Voices from the Field

Connecting Assessment and Instruction to Help Students Become More Critical Producers of Multimedia

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Abstract

Classroom teachers have been encouraged to incorporate more multimedia production in the classroom as a means of helping students develop critical media literacy skills. However, they have not always been well trained in how to evaluate the work students create; many teachers struggle to know which criteria to use in assessing student work. This article outlines criteria from the fields of visual and film art that can inform both assessment and instruction. These criteria include color, angles, lighting, sequencing, and transitions. Approaches to teaching these criteria are also discussed.

Keywords: multimedia production, critical media literacy, assessment, k-12

As my students threaded through the doorway at the end of class, I sat behind my desk, satisfied. They had just turned in a multimedia project, using images and sound to compose a multimedia video presentation analyzing a character in the novel we had just finished. My students were engaged and eager during the process of creating this project, and they shared animatedly while we watched a few showcase projects together and talked about what they had done. While I bask in the glow of what I think to be another engaging learning activity, a thought nags at the back of my mind: Now I have to grade these. As the warm glow of success starts to fade, I realize I have my work cut out for me. While I feel competent assessing a traditional piece of writing, by moving my students into composing with different media, I have also moved out of my own assessment comfort zone.

I have felt this anxiety many times as I have assigned a variety of multimedia projects during my years of teaching high school English and university courses. My younger high school students created multimedia narratives made up of images and recorded narration in which they reflected on a significant personal experience; I assigned older students a "multimedia essay" in which they used images and music to analyze a character from a novel we had studied (see Ostenson & Gleason-Sutton, 2011). And as a university professor, I have asked students in a writing pedagogy course to create digital book trailers that incorporate still and moving images as well as voiceovers and recorded dialogue.

I assign multimedia projects to my students because I feel convinced of the need to bring students into a new century, to help them develop new literacy skills and to refine their critical thinking about new media as encouraged by any number of professional organizations across the country (NCTE 2007; NAMLE 2007; ISTE 2007). The resources available in my schools—computer labs with high speed Internet connections and media and film editing software installed—provided the perfect environment in which students could engage with technology and media in ways that should help them develop these new literacies.

But the trickiest part of any of these assignments for me has often been the assessment. When viewing the finished products, I sensed that some were better than others but could not put my finger on precisely what made one project better than another. What I often did when evaluating these digital projects was to give a grade that probably did more to reward students for their effort rather than to evaluate the quality of what they had done. And yet my purpose in assigning this kind of work was about more than keeping students busy or engaged; it was about teaching them the critical media literacy skills they need in today's world. As I reflected on my practice, I wondered how I could be

sure I was teaching something meaningful if I did not know how to assess it properly.

Contextualizing My Concerns

I know I am not alone in these concerns. In speaking with colleagues, I hear many of them share similar concerns, and many in the field raise and addressed similar questions about issues of assessment in this context. The research I drew on to help resolve my concerns covers a wide range—from work done in assessment in general to work specifically in the field of media literacy education to, ultimately, work that has identified key principles in film composition.

I recognize first that the underlying thread in all these assessments I design is that I want them to be authentic—to reflect students' learning in a real situation. Wiggins (1993) asserts that authentic evaluation is not about right or wrong answers, but about appropriate or inappropriate choices; choices that are justified or not within a given context. The digital writing I assign is supposed to require students to make decisions and evaluate choices based on knowledge they had gained, as explained by Benjamin (2000) in her exploration of authentic performance tasks.

It is also clear that instruction and assessment need to be tightly integrated, as suggested by Herrington, Hodgson, and Moran (2009); they argue that our learning goals should inform the path that instruction takes. My reflection on the task of grading multimedia work brought me to question whether I was really assessing (and therefore really teaching) skills that mattered when I asked students to produce work across multiple media. Goodman (1996) suggests that the real power of technology comes when students not only create but also use the technology for "critical inquiry, self-reflection, and creative expression" (2). One of the ways to build self-reflection, according to DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hicks (2010), is through ongoing discussions of rhetorical choices. Neal (2011) argues that this focus on the why behind how materials (images, audio, and text) are combined in digital writing is what matters most in assessing digital writing. I would extend that to suggest that these rhetorical choices are a significant part of what we ought to be teaching when we teach digital writing. It is relatively straightforward to teach functional skills (i.e., how to import and order images or how to insert transitions between images) but that really is no different from teaching students to use the Tab key and claiming that we are helping them to become qualitatively better writers.

What are these rhetorical choices? What are the options we should be helping students explore in digital composition? Herrington, Hodgson, and Moran (2009) argue that there is carryover between traditional media (like written essays or narratives) and new media, especially in terms of rhetorical criteria that address how a text is shaped in response to audience and purpose. When teaching digital writing, we need to have similar discussions with students about how audience and purpose influence the content of our message. And if we teach this, we need to assess this. DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hicks (2010) suggest two questions that we can use in assessing students' digital writing in this way: "Does the piece achieve its intended purpose?" and "Does it resonate with an audience?" (106). Much of what I already know about how to evaluate quality writing can inform how I assess the quality of digital pieces my students create; these questions can shape valid assessment for both written and digital pieces.

But a third question posed by these authors: "Does it meet various accepted standards of performance for products of its type?" gets to the heart of my issue (DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks 2010, 106). In traditional writing we work with words and phrases and clauses, combining them into sentences and paragraphs that convey meaning. Text can play a role in multimedia compositions, but image and audio are likely to play larger roles. What we need, as Ohler (2008) suggests (borrowing the concept from Marshall McLuhan) is a "grammar" for these elements of visuals and sounds to help us evaluate how well students have used the options available to them and how well they have met the accepted standards for the type of piece they have composed.

Finally, the *Core Principles of Media Literacy Education* (NAMLE 2007) crystalizes these ideas and put them into a form helpful for assessment. The key questions put forth in these principles provide an important framework for helping teachers set goals for learning and assessment that target the important critical thinking skills needed to be media literate. The most relevant material for my work here is in the questions under the "Messages & Meanings" category of these principles, specifically in the "Techniques" section (5):

- What techniques are used?
- Why were those techniques used?
- How do they communicate the message?

These questions suggest that by focusing our efforts (both to assess and to teach) on the techniques used to effectively communicate meaning, we can help students become more media literate and more critical in their use of media. They help inform the purpose of my assessment which (consistent with research in authentic assessment) is to evaluate the choices that my students make from the options available to them in the media through which they work.

In this article, I outline the criteria that I find helpful in both assessing and teaching writing in digital genres. I draw these criteria from cinematic techniques and visual design principles. I focus on evaluating images based on the criteria of emphasis, lighting, camera angle, and the use of color; evaluating the coherence of a piece by examining the sequencing of images and the use of transitions; and assessing audio through the criteria of its quality and appropriateness. For convenience, I group these different criteria into three major categories of images, organization, and audio. In discussing these criteria, I share how I try to teach them—mostly through analysis of examples and class discussion—and how they inform my assessment. I also provide a rubric, included in the appendix, that describes different levels of performance for each of these elements. My descriptions are deliberately general as I have designed them for a generic assignment, but I hope they shed further light on how we can assess these criteria.

Evaluating the Use of Images

In the multimedia projects I assign students, still images play a significant role. After my students have an idea of the message they want to convey in their multimedia compositions, but before they start to select specific images, we discuss some important criteria for choosing effective images. Other instructors may choose to have students compose their own images, given the ubiquity of camera-equipped cell phones. The principles I outline in this section provide valuable guidance whether the images are selected from pre-existing collections or shot by students themselves. To assess and teach critical and purposeful use of images, I focus on emphasis, lighting, angle, and color.

Emphasis

Every image should have a focal point or subject and a viewer ought to be able to identify that focus; the emphasis should be consistent with the overall message or theme of the multimedia composition. A student who wants, for example, to convey the idea of isolation or loneliness might choose an image of a solitary tree or flower against a larger background devoid of other objects. Or a student telling the story of a life-changing move to a big city might use an image where a moving van or stacks of moving boxes figure prominently.

I stress with my students that they need to identify the emphasis in each image they choose and to make sure that this emphasis is connected to their message in a clear and meaningful way. We practice identifying the emphasis in sample images and explore how these might be used to convey a specific message or support a theme. As they work on choosing images for their own projects, I encourage students to consider each image and its emphasis carefully in order to choose images that are unified in support of the overall message.

In assessing student work, I ask myself questions about the emphasis in each image the students have chosen: "What is the focus of this image?" "How does it connect to the overall message of the piece?" "Can I see the connection or is it confusing to me?" If it is a struggle for me to see the emphasis in an image or to make the connection between the image and the overall message, that signals a problem in the student's composition.

Lighting

Lighting can communicate powerful things in an image. In introducing this important element, I remind my students of how they may have told scary stories at sleepovers or campouts and heightened the mood of the story by holding a flashlight beneath their chins. A face lit from below can look ominous and menacing; partial lighting can suggest something hidden or unclear or even dangerous. Full lighting can convey warmth or trust or objectivity. On the other hand, full lighting can also expose flaws in an object or person and thus convey a very different tone. Lighting can also draw the eye's attention to specific objects or places in an image, thus working to help create emphasis in the image.

In my teaching, I present a number of sample images to students and have them comment on what they observe in terms of lighting. As we discuss these, I emphasize with students that lighting choices

need to be made within the context of the message being communicated. As they make their own choices about which images to include, I remind them to attend to issues of lighting in each image, to be sure it supports and enhances the message of the composition. We look, for instance, at a brightly lit image of a forest and talk about the tone this image evokes and contrast that with a darkly lit image of a forest. Or we look at images of human faces with different lighting and talk about the possibilities within these scenes.

When evaluating lighting, I consider the images and ask myself whether the lighting matches the author's intended message. A multimedia essay about a character's questionable motives or moral confusion could benefit from poorly lit images. Images that feature clear, full lighting for this essay may not make as much sense as they cannot convey the message and tone as effectively. When I encounter difficulty in seeing purpose in the lighting choices in my students' work, this understanding of lighting helps me make evaluative comments on what is not working and suggestions for improvement.

Angle

The angle of the camera lens in relation to the subject image is another critical element of an image. A photograph of an object from a low angle, where the camera seems to be looking up at the object, can create a sense of dominance or power for the subject. A higher angle for the camera can reduce the size and importance of the object or provide a larger context in which to consider the object. These angles help shape the audience's perceptions of images and can convey subtle meanings about tone or mood. Just as we might talk about the point of view of a piece of traditional writing and how a first-person narrator can change the way we read a story, we should consider how we, as multimedia authors, can shape our reader's reactions by choosing images with effective camera angles.

In the classroom, I introduce students to the concept of angles by analyzing images that showcase a variety of angles. I place special emphasis in these discussions on how the angles used influence their reaction to images. As they work on their own projects, I've been impressed at the way students use these understandings to make effective choices. For example, one student I worked with, wanting to show the way that justice and fairness ruled the life of a character, chose a compelling image of a set of

scales from a very low angle, causing them to loom menacingly in the image. Another student, wanting to give a sense of the vastness of the city to which she moved, chose a very high angle (almost overhead) of a large, bustling metropolis where the cars and pedestrians were dots of color in the image. An understanding of camera angles allows me to help shape my students' critical thinking as they compose and revise their work.

Color

Entire university courses are taught about color theory and issues like tone and value. I do not pretend to be an expert on these issues with my students, but we do talk about basic ideas such as the way we responded to certain colors (or the lack of color) in sample images. I show students images where warm reds and oranges dominate and asked them to share how those images make them feel as compared to images featuring cooler blues and greens. We talk about how the warm colors tend to draw the eye and suggest emphasis in an image while cooler colors tend to fade into the background. We also discuss the archetypal significance of some colors: green as a symbol of fertility or new life, red as a symbol of blood or anger. Finally, these discussions about color also allow us to talk about how black and white images can convey very different, unique emotions, especially in conjunction with our discussion about lighting.

When I evaluate my students' work, I look carefully at their choices regarding color. Some students make conscious choices to include only black-and-white images in their work, in an effort to convey a specific emotion with their message. Others choose images where certain colors dominate, both as a way to communicate a message with the colors and as a way to create unity in the piece. When I perceive that image choices are haphazard or without purpose, I can often identify a student's lack of purposeful choices with regards to color as a potential cause of the problem.

Evaluating Organizational Elements

Selecting which images to use in a multimedia composition is only the first step in the process. Once those images are chosen, the author needs to consider how they will be combined. These choices involve deciding how to sequence the images as well as how to transition between images. To aid students in making these choices, I often ask them to storyboard

their multimedia compositions before we actually sit and compose using software. In conjunction with lessons on the criteria I outline in this section, this planning helps students make effective choices and maximize the often-limited time we have with the software.

Sequencing Images

Just as we care about the ordering of ideas in a written essay, we care about the ordering of images in a multimedia presentation. A student writer in a digital medium must make choices about the sequencing of images: Which order will most effectively support my meaning? Is a traditional order (e.g., chronological or least-important-to-most-important) appropriate for my message? What order makes sense given the content of my message? These choices in digital composition influence the reader and help express the writer's message in the most effective way.

In producing a digital personal narrative in which they describe and analyze a significant experience in their lives, my students often choose a chronological organization for their story's narration, which in turn necessitates a similar order for their images. The choices made in sequencing images are dictated by their written piece. A discussion of sequencing before they sit at the computers allows us to explore other options for ordering the events and images in the story: "What if we start at the end of the story, showing our reader/viewer the result of our experience and then move back to the beginning to unfold how the story led to that conclusion?" Or "What if we start from the middle?" I encourage students to play with the sequencing of the narration and the corresponding images, trying different patterns to see if there is a better fit. In one student's narrative, she told the story of the summer her family relocated and she left behind friends and familiar settings. Her digital narrative began with an image of a bedroom devoid of furnishings and decorations, and her voice describing how she stood in the doorway to her new bedroom, feeling miserable as she thought about all that she had left behind. The narrative recounted the experiences leading up to the move and the emotional turmoil she felt, and ended by sharing how she had adjusted to a new place and was becoming happier and more settled. Her beginning was powerful, as it set a frame for the rest of the story and piqued readers'/viewers' curiosity about how she arrived at that bedroom doorway.

In other genres, choices of sequencing can be more complex. But the general principle remains the same for me and my students: Look carefully at the ideas we are trying to express in the piece and decide which order will be most effective for the ideas and accompanying images. Students who create digital character analyses, for example, have to think about which ideas are most important and how their organization reflects that importance (often by building to them and placing them at the end of their piece). Fortunately, multimedia composing today provides wonderful opportunities for playing with different sequences, given the relative ease in most video creation software of rearranging images on a timeline. By being specific with my students about how I will assess the sequencing of images and encouraging them to explore different possibilities as part of the composing process, I hope to help them find the pattern that works best for their composition rather than just settling for the first one that comes to mind.

Using Effective Transitions

Anyone who has experienced a PowerPoint presentation created by someone new to that program can attest to the power (good or bad) that transitions can have. With such a dizzying array of choices, novices to PowerPoint often choose a different, eye-jarring transition between each slide. These choices have less to do with purposeful transi-tions that enhance a message and more with showing off the possibilities of the medium and, as a result, the transitions tend to detract from the presenter's real message.

Such a temptation to showcase the potential of the medium is also present with the multimedia compositions I have asked students to create. The iMovie application, one that I often use with my own students, features over a dozen different transitions, from traditional dissolves to eye-popping wipes (Other applications feature a similarly wide array of options). Teaching students how to make wise choices with transitions is one of the most critical elements of helping them compose well in digital media.

From viewing dozens of films, students are exposed to many different uses of transitions, but they still may not be aware of how to use them effectively. As Ohler (2008) notes, effective transitions are seamless and should not usually draw attention to themselves unless there's a specific artistic purpose to

do so (188). The easiest way I have found to teach and assess the use of transitions is to look more carefully at movies with my students. For instance, I might share a video clip that features a series of dissolves (where one scene gradually fades out at the same time as a new scene is fading in) and talk about the way such a transition can show the connectedness of the scenes. Other clips can show us how a fade to black between scenes might signal an end to the scene or real separation between the two scenes. I find that students were often able to articulate the effect of a specific transition once they are made aware of it and asked to consider it more carefully.

We also discuss the potential danger of having so many different transitions available to us—many of my students can recount horrible PowerPoint presentations they have seen where the variety and selection of transitions interfered with the meaning of the presentation. I suggest that using just one or two kinds of transitions can help create unity in a multimedia piece. While there could be times that an unusual transition (such as a wipe or "peephole" transition) would make sense, such choices need to be made carefully in accordance with the message of the composition. I encourage students to experiment with transitions, but to constantly assess the effect of each and measure that against what they hope will reach their audience.

In evaluating students' projects, I pay close attention to the transitions they use. I look for purposeful choices that fit in line with accepted conventions for transitions from film and other visual arts. Just as I sometimes see unsophisticated use of transitions in my students' traditional writing ("First ... second ... third"), students sometimes use transitions without really thinking about the meaning they could communicate. But I now have a more concrete starting point, something specific we can focus on in revision, for my students whose compositions suffer because of this. The ease with which transitions can be changed and previewed in many software products encourages my students to revise and experiment until they find transitions that align with their message.

Evaluating the Use of Audio

Most of the multimedia composing I assign requires some kind of audio component. Accompanying audio can often strengthen visual presentations, but that audio must be used purposefully and must not detract from the message of the visual elements. The area of audio is something my students have some familiarity with given their experience with film, music, and even YouTube videos. But they have not often thought about its implications (I would argue because most of what they observe uses audio so effectively as to make it unnoticeable). Helping students be more conscious of the possibilities in audio use allows them to be more purposeful in the decisions they make in their compositions.

Quality of Audio

Effective use of audio in digital compositions requires that it not detract from the entire product. Audio that is scratchy, low-volume, or in other ways of low quality is likely to have a negative effect on a digital composition. There may be times, of course, when scratchy or imperfect audio is desirable, but that should be clear from the nature of the composition. In the case of voice-over narration, where my students often record their own voices telling a story or describing facts, we need to do the best we can within the limits of the equipment we have. While we have never used a professional sound-recording studio, students can find a quiet place at home or in the computer lab and use a headset mic with a sound shield (a foam covering that blocks out external noise) to try to maximize the quality of the recording. More advanced students might be able to use "scrubbing" features of certain software programs that can help eliminate extraneous background noise. In addition, the volume of the audio should be at a comfortable level: Loud enough to be clearly understood and heard without being so loud as to detract from the rest of the composition.

In voice-over narration, the quality of the narration is also important. Strong enunciation and clear pronunciation are important, as is appropriate inflection. These qualities are rarely noticed unless they detract from the overall presentation. There are plenty of examples of voice-over narration that I use with students to highlight the way a strong narrator can enhance the visual elements of a composition (David Attenborough's narration of the *Life* and *Human Planet* documentary series can serve as strong examples). Analyzing these examples allows a chance to talk about the importance of enunciation, pronunciation, and inflection as well as a chance to make plans for making the best audio recordings we can given our limited equipment.

When students use pre-existing audio (usually music tracks) for other digital compositions, the considerations are a bit different. Since these tracks were often ripped from CDs or downloaded from a digital music store, the quality is typically high. Aside from analyzing the volume of a clip or whether or not it was effectively brought into the composition (i.e., through effective fading in and out), most of our discussion of the use of this kind of audio would center on the issue of appropriateness.

Appropriateness of Audio

Good audio in a multimedia composition will also be appropriate to the message and enhance the delivery of that message. In voice-over narration, the appropriateness of audio might address issues of how much narration there is and whether or not the amount of narration overwhelms or effectively supports the visual elements. Narration, for example, should not typically describe an accompanying image or retell what the viewer can see with her own eyes. We might also consider the use of silence or lack of narration in appropriate moments as a way to draw reader/viewer attention to the visual images. Again, plenty of models of this exist in documentary films to show students the options available to them and to help in understanding how to evaluate the appropriateness of audio narration. Ken Burns' work in his *Civil War* and *World War II* series often makes use of evocative silences that encourage viewers to focus their attention on the details of the images displayed on screen.

When students use pre-existing music tracks or even remixed audio tracks from other sources (i.e., speeches, movies), appropriateness centers around evaluating whether the selected tracks enhance or detract from the intended message of the composition. A somber piece of music featuring dark, minor chords provides a specific tone to a piece that would be much different from a bright, fast-paced piece of music. Audio tracks with lyrics or clips of dialogue should also feature language that is appropriate to the meaning of the composition. In one instance, a student I worked with chose the Kelly Clarkson song, "Addicted," to accompany her visual images to analyze the motives of the character Chillingworth from Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Her argument that he had lost his humanity in pursuit of revenge on his former wife's lover was enhanced by the chorus of the song: "It's like you're a leech / Sucking the life from me" (Ostenson and

Gleason-Sutton 2011). This is a perfect case of the choice of audio matching and supporting the intended message.

In exploring these elements of audio with my students, I face a couple of challenges. When students record their own narration, they tend to speak quickly and to rush through their script; the way they use audio constantly throughout the composition often shows a fear of silence or a lack of understanding of the power of silence in digital composition. This necessitates students listening to their recorded narration and checking to make sure the pacing is appropriate. When students use pre-existing audio tracks, they occasionally choose a song because it is very popular at the time or is one of their favorites and not because it matches well with the message of their composition. I ask students to view their composition multiple times (and have others view it, too) to make sure the music matches the intended tone and message. In both cases, by showing examples and discussing the need to be purposeful in these choices (since they will be evaluated based on them), I am able to help students make more effective decisions about the use of audio in their compositions.

Reflection as Part of Assessment

In his book discussing digital storytelling, Jason Ohler (2008) suggests that students engage in reflection after producing a digital story. Research shows that conscious reflection contributes difference between more- and less-able writers (Yancey 1998). The words "reflection" and "critical thinking" are often seen together, and various state educational standards emphasize the importance of reflective thinking to students' learning (Rodgers 2002). Goodman (1996) and DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hicks (2010) argue this self-reflection is an integral part of using media critically. In my own experience in the classroom, I have seen the power of reflection in helping students articulate and recognize what they have learned.

Given this, I usually ask my students to write reflections after they finish their multimedia compositions. In these reflections, I ask students to talk about what they have learned about how to make effective choices in multimedia production and how they think their composition reflects what they have learned. I have observed in reading these reflections that students usually make strong connections between things like lighting, camera angles, transitions, and

other elements we discuss in class and their own multimedia work. These reflections, coupled with the growth in quality that I've seen in my students' work, show that I am on the right track in focusing on these criteria in both instruction and assessment.

These reflections are also helpful to me as I assess students' work. Given our sometimes-limited resources, it is unfair of me to expect slick, polished multimedia pieces that look ready for broadcast on primetime TV. Sometimes students' presentations fall just short of the mark. But I can more often than not attribute that to limited resources or time since these reflections help me see just how much my students are learning about why they make some of the choices that digital composition requires. Other times when a student's choice does not make sense to me simply from viewing their composition, the reflection might shed some light on their intentions. Although I began asking students to write reflections because I hoped it would help their learning, I found them to be a good resource for me as well during evaluation.

Looking Forward

I began looking for help because I was not sure how to assess my students' multimedia work. Thanks to what I discovered in that research, I feel now more than ever that I am not only more competent in assessment but that I am teaching my students to use media in more purposeful, critical ways and that, as a result, they are developing more authentic media literacy skills. With the understandings gained from analyzing these elements, my students can go beyond learning how to work the software to understanding how to use digital tools and media to achieve a powerful rhetorical effect. As DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hicks (2010) remind us, just because students have access to this software "does not ensure that reflection and learning will take place. Student writers still need thoughtful and well-prepared teachers and mentors" (2). This is our job now as teachers: To help students develop their critical thinking skills needed to make the most of new technologies and media. To do so, we will likely need to stretch ourselves and reach beyond our training in traditional forms of communication to other disciplines to help us understand the form this critical thinking must take.

Appendix A
Assessment Rubric for Images

	5 - 4	3 - 2	1
Emphasis	• all images have a clear emphasis • emphasis of every image is clearly related to theme or message of composition, a clear thread unites the images chosen • emphasis in some or many images shows particularly deep connections or inspired choices	• most images have a clear, identifiable emphasis • a lot of images are connected, although there are some that do not seem to fit as well as others • may be some randomness in the images and their emphasis	• emphasis is difficult to determine in most images or the images seem unconnected, as if choices were made at random • images do not create a coherent message
Lighting	• all images show a conscious effort to use lighting in meaningful ways • amount of lighting or source of lighting enhance the message and emphasis of most images • the lighting in many images effectively creates a mood or tone for the piece or parts of the piece	• some images show lighting used to good effect, to underscore the emphasis of an image or to create an appropriate mood • some images show less effective or conflicting uses of lighting • lighting may some times conflict with intended mood or meaning of the piece	• lighting in images seems haphazard, perhaps even contradictory • no effective mood or tone is conveyed by the lighting used or such a result is rare
Angle	• camera angles are used effectively to convey appropriate meaning • author has an understanding of how angles communicate or effect what an image conveys • some images may show particularly creative or powerful use of angles	• some of the angles represented show purposeful use, but others may be haphazard or illogical • author fails to use appropriate angles when possible	• images show little evidence of purposeful selection • use of angles in the piece may even contradict conventional use (i.e., a high-angle shot used where a low-angle shot would make more sense)
Color	• colors used in images convey a unified tone or mood • colors are used in conventional ways or fitting archetypal uses • colors are used consistently, enhancing the theme of the piece	• color use is good, with some effort made to unify colors or tap into archetypal meanings of colors • use may not be as consistent or creative as it could be	• colors are used haphazardly, with little or no rhyme or reason • black-and-white images may be mixed with color for reasons of expediency rather than meaning

Appendix B
Assessment Rubric for Organization

	5 - 4	3 - 2	1
Sequencing	• the ordering of images makes sense and powerfully conveys the message • the author may have shown creativity in the way he/she organized images • the sequence is memorable for its effectiveness and/or its uniqueness	• there is a conscious effort to sort or organize images, but the sequence may not always make sense • there are better ways of organizing the images than the author has chosen • the sequencing might work at some points, but does not always support the overall message	• little effort seems to have been taken in organizing the images • it is difficult to make any sense of the organization that is been used • the organization may actually be counterproductive in communicating the message of the piece
Transitions	• transitions are seamless and there are no noticeable irregularities in their use • transitions enhance the message by communicating in parallel with the images and audio	• some transitions seem out of place, distract from the message of the piece • unusual transitions are used without a clear purpose • some transitions may have been chosen because they're flashy or "cool"	• transitions, because they're unusual or inconsistent or inappropriate, draw attention away from the main message of the piece • the choices of transitions make little if any sense

Appendix C
Assessment Rubric for Audio

	5 - 4	3 - 2	1
Quality	• audio represents the best quality possible given the resource available • recorded speech features excellent enunciation and clarity • pacing of recorded speech enhances the piece, adding to the message	• quality of recorded speech is uneven—volume may fade in and out, problems with enunciation make the speech difficult to understand • quality of background music may be uneven—too soft, fades in and out • background music may be "cut" oddly, disrupting the flow of the piece	• recorded speech is so difficult to hear or understand that it adds little to the piece • background music is so difficult to hear or understand (lyrics especially) that it adds little to the piece
Appropriateness	• recorded speech emphasizes important moments/elements of the piece • recorded speech features good storytelling: it's concise and moves at a good pace, focusing on what's most important in the story • use of silence in the audio adds to the message in a meaningful, creative way	• parts of the recorded speech may be unnecessary: describing images or elements that are portrayed in images • the story told in the speech is too long or too brief, doesn't really accompany the images • the lyrics or tone of the music are not the best fit for the message of the piece—better choices could have been made	• the recorded speech is a clear mismatch for pictures, doesn't really tell a story so much as list details or retell in a journalistic kind of way • background music features lyrics that work in opposition to the images; the tone of the music doesn't match the message of the piece

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