

Using Smartphones to Create Films in The English Composition Classroom:

Digital Filmmaking as a Pedagogical Tool

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and identify the effectiveness of digital filmmaking using smartphones in the English Composition classroom at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez in the academic year of 2013. The goal was to create awareness about the need to implement digital literacy starting in freshman English composition classrooms and to create a concrete film unit. The theoretical approaches used in shaping the methodology and the analysis, are grounded in constructivist principles and the practice of performance knowledge. Both freshman English INGL 3103 and INGL 3104 were premised on participatory simulations creating real-world filmmaking roles for students, which followed a concrete and replicable model of a month long classroom filmmaking unit. The research questions sought to discover if smartphone filmmaking was a useful teaching tool and how the results could contribute to the emerging field of New Media Literacy. Results show that digital literacy using smartphones produced a challenging, yet entertaining new unit for freshman English students. A discussion of the limitations of the research undertaken and recommendations for further research concluded the study.

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio de tesis es investigar e identificar la efectividad de la filmación de cortometrajes utilizando teléfonos inteligentes en el salón de clase del curso de Composición en Inglés (English Composition) en la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Mayagüez durante el año académico del 2013. La meta era esencialmente crear conciencia de la necesidad de la implementación de literacia digital comenzando con la clase de Composición en inglés de primer año y así crear una unidad concreta de cortometrajes. Las estrategias teóricas utilizadas para dar forma a la metodología y el análisis están basadas en principios constructivistas y la práctica de ejecución cognitiva. Ambos grupos de estudiantes de primer año tomando INGL 3103 and INGL 3104 fueron expuestos a simulaciones participativas creando roles reales en el proceso de grabación de películas, los cuales siguieron un modelo concreto y replicable durante una unidad de filmación durante un mes en el salón de clase. El estudio buscaba descubrir si la filmación mediante teléfonos inteligentes era una herramienta útil en la enseñanza y como los resultados pudieran contribuir al nuevo campo de Literacia de Nuevos Medios. Los resultados demuestran que la literacia digital utilizando teléfonos inteligentes produjo una nueva unidad retadora y entretenida para estudiantes de nuevo ingreso tomando inglés. Una discusión de las limitaciones de la investigación hecha y la sección de recomendaciones para futuros estudios culminaron el estudio.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the last two decades, technology has dramatically changed the way we communicate. Virtually everywhere you go people digitally communicate via smartphone, iPad, and various other easily accessible portable devices. These technological tools have produced a massive shift in the notion of literacy. The original definition of literacy as the ability to read and write only print-text has been enlarged to include reading and writing multiple forms of non-print "texts," as well (e.g., IRA, 2001; NCTE, 2003). However, we cannot deny the way in which society is communicating and functioning today. Interactive digital technology and new media are slowly superseding the more traditional written and interpersonal communication of the previous generation.

According to Lankshear and Knobel:

During their out-of-school lives, students routinely interact with complex forms of online and digital media. These multimodal communication technologies (such as texting and YouTube[®] videos) go well beyond the printed word. They entail new forms of social discourse, in which the production of knowledge and the negotiation of meaning are interwoven with forms of literacy that eschew the linearity of traditional texts (2006).

Thus, literacy, and the types of skills necessary to encode and decode messages, have evolved to also include reading and writing the ubiquitous non-print texts we have today. We receive texts, emails, watch videos and films on our laptops, TVs, and more often on our smartphones. Watching these videos, in many ways, mirrors the thought process. As described by Hugh Honour and John Fleming:

the inherent qualities of video include its ability to mimic the mind rather than the eye, to reveal patterns of thought and behavior, to expose and dissect social and political realities, to cause us to reflect upon our ways of seeing and understanding the world (2009, pp.898).

Now, a definition of twenty-first century literacy offered by the New Media Consortium (2005) is “the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual, and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms” (p. 8). With 21st century technology shaping how we interpret and make meaning, it is increasingly imperative that, at the university level, we teach with tools that will help students become proficient in both textual and digital literacy, starting with the freshman English classrooms.

Context of Study

English classrooms are training grounds where students learn and practice encoding and decoding messages for the 21st century. The research for this thesis provides data from a study conducted in 2013 at the University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez, during two freshman English courses. The methodology and results of the study intend to support the ideas expressed in the literature review introducing theoretical contexts of New Media Literacy, constructivism, and the concept of performance knowledge. Essentially, the research questions set out to investigate if students should be taught relevant skills such as encoding content using film scripts, translating those scripts into visual content, editing content using digital composition software, and allowing students to work in groups in a dynamic, meaning-making process. The study results determine if and how a filmmaking unit taught at a college-level English classroom, supports students in

becoming competent communicators in the 21st century digital world.

Evolution is imperative for the survival of our society and as educators our role begins with ensuring that our basic courses prepare our students for changing times. We must continue to update and revise our syllabi to ensure that our students can compete with the ever-changing technological world we live in today. Already, students are taking on the role of consumers of messages in everyday life, however now more than ever they are also creators and producers of messages.

In alignment with the emerging field of New Media Literacy and the idea of “participatory culture”, I believe that it is imperative that we close the participatory gap in English education. As Henry Jenkins explains this idea,

We are living through a moment of media change, during which more and more, seemingly “average” people are becoming authors and publishing their work to wide, appreciative audiences. They are creating videos and circulating them on YouTube. They are writing fan fiction and exchanging it on the web. They are sampling and remixing music. They are writing blogs or recording their experiences in LiveJournal. And young people—the students in your class, sometimes even the students who are sitting in the back of your class and not saying anything—are at the cutting edge of this shift towards a more participatory culture (Jenkins, p. 18).

Another issue this study addresses is the so-called “digital divide” in classrooms today. This term is used to describe the divide between users of new media and those who are unable to access these technologies. What Jenkins calls the “participation gap” which existed in the past, left many schools, as well as teachers and students, at a disadvantage as they struggled to utilize

current technology in their curriculum. Many schools did not have the funding to invest in computers or new technologies for their academic programs. They were unable to afford computers, cameras, and interactive learning tools. This prevented students from learning to use the tools that other, wealthier schools had in abundance. However, due to the easier access to smartphones and other handheld technology that has occurred in recent years, this gap is beginning to close. As the gap closes, smartphones can be used to help develop curricula that focus on encoding and decoding the prevalent messages in our society.

Student Context

This study was developed, designed, and implemented at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez, where many students are coming from a variety of backgrounds. Some come from a privileged background, while others are under-privileged students from less developed areas around the island. The fact that students at UPRM come from towns all over the island is demonstrated in Figure 1.1.

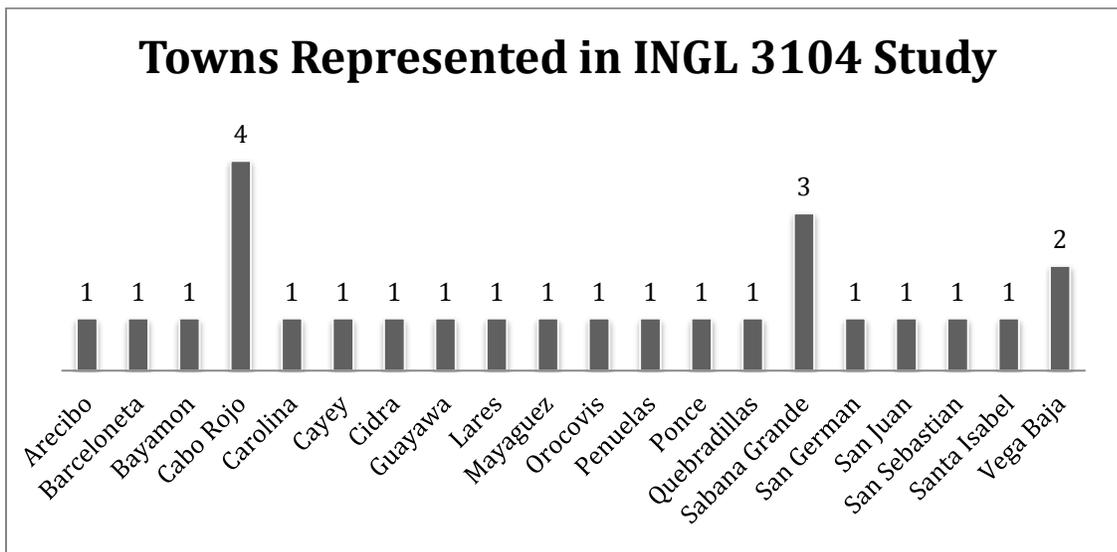


Fig. 1.1

By using the smartphone, this study naturally leans towards being inclusive, insuring that each

student can participate fully and develop increasingly essential literacy skills. If this study had taken place even a few years earlier, it is unlikely that as many students would have had access to personal smartphones. Now, due to the rise of student-owned smartphones the digital divide has begun to break down exponentially, garnering both an increase in necessity and relevancy for this study.

The use of smartphones as both tools and learning devices is grounded in the same kind of philosophical stance that motivated MIT Lab researcher Nicholas Negroponte to create the low-cost computing devices (LCCDs) intended to help realize his vision of an inexpensive laptop for every child in the world. As our world becomes increasingly connected through Internet and smartphones, many researchers, academics, development specialists and government officials believe that mobile technology should be used in education for the same kinds of reasons. Describing the benefit of LCCDs, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan said: "Children will be able to learn by doing, not just through instruction - they will be able to open up new fronts for their education, particularly peer-to-peer learning." He added that the idea was inspiring, with real potential for students' social and economic growth in developing countries.¹

There is consensus about the need to integrate technology into the classroom and break down the digital divide, but we need more studies that demonstrate successful models for how to achieve these goals. This study provides such a model since it is the first study to focus on the use of a participatory approach, using smartphone technology, to create films in the English composition classroom. For this project, the objective was to create an innovative smartphone film unit developed on participatory simulations, creating real-world filmmaking roles for

¹ Twist, Jo. "UN Debut for \$100 laptop for poor" BBC News technology reporter in Tunis. web. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4445060.stm>

students, and constructivist-learning principles section. A set of research questions will be presented in the methodology section that will provide substantive data for the main objective, which is to investigate and analyze data from the digital filmmaking unit implemented for this research study. The following chapter will now go in detail about previous research, which facilitated the research questions for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical approaches

Several critical fields were researched prior to designing the filmmaking unit. The emerging field of New Literacy Studies, the constructivist approach to learning, and the concept of *performance knowledge* (Lankshear and Knobel) were each carefully compared and contrasted in order to decide how to best implement a smartphone film unit in two freshman English composition courses at the University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez. These fields bring together thinking across several disciplines to expand the notion of literacy to literacy practices embedded in social relationships that differ as enacted across time and space (Gee, 1990, 2003; Street, 1995; also Heath, 1983). New Literacy Studies show us that literacy practices are used in everyday situations for specific purposes and to solve problems (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 2001). The literature on video production is, however, just beginning to look at how students are using video production to solve problems and make meaning in their lives. Prior to this study, there was almost no research or literature published that focused on the pedagogical practices of using smartphones to produce films. Furthermore, there is not one study that provides a detailed description of how a film production unit using smartphones can be implemented and studied in the curriculum of a college English composition classroom.

Literacy and Learning

According to Street (1995), literacy is not singular, "autonomous" or neutral, but rather it is contextually purposeful and shaped by power issues and identities. The world is no longer print-only. Therefore, by teaching film and filmmaking in English classrooms, we prepare

students for life and work in the 21st century. According to Buckingham, Grahame, and Sefton-Green:

To be literate, does not mean simply to have acquired the technical ability to decode and encode signs and symbols. Literacy inevitably involves a much wider range of competencies, which are entailed in making meaning. Reading or writing in any medium is bound to draw upon the reader's existing knowledge, and previous experience, and on the social context, as well as on the ability to reflect, to evaluate, and to reproduce(p.19).

According to Buckingham's study (2003), literacy is an omnipresent term in youth media research. The arguments circulating around this term and its various versions (e.g., multiliteracies, popular literacy, critical literacy, media literacy) create a discourse through which researchers frame how and what young people learn by making original media (Buckingham). A second discourse that leads these discussions is the issue of voice. Youth media projects often describe what they do as a process of "giving voice" to young people, or helping them "find their voice," or highlighting "silenced voices" by providing teenagers with the skills and access needed to express their stories (Fleetwood, 2005).

Now, I am not too keen on using video production for the purpose of students finding their voices, particularly because my study instead draws upon data from group-focused work rather than individual centered work. Fleetwood's study (2005) also provides little in terms of the literacy discourse and how video and filmmaking are skillsets needed for the future of literacy. It instead describes the individual experience of students in terms of narrative creativity,

rather than how the data can be used to contribute to the field of new media literacy. The study I willingly draw from is Tyner (1998) and his research that tracks how the changes in definitions of literacy can be attributed to a range of factors, including new forms of interaction and increased speed of information flow, multiplying communication channels and technologies, proliferation and globalization of popular cultures, new migration patterns, shifting journalistic practices, and intensified political debates surrounding media and society (see also Appadurai, 1996). The aforementioned definitions help to direct how and where the literature defining this emerging field is going and where it came from.

I incorporated films and filmmaking with smartphones into Intermediate English courses at the University of Puerto Rico- Mayaguez, because this implementation facilitated the development of necessary skills regarding digital literacy students need in this rapidly changing technological world we live in. According to Greenwood (2003), “at first glance, handing students a video camera might seem to favor digital literacy at the expense of more traditional forms of print literacy; yet students who engage in well-planned and coordinated video production projects draw upon and strengthen their print-based writing skills, while simultaneously developing digital literacy skills.”

New Media Literacy in the English Classroom

American media scholar and integral researcher Henry Jenkins and the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism have been strong proponents of the development of the emerging field of New Media Literacy (NML). Jenkin’s idea is that the current technology is creating a new way of digitally communicating in what he calls a “participatory culture”. The main idea, according to Losh and Jenkins, is this:

The New Media Literacies constitute the core cultural competencies and

social skills that young people need in our new media landscape. We call them “literacies,” but they change the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to one of community involvement. They build on the foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical analysis skills taught in the classroom. If these New Media Literacies are learned – and they can be learned without computers in the classroom – they can form the building blocks for students’ participation in new media (2012).

Speaking of filmmaking as a pedagogical tool, the filmmaker George Lucas (Daly, 2004, online source/no page number) develops this idea, offering an expansive understanding of what literacy means today:

We must teach communication comprehensively in all its forms. Today we work with the written or spoken word as the primary form of communication. But we also need to understand the importance of graphics, music, and cinema, which are just as powerful and in some ways more deeply intertwined with young people’s culture. We live and work in a visually sophisticated world, so we must be sophisticated in using all the forms of communication, not just the written word.

Additionally, the increasing access to the Internet has come to play an integral part in the expansion of participatory culture because it continuously enables people to work collaboratively, generate and disseminate news, ideas, and creative works as well as connect with people who share similar goals and interests. Jenkins states that the NML framework guides thinking about how to provide adults and youth with the opportunity to develop the skills,

knowledge, ethical framework, and self confidence needed to be full participants in the cultural changes which are taking place in response to the influx of new media technologies, and to explore the transformations and possibilities afforded by these technologies to reshape education (2012). New media literacy has introduced a new vocabulary into our world, which we use to make sense of this academic and societal phenomenon. Words such as *affinity spaces*, *digital divide*, and *participatory culture* are conversation starters that point the way towards a new technological culture both in and outside of the classroom. Each of these ideas lays the groundwork for this study by showing how digital media instruction that explores these concepts can add value to this new “participatory culture” we are seeing emerge, and also bridge the gap between the old and new ways young people are using media technologies. However Wartella, O’Keefe, and Scantlin (2000) believe that, “closing the digital divide will depend less on technology and more on providing the skills and content that is most beneficial.” I would suggest that, in order to achieve all of these goals, the pedagogical intervention needed is both the use of smartphone technology in creating visual “essays”, as well as guided instruction by the teacher.

Accordingly, this notion of multi-media literacy, especially regarding film, suggests "an ability to work across text, image, sound, and moving image with equal fluency" (Sefton-Green, 2000). While some scholars object to the implication built into this term that each form of literacy, be it visual, alphabetic, or auditory, each have found the concept useful as a way to frame the relationship between media production and learning. Not everyone agrees with teaching all forms of literacy in the classroom, however digital literacy has become pervasive in our everyday life, and many researchers agree that, through the creation of media productions, students are provided with an effective framework for media literacy. In further drawing from these studies, I am not in complete agreement with Sefton-Greene and Parker's (2000) use of

video as a pathway to print literacy. The ultimate goal of that study seems to forcefully lobby for a permanent place for digital video production in schools and other educational settings. Their study asserts that digital video production helps students with their reading and writing, and does not argue for the benefit of using it towards digital and media literacy. In contrast, the New London Group (Kist 2005) contends that we must not reduce new literacies and multimodal texts to how they relate to print-based definitions of literacy. To do so suggests that video production is only important as it relates to one's efficacy with printed texts. The position taken by the New London Group supports the argument for the importance of digital filmmaking as a multimodal practice that deserves merit in its own regard. Like these critics, I also contest the idea that smartphone filmmaking be simply implemented as a means of teaching writing in a composition class, and believe that it is as important in and of itself since it teaches students competencies that traditional written assignments do not.

If we continue to see video production as a replication of print-based literacy, as several of the previous studies advocate, we fail to consider new affordances that become possible with new semiotic resources and all the different ways that youth might use multimodal forms of literacy in novel ways to solve novel problems. Affordances (Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Lemke, 2005) refer to the semiotic choices that are available in a particular mode and how decisions can be made depending on the strengths and limitations of a mode to communicate meanings in a wide range of social contexts. However, it is clear that Parker and Sefton-Greene suggest the integral interconnectedness between different communicative modes, consisting of film and multimodal media.

In 2005, a study conducted by Pew Internet and American Life project illustrated that more than one-half of all American teens—and 57 percent of teens that use the Internet—could

be considered media creators. In 2012, those same project researchers discovered that 66% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 in the United States own smartphones and that 64% of adolescents participate in content-creating activities for the web (Leonhard, Maddan, Smith & Macgill, 2007). This shows us that digital use and content creation is experiencing an exponential rise. For the purpose of the study, a media creator is someone who created a blog or webpage, posted original artwork, photography, stories or videos online or remixed online content into their own new creations. Knowing this, it is clear that in this digital age, textbooks and critical essays should not be the only relevant forms of communication and educational content in classrooms today.

Now, in order to keep up with the shifting tides of communicating in a 21st century world, we must include other types of media to interest and engage our students. The implementation of a digital literacy unit within the freshman English class could better prepare students for the real world, as well as potentially engage them with a tool they are already using outside of the classroom.

One issue related to digital literacy which needs to be addressed is the danger associated with the use of such media that is discussed by critics like Losh and Jenkins who say: “we think educators should be centrally concerned with helping young people acquire ethical standards and skills in critical judgment, helping them avoid some of the risks and achieve some of the opportunities associated with new media platforms and practices (Losh & Jenkins, 2012). An alarming issue that results from the increased use of technology is the decline in young people’s attention spans with the rise of digital media. All information to be processed by our brains is temporarily held in short-term memory, and the capacity of our short-term memory is sharply limited (Baddeley, 1999). However, this is not necessarily a cause for concern since, in *Growing*

up Digital, Brown (2002) states, “indeed, one of the things we noticed is that the attention span of the teens at PARC—often between 30 seconds and five minutes—parallels that of top managers, who operate in a world of fast context-switching. So the short attention spans of today’s youth may turn out to be far from dysfunctional for future work worlds.”

Given all the issues that exist concerning using new technology in the participatory culture in which students will enter both during and after they graduate, it seems like a good idea to implement smartphones into classroom activities. Through group activities such as filmmaking, students learn to deal with these issues since they are asked to also see their roles within their group as both responsible individual meaning makers and supportive group members.

In the last several years, free software tools like Apple's iMovie and Microsoft's Movie Maker, that provide low-threshold, high-ceiling tools to enable even young children to produce their own short videos, have become freely available. These programs are user friendly and already installed in many computers on the market today. According to researchers in the field of digital literacy, when students create their own videos related to coursework, their motivation and engagement increase (Burn, Brindley, Durran, Kelsall, Sweetlove, & Tuohey, 2001; Hoffenberg & Handler, 2001; Kearney & Schuck, 2004; Ryan, 2002). Even with no prior experience in filmmaking, anyone can turn on their computer and begin creating moving visual content using Apple’s iMovie or Moviemaker.

In addition, anyone who owns a smartphone can be considered a filmmaker in this new technologically driven era. Smartphones are increasingly becoming available, easily accessible, and common amongst American college students. The rise of technology has given birth to a new breed of students who Prensky (2001) calls 'digital natives' and Oblinger (2004) describes as

the 'net generation'. These students have enormous access to digital technology and they display a fluency and familiarity with the new technology. They speak the digital language of computers, and the Internet, and they share and produce digital content such as blogs, digital images, video files and SMS messages (Tribe, 2004 in Duncan-Howell and Lee 2007). They observe that these students are growing up with the concept of electronic media use and that this differentiates them from previous generations of students whose learning experiences were dominated by text in books and journals. As they consume more images and sounds along with the text that they read, they also interact with technology more than previous generations.

Technology and Smartphones

The lives of these digital natives are influenced by mobile phones, which seem to be the fastest growing technology in recent times. Wagner (2004) in Isiaka, Adewole and Olayemi (2011) notes that “the evidence of mobile penetration is irrefutable: cell phones, PDAs, Mp3 players, portable games, devices, handhelds, tablets and laptops abound. No demographic is immune from this phenomenon. People are increasingly connected and are digitally communicating with each other in ways that would have been impossible only a few years ago” (p 85).

Because of this, when using smartphones in the classroom, there is virtually no need to provide outside equipment for the filmmaking unit. According to comScore, as of July 2011 there were 82.2 million smartphone subscribers in the United States, ComScore tracks users 13 and up, whereas Pew surveys only people 18 and older, so the data are not directly comparable. Nonetheless, as there are 308.7 million total people in the United States as of the 2010 Census, 234.6 million of them over the age of 18, a sizable fraction of adults are smartphone owners. And this fraction is growing explosively - comScore's June 2010 data showed 78.5 million

smartphone subscribers that makes up almost four million additional smartphone owners in one month that year.

Another study also supports the use of smartphones in the classroom showing how they engage frequently disconnected and at-risk students with the digital communication tool by reinforcing daily academic use of the phones. As the Director of Research for GetYa Learn On, Priya Nihalani makes clear, the use of smartphones for learning needs to be studied more:

Smartphones and other touchscreen devices have fundamentally changed connectedness, as we know it today. They've simply become ubiquitous - even on college campuses. But, educators have made little progress in finding ways to actually harness this technology for improving students' learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom (2010).

Now, although not every student has a smartphone, at least 6 out of 10 students should have access to one based on data mentioned in the Pew Internet and American Life project. With this statistic, we could assume at least one student in the group of seven in both the INGL 3103 and INGL 3104 filmmaking group would have access to a smartphone. Puerto Rico is an American territory, and Mayagüez is the fifth largest city on the island (2010, U.S. Census Bureau), so this nationwide statistic does apply².

² United States. Census Bureau. Population and Housing Unit." *United States Census 2010*. Washington: US Census Bureau, July 2012. Web. 5 March 2014. 2009. < <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-2-53.pdf> >

By using the smartphone as a tool to make films, students are able to use their everyday meaning-making device, which allows them to gain a new perspective on what they can accomplish with it. According to Saussure, “language conventions are arbitrary and culturally determined” (Buckingham, Grahame, Sefton-Green, p.17). In using the language of film and media making, we begin speaking the language of this emergent digitally driven generation. Furthermore, no outside cameras or additional university funding is needed to support the filmmaking supplement to this course. In addition, unlike the past where teachers and students did not relate to each other informally, it has been noticed that mobile technology has facilitated a friendlier teacher and student relationship than was obtainable in the stiff formal setting, which existed in the past. The students find learning through the mobile platform very engaging and interact much more with their teacher and amongst themselves than is common in the traditional chalk and talk method of teaching.

In addition, the overall goal of teaching filmmaking in a first year English university course is to impart a more sophisticated approach to 21st century print and digital literacy, and working with video in the classroom helps achieve this: “Digital video is fluid and malleable communication too. Unlike words affixed to a page or more traditional forms of broadcast, a camera can capture and edit video anywhere, at anytime, and for a variety of uses” (Spina-Caza, Booth, 2012, p. 8). Creating content using their smartphones allows students to blend traditional modes of learning with learning how to use a technological communication tool used for meaning making today. Through filmmaking and working in groups, students learn the importance of collaboration and how to use their strongest skillset to contribute to their filmmaking group.

Constructivism

As the discussion above should show, the field of New Literacy Studies provides ample theoretical justification for teaching skills such as filmmaking in the English classroom. Now, more than any other previous time, does there seem to be an urgency in creating opportunities for students for practice digital literacy in the classroom. Furthermore, this section will now discuss the pedagogical approach that underlies the design of the filmmaking unit that was integrated into the Intermediate English courses taught as part of this research project, constructivism. Constructivism is a “view of learning in which learners use their own experiences to construct understandings that make sense to them, rather than having understanding delivered to them in already organized form” (Kauchak & Eggen, 184). This approach was used in the filmmaking units designed for this study since students had to show they understand the terms discussed in the course and could prove that in their films. Students learned this through creating a film based on their own experiences of reading, watching, and learning classroom material. I agree with this principle of constructivist learning since it allows students to really work within the material and full comprehend it through a relevant form of literacy, not just as mere observers of the phenomenon.

According to Spina- Caza and Booth “writing with video uses the same critical thinking skillset as writing on paper does, but it extends the process into one that involves multimodal thinking and that has a greater relevance to students’ own lives (p.1). Anyone can create a film these days and with little training, and consequently the Internet is a host to many millions of meaning makers and content producers lacking gatekeepers. Arming students with the skills to critically analyze films, as well as produce them, ensures that they are prepared to respond to and comprehend the digital world in which they live in.

Constructivism and Scaffolding

In designing this study I chose to closely adhere to the philosophy of constructivism and use constructivist principles in designing the film units integrated into the courses. Now, it is important to first elucidate that there does seem to be vigorous disagreements about whether constructivism actually describes what human learners do (Bennett et. al.), and purpose for what aspect of constructivism I choose to focus on within this study. For counterargument sake, constructivists tend to disagree about whether the construction of meaning is essentially an individual or social process. Theodoskakis (2001) claims specifically that using filmmaking as pedagogy helps develop adolescents' visioning, researching, problem solving, logic, and analysis skills, all characteristics relevant to constructivist-motivated pedagogy.

Now for this study, students are designated individual roles within their group, however the final project relies on a group effort as a whole. I would like to draw upon Vygotsky's (1978) essay on education to support my use of group work specifically from his remarks that, "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the student is interacting with people in his environment and with his peers" (p. 90).

The main constructivist principles of focus used in designing the filmmaking unit for this study were the importance of "active participation as a learner" and scaffolding. Rather than telling students how to think, the filmmaking unit allowed students to construct their own message, create meaning and communicate using current technology they use on a daily basis.

Constructivism emphasizes the importance of student work, but students also need help from the teacher, or scaffolding. Kao, Lehman, & Cennamo (1996) postulate several types of scaffolding techniques, which focus on teacher support during a lesson until a student can work on their own in an activity. It is certainly important to provide meaningful and clear instruction to students, and the best strategy to achieve this goal with smartphone use is through the

constructivist *scaffolding* method. Scaffolding, as provided by human tutors, has been well established as an effective means of supporting learning (Soloway, Norris, Blumenfeld, Fishman, & Marx, 2001). However, Luckin, Puntambekar, & Fraser (2011) suggest that research exploring the specific use of mobile technologies to support learning rarely involves scaffolding in the traditional sense. Scaffolding enables learners to realize their potential by providing assistance when needed, and then fading this assistance out as meaningful learning takes place (Collins, Brown, & Newman).

The notion of scaffolding is also associated with the work of Vygotsky (1978): a novice learns with a more capable peer, and learning happens within the novice's zone of proximal development (ZPD). With rapid development of technology, scaffolding tools are specially designed to help students learn in a complex learning environment. Now, in using smartphones to create a visual essay (film), students are motivated to engage in purposeful meaning making when they create a storyboard based on their own script under the supervision of both their group "director" and teacher. In addition, graphic organizers, clear expectations, well-defined tasks, guiding questions, and worthy, appropriate sources of information provide students with the scaffolding for meaningful inquiry (Mackenzie).

Media Creation and Literacy

The democratization of media is evident with the advent of YouTube, Vimeo, and endless other niche websites created for online film and video distribution. No longer are films and video meant for movie theaters, and/or home television sets. Computers, laptops, and the Internet have become our media distributors and one-stop shop tool for watching messages and creating multi-media messages.

As of November 2008, Youtube.com, an Internet site that contains amateur and

professional films, boasted 200 million page views per day. According to the Nielson/Net ratings in March of 2008, YouTube had the sixth largest online audience in the United States. The increased ability to produce and distribute digital video marks one of the ways that the world has changed the concept of literacy and in turn how the world is changed by literacy. It is apparent that when society changes (i.e. technologies, language, etc.), there are new possibilities for defining what it means to be literate (Gee, 2000; Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2002; 2003) and what is required to fully participate in society (Gee et al., 1996) and make changes to society. This is what Gunther Kress (2003) refers to as a shift in ontology and epistemology from "page to screen"(p.22) in that texts are now primarily produced, distributed, and consumed on TV and computer screens as opposed to printed text on paper pages. In this sense, what it means to be literate has shifted by the changes technology has created and is defined as the ways in which people use a wide range of semiotic resources and texts in order to communicate meaning, solve problems, and make sense of the world in a variety of social and cultural ways for specific purposes (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Fairclough, 2000; Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Spina-Caza and Booth argue for video in the classroom by asserting “we must teach students to use video effectively and wisely” (p.4). So ubiquitous is this burgeoning media culture that in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Henry Jenkins writes:

In our own blogs and podcasts, they are recording their lives on LiveJournal and developing their own profiles on MySpace; they are producing their own YouTube video and Flickr photos; they are writing and posting fan fiction or contributing to Wikipedia; they are mashing up music and modding [modifying] games. Much as engineering students learn by taking apart machines

and putting them back together, many of these teens learned how media work by taking their culture apart and remixing it. And they correctly argue that you cannot really understand how these new media work if you don't use them yourself. (2007)

Ultimately, what Jenkins is stating is that as teachers we are guiding our students towards mature use of film as a communication tool. This can be achieved only once we understand why incorporating film in the English classroom is necessary. Most students coming into their freshman year of college post 2013 already have some knowledge about how to create films based on watching YouTube and experimenting with functions on their smartphones. However, both the students with little knowledge and those with none can benefit greatly by receiving the training to successfully navigate the channels of the 21st century during their first year of college.

According to Hagood, Stevens, and Reinking, for the current "Millennial Generation", youth born after 1981, reality includes new literacies embedded in these new technologies", since they have been shaped by practices related to computers, the Internet, and mobile phones (2002). As part of this youth culture, everyday tools bind adolescents together "in a social culture through communication and meaning making" (Hagood, Stevens & Reinking,). When students can relate to information being presented to them, they are more likely to be motivated to grasp that knowledge and integrate it into their everyday lives.

Performance Knowledge and Filmmaking

Now, another important justification for bringing filmmaking into the classroom comes from Lankshear and Knobel (2003), who argue the importance of *performance knowledge*. These scholars contend that "what's essential is performance knowledge, knowing how to find, gather,

use, communicate, and imagine new ways of envisioning assemblages of knowledge” (Lankshear, Knobel). While many students are taught how to ‘decode’ literary texts, many of them fall short in their understanding of how to ‘encode’. Their training does not transfer because they were not equipped with the perceptual lenses that are needed to operate in new environments” (Caine and Caine, 2001).

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2000) in the foreseeable future, the people who are best equipped in terms of literacy will be those who can draw appropriately from both mindsets and, moreover, those who can move between conventional epistemologies and what we call "digital epistemologies." In digital epistemologies, the conventional epistemological emphasis on "truth" and "justified belief" will often be overshadowed by an emphasis on knowing how to gain or structure attention, how to make novel "moves," or innovate successfully in contexts where there are few or no established rules and procedures, and how to break rules creatively or invent new rules and conventions (Lankear and Knobel).

We will need to develop what Goethe spoke of as “new organs of cognition” (Zajonc, 1993). Simply “learning the technology is not enough. What is really required is learning how to use that technology to solve problems, to answer questions, to present ideas, and to communicate” (2001, Theodaskis, 26). This is where filmmaking gives students the opportunity to encode, or reinterpret a message using a film script, and storyboard to then assemble a narrative with visual images they shoot using a smartphone. Whether that narrative is based on non-fiction, or the reinterpretation of fiction, students are able to use see how critical thinking skills come to life in film. Joel McCleskey, a professional filmmaker, writes in Videomaker, "pre-production is arguably the most important aspect of videomaking. It's the part of the process where airy ideas become actual productions" (1996, 66).

Researchers, Tom Anderson and Melody Milbrandt list three strategic goals for creative curriculums that authentically engage students: "1) the use of discipline-centered inquiry, 2) the construction of knowledge (rather than its passive acceptance), and 3) teaching and learning that make connections beyond school" (1998, p. 14). It is vital to note that discipline-based inquiry is first on the list, recognizing that there is no contradiction between teaching discipline-based knowledge and skills and creating film and work that explores meaningful connections in students' lives.

Using smartphones in the classroom, is a way to prepare students for the 21st century world of individual content creating. It's also an approach that public relations firm Edelman thinks is the future of marketing, as well as filmmaking. "It's going to be important for companies to create their own content, to tell stories across platforms," said Andrew Kirk, managing editor for Edelman's Hong Kong and Taiwan operations. Surveys by Edelman suggest people are more likely to trust knowledgeable individuals than corporations or governments (Choi, 2012). It is clear that in order to compete in the job market upon graduation, students must be prepared to at least understand the process of digital composition. Employers are already asking for video resume sin addition to paper-based resumes, and this will increase in the future. Many would also argue that schools must now more than ever, change from current approaches of "institutions of old learning that prepare students for life and work in the print-only industrialized world of the past" (O'Brien & Bauer). The need for performance knowledge is clearly demonstrated within the work place and the real world, however more data would be helpful to further support its academic relevance.

Conclusion

As I write this it is March 12th, 2014 and the 25th anniversary of the World Wide Web (WWW) which began in 1989 as simply an information ‘web’ of notes with links between them. Inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee writes, “So today is a day to celebrate. But it’s also an occasion to think, discuss—and do. Key decisions on the governance and future of the Internet are looming, and it’s vital for all of us to speak up for the web’s future³. Similarly, this study intends to encourage an audience of educators keen on preparing students for the rise of Internet, digital technology and literacy. Each one of these concepts is an integral part of our everyday lives, and will only continue to rapidly evolve at an astonishing pace.

The Literature Review has provided a discussion of the critical literature relating to the teaching of filmmaking and the theoretical justification for undertaking this study. Now, we move on to the methodology section, which will discuss how I designed and implemented the filmmaking unit in freshman English course.

³ *On the 25th anniversary of the web, let’s keep it open and free.* Google Official Blog. <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2014/03/on-25th-anniversary-of-web-lets-keep-it.html>

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology I used to design the film units taught as part of this study, and to gather and analyze the data collected about what happened when students made films in freshman English classes. In the last chapter, I argued for the importance of teaching skills in these classes that promote digital literacy. I explained why I chose to employ constructivist principles in designing film units that would give the students the opportunity to learn by doing and thereby develop the kinds of performance knowledge of digital media that will help them construct knowledge for themselves using digital technology, not only in their classes but also in the real world. As this chapter will show, in designing the film units, I also tried to develop pedagogical techniques that would encourage the participatory culture that Henry Jenkins advocates, and lessen the digital divide by finding ways to engage all the students in the class regardless of income level, whether they possessed smartphones or not, or their previous experience with digital technology. In designing the questionnaires and interview questions that were used to collect data about students' perceptions and experiences during the filmmaking units, I sought to determine how well the film units achieved these goals.

The first part of this chapter discusses the research questions, and the methodology used to collect and analyze data in this study overall and the rationale for the methods chosen. The second part discusses the design of the film unit that was taught first, the one implemented in INGL3014, the second semester Intermediate English course. The third part discusses the design of the film unit that was taught second, the one implemented in INGL3103, the first semester

Intermediate English course.

Research Questions

The objective of this study will be supported by data gathered by the research questions listed below:

1. How did students respond to their production role within their groups?
2. What were some of the issues students faced within their production groups?
3. How did students perceive the filmmaking unit as a whole?
4. Did students make connections with their course work and the filmmaking unit?
5. Should digital filmmaking units be used in other courses?

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study was collected primarily through observations, writing prompts, two questionnaires, and focus group conversations.

Data Sample

The participants in the study were between the ages of 17-22 and in their first year of college at the University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez. The study conducted in INGL3104 in the Spring 2013 semester was considered a Pilot Study, and was followed by Research Study #1 conducted in INGL3103 in the Fall of 2013. The main difference between the design of the film unit for INGL3104 and the unit for INGL3103 had to do with the kinds of films students made. In INGL3014, students wrote screenplays for their films based on literary texts read for class. In INGL3103, they made commercials or public service announcements. Conducting studies in more than one class is supported by Yin (2003) who suggests that having multiple sites in a case study strengthens a study's claim because it allows the researcher to consider how their claims might relate to different settings. Teaching two different courses given during two separate

semesters helped me broaden my perspectives on digital literacy practices and how to teach digital literacy focusing on different kinds of content.

Informed Consent and Protection of Human Subjects

To comply with the regulations established by the campus Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, I obtained informed consent from the students who chose to participate in the study. In order to participate in the study, students were provided with a student consent form (Appendix A). Students were not required to sign the form and could at any time decide to not be a part of the study.

Questionnaires and Notes

After students wishing to participate agreed to be part of the study, they were then asked to complete voluntary questionnaire #1 (See APPX B) at the beginning of the filmmaking unit. A co-researcher conducted the research by handing out the questionnaires to those students who opted to participate. The students were not required to participate and could leave the class 10 minutes prior to the end of class, when the questionnaire was administered if they did not wish to participate. The questionnaire solicited information about the background of the students, and their prior filmmaking experience and their interests. At the end of both semesters, after the films had been presented, a second questionnaire (See Appendix C) was administered by the co-researcher to those students willing to participate in the second half of the study. Finally, a focus group was administered by the same co-researcher with questions pertaining to the study (See Appendix D).

As the researcher, I took notes during the filmmaking units both semesters, making sure not to interrupt the class time in anyway. Following the completion of the unit, students were asked to complete voluntary questionnaire #2 (APPX C) also administered by a co-researcher.

Finally, willing students were asked to participate in a post unit focus group (see questions in APPX D) recorded and conducted by the same co-researcher. Having the interview be conducted by a person other than the researcher was intended to help students feel more at ease voicing their opinions than they might have if they had been interviewed by the instructor/researcher who taught the course.

By including many students' interpretations in their own words, this study could have run into the possible problems highlighted by Susan Peck McDonald (2010). McDonald addresses three assumptions she believes researchers make when including the subjects' voices in research: —1) that subjects speaking for themselves may clarify or correct our misinterpretations, 2) that it is better for researchers to be collaborative and anti-hierarchical than not, and 3) that silencing our subjects voices is harmful (120). She takes issue with these claims because she believes subjects' [may] be wrong or confused or resistant in what they are thinking, and therefore concludes that adding their voices to our research may contribute little of importance to the knowledge developing in the field (114). What I think McDonald does not consider, however, is that student confusion might be helpful in pointing out reasons why assignments or instruction are ineffective, or at least in pinpointing where communication in the classroom breaks down. Including student voices provides us with more data, which can be taken into consideration when designing further studies.

Qualitative Case Study

The research was conducted using an ethnographic approach in collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from the filmmaking unit in both INGL3103 and INGL3104. The reason for choosing this research approach is because the data collected is drawn from a unique population of mainly one cultural group: teenage Puerto Ricans mainly born and raised

on the island of Puerto Rico. There is a small percentage of foreigners that attend the University of Puerto Rico- Mayaguez, however the concentration of one unique cultural type can help distinguish a data sample, that can then be compared to a more diverse university for further research in the field.

This participant observation affords the researcher a means of getting to know the participants and the contexts in which they live on a deep level in order to capture the everyday life experiences of the participants and the contexts in which they live (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). By using the word "capture", I am not suggesting that researchers are somehow capable of using ethnographic methods to collect data that represent an objective "true" reality existing outside the researcher. Rather, ethnographic methods are recognized as a way of socially constructing data through interactions between the researcher and the participants in a study (Charmaz, 2000).

Critics of participant observation argue that researchers who engage in this form of inquiry influence the data and thus impact the results of the research. In response to this criticism, qualitative researchers have called for a reflexive approach to data collection in participant observation (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Denzin, 2000; Erickson, 1986). In this study particularly, there were several options for data collection. Data collection came from students who volunteered to be interviewed in focus groups, and others who opted to simply provide data through written questionnaires both before and after the film unit.

Focus Group Interview

In terms of the styles of interviews, there were several to choose from prior to designing the data collection portion of this study. There were extremely structured interviews whereby the researcher asks a set of pre-determined questions which she rarely deviates from during the

course of the interview. This style of a more structured interview is built on a more positivist epistemological foundation whereby the interviewer is attempting to remain neutral and stick to a script of questions (Fontana and Frey, 2000). This allows the interviewer to ask all participants the same question and attempt to get at the "objective truth". However, this approach fails to account for the social nature of interviews and the contexts in which they occur (Seidman, 1991; Spradley, 1979).

The opposite style of interview is a more informal interview such as the semi-structured interview, which attempts the "establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to understand rather than to explain" (Fontana and Frey, 2000 p. 654). Semi-structured interviews try to allow the data to emerge from the respondents in a more naturalistic, conversational manner while still keeping the research questions at the forefront of the conversation. Semi-structured interviews do not claim or aspire to neutrality and recognize that interviews are a mutually constitutive space between interviewer and respondent (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Spradley, 1979).

For the purpose of this study, a semi-structured interview served as an important data source as I attempt to understand what filmmaking meant to the people involved in the process of smartphone video production through their own words and vocabulary. The style of questions I chose allowed more variability in terms of answers and opportunity for authentic expression on the part of the students.

Throughout the entire filmmaking unit, I kept notes on the classes during the filmmaking unit and kept a log during a series of weekly discussions with my thesis advisor. Both of these reflexive approaches helped shape the direction of the analysis of the data collected that will be presented in the Results chapter.

Data Analysis

A triangulation approach was used to process and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected both from the two questionnaires and tape-recorded focus groups sessions. The quantitative data from the questionnaires were collected and organized into an excel worksheets to create visual graphs and charts to analysis the data. Then the types of films in both the pilot study and study #1 were compared and processed according to each type of data. Now, although personal observations were also noted during the study in an ethnographic style, a co-researcher conducted the focus group questions. The students who volunteered for the focus group session were recorded using a hand held voice recorder to keep their voice as authentic and unrehearsed. The purpose for this third form of data collection is to ensure a more holistic perspective, and also allow students to expand further on their experiences from questionnaire #2.

Increasingly qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results. Thus the focus of interviews is moving to encompass the *hows* of people's lives (the constructive work involved in producing order in everyday life) as well as the traditional *whats* (the activities of everyday life) (Fontana and Frey, 2000 p. 646).

Qualitative case studies do not rely solely on participant observation as a data source. In addition to participant observation, both structured and semi-structured interviews are a common method for collecting evidence in ethnographic case studies. If ethnographic case studies are concerned with the "how's" and "what's" of specific, bounded human activities, then Fontana and Frey's statement above shows why it makes perfect sense that interviews are used as an

important method of data. However, the quantitative and qualitative data in both questionnaires was collected and processed as first priority.

The triangulation of data collection ensures construct validity, as the areas where the data overlaps will increase validity. By employing a variety of data collection methods, the study will also enhance the credibility of questionnaire responses. Students were able to record their experience in both oral and written responses, allowing for a more holistic view of the filmmaking/digital literacy unit. This type of participant validation also accounts for reliability of the data. By conversing with the participants in the focus group, and humanizing the research by involving an unbiased co-researcher, there is an expectation of empathy and fairness within the data collected. Students were also reminded that their volunteer involvement in the study in no way affected their grade, but instead help to shape and add knowledge to the literacy education field in Puerto Rico and beyond.

Due to my dual teacher-researcher role I did not always have time to record my observations. So to fill in this gap, I also collected weekly free writing exercises as qualitative data based on individual students experiences as well as assigned weekly online writing prompts. Apart from the hand written free writing activities, students responded to online writing prompts. The prompts and responses can be found on the INGL3103 and INGL3104 class websites (See APPX F). I designed each of the websites using the free website host Wordpress.com which was a user-friendly platform that the students could access from their laptops or smartphones. This also served as a helpful “embedded scaffolding” technique, which aligns with the pedagogical principles of using the constructivist approach in designing this study.

Design of the Film Unit for INGL3104

Currently, at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez the syllabus of the second semester of the university's freshman English course, Intermediate English (INGL3104), is based on reading and writing about literature. Students in the class are expected to have several goals met by the end of the semester:

- React to and interpret works of literature through adoption of traditional mode of literary analysis such as comparison and contrast, in-depth study of literary work, or analysis of elements of fiction.
- Drawing a conclusion about a selected reading and stating it as a thesis.
- Demonstrating knowledge and recognition of elements of fiction, drama, poetry and selected works of literature in analysis and interpretation of these readings and writing.

I agree that students should continue to work with the great literary texts, with short stories, poems, dramas, and plays. Students must have a clear understanding of the techniques and devices used in these traditional literary forms. However, as discussed in the Literature Review, they must also develop digital literacies that are rapidly becoming more appropriate for the twenty-first century. For this reason, in designing my study, I did not eliminate literature from the course. I merely added a component focusing on creating films using smartphones, based on the literary works previously discussed in class.

Classroom Routine

Although no class day was exactly the same, both INGL 3104 and INGL 3103 followed a general protocol involving the use of scaffolds, a constructivist teaching technique. *Scaffolding* refers to an in-person, or virtual, human-led process. As acknowledged in the literature review, Kao, Lehman, & Cennamo (1996) propose several types of scaffolding techniques, which focus

on teacher support during a lesson until students can stand on their own in an activity. The main technique I utilized was designing workshops that provided reading material, an online “how-to” video (typically found on Youtube), a guest speaker, or a graphic organizer that gave students an opportunity to practice the process of filmmaking in-class.

Firstly, one full month was designated to teaching this unit with a series of in-class workshops beginning with an introductory reading assignment prior to the class, followed by a mini lecture or video on the focus of the workshop. Unless there was a guest speaker scheduled, I was usually the scaffold for each class, making sure I was available to answer questions at any point of the workshop. Secondly, ample time was also given to students at the end of each workshop lecture or video, to work within their film production groups. It was also important to encourage students to have readings done prior to class, so they were familiar with the workshop materials and could base their expectations on their readings.

Week 1: Development and Assigning Roles

As previous stated, the filmmaking unit was taught over the course one month entitled the “filmmaking month”. For INGL 3104 the film unit started April 2013, one month prior to the end of the semester. A copy of the calendar was posted on the class website (APPX F) for all students to download and print out. Now, the overall process of the film was divided into weeklong sections, with each week devoted to one aspect of the filmmaking process. Once students understood the process to be followed during the month, the next step was assigning the roles needed to create the filmmaking groups.

Assigning roles

The first step in helping students decide on roles was showing an informative YouTube

video⁴ about the duties of each production position. Thus, the first day of the filmmaking unit began with students learning about the types of duties in a film and then choosing their desired film production role (see Appendix E). Students were given an *embedded scaffold* handout entitled “Choose your Production Position” and required to indicate their first and second choice for the production role they wished to have. The handout gave clear and simple instructions for students to choose a role they felt was a good match and a section explaining why. For example, a student could choose to be a director, but needed to include reasons why and list any experience they had in leading groups, or organizing teams.

Once the handout was collected, students were allowed to create their own “production teams”. I was in charge of designating positions and once a director was chosen, the director was then in charge of choosing their team members and then had to decide on a name for their group. From that point on, each team worked together for the remainder of the month long filmmaking unit.

Week 2: Pre-Production

Now, students are usually eager to start filming, so enforcing the pre-planning stage may take more effort than that required to get students to brainstorm and pre-write for a printed document. This is where each of the worksheets and workshops dedicated to the process of filmmaking become even more integral to student motivation and application. Prior to the class, I had created worksheets based on professional templates found online by browsing the Internet. I then customized the worksheets to appear user friendly and easy to follow for freshman students.

I strongly believe in the idea behind workshop methodology advocated by researchers

⁴ Film Basics: Crew Positions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usW2h8liUkk>

Georgsen and Nyvang (2007) and Buus (2010) who state: “emphasis in using this method is on bringing focus and structure to the early stages of the learning design process, scaffold the different domain experts in sharing ideas, knowledge and inspire and further the aims to concrete develop design specifications and/or early prototypes within a few hours of work.” By using a video clip or an easily accessible video clip, I could provide more information through a lower threshold (quicker and easier access to understanding) than a traditional text or reading assignment. Essentially, within one classroom period students were able to grasp enough knowledge to begin their own process of developing a script, storyboard, or shooting their film.

Scriptwriting workshop

In order to explain to the students what they were expected to write, a scriptwriting worksheet was handed out during the first half of the scriptwriting workshop (See APPX G). The worksheet was very basic and provided a context from which the student could start the written part of the film unit. To help with the process of writing, excerpts from *Scriptwriting for the Soul* (Krevolin, 1998) were also scanned and posted on the class website. This also served as a scaffold since instead of talking about the process, students could read instructions written by an actual scriptwriter. The excerpts chosen for students to read were also written in a very literary and artistic format.

As stated earlier, all worksheets and readings were available online and easily accessible for download or online reading. Students were made aware that *how* they wrote the script would not be graded as heavily as the content they produced. Since this is an English composition classroom, the largest percentage of the grade was based on their written essays after the film unit, not on the screenplays they wrote. The screenwriting assignment was intended to help students develop *performance knowledge*, not write a perfect screenplay. As Lankshear and

Knobel explain the idea of performance knowledge, “what’s essential is knowing how to find, gather, use, communicate, and imagine new ways of envisioning assemblages of knowledge” (Lankshear, Knobel). This approach enabled students to focus more on producing a script within their group, rather than the details of its construction. Also, several professional scripts from a commercial, a film, and a documentary were handed out to serve as examples. These can also be found on the public class website.

Finally, in the last half of the workshop class, a guest speaker who was a professional scriptwriter and documentary filmmaker was brought in on Skype™. She served as both a scaffold and professional example. Students were able to ask her direct questions about the process of writing a short fiction-based film.

Week 3: Post-Production

Having a concrete outline for the students who were going to film helped shape the overall editing process. Much like editing an essay, filmmaking following a similar process of designing, producing, and then editing the content. I chose to teach students about both storyboarding and editing before the production week so they could understand the types of shots they would need to film to put together their films.

Storyboard Workshop

The storyboard workshop class was presented on the first day of the “post-production” week providing students a chance to visually map out their script using a graphic organizer (See APPX G). One student was designated as the main “storyboard” artist in the group, however each student had a chance to practice storyboarding during the in-class workshop. The class had no prior reading that day so students were asked to immediately get into groups and begin shaping their storyboard based on their script drafted the previous week.

Editing Workshop

The next day of class for the week of “post-production” was the editing workshop day. Fortunately today with a laptop or a smartphone you can create your own film using pre-installed editing software. In preparing students for the editing portion of their filmmaking process, I was able to secure the computer lab in the English Department, which came equipped with desktop iMacs installed with iMovie and had a guest editor in attendance as the scaffold.

The editor was a local editor who had submitted films to local festivals and was experienced in using the software the students were presented with. For the sake of both easy access and clear instructions, students were able to follow the editor’s directions using iMovie on the computers in the lab. Students could also immediately ask questions of the editor if they had concerns about using the software.

Week 4: Production

The final week of the film unit was devoted to the production of the student films. The production of a film is comprised of shooting the footage and having actors follow the direction of the director. In this case, the group had a director designated times and places to shoot the smartphone film.

Directing Workshop

Although there was only one director per filmmaking group, I wanted to ensure that each student was given the basics of what I expected out of a film director. Guest speaker and director Anthony Dooley was asked to present his film *Fished Out (2013)* that was screened at the “6th Annual Rincon International Film Festival.” This served as a scaffold and the class included a discussion after the film about directing and the goals the students should have in mind while filming.

To motivate students to think about what could be filmed using their smartphone, the film *Vengeance*⁵, shot and edited entirely on an iPhone, was screened in class. Afterwards, a “making of the film” Youtube clip was shown to students to show them background techniques they could also incorporate in their smartphone films.

Acting Workshop

On the day of the guest director, one of the actors, Gio Perez from the film *Fished out* (2013), was asked to come in to conduct an acting workshop. Since each student was encouraged to also be in their film, students who were shy or not vocal in class were given an opportunity to speak up and be a “character”. Perez presented students with a fun activity where they were able to use improvisation techniques where each student would say his or her name in a certain character’s voice, and the following student would repeat the previous name. This helped students to warm up for their own filmmaking experience.

INGL 3104 Film Festival

After the culmination of the filmmaking month, the first day of the following week was when the film festival for students to showcase their films was held. For INGL3104 the Film Festival was entitled, “Lit, Camera, Action” and was conducted in a “professional style” fashion consisting of an award for “Viewers Choice.” This gave students a chance to see the effort from their hard work on a screen in front of their fellow classmates. The festival also allowed students to see the media and content creation that is possible with their smartphones. They were also collectively able to see each others’ short films and notice the creative ways each group implemented the themes from literary texts discussed during the semester.

Design of the Film Unit for INGL3103

⁵ Vengeance: An iPhone 4S Short Film. Matthew Pearce. Uploaded on Nov 25, 2011. Web. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQSxP6A5f5w>

In designing the film unit for INGL 3103, I kept many aspects exactly the same as they had been in INGL 3104. However, a few decisions were made based on the experience of teaching the film unit in INGL 3104. Consequently, the design for this unit is slightly different. Those differences will be discussed in this subsection.

The original syllabus for the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez first semester freshman English course, Intermediate English INGL3103 lists several goals that students are supposed to meet by the end of the semester:

1. Recognize the organizational structure of essays assigned for reading
2. Write successful introductory, transitional and concluding paragraphs for their own essays
3. Provide relevant supporting details and evidence/justification for relevant statements in their essays
4. Demonstrate correct usage of MLA documentation with general formatting, in text citations, and the Works Cited page

Now, due to the fact that INGL 3103 focused on non-fiction, rather than the literary texts covered in INGL 3104, and that a research project was required in INGL 3103, I added a research requirement in the film unit. Students in INGL 3103 were required to submit an annotated bibliography along with their script. The bibliography was based on resources needed to create their short film. Students were asked to consult at least 3-4 relevant sources to help shape their short film and help them write their scripts.

The syllabus for INGL3103 states that students will “carry out a filmmaking/digital literacy (scriptwriting, filming, editing) project using a smartphone and the campus library and/or

Internet including the proper use of outside sources and the basic forms of documentation (INGL3103 syllabus, see APPX F).” All reading material for the film unit was placed on the class website (APPX F) .

Week 1: Development and Assigning Roles

Similarly to INGL3104, the INGL 3103 filmmaking unit was organized into week-long segments dedicated to one specific process of the production. The first week was the “development”, similar to INGL 3104, where students were partitioned off into their groups and given activities to brainstorm ideas for their film. This time, film month was held in September of 2013, during the first half of the semester. A calender was provided to students giving them the course outline according to each week (APPX F). The reason for placing the filmmaking month near the beginning of the semester was because freshman are new to university and usually have not made friends yet. Placing the film unit in the beginning of the class thus gave students an opportunity to start the process of meeting new people and creating friendships.

Process of Learning Concepts

Now, in the development of the course, even though the subject matter of INGL3103 and INGL3104 was different, the goals remained the same: to implement a digital literacy practice into the curriculum. In INGL3103 students were asked to produce a commercial instead of a short film. This was because a commercial could be taught in a way that is similar to how students can be taught to write a rhetorical analysis essay. Prior to beginning the filmmaking unit students were given a brief lesson on rhetorical analysis. The vocabulary they learned prior to writing and producing the commercial included: logos, pathos, and ethos, each of which are kinds of rhetorical appeals. A power point was shown to students that explained these concepts and also placed on the class website (APPX F). Prior to the start of the smartphone filmmaking

unit students were also shown a variety of 1-3 minute commercials to introduce the concepts of rhetorical analysis. These commercials served as a scaffold and can each be found by clicking the “Film/Media Links” section on the class website (APPX F).

Assigning Roles

The first day of the filmmaking unit was the same as in INGL 3104: deciding on the roles of each student in each production. The same informative YouTube video⁶ about the duties of each production position was shown prior to handing out the *embedded scaffold* handout knowledge to begin their own process of developing a script, storyboard, or shooting their film.

Once students grasped the knowledge in the power point, they were told that the next class would commence with the scriptwriting section.

Scriptwriting workshop entitled “Choose your Production Position.” Once the handout was collected, I took the information back home with me to then strategically place students into groups.

A major difference in designing the groups was that I took away the control from the students in INGL3103. In INGL 3104, students were allowed to choose their groups which created many disruptive issues in the classroom. In INGL 3104, students had been upset at the way groups were chosen by their peers, and thus I decided not to repeat this process in the INGL 3103 film unit. I gave students their production group assignments on the following class and then gave them the freedom to choose their team name.

The second day of the development week, students were placed into groups and also given their commercial assignments. The commercial assignment was based on picking a rhetorical appeal (logos, pathos, ethos) and a genre (romantic, comedy, musical, thriller) out of a

⁶ Film Basics: Crew Positions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usW2h8liUkk>

hat. Groups were asked to choose two pieces of paper at separate times out of a hat to designate their themes they would focus on in the creation of their commercials or PSAs. Afterwards, groups were asked to come up with a social issue to write their commercial about. One group chose “beach clean ups” to coincide with “logos” for their rhetorical appeal, and “musical” for their genre.

Week 2: Pre-Production

The second week of the film unit was also set up similarly to INGL 3104, except that the two workshops for the week were focused on directing and the following one on script writing. The reason for this was particularly based on student requests that directions on how to film be placed earlier in the film unit. However, similar to INGL 3104 this film unit started with group members sitting together at the start and finish of each class. Groups were now considered cohesive film units and were expected to feel as though they were professionals in the field.

Directing Workshop

The directing workshop began with the same “Think like a Director” power point discussed in INGL 3104, which could be found by clicking on the “class notes/presentations” tab on class website (APPX F). The power point focused on camera angles, gave students a mini lesson on how to film, and also presented the importance of sound in film. This gave students a broad look at how a film or commercial is made in short and simple steps.

I strongly believe in the idea behind workshop methodology as discussed by researchers Georgsen and Nyvang (2007) and Buus (2010) who state: “emphasis in using this method is on bringing focus and structure to the early stages of the learning design process, scaffolding the different domain experts in sharing ideas and knowledge, and inspiring and furthering the aims to develop concrete design specifications and/or early prototypes within a few hours of work.”

By using an easily accessible video clip, I could provide more information through a lower threshold (quicker and easier access to understanding) than if I had used a traditional text or reading assignment. Essentially, within one classroom period students are able to grasp enough.

The second day of class during the pre-production week focused on the scriptwriting workshop, in order to teach students what they were expected to write. The film unit for INGL 3103 was based on commercials and PSAs created using rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, ethos). A scriptwriting worksheet was handed out during the scriptwriting workshop (See APPX G). The worksheet was very basic and provided a context from which the student could start the written part of the film unit. Students were also given examples of professional commercial and PSA scripts, which were also placed in the “resources” section of the class website (APPX F).

As stated earlier, all worksheets and readings were available online and easily accessible for download or online reading. Students were also made aware that *how* they wrote the script would not be graded as heavily as the content they produced. As in INGL 3104, the most important goal of this assignment was to develop *performance knowledge*. Professional scripts for a commercial, a film, and a documentary were handed out to serve as examples. These can also be found on the public class website.

Finally, for INGL 3103, a guest speaker was also brought in on Skype™. This speaker was a professional scriptwriter and professor who served as both a scaffold and professional example. Students were able to ask her direct questions about the process of writing a script, and personal questions about her real life work.

Guest Speakers/Mentors

As part of the film unit month, both INGL 3103 and INGL 3104 included film professionals as guest speakers to motivate and inspire students. Speakers who were directors,

scriptwriters, actors, and graphic designers came either in person or spoke to the class using Skype™. Skype(TM) is a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) application that allows free phone and video call for registered users (Educause Learning Initiative, 2007). Its fast, high-quality connectivity provides an easy way to view and speak to people around the world. In regard to this class, Skype(TM) was appropriate for guest speaker presentations, because flying guests to present in our class was not a feasible option.

The technology available in our class allowed the guest speakers to call into my personal Skype™ address and then be projected onto the whiteboard screen for all students to see and hear. Guest speakers were also able to see students from a video camera that was built into the classroom iMac computer. Poling (2000) states that by “bringing well-informed guest speakers from the community into the classroom, we can encourage our students to assess multiple points of view and to think more creatively and critically about their course work. The questions that they prepare in advance, as well as the classroom discussions and follow-up reflective writings, promote higher-order critical thinking skills.” Students were asked to free write based on their experience with guest speakers and also wrote “thank you” cards, many of which thanked the speaker for their inspiration. In INGL 3104, students were also asked to write such cards thanking their guests for their time.

Week 3: Post-Production

The third week of the film unit was dedicated to storyboarding, editing, and having a “director of photography” workshop. To fit in more material within the week, the storyboard and editing workshops were held on the same day. Also, because I did not gain access to the English Department computer lab, I had to conduct the editing workshop in the classroom.

Storyboard Workshop

The storyboard workshop class was presented on the first day of the “post-production” week providing students a chance to visually map out their scripts using a graphic organizer (See APPX G). One student was designated as the main “storyboard” artist in the group, however each student had a chance to practice storyboarding during the in-class workshop. The class then transitioned into a brief workshop on editing in which I served as a scaffold.

Editing Workshop

As stated earlier, I did not have access to the computer lab on this day, so instead I had students bring in their laptops if they were the editors of their group. I had created an activity where students were asked to use their smartphones to create 30-second of film in class on whatever they chose with their group. I then asked them to email the films directly from their smartphone to my email account. I then projected my computer screen, which had access to editing software, on the classroom whiteboard. Students were able to watch the process as I downloaded what they had shot on their smartphones, and placed it into the timeline of the iMovie software. I then showed them how they could crop the frame, cut time off, and even create transitions when adding other pieces of footage. Students were allowed to ask questions at any time of the activity. Fortunately, the students who were designated the editor position all had previous experience with editing and did not express concern with the process.

Directory of Photography Workshop & Guest Speaker

For the second day of the pre-production week, students were first presented with a handout and then shown a YouTube film to demonstrate what kinds of films can be shot with a smartphone. The handout contained reading material which was scanned and printed out to students from Ben Harvell’s book “*Making Movies with your iPhone*” (2012). The book demonstrated techniques and gave good advice for students to glean prior to starting their own

film. Then, as in INGL 3104, students were shown the film *Vengeance*⁷, shot and edited entirely on an iPhone, to inspire and motivate them.

Finally, the second half of the class was dedicated to a guest speaker, award winning director of photography and director, Jessica Sue Bernstein who Skyped™ in from New York City. Similarly to previous guest speakers, students were able to ask questions regarding their own commercial as well as any questions they had personally for the guest.

Week 4: Production

The final week of the film unit was devoted to an acting workshop and having another guest speaker. However, due to scheduling issues both the actor and director were not able to attend. Instead of scheduling another speaker, students were given an acting workshop and given the day set aside for the speaker to work in-class with their groups.

Acting Workshop

Even though INGL3103 did not include a guest speaker for this workshop, students were still given the opportunity to practice improvisational acting. Again, as in INGL 3104, since the entire group as a whole was encouraged to be in their film, students who were shy or not vocal in class were given an opportunity to speak up and be a “character”. Now, it is interesting to note that at the heart of improvisation is transformation. In support of the acting workshop, I draw from Spolin (1983, as cited by Wolf) that “all education is-or should be-about transformation, whether for teachers or learners: transformation in conceptual understanding, in the range and nature of strategies available for completion of tasks, and in personal perspective related to the way challenges are met. Whether it is through an acting workshop, or students developing their

⁷ Vengeance: An iPhone 4S Short Film. Matthew Pearce. Uploaded on Nov 25, 2011. Web. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQsxP6A5f5w>

ability to create a composition using their smartphone, the interconnection between traditional literacy and digital literacy involves transformation.

In-Class Work Period

Due to scheduling problems with the guest speaker, students were given the last day of the production week to work with their groups in class. This also gave students who were unable to meet outside of class a chance to work with their group.

INGL 3103 Film Festival

After the culmination of the filmmaking month, the first day of the following week was when the film festival for students to showcase their film was held. For INGL 3103 the film festival was entitled, “Rhetorical Analysis Film Festival” and was conducted much like a professional festival even consisting of an award for “Viewers Choice” (APPX G). This enabled students a chance to review and “grade” how well they could tell the type of rhetorical appeal used in each commercial.

Conclusion

This study followed a similar method in design and data collection in both INGL 3104 and INGL 3103. The differences were mainly due to the different types of texts the two courses focused on, and minor adjustments that were made after the first study in INGL 3104 was completed. The minor changes mainly had to do with how students were assigned to groups and the way the directing and acting workshop were conducted. Although the aforementioned workshops were changed because of last minute interferences in the schedule, the projected timeline of the study was not affected.

Chapter 4: Results

The results section will now present and analyze the collected data. As noted in the methodology, data was collected through series of questionnaires containing both quantitative and qualitative data. The research study spanned the course of two classes taught in consecutive semesters in the spring and fall semester of 2013. As such, this chapter will include the results and discussion of the 26 students who participated in the study in INGL3104 and the 27 students in the INGL3103 research study. However, it is important to note that not all of the students were present when questionnaires #1 and #2 were administered. For this reason, the numbers of students cited in the some of the results based on data acquired from the questionnaires that will be discussed in this chapter do not add up to the total amount of students who participated in the study. The section will also discuss the limitations of the present study and make recommendations for future research.

INGL 3104

The first study conducted was in INGL3104, the second course in the required English composition sequence, which focuses on Literature: short stories, poems, and short plays. This study began in the spring of 2013, when the film unit discussed in the previous chapter was integrated into the second semester of Intermediate English, a freshman composition course. Students had already learned how to write essays during the first semester of Intermediate English and were now expected to analyze texts and formulate their own interpretations.

As written into the syllabus, students were presented with a brief outline for the filmmaking unit that was reserved for the last quarter of the semester. Prior to the unit, the main focus of the semester remained dedicated to reading and writing essays based on several short stories, poems, and visual poems. Once students had fulfilled their reading and writing

requirements for the course, the class transitioned into a digital film production section. The filmmaking portion took place in April 2013, which gave the students one month to prepare their film for the student Film Festival “Lit, Camera, Action.”

Student-owned Technology

The majority of the students in INGL 3104 had smartphones, which ensured that when groups were formed that at least one person in their group of 7-8 students would have a smartphone to use for their film project.

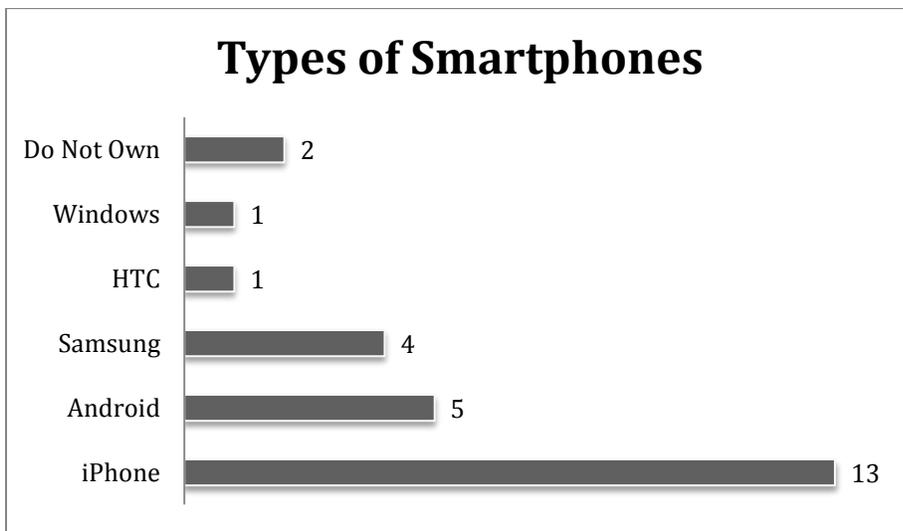


Fig. 2

In this particular study, 14 out of the 29 students had used their smartphone to film prior to class. This attests to the fact that students of this generation have already become acclimated to the changing tides of communication. The use of their smartphones in this study that would introduce a new approach to learning since, as Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong say “Even the most dedicated learner or heavy user of technology will develop, refine and alter the quantity and quality of engagement as their life circumstances alter” (,2006, p. 40). Most of them were at least familiar with smartphone technology and understood the basics of using their smartphone to access video, media, and even create their own.

Now, it was important for participants to own their own smartphones because ownership of a device matters (Conole et. al., 2008; Hashemi et al., 2011; Kukulska- Hulma, 2009; Ros i Sole et al., 2010). Ownership makes a difference in the way a device is used because of the familiarity and comfort level the user has with a device and because, increasingly, these devices are becoming a part of the identity of users (Conole et al., 2008; Ros i Sole et al., 2010). This shows how constant interaction with technology produces *performance knowledge* and how student's personal smartphones act as "perceptual lenses that are needed to operate in new environments" (Caine and Caine, 2001).

Furthermore, with the worldwide popularity of YouTube, Facebook, other visual media websites, anyone can film a snapshot of their life from their smartphone and upload to the Internet. Professionals are no longer the only types of people able to create film content. Another important aspect to mention is that a smartphone makes it possible to instantly upload personal movies, pictures, and other forms of visual media to the Internet. Instant access to the Internet through both Wi-Fi and smartphone data plans, allows users to always stay connected regardless of where they are. Due to the ease and convenience that a smartphone provides, anyone can shoot and edit a film or visual component to upload to the web almost as instantly as it is created.

Similarly, more film-focused websites such as Vimeo allow anyone from media professionals to students to upload their film and present it to the public in a higher resolution format than Youtube. It was advantageous for students to become familiar with Vimeo since their projects were created on smartphones. However, not all students found this easy to use. One student commented in a free writing exercise, "when we tried to upload the video. It didn't let me, it was too big. I stayed until it was uploaded but it was really fun, since I learned about

editing video software. I didn't know how to use it [the software'] but now I feel prepared (Alejandro, May 2013).”

Issues With Uploading Films

As mentioned in a student comment in the previous section, some students had difficulties with uploading their work on Vimeo. One way to alleviate this issue could be by providing options such as, uploading films to YouTube, burning the film on a CD, or bringing their laptop to class. The more options the better when implementing new websites or technology. The filmmaking unit allowed them to practice a digital literacy skill, and provided a public platform for their work to inspire others to create visual stories using a device that is becoming almost universal.

Here we have another example of how *performance knowledge* really provided students with leverage even outside of the classroom. Until recently, the power of production and distribution had been held by a small number of privileged in society (Bailey, p.10). However, now the Internet offers a vast collection of short films, animations, and commercials made by students, amateurs, as well as professional filmmakers. Now, students were able to see that their work would and could get an international audience when put online.

It has also become more and more common to hear that students are using the Internet and these websites to watch tutorial videos on any academic subject, and hobbies ranging from dancing to fixing car engines. Their source of knowledge is increasingly becoming something to be “watched” rather than “read”. It is as if the world is rapidly allowing anyone to become both a student and a teacher on whatever subject they have a strong interest in. One student wrote in a free writing exercise that with film, “you don't need sophisticated words to impact a mass of people, you just need creativity (In class writing prompt, September 2013).”

Research Question #1: How Did Students Respond to their Production Roles Within their Groups?

An issue discussed in the methodology chapter had to do with whether students would be actively engaged in their individual role in the production of the film. In order to investigate this, students were first asked to complete a questionnaire answering questions regarding their interest in films and filmmaking. They were then asked to complete a handout entitled *Choose your Production Position* (Appx. E) allowing them to rank their top three choices for their positions in their film production group, and also explaining their experiences they have to demonstrate their qualifications. The reason for this was to provide the researcher with information to be used in assigning roles to students

The majority of students were placed in roles they were somewhat familiar with and then allowed to choose and form their own groups comprised of each of the filmmaking roles. See Fig. 2 to see the Spring 2013 INGL3104 class breakdown of roles.

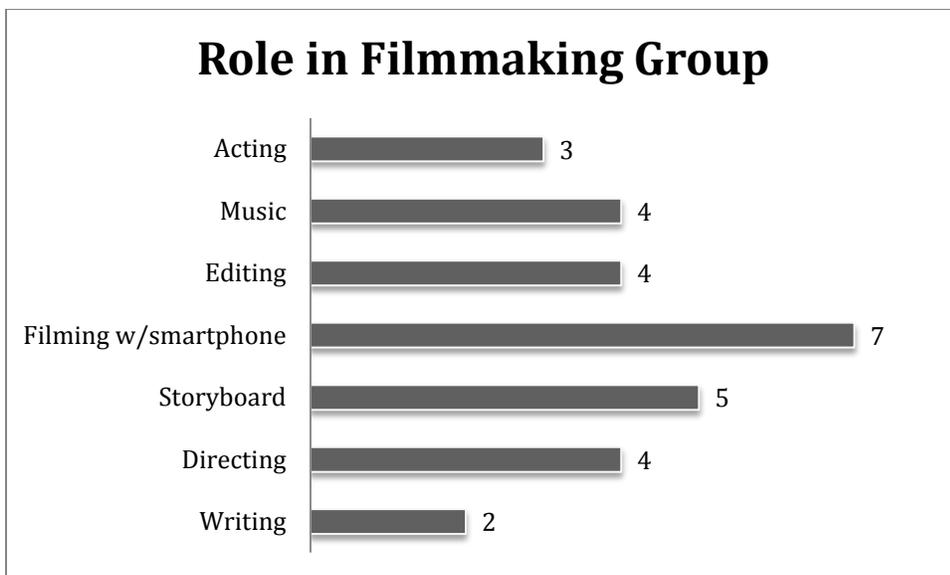


Fig. 3

As Figure 3 illustrates, the largest number of students chose the role of smartphone filmmaker, meaning they would shoot the footage with their own smartphone. This was the most important role to assign. so students could then choose the rest of the 6 roles to complete their production group of 7. Students were then allowed to open up the class and the director was able to recruit production members for his/her group. This proved to be a disaster and this will be further explained in the next section that discusses issues with group work.

Student Evaluation of Individual Roles

Now another questionnaire response indicated whether or not students enjoyed their roles. We can see that the majority of the students did in fact enjoy their particular chosen role. See Fig. 4 below.

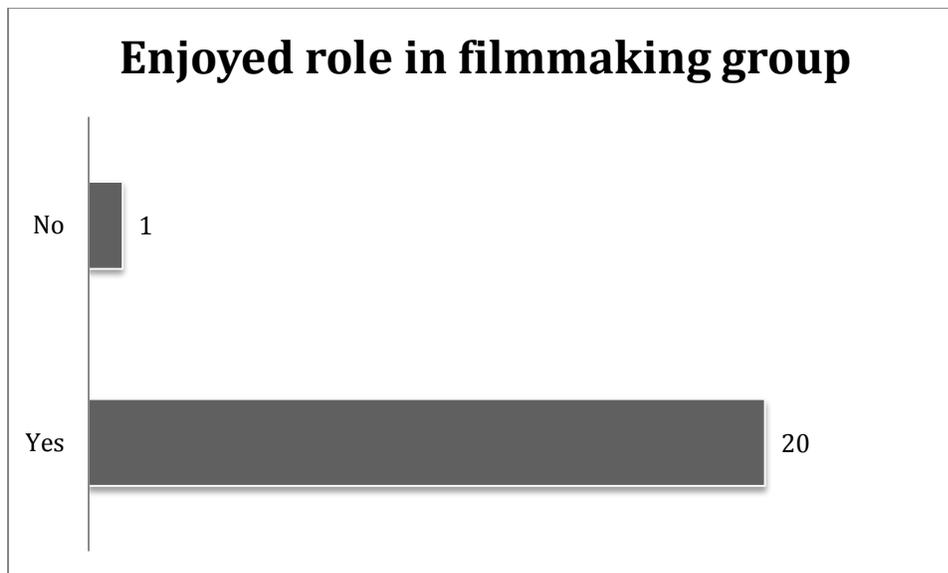


Fig. 4

This demonstrates that the rationale for creating the *Choose your Production Position* worksheet was on target. The idea behind the worksheet was that giving students roles that allowed them to develop and work within a skill that that they had some experience or interest in, would help them best serve their group and project. One student wrote about her experience in

the group, “*I decided to be the Director of the film. I knew it was a big responsibility because the director is like the head of the team, but I like the leader roll. Also, it was all about teamwork so it was going to be better. More people, more ideas* (Post-class essay, May 2013).” She then went on to express her satisfaction with the grades:

Everybody liked their job, and when I saw that, I understood that all the hard work done was worth it. I was extremely happy. My team worked really hard, and it was our first time making a video for a class. All of us were really happy with the grades Ms. Dhillon gave us (May 2013).

Now, one important consequence of choosing roles is that students become leaders in their chosen position, and others within their group could work alongside them in that role. If a student is an actor he or she can also assist the scriptwriter in writing and or editing the script. This ensures that each student has full responsibility for his or her part of the entire film project. Students were made aware that they would be evaluated on their work after the project was over, and I believe this stimulated them to work fairly within their groups. However, in both studies there was an experience in at least one group where one student member did little to none of the work.

A goal of this filmmaking unit was to teach and implement a skill that would serve students even outside of their academic experience. In a writing exercise after the unit one student wrote, “*we finished our Intermediate English course but we got from it skills that would serve us a lifetime* (May 2013).” This response helps to answer one of the questions this research project set out to answer: *how the students would perceive the filmmaking unit* and how it would impact their overall experience in the class. Another student wrote in a freelance writing

exercise, “*every time we make a video, we make a mark in history. These types of videos we created deliver a whole new message to the world* (May 2013).” This kind of positive response was particularly evident in the second course that was taught as part of this research project where students made commercials and PSAs (public service announcements and created messages relating to social and environmental issues. In INGL 3104 students were asked to create short films based on themes discussed in class that demonstrated their own understanding of the text.

Now, it’s important to note that many of the students said that the unit was stressful. (See Figure 4.) One student expressed her discontent in a free writing exercise, “*I couldn’t do anything in my group and didn’t have the time. I also the music director and I have some great music choices, and none of them were in the film* (September 2013).” This student is the one student who answered “no” to the question of whether student enjoyed their filmmaking role (Figure 3). The student was an athlete at the university and frequently complained that there was a lack of consideration within her group regarding the time constraints that the film project added to her schedule.

Time, as well as lack of group cooperation seemed to be the biggest challenges for students who complained about the stress the work for the unit caused them. The data shows that the participants, like many freshmen, are challenged both in managing their time and learning new skills. However, this shows that the unit created the necessary need for urgency within a challenging and educational classroom unit. I strongly believe as both teacher and researcher it was important to include the concept of performance knowledge, specifically in providing students with looser guidelines allowing them to “gather, use, communicate, and imagine new

ways of envisioning assemblages of knowledge (Lankshear and Knobel, 2003).” Students had to learn the importance of creating a film and making meaning with basic instructions.

Research Question #2: What were Some of the Issues Students Faced within Their Production Groups?

As discussed above, allowing students to choose their own group in INGL 3104 spring semester became one of the most challenging issues in the filmmaking unit. Since students were in their second semester of university, they had had time to form relationships with students from the previous semester. A few of those students had friends in this class and immediately formed attachments to those students. Those who were given the director role were in charge of picking group members to fulfill the seven roles needed to have a complete filmmaking group. However, this created a problem since many students felt isolated when they were not asked to be in a group. The tense environment in the classroom during group formation day could have been avoided by choosing group members with no student influence in the decision making process.

Group construction was not previously thought of as an issue that could cause a volatile situation. Gershon’s study (2013) on group dynamics was later consulted as a resource in creating the film unit for the second course that was taught during the Fall 2013 semester.

Gershon makes the following suggestions on role allocation in this article:

In order to imbue students with a strong sense of purpose, you can give each group member their own role, such as timekeeper, scribe, leader, questioner or devil's advocate. You can develop as many different roles as you wish. I would advise sticking with a select few roles, however, so that students

can learn how to carry them out effectively. You may want to create laminated cards containing bullet- point lists of what each role entails (p. 26).

Instead of laminated cards, I introduced students to a YouTube clip entitled “Crew Positions”⁸ which went over each of the individual roles prior to passing out the worksheet “*Choose Your Production Position*”. The 5-minute video went over the roles in a film production, giving students real world examples of what directors, scriptwriters, storyboard artists, and editors do. The second research study, conducted in INGL 3103 did not encounter the same issues with the filmmaking unit because I created the groups and placed students into roles based on the handout. The roles for students were carefully considered before placing them into groups of seven students in which each took on a specific filmmaking role.

Throughout the study students collaborated to create meaning with their smartphones, and engage in the filmmaking process as a team. Group work was meant primarily to garner support among classroom peers, and to develop individual roles within each production group within the digital literacy unit. Education researchers have mostly agreed with the notion that learning does not occur in a vacuum and encourage the influence of social constructivist principles when designing classroom environments (Bransford, Brown, Sc Cocking, 2000). The idea behind social constructivism describes the student as an active "maker of meanings" who participates in a small culture to co-construct knowledge with other students (Voss, Wiley, Sc Carretero, 1995). According to group pedagogy researcher Zamora (2005):

In regards to group size, I aim for three to four students in each group. Any more students than that has led to the obvious lack of participation by a few and the major weight of the work done by others. There are always stronger

⁸ Film Basics: Crew Positions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usW2h8liUkk>

and weaker students that manifest after a brief period in the semester has passed. I continuously attempt to "evenly distribute" student representation in each group, so that stronger students are matched up with weaker ones, thus maximizing peer learning.

In choosing the production group size I did not follow Zamora's recommendation, and instead created groups of seven per production group in order to fulfill each role needed with each unit (director, writer, director of photography, storyboard artist, editor, casting director, actor). In this case, seven roles were needed, and were created specifically to fulfill the individual duties needed to complete the film. Any fewer, and the students roles would not have been fairly distributed. If I were to do this study again, I would maintain the number of seven students per filmmaking group.

Finally, accountability was given to each student through peer evaluations of their roles within the group. A study by Dr. Mark Sutton (2005) describes the strategies of group work he uses to give each member a sense of ownership in the group. "I tell students I expect them to be responsible to their group. Giving them the power of evaluation helps them see I am serious, and they rarely avoid that responsibility" (Sutton, p.75). I agree with Sutton's claim because in my own experience, the students in both INGL 3104 and INGL 3103 were serious in their evaluations and when students found out this was part of their overall filmmaking unit grade, they stepped up their share of work. An interesting observation I noticed was that in any particular group, it was clear which student was slacking off and not adhering to their duties based on the individual student evaluations.

Now, I did not foresee group size becoming a main issue prior to the conducting the study since my perspective was shaped by classroom management studies by Bruffee (1973), Trimbur

(1985), and LeFerve (1987) who argue that students gain a better understanding of audience and other rhetorical elements when working within groups. However, students must also be trained in-group dynamics, "the condition most crucial to collaboration and the most difficult to achieve" (Ede & Lunsford, 1986, p.21). This was achieved through "how to" classroom workshops dedicated to each individual production role where students learned about each production role, even if they were not assigned to them. One student mentioned in a focus group interview, "*I think that we should have more time to get to know our group members before starting our filmmaking unit so we can be aware our dynamics in working together* (October 2013)." This will need to be taken into consideration when conducting further research since it brings up a point about the time frame best suited to starting the filmmaking unit. In the INGL 3104 course, the filmmaking unit was placed at the end of the semester, and subsequently INGL 3103 had the filmmaking at the start of the semester. Whether or not there is a big difference will need to be confirmed in further research. Now we can move to characteristics about the filmmaking unit as described by students in questionnaire #2 and how the information obtained can help design future courses.

Research Question #3: How Did Students Perceive the Filmmaking Unit as a Whole?

One way of gauging a research question focused student usage of their smartphone as a digital literary tool posed prior to the study, is capturing student perceptions through individual experiences. A particular question in questionnaire #2 asked students to describe their experience in one or more adjectives.

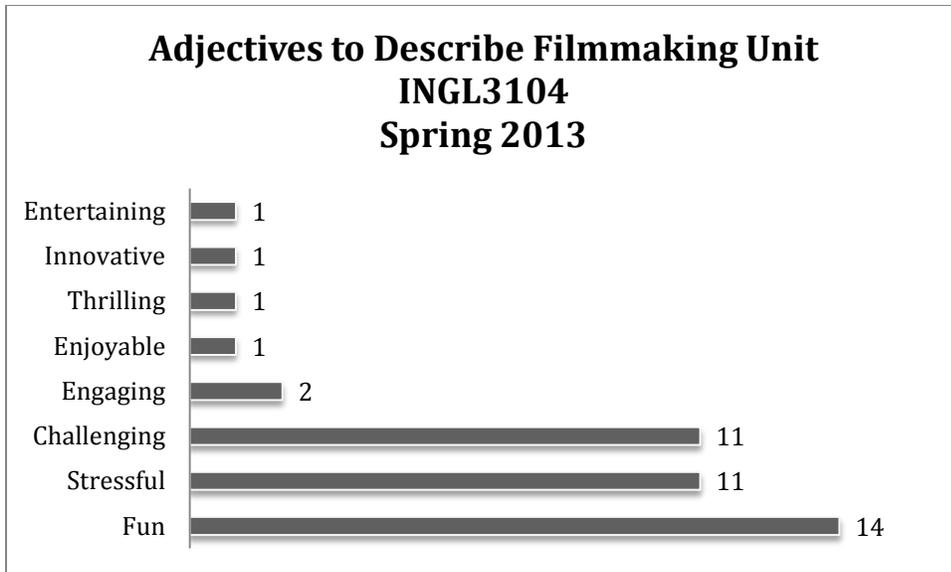


Fig. 5

Although the two main adjectives chosen by students were “stressful” and “fun”, for the most part they used positive adjectives to describe the course as shown in Figure 5 above. It is also interesting to point out that the only two adjectives to check off in the questionnaire were those aforementioned, the rest of the adjectives listed in Figure 5 were words chosen by the students to describe their own experiences. When the students were having fun working within their groups, they were also grasping concepts based on the readings and transforming them into visual “essays”. One student stated in a free writing activity:

At first I was not very motivated because my group was disorganized and they didn’t seem like people I would fit in with. Then after a while during group reunions we started talking and getting along better. Now that we are done, I know for certain I would work with them again (Brian, September 2013).

This student made a huge turnaround from the beginning of the unit. At first, he had little enthusiasm and even vocalized his concern with his group to me privately. However, as his group

became more involved in the film through each workshop activity, he showed a remarkable improvement.

I believe it is important to point out the significance of this observation since the student mentioned above, exemplified a real world work ethic in a classroom situation. When students embark on real world careers and positions in the working environment, they will not always enjoy working within group situations. However, being that this is an unavoidable experience for most people, unless they are working for themselves in isolated environments, students must learn to adapt and work successfully within group dynamics. The study made it possible to observe several situations where students' had to develop meaning within their groups and produce an overall general consensus with their project. This either created the potential for friction or solidarity.

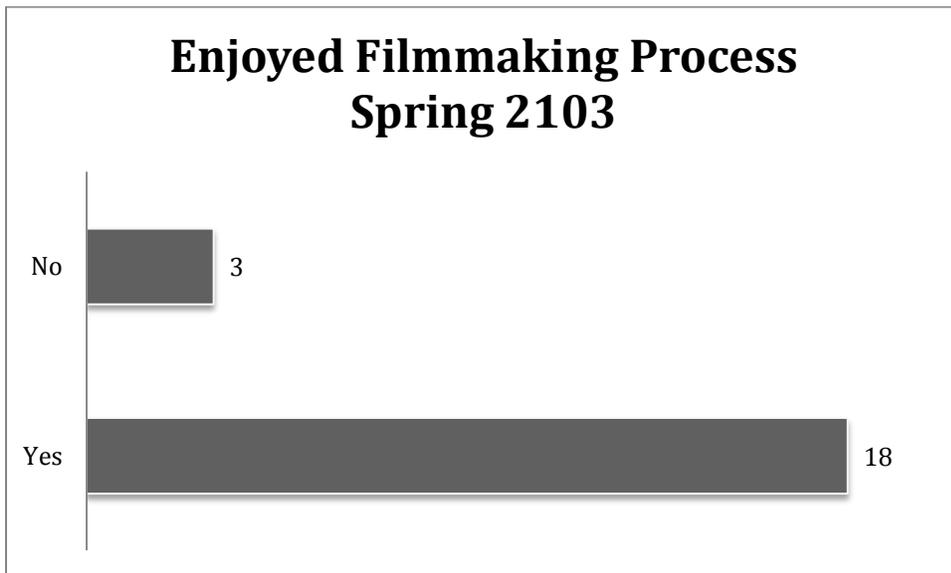


Fig. 6

Now, the results in Figure 6 show that the majority of the students checked “yes” to indicate that they enjoyed the filmmaking unit. During a focus group interview, a co-researcher commented after speaking with two students:

Both were very excited about the project and you could tell in their faces that they really enjoyed the filmmaking unit. They offered some great feedback. I thought it was really interesting that they talked to other individuals about the unit, like the old high school teacher and etc. Sounds like they enjoyed the social aspect of it all the most (Focus group interview, October 2, 2013).

Although group work was demanding for many, students felt relief in putting together their film. In many of the comments they posted on the course blog, students expressed the fun and the humor they enjoyed within their groups. I see the effects of both the meaning of the word “relief” and an overall theme of the “stress” students felt to be a positive observation. In terms of how they learned, I noticed how *performance knowledge* outweighed the actual content of what was provided in the embedded scaffolds, such as examples of scripts and proposals. This is to say some student groups did not exactly go “by the book” and instead were exceptionally adept at creating their original scripts and then filming using techniques they either already knew, or had done additional research in learning how to create.

I noticed that although many students complained about staying up all night to complete the film, or having to sacrifice their weekend time to film, that the end result was worth their while. The “stress” they experienced seemed to motivate them to put in extra effort to ensure a unanimously successful film project for not only their satisfaction, but their group members as well. I would like to see further research done specifically on group rapport in Puerto Rico as compared to other states and/countries. As a non-native to the island, I noticed there seems to be a noticeably stronger connection with groups and group dynamics here in Puerto Rico than I noticed in my time in the states as an undergraduate. Perhaps this piece of information could help

strengthen the use of “stress” and how it serves as a building block in the success of group project and learning.

Research Question #4: Did Students Make Connections Between Their Coursework and the Filmmaking Unit?

Now, the main objective for the film project for this INGL3104 course was that the student groups were able to write, direct and edit their film projects based on readings assigned through out the semester. However, since INGL3104 is a Literature-based class, the students were exposed to a variety of different types of readings and short films, most of them fiction. They were thus asked to ponder what makes a film or a short story profound or innovative or meaningful?

In order to be able to answer these kinds of questions, students need to be exposed to a variety of artistic texts, and provided with critical tools they need to be able to learn how to interpret and appreciate them. For students of a second language, this poses some difficulty, but it is important to help students read and appreciate these kinds of texts. It was clear from the films they made that the students in this study did understand the literary texts they were basing their films on. This is important since creating films and digital media helps students attain the new kinds of literacies we want our students acquire.

A main theme in the literary texts studied was a female protagonist facing the challenges of growing up and choosing between two options. The students were allowed to choose from the stories: “Eveline” by James Joyce, “Where are You Going? Where Have You Been?” by Joyce Carol Oates, the poems: “A Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, “A Lost Generation” by Jonathan Reed, “If You Forgot Me” by Pablo Neruda, “Cities Vagabond” by Arthur Rimbaud, and “A Plagued Journey” by Maya Angelou. Two films were also shown in class and students were

asked to interpret these visual texts. These films were: *Destino* by Salvador Dali & Walt Disney and *The Little Match Girl* by Disney & Pixar.

Each of the short stories, poems, visual essays, and assignments were placed on a class website. This organization was implemented to create ease and flow with the new materials students were given in regard to the filmmaking unit. In terms of how students were to write their script, they were given excerpts from Richard Krevolin's *Screenwriting for the Soul* to read and gain insights into the writing process for their visual composition.

One quote in particular from the book was used as a writing prompt on the class website to encourage critical thinking about the writing process, "writing for the screen is different than writing for your English Composition class; there is no need to impress with the literary quality of your prose" (Krevolin, p.49). One student posted on the INGL 3104 website:

I agree with the author on this quote because definitively it is not the same than when your writing for a movie. When one is writing a movie or such, one wants to simplify the movie into making it interesting for the viewer and not bore them with rhymes. A composition takes time and encompasses a huge amount of structure, things like metaphors, rhetoric, rhymes etc. Scriptwriting has very little of those qualities, instead it just focuses on the literal story and not the qualities of how many metaphors, similes it has (Manuel, April 2013).

Students were aware that the writing portion of the film unit was different than typical written composition, and for this reason the scriptwriting and storyboard portion together comprised of only 25% of their overall filmmaking unit grade. The point was to teach them how to create a film using their smartphone in its entirety, not simply how to

write for the screen. For this reason they also were made aware that writing for visual composition did not need to include much detail or many metaphors, rather the screenplay “should be all action verbs and nouns with very few adjectives and hardly any adverbs (Krevlin, p51).”

One student in another blog post comment wrote regarding the filmmaking unit and the written portion:

All of these skills are important because as time goes on and you are growing you are going to know what kind of writer you are, what kind of ideas you have, what are your opinions about something. Indeed, that is all because you are developing not only writing skills, but other skills that will become important for communication and socialization because writing is a form to express ourselves and our feelings (Lila, April 2013).

However, some students also showed apprehension with the writing process in particular: “I am concerned about this project we are doing in class, because I am not familiarized with writing for a video. I have never done it before, and I do not know how difficult it will be to transform a story written on paper to a video, and how to present correctly on the video what we really want to express (Omar, April 2013).

Another student openly expressed in a blog post:

English composition class (writing) is a lot easier because it is only between you the writer and the person who is going to correct the work. I am a little nervous

about doing something for the screen because I have never been to open in everything I do. For example I am a little shy and I do not feel comfortable of writing something that everybody could see. I feel that way because I am afraid that people do not like it or they just critique what I write (Angelina, April 2013).

Based on this snapshot of student experiences, it is clear that the writing aspect of the filmmaking unit generated the most concern from student groups. I think it would be clearly an easier transition if students were required to create PSAs or commercials prior to making short films based on Literature. This way they are given the basics of filmmaking using smartphones during the first sequence of freshman English composition, and can then gradually move on to more complicated forms of film making and analysis.

Now in terms of how they connected the readings with their own films and group work see figure 7 below.

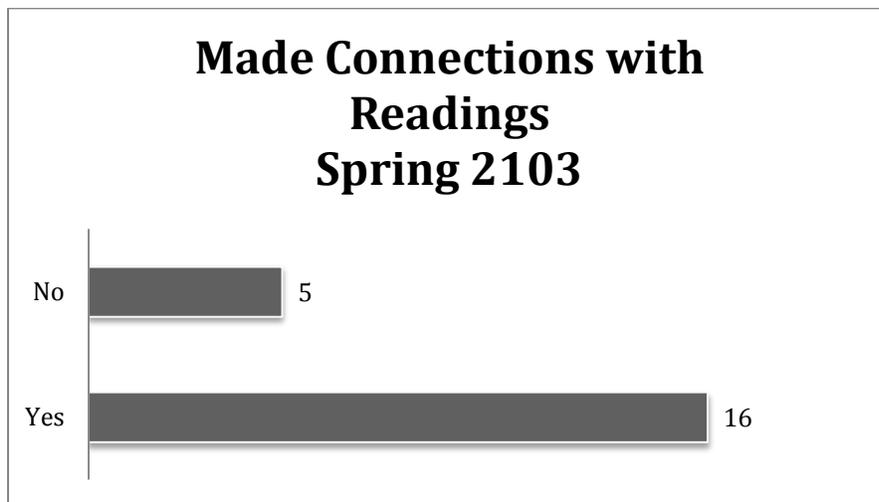


Fig. 7

The way students were evaluated was based primarily on if they completed each section

of the filmmaking unit (script, storyboard, research page) or not. However, how they formed connections was assessed as well. This assessment was based on how well they were able to incorporate aspects of reading assignments into their scripts. The themes between the readings were discussed in class and students were asked to write two essays prior to the start of the filmmaking unit. Both writing and analysis were main foci throughout the first portion of the semester. Now, the filmmaking unit was able to transfer that knowledge into the student's development of digital and new media literacy.

I noticed from grading the essays and reading their scripts that most students had successfully drawn connections between continuing themes in the filmmaking unit and readings. It was important for students to be able to write out what they saw as connections in particular readings and short stories, and then create their own creative version in a written and visual format. I saw the biggest example of student success in one particular music video one group created using a popular song titled "What if" by pop artist Jason Derulo because it had similar themes of choosing between options and questioning choices made in life as also entrenched in two particular class readings. That was an obvious example of how students generated ideas from class and then found additional sources to help support their film.

Literacy is primarily something people do; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not just reside in people's heads as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analyzed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people (Barton and Hamilton, 1998 p. 3). As far as transferring this definition into filmmaking, Theodaskis (2001) explains it is all about turning the "intangible into the tangible" (2001, Theodaskis, 29) and taking an idea or vision and turning it into a script and eventually a film. Filmmaking encourages

the notion of backward design, suggesting that one works back from an idea by developing a process that transforms ideas into action.

Below is an excerpt from a student's experience during the filmmaking unit:

We choose the story Eveline by James Joyce, the film *The Little Match Girl* by Disney Pixar, and the poem *A Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost. Before the class, I didn't know what a script was or a proposal was. I found out that to take a organized job, the script is just essential. The proposal was really complicated. I was the one responsible of making it and I didn't know what I had to write or so. Thanks to the teachers examples I made our and it came up easy. I didn't know that I draw showing the scenes or a storyboard as it is called was necessary. I was really useful, because it help us to let us know when to do a close up shot, medium shot or long shot. Every single step of the film process is important, that's why we tried to follow then as much as we could. Nobody was an expert on this unit. Maybe that made the unit more interesting or maybe challenging. (Ariana, Post class essay, May 2013).

Ultimately, the unit strengthened both textual and digital literacy skills by implementing both simultaneously. As previously mentioned, the music video made by one particular group was a fantastic example of how group creativity and cooperation can create a powerfully artistic and visually complementary to the class reading. The students followed each workshop assignment diligently, took each step to generate and then compose their ideas from the page to the screen. Further supported with research by Hutchison (2012) "The video production/print literacy connection is apparent: the stages of video production rely heavily on traditional forms of written literacy, beginning with the brainstorming of ideas for a video, followed by pre-

production planning, the writing of a treatment (i.e., synopsis), script writing, and so on (p.4).

Also, it is important to prepare students to work effectively within their groups in preparation for the real world.

The way the filmmaking unit was structured closely mirrored the path of writing an essay. The students were able to draw upon that connection which created a new way of looking at filmmaking and its use in the English composition classroom. According to the table below (Figure 8) there was a slightly higher percentage of students who found making films more beneficial than writing essays, however the majority found the benefits of having both the written essay and filmmaking unit.

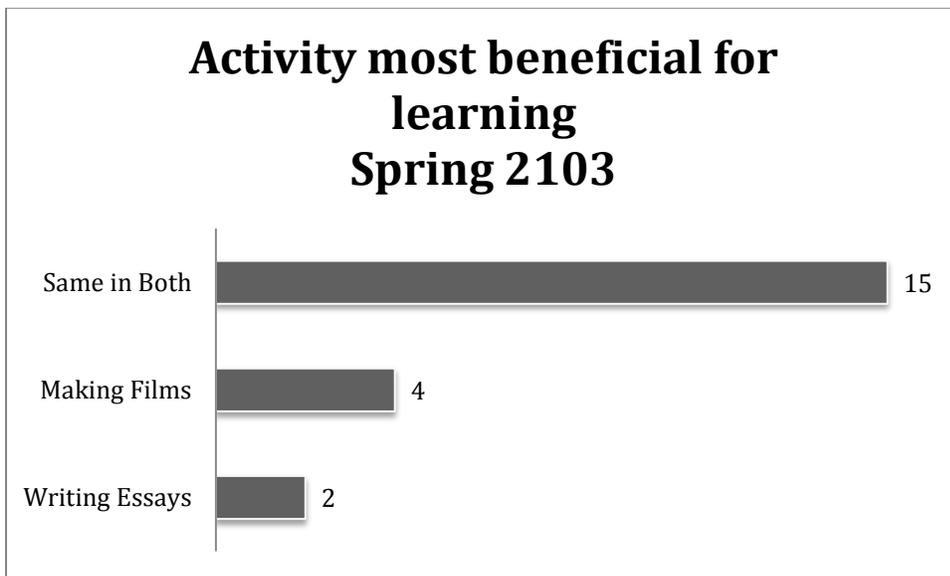


Fig. 8

One student explained his view of both writing essays in compared to filmmaking; “there are different and easier ways to transmit a message, rather than just writing it in an essay.

However, it might depend in the occasion. Personally, I am not a big fan of writing, but I would say, however, that I prefer it when it is something that interests me. (Ivan, May 2013) ” It is clear

based on Figure 8 that most students saw the importance of both writing and making films, however a small margin chose “making films” over “writing essays”. As one student expressed in a blog post on the INGL3104 website:

I think it is a lot harder because you have to put extra work in it (writing essays). When you are writing a movie it is easier because it comes more naturally, because you have a perception of what the viewer wants to see to make it more interesting for the viewer and not bored them with dialogue and words. A composition takes more time, because you have to think it more clearly and you are not writing only for yourself but also for the reader so he can be interested, and not get bored, you have to think what he likes and he is going to view your composition (Liana, May 2013).

In noticing the difference between student essay work and student film work, I noticed a stark difference mainly during the process of either writing or filming. For instance, prior to starting the filmmaking unit there was an overall sense of doubt and uncertainty with how to proceed. However, once students were given a loose rubric for how grading would be implemented, the sense of worry transitioned into perseverance and focus in regard their group project. I got the sense most students were excited about seeing their ideas go from print to screen.

With regard to written essays, students were almost all already familiar with the process and seemed apathetic when following guidelines of essay writing that they had already learned. Now, this is just a general observation based on field notes during class and my role as the teacher. I would use the observation to argue for the importance of *performance knowledge* and

point to the enthusiasm of students when engaged in putting together a filmed version of a story in INGL 3104 which called on them to exhibit performance knowledge.

As one student wrote in a free writing exercise, “filmmaking has given me the opportunity to show people that videos can do a lot in terms of transmitting messages (May 2013).” It was clear that students felt supported in using their creativity and performance knowledge to make the films showcased in the “Lit, Camera, Action” Film Festival. The festival at the end of the semester provided students with a day to showcase their messages they had worked hard in constructing. Students demonstrated an impressive mix of music videos, short films, and artistic avant-garde type short films.

Research Question #5: Should Digital Filmmaking Units be Used in Other Courses?

The last question addressed was whether students would like to see filmmaking in other courses. The answers to that question came from both qualitative and quantitative data as shown in Figure 9.

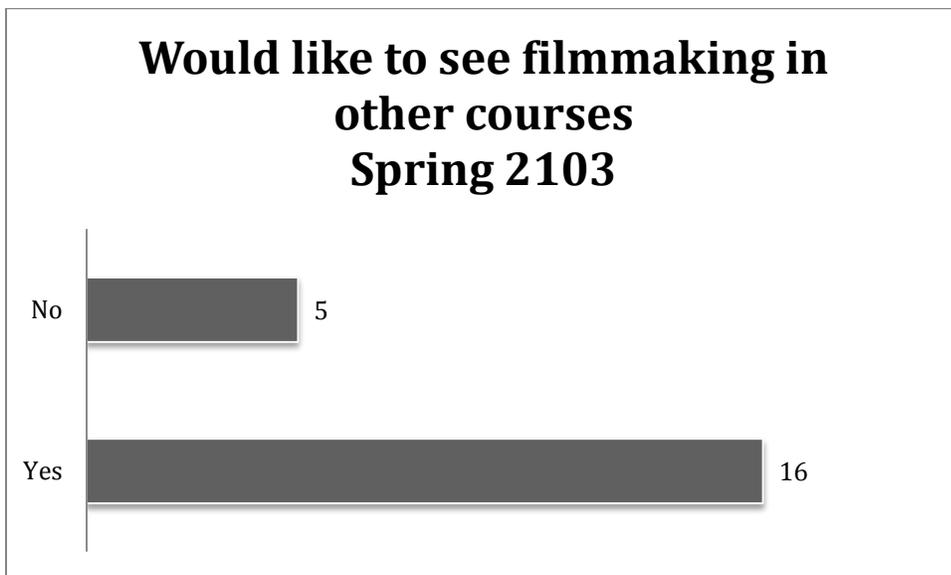


Fig. 9

In order to define a way for students to come up with this answer, I asked them a series of questions during free writing exercises and during in class discussions about their experiences. In questionnaire #2 (May 2013) a blank section was created to invite students to explore reasons behind choosing why they think filmmaking using a smartphone should also be included in other courses. Students wrote the following reasons:

“I like films and especially if I get to be in them (Giselle, May, 2013).”

“It’s a way to get to know your classmates (Dionysus, May, 2013).”

It changes the routine and makes the class more interesting (Athena, May, 2013).”

It is alot of work and it is really stressful, but it is great experience you should have to do at least one (Brendan, May, 2013).”

“It was a lot of work and not many people cooperated (Anna, May, 2013).”

“I love it. I believe it helps in leadership skills and teamwork (Mauricio, May, 2013).”

It seems to be clear that students enjoyed the filmmaking unit, however further research is needed to discuss the details of how and in what kinds of classes students would like to see a similar kinds of film units. The University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez campus is renowned for its engineering school and has strong science programs. It was shown in the literature review that it is becoming more common for people to search data and information using media sites such as YouTube. One way to implement this study in a science class could be to incorporate a filmmaking unit focused on creating video research essays or lab work. The final project could then be uploaded to YouTube, or other media sites, to provide assistance for other students around the world conducting similar research.

The filmmaking unit in INGL 3104 was heavily focused on literary texts. However other courses on campus, such as public speaking or humanities courses, could also benefit from adding filmmaking to their syllabi. Having students go through the process of writing, filming, and then editing provides the steps necessary for students of other courses to follow a process of both self discovery and learning through performance. The main principles of using constructivist guidelines, such as scaffolds, and then offering loose guidelines in regards to script writing allows students to be open in generating new media and content. This permits for performance knowledge to be the guiding concept in students integrating their own ideas into digital content.

INGL 3103

The second research class was an INGL 3103 class that focused primarily on non-fiction topics for essay writing. Instead of having the filmmaking unit at the end of the semester, this class began the class with a unit on rhetorical analysis essays. The first two weeks of class was focused on learning the basics of a rhetorical analysis and the types of appeals used by a rhetorician: ethos, pathos, and logos. Students watched commercials and public service announcements and held class discussions focusing on the critically analyzing the commercials based on the use of the three appeals. The principle underlying watching commercials and PSAs before doing their own is explained in the dissertation of Brian Bailey (2009), “within global economic arrangements and situates video production in larger social contexts, not the least of which is Hollywood and the cinema industries. It helps us to see that when students make films, they are not doing so in isolation and separate from larger social, cultural, historical, and economic relationships but rather they are participating in larger discourse communities” (p.55).

When students can see their real world connection to their assignment, they tend to place a higher priority on it and its relevance in their life.

Once the students had a firm understanding of the terms and basic outline of a rhetorical analysis, and how it is placed within a social awareness context, we eased into the filmmaking unit. One student wrote on a blog post prior to starting his film project on the INGL 3103 website:

For a long time now people have created different ways of expressing what they feel is right or wrong. Now a day you can watch different types of commercials. Basically they are using commercials or videos to transmit any type of message or even a social issue. In other times they would just put it on newspaper or something like that. But the truth is that newspapers are boring like hearing about it on the news. This new way of letting people know that there's a problem is more interesting, because of the creativity that takes to do a commercial or video (Gia, August 2013).

Since all of the materials were found on the class website (See APPX) students followed the same process as the INGL3104 class, instead this time I, the researcher, formed their groups. This was based on the challenging experience from the previous class and the difficulty in having students choose for themselves. One student still found challenges in being part of a filmmaking group, "at first I was not very motivated because my group was very disorganized and they didn't seem like people I would fit in with (in-class writing prompt, September 2013)." This particular student was facing the anxiety of being a new student in a new academic environment, since in INGL3103 they are all first year freshmen embarking on a very new experience. The

same student towards the end of the unit wrote, “then, after a while during the group reunions we started talking and getting along better (September 2013).” I noticed throughout the film that students started out quiet, and slowly became more energetic throughout the rest of the semester, which ended up changing the dynamic of the classroom. I would enter the classroom some days to find the entire classroom already in their groups, talking loudly, and enthusiastically to each other. Now, it is not clear if they were always communicating ideas about their project, but it was obvious they were getting along very well.

Most likely, the fact that students enjoyed their filmmaking groups in 3103 had to do with the students being first year freshman with few or no friends on campus. The group project they had to work within forced them to socialize and initiate working and social relationships with their peers in class. The timid students in the beginning of the semester turned into outspoken and friendlier students upon the completion of the film project.



Fig. 10

Research Question #1: How did Students Respond to their Production Role within Their Groups?

In figure 10 above, the data clearly illustrates student satisfaction with their chosen filmmaking roles in INGL 3103. One major topic garnering plenty of discussion in the results subsection from INGL 3104 was related to group dynamic. This subsection will now compare the aspects, which stood out as differences in group behavior in both INGL 3104 and INGL 3103. The figure 9 above seems to provide further support for the use of the Choose Your Production Position Worksheet implemented in the first research study. This worksheet served as one of the “embedded scaffolds” aligning with the use of constructivist principles in this study. One student wrote in a free writing exercise about her experience, “I made new friends and I enriched my knowledge and ability in being a leader” (Jonathan, September 2013). This student chose as her role to be her group’s director, and succeeded at creating a dynamic team and final project entitled, “Romantic tourism in Puerto Rico.”

Prior to choosing their roles students were asked to write a blog post describing their reasons behind choosing their PSA or commercial topic. This student wrote:

My purpose would be to encourage new tourists to vacation on the island and a raise in our economy. I would persuade my audience by the use of pictures and videos of Puerto Rico’s most beautiful places, and by showing some recorded anecdotes from native people and other tourists talking about their experience on the island. This will help Puerto Rico’s economy because in the past 8 years, Puerto Rico’s tourism industry has been declining. (Blog post entry, September 2013).

Having students create social messages with their smartphones aligned with the new possibilities for defining what it means to be literate (Gee, 2000, Jewitt and Kress, 2003) and what is required to fully participate in society (Gee et al., 1996) and make changes in society. This is what Gunther Kress (233) referred to as a shift in ontology and epistemology from “page to screen” (p.22) in that texts are now primarily produced, distributed, and consumed on TV and computer screens as opposed to printed text on paper pages.

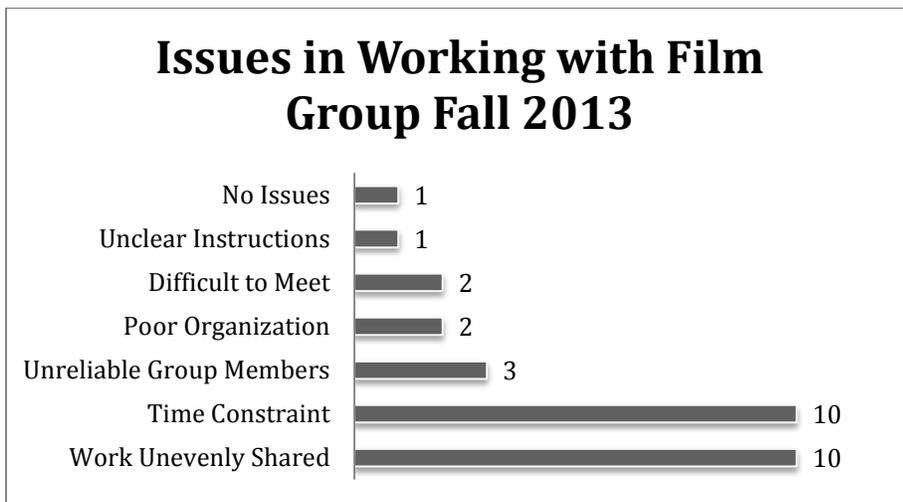


Fig. 11

Research Question #2: What Were Some of the Issues Students Faced Within Their Production Groups?

Now, a major issue within the study was the student’s reactions about working within a group. As shown in the Figure 11 above, a questionnaire response garnered specific reasons behind the most challenging issues with group work. In one response to questionnaire #2 (October 2013) a student wrote, “I think that is always takes too much time and working with groups is always a problem.” Another wrote, “I didn’t have the time” but enjoyed her group and

their ideas. The main reason behind the student evaluations was to alleviate the concerns with their members. It was also to ensure that students would be graded fairly based on the amount of work they believed they put in, as well as what amount of effort their group members believed they exerted.

However, experiences varied. A student that was part of the group discussed above stated, “I learned how to work in groups and how different ideas one can have and what an amazing job can be done when many ideas are made into one (Victor, In-class writing prompt, September 2013).” In one focus group interview, a student suggested having more activities with classmates prior to choosing groups. She mentioned, “I think that we should have more time to get to know our group members before starting our filmmaking unit so we can be aware our dynamics in working together (Sophia, Interview, October 2013).”

In this particular study, I noticed that issues regarding group work are inevitable; no matter how happy students are with their group members. One student wrote in questionnaire #2 in response to whether she was pleased with the final project, “I think we would have done better if we had more time to meet” (Theo, September 2013). I propose this issue to be a catalyst for future research. How much class time should an instructor dedicate to group work, and how much time should students allot themselves for meeting outside classroom? This poses a potential limitation within the research since I had not included this question among my own research questions.

One possible reason for students in INGL 3103 complaining about lack of time is due to the level of the course and the hours dedicated to film work. In INGL 3104 students were expected to achieve a higher level of understanding of both literary texts and of how to use smartphones to create their short films. Yet, these students did not openly express in either the

data or focus group any issues concerning time. I would suggest that this was because students in INGL3104 were second semester freshman who had already developed better time management skills, and they were better prepared for the filmmaking unit than the first semester freshman in INGL 3103.

Research Question #3: How did Students Perceive the Filmmaking Unit as a Whole?

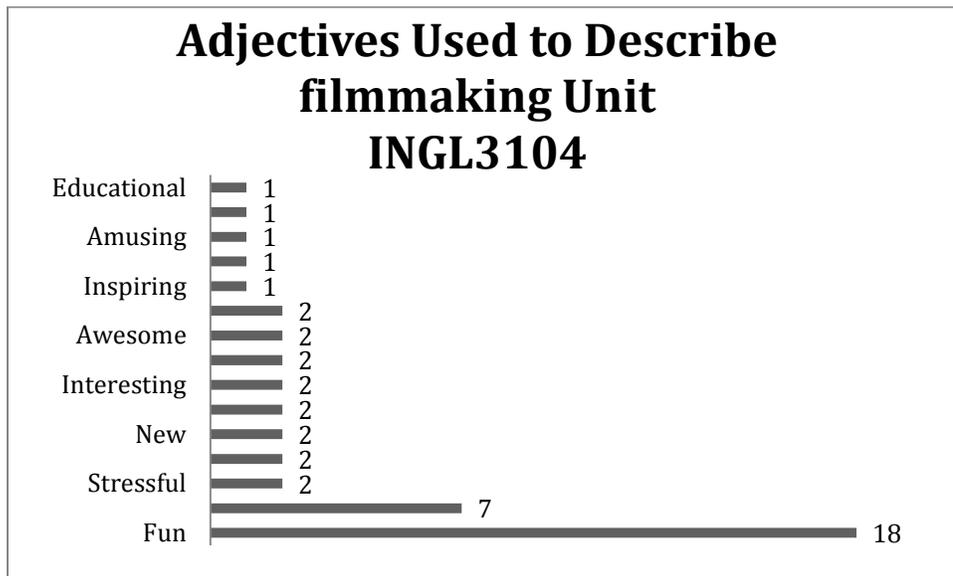


Fig. 12

In contrast to INGL 3104 and the student response to the course, I suggest that students in INGL 3103 had such favorable responses because their assignment involved real world issues. More students found this course more “fun” and less “stressful” than students in INGL3104. The students were able to directly connect with their topics, and feel as if they were making a substantive change by producing their commercials. Conversely, INGL 3104 students had more comments that expressed their stress and challenges in coming up with a short film based on the literary texts they read in class. I would conclude that this was based on the level of difficulty in the creativity needed for the assignment. When students make a direct connection with their

subject, they tend to have a more favorable experience regarding their academic work. It was also interesting and important to note that “educational” was the adjective used the least. The students were too busy having “fun” to realize the coursework was indeed a new “educational” challenge added to their curriculum.

Furthermore, as discussed in the Literature Review and Methodology, both studies in INGL3104 and INGL3103 involved the use of scaffolding techniques. With the rapid development of technology, scaffolding tools are specially designed to help students learn in a complex learning environment. Students were taken through the steps in the filmmaking unit with various scaffolding opportunities, including guest speakers, teacher-led workshops, and website resources. However, further research is needed to decipher in what specific ways the students were benefited. This was not addressed in questionnaire #2 and will be added for future research. It was clear that students were first motivated to engage in purposeful meaning making when they created a storyboard based on their own script under the supervision of both their group “director” and teacher. The observations made through in-class notes during my role as a teacher, consisted of several instance where students showed interest in how the filmmaking process seemed to flow smoother after this step. In addition, graphic organizers, clear expectations, grading rubrics, well-defined tasks, guiding questions, and worthy, appropriate sources of information provided students with a springboard for meaningful inquiry as recommended by previous researchers (Mackenzie). One particular scaffolding technique that is highly suggested based on the experience of this study, is the use of the class website. The website, which was created using a wordpress.com blog site, included every resource discussed and used in class, as well as important web links and videos for students reference during the entire filmmaking unit. This made access to all worksheets and examples easily to upload and

refer to, whether or not students were able to attend class.

New Literacy Studies show us that literacy practices are used in everyday situations for specific purposes and to solve problems (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 2001). The literature on video production is, however, just beginning to look at how students are using video production to solve problems and make meaning in their lives. Students in INGL 3103 were asked to tackle social issues in Puerto Rico with their PSA and commercial film projects.

This emerged from Jenkins's NML framework providing youth with the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge, ethical framework, and self-confidence needed to be full participants in the cultural changes, which are taking place in response to the influx of new media technologies, and to explore the transformations and possibilities afforded by these technologies to reshape education (2012).

Research Question #4: Did Students Make Connections Between their Coursework and the Filmmaking Unit?

As shown in the qualitative data from INGL 3103, students expressed their motivation and enthusiasm in the filmmaking unit and their knowledge of the impact they can make transmitting messages in visual form. One student in INGL 3103 attested that “every time we make a video, we make a mark in history. These types of videos we created deliver a whole new message to the world (Laura, in-class writing prompt, September 2013).” In order to make an impact in their world, students must first learn how to effectively deliver their messages to their world.

Now, going back to questionnaire answers, it was interesting to notice the extreme difference between INGL3104 and 3103 when responding to the question that is the focus of Figure 11. There was a substantial increase in students who stated that they learned more by filmmaking than by writing essays in INGL 3103. However, the majority of students in both classes chose “same in both” for writing and filmmaking. Perhaps the reason so few students said they learned more from writing essays is that they already been taught a method of writing essays prior to this class. The filmmaking unit introduced them to a new way of looking at literacy as well as helped them shape a new style of learning in a collaborative unit. Here we can see concrete examples of how the process of filmmaking helped students to learn a new skill using an increasingly common digital device and thereby increase performance knowledge.

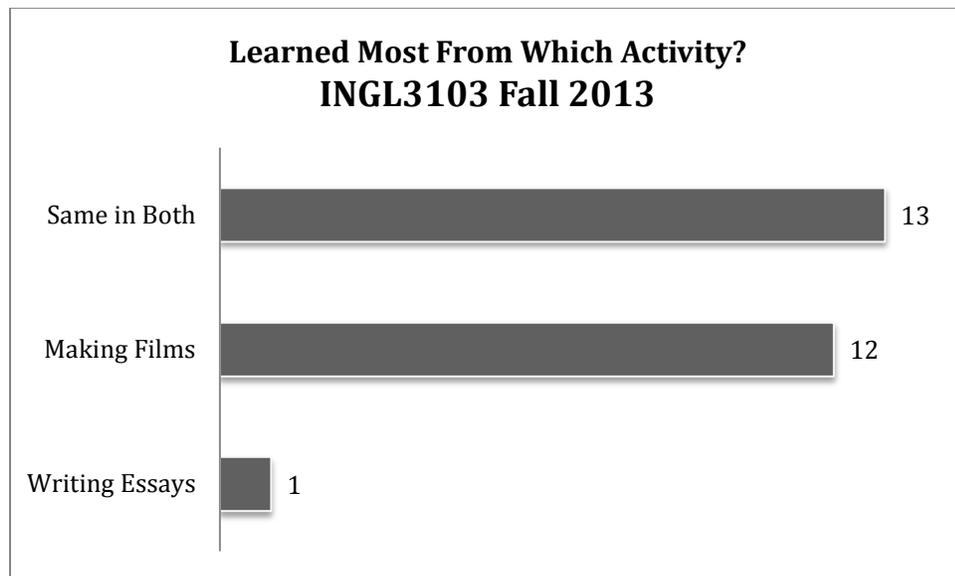


Fig. 13

These results suggest that students still see the benefit of working with the two literacies, both digital technology and traditional writing. However, the possibility also exists that these results indicate that students value the opportunity for discussing social issues using film. “I was able to see the risks of going to the beach where there is a lot of garbage (Ciara, In-class writing prompt, September 2013).” Another student saw PSAs as a powerful medium to counteract what

the world thinks of his generation, “experts say that is the generation’s this moral change started with the “Baby boomers” and are cataloging my generation as the “I don’t care generation”. They say is because of all the liberal people and people not having moral values, etc.” (Stephan, Blog post, September 2013). Students who felt this sentiment seemed to want to strive harder to disprove this idea. Perhaps, the use of filmmaking for a social purpose motivated these students to want to make films addressing certain issues they face in their everyday lives. As one said, “I’m not one to focus on the negative but maybe some more awareness on the subject would do some good” (Maria, In-class writing prompt, September 2013).

Research Question #5: Should Digital Filmmaking Units be Integrated into Other Courses?

Now another implication worth looking into is the desire for students to see digital filmmaking in their other courses. Based on Figure 13 below, only two students in INGL 3103 did not want to see a similar assignment in one of their other classes.

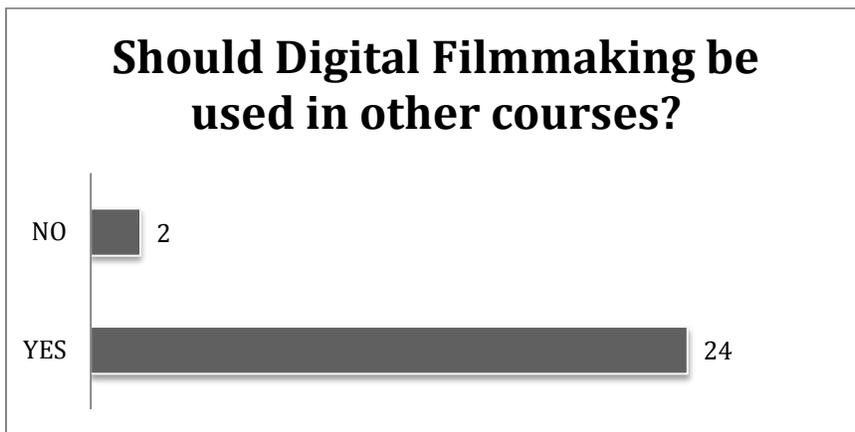


Fig. 14

A staggeringly high percentage of students said they wanted to see filmmaking in other courses. I would suggest this means that students see the benefit of using a relevant technology to create meaning in classes outside of English class. The way they communicate is shifting and the way they are learning in other classes is also undergoing that rapid change.

One reason could be that students today have easy access to camera phones, digital cameras, and webcams to record video for online distribution. This means that very little, if any, prior training in camera usage is needed by students to make their films in this day and age since it is possible to shoot in 1080p HD using a smartphone. We now have access to what used to cost thousands of dollars for professional quality equipment in our pockets. However, it is interesting to note the student response to the same question in INGL 3104.

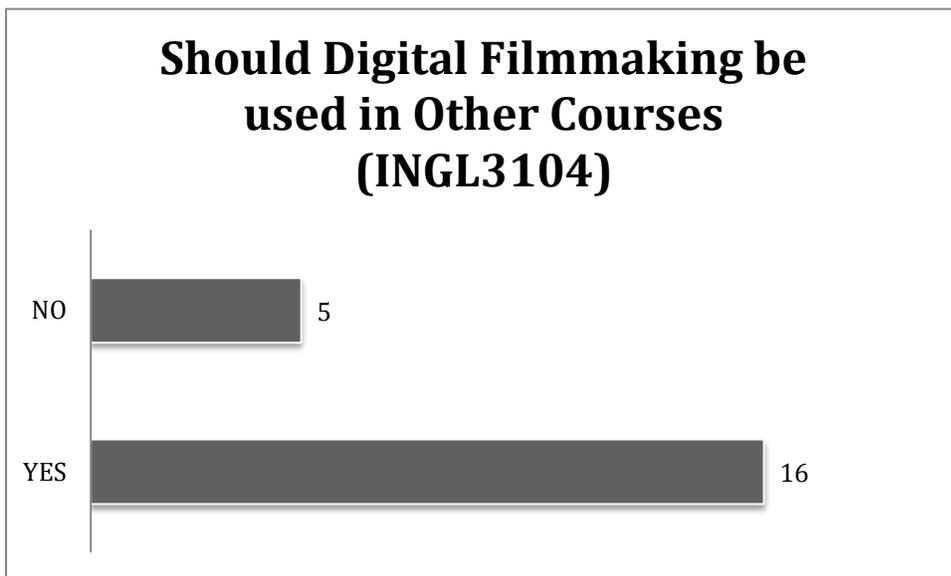


Fig. 15

More students in INGL 3104 did not believe that filmmaking should be used in other courses, and this can be attributed to their overall experience. More students found the course more stressful and the content of the work more challenging than INGL 3103. Regardless, more students chose to answer “yes” to the question than “no”.

Scholars are also divided in their opinions of the value of using technology like smartphones in the classroom. Hicks and Turner (2013, pg. 55), for example, provide an example of how the use of this technology is not beneficial when they write, “using smartphones and/or

social networks to send messages from the teacher to students or using wikis to fill in a preformatted page will not engage students in substantive conversation or collaborative content development.” In response to Hicks and Turner, I would suggest that this study demonstrates that students are in fact able to engage in substantive conversation and collaboratively create content using their own personal smartphone and, in most cases, their own computer editing software. As one student commented on the blog about her experience:

Writing for class (composition) has a rubric that you have to follow and rules you have to convey and a message they have to send. In my experience I was really scared to do a film, I've never done one so it is a first for me! I'm so nervous to write a script, to film, to convey a message. I'm worried people won't like it! But I'm also excited to do a film, to produce a film and to emerge into the world of film, movies and commercials (Michael, September 2013).

This student came from a place of fear about using smartphone technology but acquired a new positive outlook about the use of an everyday handheld technological tool. There are also critics who claim that by writing for video in the classroom, “adolescents develop an understanding of audience, purpose, and voice in their digital writing communities” (Turner, Abrams, Donovan, and Katic, 2012). This supports the idea that filmmaking does indeed break through the *digital divide* in providing more ways of looking at audience and who can receive the messages we create. The way we communicate is no longer limited to what we write, and now includes the Internet. This reason additionally supports the idea of including a film unit, such as the one this study proposed, in more courses in the future.

Conclusion

English composition class is where students come to practice and develop their written and verbal communication skills. It is therefore the right place to implement a digital literary unit using technology. However, as I argued in the literature review, and as Wartella, O’Keefe, and Scantlin (2000) believe, “closing the digital divide will depend less on technology and more on providing the skills and content that is most beneficial.” I would now like to conclude with some final thoughts on recommendations based on the study and possible further questions.

Recommendations for Future Research

To continue from the previous paragraph, the first research recommendation involves studying how learning contexts and needs change dramatically over the course of a year, five years, or a lifetime. In order to understand how learners are adapting technology, as technology too evolves, to their individual learning projects, we will require a more longitudinal approach. “Even the most dedicated learner or heavy user of technology will develop, refine and alter the quantity and quality of engagement as their life circumstances alter” (Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006, p. 40).

Continuing the Smartphone Study

Technology is constantly changing and it would serve both educators and students to teach only the basic use of digital literacy, in order avoid the frustrations of keeping up with all the latest gadgets and technology tools. This does not mean we need to use only one type of technology, for instance smartphones. However, conducting ongoing research on a particular type of technology can serve to develop a process, or template for creating content with this technology. The month long filmmaking unit provided an outline for a course, which focused on creating a visual composition. The visual composition was created using a smartphone and

because that aspect remained static, I was able to draw certain conclusions, none of which posed problems in dealing with the use of smartphones. The data in the results pointed towards issues with group work, timing, and content concerns, however the technology used in filming the project, remained virtually problem free. Additionally, it would also be useful to know how learners without smartphones now supplement their learning outside of the classroom. If the argument is that we are living in a society of increasing smartphone ownership, the experience of those without the latest technology and understanding how to help them, is critical.

Cultural and Social Context

This study was carried out at a bi-lingual institution situated in a large town in Puerto Rico. All students were from Puerto Rico, since neither class contained any exchange students. It would be beneficial to see the filmmaking unit implemented in other countries with bilingual students similar to the demographic in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico who have similar technological familiarity and access to smartphones.

It would also be useful for researchers to compare the results from this study with the results of similar kinds of studies conducted in other kinds of social and geographical contexts. Doing so could help other researchers come to broader conclusions about how to integrate approaches to digital literacy in educational contexts with more precision, taking a variety of factors into consideration.

Types of Films: Commercials vs. Short Films

I can confirm that it was more enjoyable for students to create commercials and PSAs, based on the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. Social issues and the real world implications of the issues discussed in class seemed to motivate and inspire students more than the short films created in INGL3104. Now, further research that investigates the use of Literature

in other English as a Second Language environments would help ground issues related to the topics students make films about.

When students are asked to interpret metaphors and understand issues, ideas and relationships in literary texts, which are often not explained in a straightforward manner, this typically causes difficulties for students. This is even more true if the story is written in a language, which is not the student's first language, or set in a time and or place he/she is not very familiar with. Perhaps a future study can use a similar approach to teaching this film unit where students are taught the course in their native language.

The kind of content that is most helpful in teaching this unit is still uncertain since the results of the study are based on only two classes. More research is needed to come to conclusions about this topic.

Beyond English Composition Class

Based on the study, I can conclude that students did benefit from the smartphone filmmaking unit. It would seem that one year of research was indeed sufficient to demonstrate how smartphone usage and new media literacies are expanding at an exponential pace in academia. However, further research is still needed to answer the question of whether English teachers should be the sole proprietors of this new literacy, or whether filmmaking should also be integrated into other kinds of classes.

Questions still remain, as to whether other courses, such as science and business courses would also benefit from implementing the use of smartphone filmmaking and content creation. Lastly, the limitations of the analysis are explained.

Limitations

There were several obvious limitations of the study. One was that only one researcher coded and analyzed the data. Having multiple researchers analyze and discuss their analyses of the data would have allowed for “a certain degree of consensual interpretation” (Pachler, Cook, & Bradley, 2009, p. 81). Collaborating with other researchers and consulting with them about their analysis of the data would allow for a greater degree of confidence in the analysis and presentation of the results.

The timeframe of this study was also a major limitation of the study, since the courses studied were taught within the span of only one year. My teaching assistantship was limited to the time that I was a student at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, which was from 2012-2013. A new study would involve another researcher, or perhaps will be restructured and conducted during my doctoral studies and would compile data gathered from additional courses.

In conclusion, the data in this chapter provides data about many details of what happens when filmmaking is taught in an English composition class, and provides a basis for further research on the use of smartphones to create films, and the use of filmmaking as a pedagogical tool in higher education.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the process of writing up the results of this study, I came across numerous articles on the subject matter of digital literacy and the future of higher education. A *Time Magazine* special report from October 7, 2013 asked what the graduating classes of 2025 should know. Author Jon Meacham claimed that “the prevailing contemporary vision, even in the liberal arts, emphasizes action: active thought, active expression, active preparation for lifelong learning” (p.42). This study advocates teaching students performance knowledge by implementing a rapidly emerging technology using an academic method. I strongly believe that college graduates who can both think creatively and understand how to disseminate their messages into the world most effectively are the ones who stand the greatest chance of doing well.

Educators, schools and policymakers today have two options: (1) to expand language and literacy practices in the classroom to include digital forms of literacy like filmmaking, using current and commonly used technology, (2) to ignore these changes and remain committed to a fixed and traditional form of literacy that consists solely of the printed text. As this study and the many others which are coming out everyday demonstrate, it is imperative that we keep up with rapidly evolving forms of technology, including smartphones and other commonly used personal meaning making devices, and continue to study how we can integrate these new technologies into our classes so that we can prepare our students for the world they will face when they leave college.

In this study, I made a contribution to the emerging field of New Media Literacy. I used constructivist principles to design a film unit intended to engage students and encourage them to take their learning into their own hands, and I saw a correlation between this approach, student interest in their coursework, and student success. The concept of performance knowledge, which

informed the design of the film unit implemented in this study, is the idea that how students implement what they learn is just as important as what they are taught. One of the main objectives of this study was to demonstrate how the smartphone could be implemented as a device for creating films and visual compositions in classrooms, and thus help students take control of technology and learn to use it for their own purposes. Many students did not even know that they could create films with their smartphones before participating in the film units integrated into the courses studied. The clear evidence that they were able to learn new skills that enabled them to think critically and present their ideas in an engaging way demonstrates that integrating this kind of pedagogy into freshman English courses opens doors that enable learning and expand the kinds of literacies and competencies our students possess.

Furthermore, the opportunity to create their films using smartphones generated genuine enthusiasm for learning on the part of students in both research studies. One reason for this was that students already had access to the tools needed to promote the films and another was their familiarity with the technology prior to the study. Thus, it is clear that smartphones are important tools that can be used to help students develop the kinds of literacies they need in the twenty-first century. As Spina-Caza and Booth (2011) write, “one of the most compelling reasons for using video in the composition or basic writing classroom is its accessibility” (p.1). Video literacy is rapidly becoming an important everyday facet in modern life for students and citizens in most developed countries. This is not to say that print literacy is going away anytime soon, and that film will replace writing, but the way we decode everyday information is undergoing a clear transformation.

The purpose of my research was to create more awareness about the need to implement digital literacy in the classroom, but also to provide a concrete template for the use of filmmaking using smartphones. I believe it is important to start requiring the practice of using digital technology, specifically smartphones in the classroom as a pedagogical meaning-making tool. By simply browsing through current news sources, it is clear that technology is shifting rapidly, and more and more people are gaining instant access to the Internet. Even more startling is that professionals are not the only ones creating the content; anyone with a smartphone can create and immediately upload content. The idea behind this study is, however, to help students learn to use this technology effectively and critically. With that said, perhaps we will start to see digital filmmaking more regularly in English composition classrooms in the future. It serves as one way of keeping students up to date with the expanding 21st century definitions of literacy, and prepares them to be well equipped to communicate and serve as responsible citizens in this ever-changing world.

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APPENDIX A:

PERSONAL CONSENT FORM:

**“Using Smartphones to Create Films in The English Composition Classroom:
Digital Film-Making as a Pedagogical Tool”**

**University of Puerto Rico- Mayaguez
Masters Thesis**

I understand that the researcher and M.A.E.E. candidate (Nihal Dhillon) is conducting a study on smartphone filmmaking in the classroom. For the purpose of the study, I hereby authorize the researcher listed above and University of Puerto Rico to record the use data I provide in the study. The data that is collected will be based primarily on my personal experiences before, during, and after the study/course and will be recorded both orally and through written questionnaires. I understand that to protect my privacy, my real name and likeness will not be published in the study.

Name of Student

Signature/Date

APPENDIX B:

Questionnaire #1 (Prior to Filmmaking Section)

1. Male Female
2. What is your department? _____
3. What town or city are you from? _____
4. What kind of high school did you go to? Public Private
5. Do you like reading fiction? Yes No
6. Do you like writing fiction? Yes No
7. Do you like writing essays? Yes No
8. Do you like watching films? Yes No
9. If so, what kinds of films (horror, romantic, action, sci-fi) _____
10. Name some of your favorite films. _____
11. Do you have experience (check all that apply): acting directing a film using editing software creating original music drawing a storyboard
12. Have you ever written a script for a play or a movie? Yes No
13. Do you like to draw or create any kind of visual art? Yes No
14. Have you ever used any editing software? Yes No
15. Do you play any musical instruments? Yes No
16. If you could choose to do any job related to filmmaking, which would you choose? acting directing producing (organizing details) scriptwriting storyboard drawing music editing (Check all the boxes that apply.)
17. Do you own a smartphone? Yes No
18. If so, what kind? _____

19. Have you ever used your phone to film? Yes No

APPENDIX C:

Questionnaire #2 (After Filmmaking Section)

1. How would you describe the experience in filmmaking using your own adjectives (engaging, challenging, fun, stressful, etc.)? _____
2. Did you enjoy the process of filmmaking? Yes No
3. Were you able to make connections with filmmaking and the readings from the earlier part of the semester? Yes No
4. Did making a film enhance your English 3104 experience? Yes No
5. What was your role in your filmmaking group? Writing directing Storyboard design filming editing music
6. Did you enjoy your designated role? Yes No
7. If you answered no, which role would you have preferred? _____
8. Were you pleased with the finished project? Yes No Please explain your answer:

9. Would you like to see filmmaking included in your other courses? Yes No Please explain your answer:

10. What activity did you think you learned more from this semester: writing essays making films I learned the same in both
11. Would you recommend the filmmaking portion of this class to be used in other sections of this course? Yes No
12. Did you find that filmmaking was harder than writing an essay? Yes No
13. Did making the film take longer than expected? If so, what are ways that could have made the process smoother? Yes _____ No
14. What were some issues you ran into working with your group: Time constraints Group members didn't fairly participate instructions weren't clear Other
Explain _____

APPENDIX C:

Sample Focus Group Questions

1. Did you have any experience working on a film prior to this class?
2. What hobbies do you enjoy outside of school?
3. Did you enjoy working with your group?
4. What was your favorite part of the filmmaking section?
5. Were you satisfied with the finished film?
6. What aspect did you like best about your film?
7. What would you do differently in your film?
8. Will you make more films in the future?
9. How would you describe this section of class to your peers?
10. Did you find that making a film was similar to writing an essay?
 - A. What skills do you think are useful in making a film?
 - B. Do you think any of the skills you used to make your film could help you write a good essay?
 - C. Do you think any of the skills used to write an essay could help you make a good film?
 - D. Can you give specific examples?
11. What was the most challenging part of the filmmaking section?
12. What aspect of the filmmaking section would you like to see changed if you were to take this course again?
13. Did you learn any new skills that you think are useful?
14. Do you have any other comments about the filmmaking section of the course?

APPENDIX D:

Film Festival Promo



APPENDIX E:

Choose Your Production Position

Write 1 next to your first choice. **Write 2** next to your second choice. In the spaces provided, discuss what you like about the job(s) you selected and what abilities or experience you have that would help you do them well. (Examples of abilities or experience you might discuss: acted in a high school play, made a film before, good at leading groups, tech savvy with smartphones, enjoy figuring out software programs, play a musical instrument, etc.)

____ Scriptwriter:

____ Storyboard Artist:

____ Director:

____ Director of Photography/Cameraperson (using Smartphone and Apps):

____ Actor (also Casting Director for other actors):

____ Editor:

____ Music/Sound:

APPENDIX F:

INGL3103 & INGL3104 class websites

<http://ingl3104spring.wordpress.com>



<http://ingl3103blog.wordpress.com>



APPENDIX G:

“Rhetorical Analysis” Film Festival INGL 3103 October 8th 2013

0.7MM Films

Title of Film: _____

Overall score (1 lowest, 10 highest) **Circle one number**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How well did you see the chosen **appeal** in film (Pathos, Logos, Ethos?)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Goldfish Productions

Title of Film: _____

Overall score (1 lowest, 10 highest) **Circle one number**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How well did you see the chosen **appeal** in film (Pathos, Logos, Ethos?)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Blink Studios

Title of Film: _____

Overall score (1 lowest, 10 highest) **Circle one number**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How well did you see the chosen **appeal** in film (Pathos, Logos, Ethos?)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The RUM's Films

Title of Film: _____

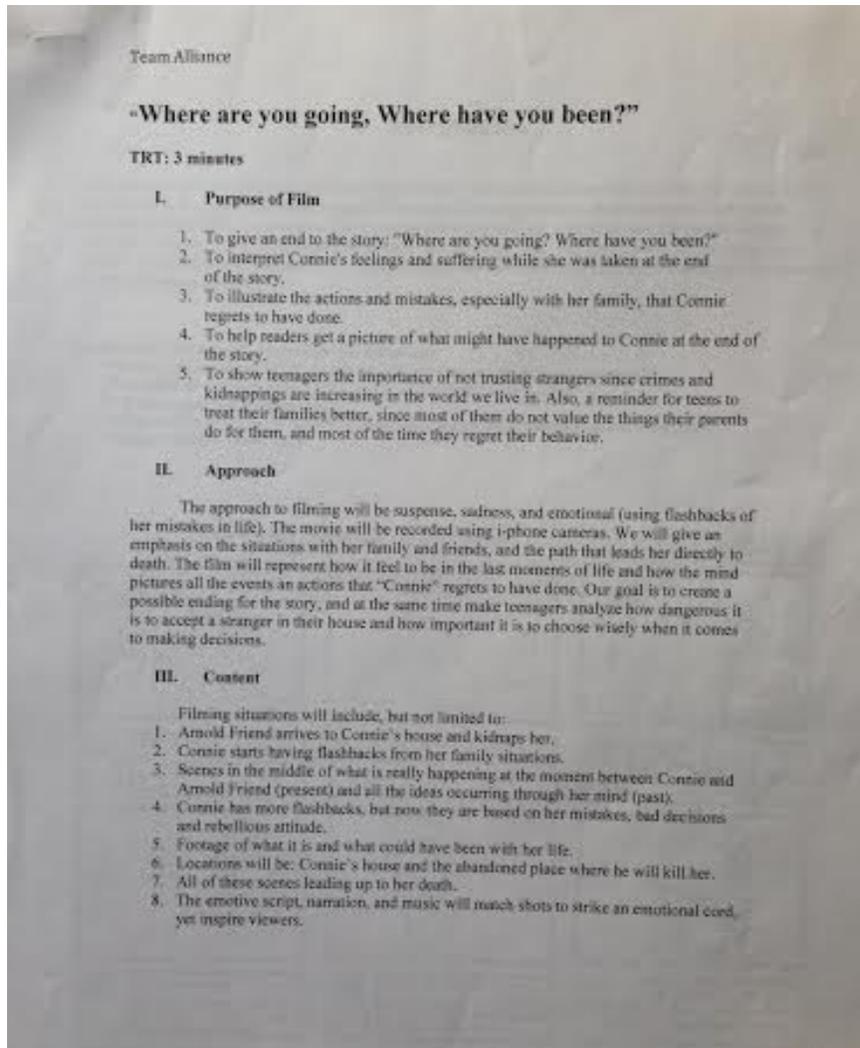
Overall score (1 lowest, 10 highest) **Circle one number**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How well did you see the chosen **appeal** in film (Pathos, Logos, Ethos?)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APPENDIX H:

Examples of Student work in INGL 3104:

Proposal:



Script:

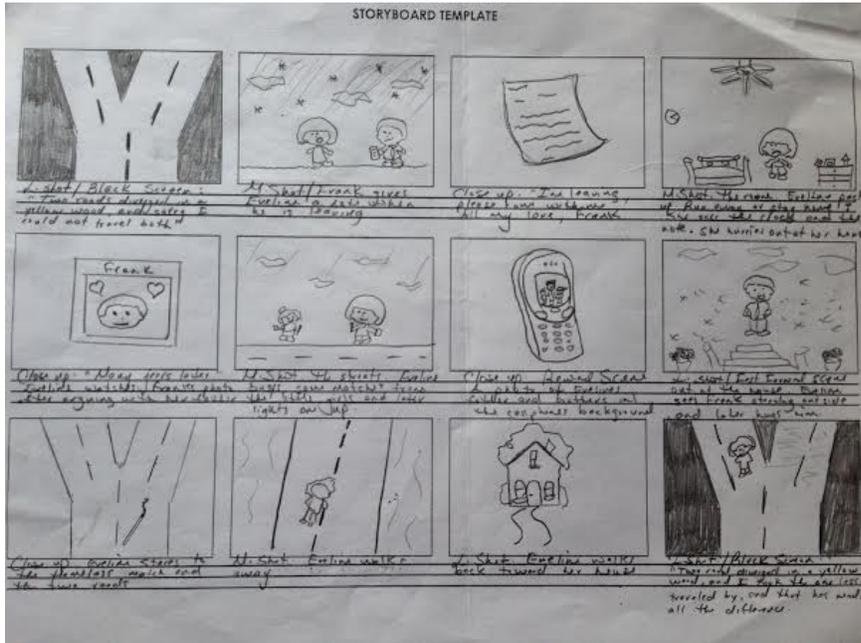
Forest Films 1	
Video Title: What If	
VIDEO	AUDIO
	LYRICS / NARRATION / MUSIC / FX
1. At the beginning of the video, the screen will be all black, and the text will appear: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both" -Robert Frost	"What if?" <i>What if I'm the one for you? And you're the one for me?</i> What if?" From 0:00 - 0:12 No FX No narration
2. This scene takes place when Eveline introduces Frank to her father. Her father is seen getting angry and fighting with them, telling her never to see him again. Frank runs out, and Eveline rushes after him. Frank gives Eveline a note, tells her to read it, and walks away. The camera zooms in on the note that says: My dearest Eveline, I'm leaving to Buenos Ayres in a week. Please come with me and be my wife. I will be waiting for you at the docks on Tuesday night at 4:00 pm. All my love, Frank.	"If you are the one <i>I have an offering here to give I have with a ring around the like a house with a fireplace</i> This is the first I've ever seen, Jane <i>But there's a chance we are not meant I know that this might sound crazy "Can't you don't leave my name"</i> From 0:14:34 No FX No narration
3. Eveline is in her room pacing back and forth putting her hands in her face. She is thinking if she should stay in her house with her father, or run away with her boyfriend Frank who is a sailor. She starts taking clothes and placing them in a suitcase.	"This we can't, we can't tell the future, we <i>but that's just the beauty of the world we live in</i> " From 0:23:43 No FX No narration

Forest Films:

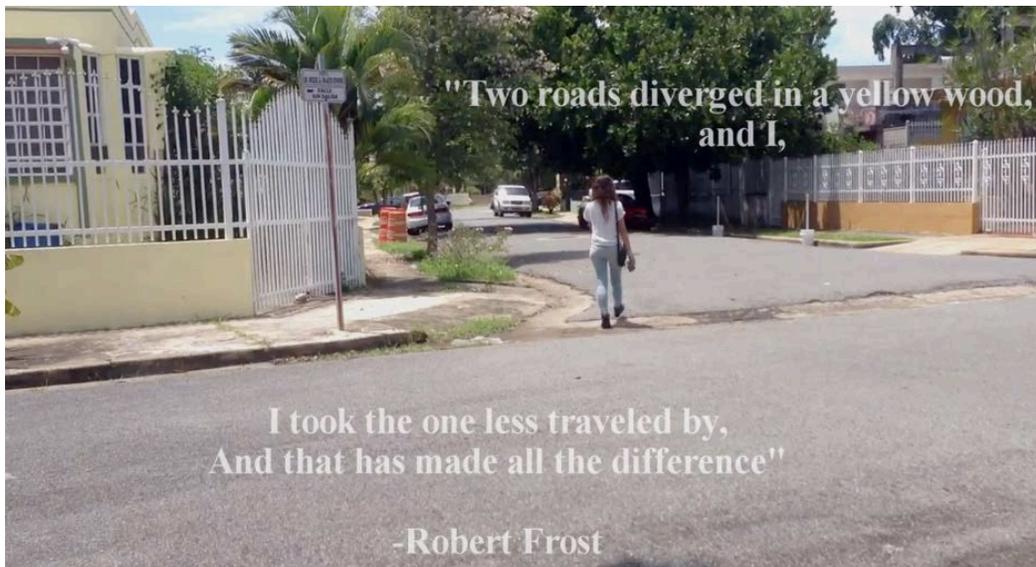
What Santiago
se Suarez
ctor Alvarez
se Remus
for Trace

Paulina De La Cruz
Yarelis Pérez

Storyboard:



Short Film:



Screenshot of student short film (on vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/65608432>)

APPENDIX I:

Example of Student Work in INGL 3103:

Proposal:

Be Eco-Friendly

I. Purpose:

1. Make people understand how pollution can affect the planet.
2. The consequences that can happen if people don't take action fast.
3. Show ways to be eco-friendly
4. Demonstrate the benefits of being eco-friendly

II. Approach:

The approach to filming will be funny using close shots and long shots to show the place and the expressions of the characters in the film. The director of photography will be using a Galaxy S III to record the whole film. The director will show how garbage is affecting the whole ecosystem. The goal is to get the attention of the audience through comedy with real life issues. There may be footage of other videos with some quotes referring to the importance of cleaning our ecosystem and deliver our message clearly.

III. Content:

Filming situations will include:

1. People throwing garbage on the streets and other places.
2. The use of an actor creating a celebrity resemblance to clean up the ecosystem so people will be convinced to do it.
3. The use of videos from other sources to show the consequences of not protecting the ecosystem.
4. Comedy Script to make the audience laugh, being entertaining and get attracted to it.

Script:

Beaches- Lets keep the clean

E-Eduardo
O-Oscar
C-Crystal
B-Brandon

E-(Tropical music in the background) What a beautiful sunny day.
O-(Tropical music in the background) Yeah, the beach is so beautiful.
E-(Tropical music in the background) I wish I could be here every day.
O-(Tropical music in the background) Whoa! That would be super rad.

O-(In shock)(Record crash sound) Oh damn! I got something on my foot. Take a look how dose it look?

E-(Talking and falling to the floor) Oh no man. I can't handle blood, it makes me sick.

C-(In a moking tone) Give me your hand Eduardiita.

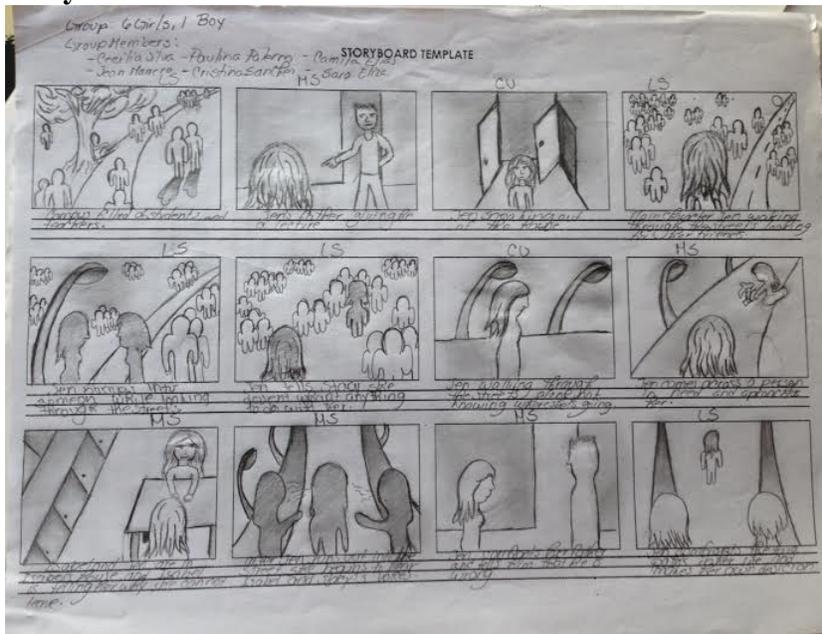
E- Oh my God! look at all the trash (Surprised)

O-(Enthusiastic) Lets clean it!

(RAP MUSIC, Eduardo and Oscar singing) Everybody cleaning and dancing.
Eduardo and Oscar dancing

B-(Randomly) Beaches are closing because of the presence of high levels of bacteria. Cigarette butts, throwing away food, containers, food rapers, plastic bottels are some of the trash that contaminate the beach. It also affects the enviromen and the species that

Storyboard:



PSA/Commercial:



Screenshot of student film (on vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/76421629>)

APPENDIX J:

Comite Para la Proteccion de Los Seres Humanos en la Investigacion Approval



Comité para la Protección de los Seres Humanos en la Investigación
CPSHI/IRB 00002053

Universidad de Puerto Rico – Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez
Decanato de Asuntos Académicos
Call Box 9000
Mayagüez, PR 00681-9000



13 de marzo de 2013

Sa. Nihal Dhillon
P. O. Box 9265
Mayagüez, PR 00681

Estimado Sa. Dhillon:

Como presidente del Comité para la Protección de los Seres Humanos en la Investigación (CPSHI) he considerado la Solicitud de Revisión y los cuestionarios sometidos para el proyecto titulado *Using Smartphones to Create Films in the English Composition Classroom: Digital Film Media-Making as Pedagogical Tool*, y he determinado que, por tratarse de un estudio que se llevará a cabo exclusivamente en un contexto educativo que involucra solamente prácticas educativas normales, su proyecto está exento, bajo la cláusula 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1), de todos los requisitos de la parte 46, incluyendo el del consentimiento informado.

Cualquier cambio al protocolo o a la metodología deberá ser revisado y aprobado por el CPSHI antes de su implantación. El CPSHI deberá ser informado de inmediato de cualquier efecto adverso o problema inesperado que surgiera con relación al riesgo de los seres humanos, de cualquier queja sobre esta investigación y de cualquier violación a la confidencialidad de los participantes.

Recuerde que deberá someter al CPSHI un informe anual con un resumen de los resultados de su proyecto, incluyendo la identificación de efectos adversos que, en el proceso de desarrollo de este proyecto, hayan padecido o estuviesen en ese momento padeciendo los sujetos humanos participantes de su investigación.

Agradecemos su compromiso con los más altos estándares de protección de los seres humanos y le deseamos éxito en su proyecto. Queda de usted,

Atentamente,

Rosa F. Martínez Cruzado, Ph.D.
Presidente
CPSHI/IRB
UPR - RUM

Teléfono: (787) 832 - 4040 x 3196, 3807, 3808 – Fax: (787) 831-2085 – Página Web: www.uprm.edu/cpschi
Email: cpshi@uprm.edu

APPENDIX H:

Filmmaking & Creating Visual Compositions

The goal of this unit: to learn how to interpret, research, and create a film composition (using a smartphone) based on elements from topics, vocabulary, and composition structures discussed in class.

Production Groups can make either a Commercial or Public Service Announcement (1-3 minutes in length).

Assignment	Percentage of Overall Class Grade
Script/Storyboard	5%
Research (MLA)	5%
Completed Film	8%
Film Festival Participation	2%
Total: 20%	

Script/Storyboard

Create storyboard and script based on requirements discussed in class through workshops, and examples.

Research (MLA)

Create a research page in MLA style documenting the sources used in creating the content of the script. Need at least 2-3 relevant sources. Design page like an annotated bibliography by writing a short description about each source and how it is relevant to script.

Completed Film

Must be fully edited and prepared by the Film festival date, **October 8th**. Final grade will also be partly based on peer evaluation from production team members.

Participation

Will receive 2% of grade just for attending the date of the Film festival.