing and create stunning visuals to exhibit their knowledge. While multigenre projects allow students to play to their strengths, it is also imperative that some sort of writing component be involved or else the activity cannot be completely beneficial to both students and teachers.

Since my students last semester were freshmen in college, I compiled a list of genres that most of them should have been familiar with. I used various websites as well as consulted lists other teachers give their students when working with multigenre assignments. This list can be found in Appendix B.

After students have their topic and a list of different genres to choose from when they discuss their topic, there really is not a set path to the end of the assignment. From this point on, the steps can be modified to fit specific classroom needs.

Creating unity

For some instructors, the next step they ask their students to complete is to choose something about their projects they can use in order to make a unified product. When Wright State University professor Nancy Mack first used multigenre projects with her pre-service teachers, she found that even these college students had issues finding coherence between the different pieces of their assignment. One student solved this issue by inserting herself into a larger story about helping a family member move, “which established the conflict of whether to throw out a box of old family papers. The gambit of unpacking the box became a framework for several chapters about the family members...” (Mack 96). Other teachers have found success by having students include some sort of motif within each genre such as a word or symbol. Delane Bender-Slack has her students choose what she calls the “recurring detail” first. She explains it as “a clue that is placed into various pieces throughout, so that when readers read the paper, they say, ‘Ah.’ It should be based on the paper’s theme” (Bender-Slack 64). So whether students bring their research projects together by using themselves within a larger story, use a recurring detail, or a different method that they create on their own, it is vital that there is something within the project to truly connect everything together. This idea of creating unity is not something I had considered before implementing these projects in my classroom, but after reading about the idea in various sources, I can see how this may have contributed to the way some of my students’ projects turned out. More on the importance of unifying the pieces of a multigenre project can be found under “Common Concerns”.

Choosing genres

One aspect that students may find to be the most difficult about this type of assignment related to the unification of the final product is what genres to choose to best showcase their

research. The most logical, and probably easiest, way to go about assisting students with this step is to encourage them to “make notes on the type of genre the information might fit into best or to draft a piece that might become part of their later presentation” (Moulton 531) as they do the research aspect of the assignment. This will help students keep track of ideas they have in addition to inspire them to get started on the projects as they go along. Also, since by then students have a broad knowledge of different genres, they will choose projects that not only suit their needs in regards to their topic, but play to their talents as well.

When I used multigenre projects in my class, I wanted students to be able to express their research in whatever way made sense to them; however, I failed to emphasize the importance of making sure the genre also made sense for their topic. Some students who chose subcultures with a heavy musical influence such as Rastafarian and British mod, chose to create mix tapes for one of their projects, which proved to be a good fit. For others, it was difficult for me to see how the genre connected with the ideas behind their subcultures, but since this was not something I had considered myself, it was not something I could expect them to have considered either.

Citing sources and accuracy

In the realm of developing research skills, it is important to come up with a strategy for how students should show what sources they used to find their information. Some teachers have found success by having students include a bibliography at the end of their projects but also requiring them to use footnotes as a way to “explain their ethical intentions for composing a particular type of document” (Mack 95) as a way to exhibit their findings, as well as a way for them to note what information came from their sources. Mack also mentions how some students used footnotes to have a commentary on their individual pieces and essentially create “an ethical

dialogue between fact and fiction” (96). Even though footnotes are a system that tends to be used less in academia as opposed to endnotes, most instructors have found this method to be an unobtrusive way for students to cite their information. My students used endnotes as a way to indicate in each piece what sources they used for the project, which made it easy for their audience to see where they found the information they were using. They also liked it better than the regular in-text citations since it did not take away from the effect they were attempting with their various pieces within the project.

Assessment

Although multigenre projects are meant to be a fun and engaging way for students to showcase their research, they are still assignments that teachers must assess; however, these projects are meant to be enjoyable for teachers as well, but the guesswork of how to grade the work can be daunting. Romano and other educators have found and believe the best way to grade creative projects of any genre is to focus on content rather than form. During a unit on poetry, Romano taught a lesson on haikus and found he was unsatisfied with the way he was grading them. He says, “What mattered, my grading habits proclaimed, was form, not content; syllabication, not meaning. I found myself awarding As to mediocre haiku because the syllabication was correct and Bs and Cs to great haiku because their syllabication was not” (*Blending Genres* 96). Although the purpose of multigenre projects is to have students use these various genres to express the findings of their research, focusing on the formatting of the writing rather than what is being discussed will not encourage growth. If teachers are not grading student projects based on the formatting of the genre, some may wonder if they are expected to assess them based on creativity. This, however, would not be a fair option either, but there are still ways for teachers to fairly mark the project in a way to satisfy the need for grades.

In *Blending Genres*, Romano dedicates an entire chapter to help introduce teachers to different methods others have used in the past to assess multigenre projects. Some teachers such as Becky Hoag divide the projects into categories with specific requirements so students know what she is looking for in their final product. In Hoag’s classroom, the different sections of the project include research-in-progress, a writer’s notebook, a written presentation, an artifact presentation, and a research journal (*Blending Genres* 165). Unfortunately Romano does not include exactly how Hoag assesses student work in each of these categories, but some of the other strategies have more details to help teachers implement them in their own classrooms.

Another way teachers who have used multigenre projects have evaluated student work is by assigning each piece a specific number of points to show its importance as part of the whole assignment. Romano gives an example of this in his book using a system Karen Blanchette uses in her classroom when grading multigenre projects:

Multigenre Research Paper Grade

5 genres present (minimum)	50 pts/
6-8 typed pages	25 pts/
Content/historical accuracy	100 pts/
Mechanics/presentation	25 pts/
Documentation/Bibliography	50 pts/
TOTAL POSSIBLE	250 PTS/_____

(Blending Genres 166)

For teachers that prefer a method that offers specific descriptions of what teachers look for in students’ final products as well as a more defined scale to grade the projects, Romano offers Nanci Bush’s rubric:

MULTIGENRE PROJECTS

MRS. BUSH

PROLOGUE 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tells the reader how to read the paper. May be brief (1/4-1/2 page).

MULTIGENRE SECTION 70 84 98 112 126 150

A thoughtful and thorough collection of no fewer than five genres responding to a single topic and considering the topic from several vantage points.

There may be some premise (e.g., travel itinerary) connecting the whole piece. A repetend [unifying piece] may be used to connect the genres as well.

NOTE PAGE 10 12 14 16 18 20

Reflective in nature, it describes the inspiration for each of the pieces in the project. This is also an ideal place to document specific notes from sources. Might also provide explanation of what is fact and what has been created or assumed about the situation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 10 12 14 16 18 20

Accurately documents all sources using MLA style.

(Blending Genres 166-7)

Romano notes that Bush reserves half the page of her rubric for written comments on student work in order to elaborate on why she awarded each category specific points. Lastly, for teachers who employ a more holistic-type of grading in their classrooms, Romano gives an example of how Putz evaluates her students using her own interpretation of the Likert Scale:

Criterion: Content (specific facts, thorough; complete picture of topic; many genres; choice of genre fits topic)

Self-Evaluation

Not Yet

Not Bad

Ah Hah!

Teacher Evaluation

Not Yet

Not Bad

Ah Hah!

(Blending Genres 166)

Unlike the other rubrics and grading scales in this chapter, Putz’s allows for students to give feedback on their own performance as well. She also allows for students to elaborate on why they chose each “grade” for themselves and takes their comments into account when she grades their final products. Overall, no matter how teachers decide to assess the multigenre projects their students create, it should be noted that grading based on content rather than form, which is what each of the aforementioned examples do, is the most productive way of encouraging further development of their writing skills in each genre.

When it comes to what types of changes teachers have seen in students’ grades as a result of incorporating multigenre projects into their curriculum, the results can vary. When Ruggieri brought multigenre assignments into her classroom, she found that

students who had regularly struggled with the rigors of the literature in the course responded with much greater effort during the unit than they had in the past. In fact, there was a 99 percent homework completion rate for the class during this unit, which was an improvement of 15 percent from previous averages. Furthermore, when the projects were evaluated, overall student performance rose an average of 5 percent per student—the equivalent of a letter grade for many individuals. (67)

This improvement in student averages is a great example of how multigenre projects can change a classroom environment. From these numbers, it is easy to see that students who were struggling with the material of earlier lessons were now thriving, which could be attributed to

their renewed interest in their classwork. As many teachers can attest, when students are given the opportunity to incorporate their outside interests into an assignment, whether that means choosing their own topic or choosing which medium to showcase their knowledge on the topic, they generally work harder and achieve higher grades.

These increased averages, especially where struggling students are concerned, may be a large part of why teachers consider adding multigenre to their curriculum; however, it is important to remember that such drastic changes in student participation and effort may not be typical in every classroom. Although Ruggieri found a high level of success in reaching more of her students, she also found that “students who typically had the best averages in the class saw only an average of a 2 percent increase in scores” (Ruggieri 67). As great as it was that she was able to help those who were struggling with the course material, not all students saw such a dramatic change in their averages. This has nothing to do with Ruggieri as a teacher, but may be an example of why teachers should also consider using differentiation in their planning with multigenre.

Other requirements

As I have emphasized, there is no set way to construct a multigenre research project, but many teachers do have suggestions as to how to go about assigning them. In terms of what should be included with the final product, some instructors ask students to provide items such as a table of contents, an introductory/concluding piece, and a bibliography page in addition to the projects/genres already required of the project. The table of contents usually gives readers a preview of each project by not only stating its name and page number, but what genre the writing is as well. The introductory piece, sometimes called a “Dear Reader Letter”, should help readers orient themselves by telling them what to expect within the project and any background

information they might need before continuing their reading. If teachers do not want to require reflections on each project or a concluding piece, which many have done as well, instructors could ask students to use their introduction as an overall reflection of their process through the assignment. If students also prefer to limit their interaction with their audience to just what they have to say in the introductory piece, they may want to discuss how they would like their work to speak for itself so by the end the reader understands they are to be transformed into a part of the project itself. The concluding or reflection pieces can work much the same way, or as always, teachers can decide what method works best for their classroom's needs.

Transliterations: Bringing Social Media into the Multigenre Project

Multigenre projects are a great way for teachers to prove to students that their interests outside of school can have a place within the English classroom as well. For students interested in the fine arts, as Romano notes in his text, this could be an opportunity for them to branch out and incorporate their talents into projects that reflect what they have gained from classroom readings or research. For example, students with musical inclinations may be inspired to compose a song about the text they read or students who have more artistic interests may decide to express what they learned through a photography display. This could also be a chance for students of the digital age, who seem to enjoy spending hours on their computers and phones using social media rather than write a book report or research paper, a chance to bring those online literacies into the classroom. As Donna Alvermann states,

the use of social media—blogging; working on a webpage for school or for personal use; sharing original content such as artwork, photos, stories, or videos; and remixing online content to create new texts—is central to the lives of many young people living in the continental United States. (9)

With this in mind, it would only make sense that teachers began discussing these various online literacies in the classroom, especially in ELA courses, since they are so prevalent in students' lives.

Looking at teenagers today, it is quite evident that social media has changed the way they communicate and interact with each other, but it has also changed the way they view reading and writing. Many students nowadays get tripped up and tongue-tied when asked what they like to read in their free time, or what their favorite book is. Some are quick with a comeback saying, "Who has time for reading when I have so much to do?" while others might just be afraid to admit that they cannot remember the last time they picked up a book for fun, or for school even, and would rather just read what their friends have to say on Facebook and Twitter. Although for English teachers the idea that students do not find as much excitement in literature as they do might be disheartening, they need to remember that at their age, the significant thing is "the THAT of teenagers reading is more important than the WHAT" (Hipple qtd. in Gibbons, Dail, and Stallworth 53) and try to encourage this line of thinking in our students' classroom reading and writing activities.

For some of these adolescents who find solace in social media, their online writing genre of choice is more rooted in fiction than in their own daily lives. A simple status update on Facebook or Twitter to let their friends know what is going on in their lives is not how they would like to spend their time. Instead, they dedicate their downtime writing novel length reinterpretations of their favorite fictional characters facing noncanonical situations—their online writing genre of choice is "fanfiction." As Alvermann defines it, fanfiction is "a term for stories that fans of an original work (e.g., *Harry Potter*) write by using the settings, characters, and plot from the original to imagine and create different situations that sometimes include curious mixes

across genres and media” (10-11). Although the genre of fanfiction is not limited to just adolescents, they do make up a large majority of the writers in this subculture.

When someone outside of fandom hears the term “fanfiction”, they probably conjure up an image of people devoted to *Twilight* or *Harry Potter* and people who like to dress up as their favorite fictional characters. Although this may be an accurate description of some self-proclaimed “fangirls” and “fanboys”, it is not the norm. When it comes to the ideas behind fandom and fanfiction, Henry Jenkins says it well:

Fandom, after all, is born of a balance between fascination and frustration: if media content didn’t fascinate us, there would be no desire to engage with it; but if it didn’t frustrate us on some level, there would be no drive to remake it. (247)

In actuality, this balance of fascination and frustration that Jenkins discusses is what should drive any good writing, not just that of fanfiction.

When students choose topics to research, teachers should encourage them to select one they have interest in and do not mind immersing themselves in for the duration of the project. Although creative writing assignments are usually seen more in electives bearing the same name, in those classes teachers push their students to develop their own styles and characters to create a story of their own. Using the ideas that motivate these fans to write works reimagining fictional characters from popular media, teachers could bring this drive to create into their classrooms by offering students assignments that lend themselves to this genre.

At first many teachers and students might be a little hesitant about this idea, but studies have already shown the benefits writing fanfiction can have on developing students’ writing skills. For example, Rebecca Black’s ethnographic study of the website FanFiction.net allowed her to study the “literacy and social practices of adolescent English language learners (ELLs)

who have been involved in writing and reading Japanese animation or anime-inspired fanfictions on the site over a three-year period” (385) and the positive effect this writing had on those adolescents’ language acquisition. In her article “Fanfiction Writing and the Construction of Space,” Black discusses how social media websites, not just those for fanfiction, allow for user input, unlike the classrooms students sit in daily. This sense of community that the websites provide for adolescents is one of the ideas she believes helps encourage the literacy and social growth of the adolescents in her study. Perhaps if teachers were to take note of this and allow students to make suggestions on what goes on in the classroom, with discretion of course, students would feel more comfortable with their peers and the classroom community.

This idea of bringing social media into the classroom may not be something many teachers are comfortable with or even able to do. Most school districts have some sort of online security to prevent students from accessing these websites during school, and there are still some students that do not have access to a personal computer at home. However, that does not mean these online literacies cannot be brought into the classroom. Instead of having students do this writing on their own, teachers may want to consider creating a classroom blog where they can post students’ writing or take time for students to visit the school’s computer lab so they can create their own blog to showcase their works. No matter how teachers decide to incorporate online literacies into the classroom, at this point it is just important that they do. This area of literacy is only going to become a more prominent part of the English language experience, so it would be beneficial for teachers to begin bringing it into the classroom now to better prepare their students for writing in the future.

Common Concerns

When first considering the use of multigenre assignments in the classroom, teachers may find it to be quite a daunting task since they are essentially given just as much freedom to create the assignments as students are in performing them. Although many instructors have used these types of projects in their curriculum over the past few decades and even written about their experiences, there still is not one set way to take on the project. While multigenre assignments can provide a fun and exciting way for students to conduct research, it is important to note that these projects should still follow the processes of conventional writing assignments. It is vital that students see the work they do with these projects as legitimate and not just a “play time” activity, so teachers should do their best to structure the various pieces of the assignment as any other class work. Keeping this in mind as well as the plethora of materials and opinions available about multigenre projects, teachers may wonder if there is any foolproof way to be sure they are not only adequately preparing their students for successfully completing these projects but also providing a valuable educational experience. Since multigenre units afford teachers a large sense of freedom to conform the teaching method to their classroom needs, there is not a definite way of taking on the task; however, there are some aspects teachers should consider before employing the assignment in their classroom.

Before teachers employ multigenre assignments in their classroom, they may have some reservations and concerns for themselves and/or their students, which is to be expected. One of those fears may be the idea of implementing an assignment that is so different from what they have done before or the fear of not knowing how it will turn out in their classroom. Most teachers are accustomed to having full control of how classroom assignments are carried out and giving more freedom to students, rather than being the authority, can seem a little unnerving; however, it is important to remember that although students will have more freedom with these

projects, they should still be structured in such a way as to encourage the development of reading, writing, and research skills. The belief is that students will be able to use these more creative methods to present their findings while also gaining the skills they would normally glean from more traditional projects. This is a key point to emphasize when implementing multigenre assignments, or trying to convince colleagues and administrators of its legitimacy so they can see the benefits of a less traditional route to the same goal. The major difference between the two methods is that multigenre assignments allow for students to flex their creative skills and practice writing in genres that will have more relevance to their future lives, rather than relying on the mode of the traditional research essay.

One of the major aspects of multigenre projects is looking at the research students have gathered for their project and deciding what genre of writing would best showcase this information to their audience. Without careful planning, readers may not see why a student chose a specific genre or chose to convey information in a certain way; therefore, it is important for teachers to emphasize this idea when assigning the projects, especially in the case of multigenre research assignments. For most students, this plotting out of the project and choosing genres can be a lot of fun, but also, as one student noted, “a great deal of work—not really hard work, but thoughtful work...I found that the most strenuous work was the exploration that took place in my mind” (Moulton 531). So although multigenre projects are more enjoyable than the traditional research assignment, they still require a lot of thought to create a successful final product. In addition, there are elements teachers can include that have the student discuss in their project what they took into account when they were contemplating the various genres such as a “Dear Reader” letter that is meant as a type of guide for anyone looking at the student’s

project. This reflection allows students to revisit their thought process and show their audience how they reached a decision about each piece.

Another concern teachers may have is the aforementioned amount of freedom the assignments provide students. Although most teachers who have used multigenre projects in their classrooms have found them to be successful, they do place a large amount of the work on students, and as Voltaire once said (or if a group of adolescents were to be polled they may attribute the quote to 2002's *Spiderman*), "With great power comes great responsibility." Bender-Slack mentions that after experiencing the accountability required of multigenre research papers, some of her students decided they preferred writing a traditional research essay over the more creative projects. One such student said, "Multigenre papers are more complex, take more time and energy to write than a traditional paper. It makes you think harder and makes your paper more personal" (Bender-Slack 66). Teachers may also find that even if students begin their projects with the best of intentions, sometimes the end products do not meet educators' expectations. The responsibility multigenre projects ask of students may be too much for some to handle without more guidance, so it is important for instructors to remain as hands on as possible to assist with this where necessary.

In many cases, the most difficult part of the project for students is making sure the genres they choose to include in their assignment have a sense of unity. As W. David LeNoir advises, a multigenre work without unity is not a multigenre paper; it is an anthology at best...The point of a multigenre paper is to convey a unified message through means that reflect the richness of experience, so this unity must be reflected not only in the content of the individual elements, but also by how they work together. (100)

The idea of unifying the different pieces of a multigenre research project can be difficult for students depending upon their topic, but as teachers use these more in their classrooms, they should feel better equipped to assist students with this aspect of the assignment.

An additional concern instructors may have in regards to these types of assignments is the creative freedom they offer for a typically nonfiction genre of writing. Since multigenre lends itself to incorporating both fiction and nonfiction into the various pieces students create, teachers will have to decide what they consider to be an appropriate amount of historical accuracy and how much they will allow students to fictionalize in their work for creative purposes. Some teachers such as Cate suggest to their students that as long as the details are “consistent with their research” (137), they can have as much creative freedom as they would like. An example of this idea in regards to historical consistency can be seen in Mack’s article where she discusses the process of her student Jeff when he wrote the parallel obituary about his mother.

Above all, Mack remarks that her “students made a concerted effort to demonstrate in their writing that they understood the time period and the social forces that framed the stories” (93). This shows the true purpose of these products in a succinct statement: for students to demonstrate their understanding. If we as educators can read through a student’s final product and see instances of understanding about the topic at hand, then the assignment has served its purpose.

For more traditional teachers, the idea of revamping the traditional research essay may leave them questioning how students are expected to learn about writing. Although many subjects do use research type papers, they are a genre mainly used in academic settings. For students who do not plan on continuing their education after high school or going into a field with a specific way of styling research documents, the time secondary teachers take to go over

research paper formatting is wasted. By teaching students about various other genres they will most likely encounter throughout their careers such as letters, memos, invoices, etc., they will be more prepared for workplace writing. As Romano says,

No matter what professions they [students] enter, facts and analysis are not enough. If our decisions are to be both sound and humane, we need to understand emotion and circumstance, as well as logic and outcome. Writing in many genres helps minds learn to do that. (*Blending Genres* 57)

The same can be said for students who plan to attend college post-graduation because the research and writing skills they develop through the use of multigenre projects will still aid them in their educational pursuits without putting them through the motions of writing under the strict standards of the research paper format.

No matter what concerns educators may have going into experimenting with multigenre assignments in their classrooms, hopefully learning more about the purpose behind them, how other teachers have used them in their own classrooms, and the impact they have on students will sway their fears and encourage them to take the first step in implementing some of these assignments.

Chapter Four: Personal Experiences with Multigenre

Although I had never explored the idea of multigenre assignments until now, I had unwittingly had contact with them throughout my academic career since middle school. In a few secondary classes, we used creative projects to discuss books we read, both individually and as a class, with our peers. Once I began to learn more about these projects, I tried my hand at using them with my own students, and found that I, too, still have some learning to do when it comes to incorporating these ideas into my own classroom.

My first experience with multigenre projects came to me in the form of book talks in my fifth grade language arts class. Throughout the school year, we read various works of our choosing outside of the classroom, in addition to the texts we read as a class. My teacher would set aside a few days of each marking period for us to present creative projects based on our outside reading to our peers. I remember she gave us a handout at the beginning of the school year to give us ideas as to how we could present our texts, but other than that there weren't any strict parameters. Having this freedom allowed us to express ourselves, and our texts, however we chose, and we always found it to be much more fun than the boring book reports we would come to loathe in later years.

After fifth grade, the next opportunity for multigenre projects did not enter my academic career until my ninth grade class studied *Romeo and Juliet*. Much like my language arts teacher, our instructor gave us a list of ideas that we could interpret in our own way to best showcase our understanding of Shakespeare's work. I chose to practice my creative writing skills by putting together a diary of what I believed could exhibit Juliet's thoughts over the course of the play, which could almost be seen as a form of fanfiction. I was very proud of my work and ecstatic that my teacher was allowing my love for creative writing to enter the classroom. It was only

then that I began to feel that this hobby I did on a daily basis outside of school could have actual bearings on my education. This particular teacher offered other opportunities for multigenre projects throughout the entire school year, which was quite enjoyable; however, I was afraid that once I moved on from ninth grade, these types of assignments would once again be pushed to the side.

When I entered the tenth grade, I found I had been wrong in my worries about losing the chance to do more creative work in the English classroom. As with my ninth grade instructor, my teacher that year gave us various opportunities to showcase our talents through creative projects, including during our unit on *The Princess Bride*. For our final projects in this unit, our instructor gave us a list of choices and set us loose to create. During high school, in addition to my love of creative writing, I also had an intense passion for music and was thrilled to see an option for creating a soundtrack for the text. I spent days mulling over different songs that best represented various characters and scenes throughout the novel. Once I chose my tracks, I performed the most important part of the assignment, which was to write explanations for each track. I did this in the form of liner notes so the writing portion would go along with the general concept of CD packaging and my teacher would be able to make a clear connection as to why each song struck me as perfect for particular people and situations. I even created album artwork for the front and back of the cases, as well as sacrificed an actual CD case from my beloved collection to house my masterpiece. When I turned in my project, I was quite proud of myself and the work I had done. When I got it back a few weeks later with a perfect score (because I was and still am one of *those* students) and a note from my teacher asking if she could keep it, I was over the moon because she thought my project was good enough to share with future classes as an example. Now, however, I am less thrilled that I do not have a copy of this assignment

because out of everything I have done in my entire academic career, that soundtrack was the project I was the most proud of. People I know as little more than colleagues and peers have heard me wax poetic over this project about the time and effort I put into crafting this assignment nearly 10 years ago with a fondness as though it were only yesterday.

When I was in college, I also had the chance to do an alternative book report to discuss a memoir I read in my adolescent literature course called *Love Is a Mix Tape* by Rob Sheffield. Although the book is not geared toward secondary students, per se, it was an interesting story of the author's relationship with music and his late wife that would be an appropriate work for music lovers of all ages. As I decided what type of project to make for my alternative book report, I decided I wanted to do something a little different from what someone would normally expect a student to produce when reading a book about music i.e. I did not want to go the mix tape route again. Instead, I chose to make a mobile using different objects that represented the author and the subjects he wrote about. I used knitting needles and yarn, which were important to his wife, as the main structure and links of the mobile and hung items such as a CD, articles written by Sheffield from Rolling Stone Magazine where he works, as well as a few other significant objects. I cannot remember if any writing was required for this particular assignment but even if it was not, deciding what project to pursue and working out the details was a process in itself. Projects such as these allowed my classmates and me to stretch our imaginations and further interact with the books we read in order to create something that helped us to share these works with each other.

During that same course I created a "Reader's Support Kit," which was essentially a list of activities for students to do before, during, and after their reading of *I Am Number Four* by Pittacus Lore. I tried to make the assignments creative but still include some sort of writing

component as well as make them relevant to the text. A list of these activities can be found in Appendix A.

Last semester when my course used Haenfler's text, I thought I had found the perfect opportunity to incorporate a multigenre research project into my curriculum. When I compiled the list of genres for students to choose from, I deliberately did not include specific guidelines because I did not want to inhibit their creativity. What I found was that even university freshmen still need some guidance when it comes to projects such as these, not because they are not capable of doing them, but because they are not used to having so much freedom and do not really know what to do with it.

Some of the projects students created were wonderful interpretations of what they learned about their topic. One of my freshmen, Christi, chose to do her project on the Riot Grrrl movement after learning more about it from our textbook. For her projects, she chose to give a PowerPoint on the movement and made a painting on canvas to exhibit what she had learned. She said the following in her portfolio reflection letter:

I chose the painting to reflect the Riot Grrrls' personality. It gave me an opportunity to share the subcultures' taste in music and how they associated with the punk scene. I chose a very popular song among the subculture and painted it to look like something a girl in the subculture would own. I definitely enjoyed learning about them. (Burks)

Although some may argue that PowerPoint is not the most creative outlet for students to use for multigenre projects, Christi used hers in such a way as to reflect what was important to members of the Riot Grrrl subculture. The colors of her slides as well as the font were chosen to reflect the punk aspects of the movement, much like the colors she chose to use for her painting.

Through both her presentation and her art, it was obvious to me that Christi had gained an understanding of this subculture and had maybe found a bit of a riot grrrl within herself.

When it came to the research aspect of the assignment, most students used the Internet and the library databases our campus offers, but some also spoke with people they knew who considered themselves a part of these different subcultures and found these interviews of sorts to give them better ideas into these communities than secondary sources ever could. Kaitlyn did her project on fandom subculture and was inspired by her roommate. Using what she gleaned from her roommate and her research, she was able to discuss what it meant to be a “fangirl” from the perspective of someone close to her. In her letter explaining why she chose to show what she learned in the form of creating a daily schedule and stickers for our class, she said,

I chose these two projects because the schedule will show others how much time of a fans’ life is devoted to what they love and how it could take over their real lives not just the fictional one. I also chose to create a sticker because fans like to get other fans involved and fandom as a subculture is proud of what they are and who they become...

(Groh)

At the end of the project, she said she still did not see the appeal of being a part of fandom for herself, but she could understand why it would be a subculture people enjoy being a part of, and that is what was important about this assignment.

As with any assignment, no matter how “exciting”, the outcome still relies on the effort of the students. I have to say that once my students had finished their presentations I was very impressed with how many of them turned out; however, there were just as many that lacked any effort at all. While it was my hope that my students would see this as an opportunity to branch out and explore how they could discuss their research topics in genres other than the traditional

research paper, it was clear that they needed more guidance than what I provided. As Romano and other educators will attest, multigenre projects are just as much a learning experience for the students as the teachers, and I can definitely say I learned how too much freedom can be overwhelming for some students, even at the university level.

Looking back I cannot recall any of my past teachers actually calling these projects “multigenre,” but the connection became clear to me the more I explored the topic. Through a college course in adolescent literature, we were taught about alternative book reports and the visual impact they could have, so making the transition to using those same types of projects for research based assignments did not seem like a far-fetched idea to me. Each option teachers provide for students is essentially an activity found in a traditional ELA classroom, but “repackaged” to include more creative thought. Teachers can find applications for these assignments in their own classrooms and utilize them to cover some of the district and state standards they are required to teach.

For example, in Virginia teachers follow a curriculum called the Standards of Learning (SOLs). Within the English SOLs, each year from first through twelfth grade is separated into four categories that teachers must be sure to include within their curriculum: oral language/communication, reading, writing, and research. Looking at the 9th grade SOLs in the realm of communication, by the end of the school year students

will develop interpersonal communication skills as well as those skills required for more formal public speaking opportunities. They will continue to develop proficiency in making planned oral presentations independently and in small groups. They will continue to develop media literacy by producing, analyzing, and evaluating auditory, visual, and written media messages. (Virginia Department of Education 219)

These standards could be addressed in a multigenre unit in different ways, depending on what projects students choose for the assignment. Students may be interested in writing a play, commercial, or some other visual project that would allow them to not only practice developing their writing skills but also give them an opportunity to perform their work for their peers. Students would need to look at various media messages when preparing their own to see what things they can learn about this medium, which will lead them to doing an informal analysis of sorts on the messages they receive. Multigenre could also lend itself to group work, so having students work in groups on projects and presenting them to the rest of the class would fulfill this standard as well.

For reading in 9th grade, the standards of learning focus on comprehension and cross-curricular skills. The framework states that in addition to gaining specific knowledge about vocabulary and literature, “students will continue to develop their reading comprehension skills through utilizing strategies to identify formats, text structures, and main ideas. They will apply these skills across the content areas, including history and social science, science, and mathematics” (Virginia Department of Education 225). These skills can easily be addressed within a multigenre unit by exposing students to various genres and helping them see what characteristics define them. This will not only be fulfilling a requirement for the SOLs, but also setting students up to be better equipped with the background knowledge they will need when exploring different genres in their writing. Encouraging students to be conscious of the words they use when writing from a different perspective, for a specific genre, or one of the various content areas will also help them build and expand their vocabulary.

When students leave the 9th grade in Virginia, they are expected to have a good grasp on different forms of writing as well as the writing process as a whole. More specifically,

students will write narrative, expository, and persuasive forms with an emphasis on analysis. As in every grade, daily writing experiences are essential for all ninth-grade students, and they will demonstrate their understanding through written products. They will develop as writers by participating in a process for writing including prewriting, organizing, composing, revising, editing, and publishing. Students will edit writings for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing. (237)

Looking at all of the skills students need to learn in the area of writing before leaving this or any other grade may seem overwhelming, but in reality all of these standards can be discussed in terms of multigenre projects. When teachers begin introducing different genres to students, they should give them ample time to practice the new style. Allotting time for daily writing can be utilized as a way to encourage this practice of writing in different genres and further developing writing skills. In addition, since multigenre projects follow many of the same steps of the traditional writing process, it would not be difficult to incorporate the steps involved between prewriting and publishing as part of the multigenre unit.

The final section of standards set for English teachers in the ninth grade describes what students need to be able to accomplish in the realm of research before they advance to the next grade. According to the curriculum framework, students will develop skills in using print, electronic databases, online resources, and other media to access information and create a research product. Students will verify the validity of all information and follow ethical and legal guidelines for using and gathering information. They will use a standard style method to credit sources of ideas used and will demonstrate clear understanding of grammatical conventions through the application

of rules for correct use of language, spelling, and mechanics. (Virginia Department of Education 242)

After reading through these specific requirements, it should be noted that nowhere here does it say that the way students must learn about the research process and how they incorporate it into their writing has to be within a specific genre. As long as by the end of the school year students are able to complete a research project utilizing these various skills, they will be successful in meeting this standard; therefore, if teachers include lessons on how to find different, reliable sources as well as how to cite them, students should emerge from a multigenre unit with the same skill sets as students who write a traditional research essay.

No matter what curriculum standards teachers must consider, the ultimate goal for students' multigenre projects is for teachers to see that students have done the work, absorbed the information from the classroom and their research, and are able to express it back to an audience in a way that all can comprehend. It is about knowing something so well that they are able to take it a step further and exhibit it in a way that no one has done before. To look at these projects from a theoretical standpoint, their basic goal is to exemplify the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

On the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, the stages begin with "remembering" as the foundation then continue on with "understanding", "applying", "analyzing", "evaluating", and ending with "creating", and each level can be exemplified by students through the use of multigenre. In relation to "remembering", students should be able to recall the different genres they have used in and out of class in order to choose which ones to use for their projects. This step can also be manifested in "applying" since they will be taking the genres they choose and employing them to express ideas about their subject. While students gather the research for their

projects, they will be spending time “analyzing” and “evaluating” their findings to determine whether or not the research is valid and if it will be useful as support for their assignment. Finally, once students have an “understanding” of their subject, they will be able to get on to the “creating” in order to demonstrate their knowledge. The fact that multigenre works so well with the ideas behind Bloom’s Taxonomy should make it an assignment used more often in classrooms since teachers are always looking for a way to encourage higher-level thinking. Multigenre does just that, while also allowing students to have a little bit of fun.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Multigenre projects have been incorporated in a variety of ways in classrooms around the country since they first gained popularity in the academic world. Teachers either bring them into the curriculum as a way to change up their methods of assigning book reports, research papers, or even just to see if a different teaching approach will reach more of the students in their classes. As Romano, Putz, Gillis, and various other educators have discovered, these projects are also able to expand student thinking and give them a memorable experience with exploring different genres of writing. These projects have encouraged students from the secondary to university levels to break free from traditional writing assignments and allowed them to express their thoughts, feelings, and research in a creative manner that past assignments did not afford. Multigenre projects can also provide excitement for teachers because they get to have more freedom in the creation of the assignment, and they will have the luxury of looking forward to reading attention-grabbing final projects rather than page after page of potentially lackluster writing.

To emphasize Romano's words from *Writing with Passion*, "good writing, regardless of the mode of discourse, causes writers to think" (6). When teachers bring multigenre into the classroom, they are not giving students "free time" or failing to fulfill their duties as an educator. In all honesty, they are crafting an assignment that will take time on their part, as well as make their students work harder in order to develop their research and writing skills; however, the final products will be well worth the effort for both teachers and students. In essence, multigenre assignments are like hiding zucchini in brownies—students get to enjoy their work while teachers still make sure they get their vegetables. By the end of their work, students will not only learn more about writing and research, but their subjects as well as themselves. Students

like Allison discovered that writing poetry was hard, but unburdening herself of her thoughts regarding her early first marriage made the experience notable. Or even looking at Ondaatje's text can show how history can come alive, even if it is bolstered by fiction.

Since multigenre assignments can be altered for whatever topic or standard teachers would like to apply them to, it only makes sense that they afford themselves easily to differentiation as well. As Ruggieri discovered, multigenre projects were able to help struggling students grasp the concept of transcendentalism, which may have remained foreign to them had she taught it in a different manner. For students who already thrive in academic environments, multigenre projects may increase their understanding, but not provide them with enough challenge to truly expand their thinking. So in essence, it almost seems that while she was drawing one group of students into the classroom, another group was being "set aside"; therefore, it is important that when teachers create their multigenre assignments they find a level of balance to make sure they are truly reaching all of their students and encouraging them to reach their full potential. In truth, this is something that educators should strive for every day, but this balance is also important to the successful implementation of multigenre assignments.

Although some educators might still remain skeptical, there are clearly more pros than cons when it comes to implementing multigenre assignments in the classroom. If everything does not go as planned the first time around, the flexibility of the assignment allows for maneuvering so that next time teachers can try something different. With that in mind, there really is no reason teachers should not attempt to employ multigenre in the ELA classroom in some fashion at least once in their teaching careers; however, they may be surprised to find that once they and their students have had a glimpse of the exciting and interesting projects that can be revealed through the unit, they might make it a part of their yearly curriculum.

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Appendix A - Project Examples

Examples of Alternative Book Report Projects Adapted for *I Am Number Four* by Pittacus Lore

Pre-reading Activities:

- *Introduction to Science Fiction.* In a group of 3-4 people, talk about what you think science fiction is. As a group, come up with an “in your own words” definition and some examples of other movies, books, and television shows that are science fiction. For the entertainment portion, include a brief summary of each. The overall assignment should be about a page and a half, double-spaced. If you can think of a lot of examples, feel free to make it longer!
- *Judge a Book by Its Cover.* Take a good look at the cover and outside of the novel. If your copy is hardcover, look at the inside of the jacket to see if there are any pictures and check the actual book itself. Based on just the graphics that the artist has designed for these different areas of the outside of the book, what do you think this novel will be about? Can you tell anything about the genre or the characters (without reading the summary)? Do you think you would enjoy reading this book from just looking at the graphics?
- *KWL Chart.* After reading the summary of the book, fill out the first two parts of a KWL chart. Write under the “What I know” column everything you know/think you know about this novel. Under the “What I want to know” portion, write what you hope to get out of this book, i.e. learn to have an appreciation for science fiction, learn more about a fictional race of people, etc. You will fill out the rest of the chart after you finish the novel.
- *New Kid in Town.* What if tomorrow a new student who was unlike anyone you had ever met moved to your school? He/she looked pretty normal, but you could tell when you talked to him/her that they were hiding a secret. How would you react? Would you try to befriend this mysterious stranger? Write a one page, double-spaced response of how you would deal with this situation.
- *Bookmarks.* Before you even pick up the book, watch a book trailer for the novel and then read the summary on the book jacket. Once you think you’ve got a pretty good grasp on some things that may come along in the novel, create a bookmark to use throughout our reading. After you finish, write a paragraph about why you designed it the way you did.

During Reading Activities:

- *Response Journal.* During our reading of *I Am Number Four*, you may keep a response journal. You will write a response after every 4 chapters (8 responses) and when you finish the novel, you will need to write a final response on the overall novel and how you felt about the ending/what you would change about it.

- *Graphic Novel.* Enjoy graphic novels? Why not create one? After reading each chapter, think about the most important event and how you could translate it into a picture. For each chapter you will only need to have one frame. To go above and beyond, you may attempt to make the entire book into a graphic novel.

Note: If you choose to take on the challenge of translating most of the book into graphic novel format, you may be able to get credit for both the during and post reading activities, depending upon level of effort.

- *Dear Diary.* Throughout your reading of the novel, choose one character to keep a diary for. Include major events as well as non major ones. You have creative liberties with this project so you may add other “behind the scenes” events as well if you would like.
- *What If?.* Have you ever read a story with a major event and wished the characters had done something different? Here’s your chance to fix it! Once you’ve found a scene in the novel that you wish had played out differently, rewrite it to your own preferences. In another paragraph, write why you think it should’ve played out that way.
- *End Scene.* In a group of 3-4, choose a scene from a chapter we’ve read recently and act it out in front of the class. Be sure to have at least 5 props (wardrobe or other miscellaneous objects) to use in your scene.
- *Timeline.* While reading the book, keep track of important events and create a timeline during your readings. Try to make a large version on a piece of poster board so it can be displayed in the classroom once we finish the book.
- *Book Buddy.* During our reading of the book, correspond with a partner about the different things that go on in the novel. You can do this over letters or email, whichever works best. Like the response journals, you will have 8 responses each as well as a final overall response. At the end of the reading, please print/type up/email me the responses.
- *Daily News.* In a group of 3-4, you will create a newspaper. As with the response journals, you will have 8 issues (one after every 4 chapters) and then a final overall response issue. Include important events and even interview classmates to see their reactions to the novel so far. If you would like, I can print off and distribute your newspaper issues to the class!
- *Yo teach!* Ever wanted to see what it’s like to be the teacher? After reading a section of the novel, if you would like to lead the discussion about it in front of the class, you are more than welcome! Prepare a 5 minute presentation accompanied by a 10 question multiple choice quiz and you’re good to go!
- *Recap.* One day, you may volunteer to recap the novel up to the point we will be discussing that day. Be sure to keep a detailed outline that way you don’t miss anything important that people may’ve missed if they were absent on another day. Don’t worry about being nervous in front of the class! You’re outline is what I’m interested in grading.

Post Reading Activities

- *Sketchy Characters.* Choose two of your favorite characters from the novel and draw them to the best of your ability. Once you've drawn them, write a one page, double-spaced essay describing each of the characters and why they were your favorite. Did you admire them for their bravery? For their intellect? Make sure your response is detailed.
- *It's a Musical Life.* Make a 12 song soundtrack for *I Am Number Four*. Be sure that all of the songs relate in some way to the novel. Create a CD booklet and for each song, write a paragraph about why you're including that particular track.
- *KWL Chart (continued).* Once you've finished the novel, fill in the "What I've learned" column on your KWL chart.
Note: If you choose to do this assignment, you must do another post reading activity with it.
- *Book Trailer.* Now that you've finished the book, share what you've learned with others. Create a book trailer for the novel and present it to the class. If you need any assistance, I will be glad to help you.
- *Collage It.* Create a poster collage of different words and symbols/items from the book. Along with that, submit a response explaining why you chose certain items and what they represent from the novel. Try to make a large version on a piece of poster board so it can be displayed in the classroom!
- *Let's Go to the Movies!* Create a movie poster and include pictures of the actors you would want to play the respective parts. Include a written response as to why you chose those certain actors and any changes they would need to make to fit the part. Try to make a large version on a piece of poster board so it can be displayed in the classroom!

Appendix B – Example of Multigenre Research Assignment

Portfolio Two: Opposing Viewpoints

For your second portfolio this semester, you're going to look at two (2) differing opinions on one (1) subculture. This is going to allow you to see opposing arguments people have on one subject and give you the opportunity to present these arguments to an audience. This is something you'll most likely be doing throughout your academic career, so this assignment is going to help set the foundations for you to succeed further down the road.

You can choose any of the subcultures we've discussed in class or one that Haenfler doesn't include in *Gamers, Goths, & Grrrls* (just ask me beforehand!). Once you've chosen your subculture, begin looking through sources that promote the values of this subculture AND sources that don't approve of this subculture as a whole or specific aspects of it. You'll eventually be choosing one from each viewpoint, but it's always good to see what's out there on your topic!

After you've chosen your subculture and the two resources you're going to be using, you'll need to decide how you want to present your information.

Rather than a formal paper, which is always an option if you prefer it, you're going to be presenting your arguments in a more creative way. You'll need to choose three (3) of the different genres/projects to include in your portfolio (there's a list of ideas on the back). Some of these ideas can be combined to form a single project (e.g. dressing as a subculturalist from a subculture different from your own and writing a journal entry about it). Whatever you choose, you'll need to get them approved by me so that I can make sure you're choosing at least one or two that will allow you to practice your research skills. Also, for each project you'll be doing a short write up about your process and why you chose to exhibit your findings using that genre.

We'll discuss some of these ideas throughout the unit, but if you have questions about any of them at any time, please ask.

When you turn in your portfolio, please include ALL drafts of your work (including brainstorming), responses from peer review, and a reflection letter on your engagement with the material and the writing practices from this unit.

As we get closer to the end of the unit, I'll give you more specifics on what needs to be included with each project, so don't panic about the lack of information!

Project Ideas:

Journal entries
Personal letter
Greeting card
Schedule/things to do list
Inner monologue representing internal conflict
Want/classified/personal ads
Personal essay from the viewpoint of someone in this subculture
Poem
Song
Encyclopedia article
Short scene from a play with notes for stage directions
Short scene from a movie with notes for camera shots
Short story
Talk show interview
Mixed CD with liner notes
Picture book
Brochure/newsletter
Magazine/TV advertisement or infomercial
Restaurant description and menu
Local news report
Review and poster for a movie/book/TV program

Board game
PowerPoint/Prezi presentation
Letter to the Editor or advice column
Obituary/eulogy/tribute
Speech/debate
Fashion magazine article
Comic strip/political cartoon
Résumé`
Crossword puzzle
Documentary/video ethnography
Recipe
Will
Play/skit
Flag/banner
Bumper sticker
Shopping list
Fairy tale
Email correspondence
Sermon
Map
Photo/painting/collage
T-shirt
Business card
Action figure
Diorama
Other (with permission)

