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The Twine Project: Engaging Metacognition and Remediation with Digital Narrative
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The Twine Project: Engaging Metacognition and Remediation with Digital Narrative

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Overview

The Twine Project invites students to reconceptualize a previously written paper, ideally a personal narrative or argumentative essay, into a non-linear experience that can easily be shared or published on the internet as a single hypertext markup language (html) file without prior coding knowledge. Twine, an open-source platform that allows users to create interactive "clickable" web pages (similar to "choose your own adventure" books or visual novels), is an ideal means of introducing multimodality, transfer, and reflective writing for students of all skill-levels, but particularly those in First-Year Composition. The goals for this project are twofold. First, to increase digital literacy by having students work with a basic coding language to create branching narrative pathways, manipulate perspective, and experience writing in an unconventional way. Second, this project encourages students to focus on dynamic storytelling by taking their original information or ideas from the previously written essay and transferring them to a new genre for a new audience. The rewritten Twine story is accompanied by a brief metacognitive reflection essay asking students to explain why they made specific decisions behind their transformative work from one medium to another. Finally, the project concludes with a classroom showcase, where authors invite their peers to play through their Twine stories and offer comments or final feedback.

Time Commitment

2-3 weeks

Materials

Students will need a device (either a personal laptop/computer or access to a school computer lab) with an internet connection. [Twine](www.twinery.org) (www.twinery.org) can be downloaded on Windows, macOS, and Linux based systems, or used through a web browser (projects will be saved / cached as long as the student does not clear their browser history), such as Google Chrome (recommended) or Apple Safari.

Assignment Process

- Students begin with an introduction to [Twine](#) by engaging in a group playthrough using two published examples. [You Are Jeff Bezos](#) by Kris Lorischild is an effective model of argumentative writing and [Depression Quest](#) by Zoe Quinn is an effective model of narrative writing. A class discussion follows each playthrough highlighting the purpose, audience, and context of each example. Multiple playthroughs of each example are encouraged so students can experience the various outcomes of each story.

- Next, students read Kara Taczak's "The Importance of Transfer in Your First Year Writing Course" followed by an in-class discussion of how previously written work can be transformed for a new purpose, via a new genre, specifically aimed at a new audience. This helps students realize that they are not writing from scratch, but are reconceptualizing their ideas through the use of a new medium.

- Students are invited to select a previously written essay between 4-6 pages in length, a personal narrative or argumentative essay are ideal, for transfer. Students are asked to free write a brief reflection on why they selected the essay that they did, what new audience they have in mind for their web story, and how they envision using the Twine platform to transfer the most important information from the original

essay. This allows them to set goals by understanding purpose, audience, and context.

- Further, students read Melanie Gagich's "An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing" to help them consider how they will reconceptualize their linear essay into an interactive narrative experience. The Twine platform is then modeled in class by showing students how to create a story, compose passages, and link them together to form an interactive narrative. Previously written paragraphs from their selected essay are rewritten into Twine passages during class time. Students then decide if they will include visual imagery (jpegs, gifs), music (mp3s), or videos (mp4s) as part the transfer process.

- Additionally, students are asked to consider accessibility with their choices (particularly through the audio / visual possibilities mentioned above) by reading Rachel Donegan's "The Rhetorical Possibilities of Accessibility." Students have the option to record each line of the story or to use images / music to aid in the storytelling process.

- Next, editing continues in the classroom as each respective Twine Project takes shape. Peer review is highly recommended by inviting students to share their Twine Project with their classmates, which often facilitates new ideas and approaches as the project enters its final stage. This is also a key troubleshooting phase to make sure each story executes the basic code properly, making navigation between the webpages possible.

- Furthermore, as the Twine portion of the assignment concludes, students are asked to read Giles, "Reflective Writing and the Revision Process: What Were You Thinking?" in preparation for writing the accompanying metacognitive reflection essay. Emphasis is placed on sharing

the *intentions* behind the Twine Project by clearly stating what the student was going for in terms of the new writing goal and the impact the interactive webpage would have on the new audience. In this respect, students are asked to consider their approach. If they selected a personal essay, how did they manage to convey the original meaning / emotion behind their narrative? If they selected an argumentative essay, how did they preserve a sense of persuasion?

▪ Finally, the reflection essay itself prompts students to remediate the writing process by inviting them to discuss how they transferred their original essay through the lens of purpose, audience, and genre / context in a final summation of their work. Specific questions may include: 1) "The reason you chose which essay project to revise, how you considered this new audience, and what you did to fulfill this new purpose. Please get at the WHY of these three things." 2) "Reflect on this process, in terms of your writing, that the piece went through - and what you learned from that process." 3) "How do you see this piece fitting in, or not fitting in, with the rest of the class? How is your Twine experience different from the original essay? How is it the same?"

Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this assignment will:

▪ Gain an understanding of multimodal writing and digital literacy by creating an interactive webpage to tell a story

▪ Think critically about transfer writing and accessibility through the lens of purpose, audience, and genre

▪ Reflect on the writing process through remediation and metacognition

Learning Accommodations

- Students may find that tutorial videos on [YouTube](#) are more effective in terms of learning how to use Twine than in-class instruction because they can view / experiment at their own pace, or if a projector and computer are not present for an in-class walkthrough.

- While coding knowledge is not required to use Twine, basic commands can be inserted with copy and paste.

Additional Tips

- To add pictures: <img src= "paste the URL here"> and resize them: <style> img {max-width: 100%; max-height: 100%; } </style> with picture size linked to percentage.

- To add music: <audio autoplay id="myaudio"> <source src= "paste the URL here"> </audio> and to control the volume level, please use: <script> var audio = document.getElementById("myaudio"); audio.volume = 0.05; </script> where 0.05 can be adjusted for loudness or softness.

- For Windows / Linux users, Twine stories are easily shared by the "Publish to File" option, which creates an html file that can be easily sent over email and opened via any web browser.

- The "Publish to File" option will not work properly for Apple Safari users. Therefore, students should go to the file option on the left upper-hand corner of the browser. Then, click "save as" and it will save to the downloads folder as an html file. The html file can be renamed from there and then shared over email or be otherwise published on the web.

Works Cited

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