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DOCUMENTING LITERACY HISTORIES, VALUES, AND PRACTICES: THE HUMN PROJECT JASON CHEW KIT THAM UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES

Abstract

Literacy narratives are personal accounts of learning to read and write. They offer insights to individual literacy histories, values, and practices. For this reason, they are valuable in the composition classroom as they allow students to grapple with culturally diverse ideas and literate practices of others. This essay showcases a multimodal community literacy narrative project—The HUMN Project—that’s designed to let student writers document narratives from the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) community. I begin with narrative theory as seen through literacy perspectives, and provide the details of The HUMN Project including its process, learning objectives, reading materials, and project tools, followed by student reflections on their experience with the project. The essay closes with my personal reflection on this endeavor and a call for literacy educators to innovate learning activities such as The HUMN Project to engage students across K-12 and college settings.

Documenting Literacy Histories, Values, and Practices: The HUMN Project

Literacy narratives are powerful rhetorical linguistic accounts through which people fashion their lives and make sense of their world, indeed, how they construct the realities in which they live.

– The DALN (Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives) Consortium

It’s about taking an atmosphere of fear, strangeness, and uncomfortableness, and turning that into an atmosphere of intimacy where people feel comfortable sharing.

– Brandon Stanton, photographer of the Humans of New York project

Introduction

Students today bring with them complex and diverse social, educational, economical, and cultural backgrounds. Many of them—roughly 30% of entering freshmen in the United States—are first-generation college students, according to a *USA Today* report (Ramsey & Peale, 2010). Appropriately, the college campus becomes a unique place where students meet and engage with people from different walks of life and circumstances. As a core requirement common in many schools and colleges around the country, the composition course, by the nature of its existence, provides these incoming students with not just semester-long writing instruction but also a contact zone (Pratt, 1991) to experience and understand various civic discourses. Such environment offers both the teacher and students the opportunity to discern and participate in important public conversations, such as racism, structural oppression, and critical literacy practices in the public.

One way to take advantage of the diversity in such contact zones is to engage with those who occupy these spaces—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—through dialogues about one’s personal literacy experience. In “Documenting Community Literacies: Using Digital Narratives,” an iTunes University course created by Cynthia Selfe and Lewis Ulman (2013), Selfe demonstrates that narratives about one’s literacy background are a great and rather friendly way of entering someone’s literate life and finding turning points where their literate practices have helped shape their personal values and beliefs. Listening to and collecting others’ literacy narratives are thus purposeful ways to gain insights on how literacy transforms lives. It also provides students an opportunity to encounter culturally situated and epistemologically significant events in others’ lives that may help them consider the values of their own literacy practices through a process of reflection (Sharma, 2015). Such exercise, then, is valuable for students across K-12 and college levels as they meet with those who are culturally different from them and grapple with values and ideas that might seem divergent from theirs.

In this essay, I describe a multimodal literacy narrative project I designed for a first-year composition class at a research university, where students in my class had participated in collecting and exhibiting literacy narratives of members of the university community through an oral history methodology. My goal is to showcase the pedagogical benefits of this literacy narrative project—fondly called The HUMN Project—for students of composition in both K-12 and college settings. In the following sections, I provide a brief introduction to the rationale of the project, the theoretical framework underpinning its design, followed by the logistics and student reflections after completing the project. It is my hope that readers find this project inspiring and applicable to their own pedagogy.

What is The HUMN Project?

The inspiration for The HUMN Project came from both the Humans of New York project and the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN) hosted at The Ohio State University. I have named our project “HUMN” not just because it looks like a clever wordplay by a colleague of mine, but truly to pay tribute to Humans of New York as well as to hint at the campus community—UMN (short for the University of Minnesota)—from which our literacy narratives

are curated. The logotype (Figure 1) of The HUMN Project is made up of its name and a bar across the letter “H” to emphasize the human factor in this project. The maroon and gold colors in the logotype serve as key institutional identifiers.

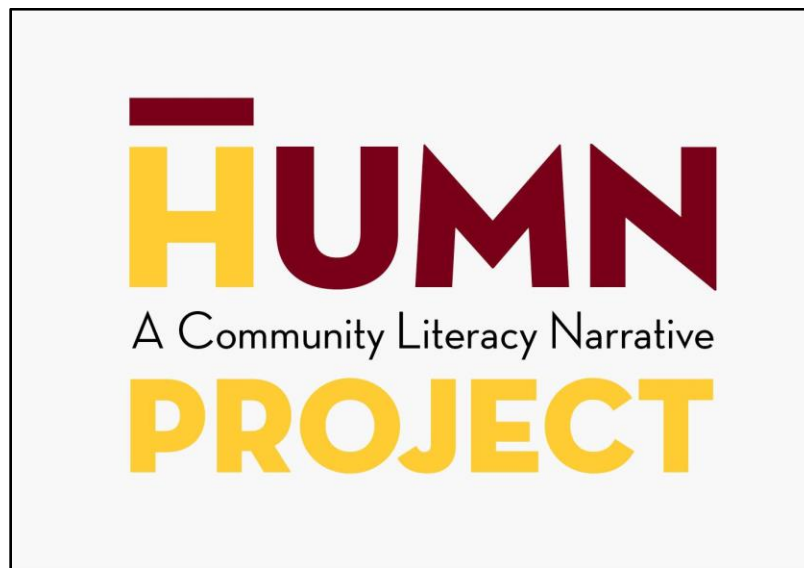


Figure 1. Logotype for The HUMN Project.

Thriving on the culture of an open campus and the available means for storytelling, The HUMN Project provides an opportunity for students to think about their literacy practices and those of others, as well as to consider issues surrounding literacy acquisition. The HUMN Project allows students to work in teams and meet with people on the University of Minnesota campus to collect accounts of how individuals remember learning to read and write; the conditions under which they continue reading and composing; and the influences, people, and values that shape their literate practices. Coupled with readings on critical literacy, power, and identity, as well as collaborative in-class activities, students will be given the chance to reflect on their personal literacy histories and to explore patterns of local literacies.

Narrative Theory and Functions of Literacy Narratives

Literacy narratives have a traditionally important place in the composition classroom. A literacy narrative is a first-hand account about an individual's reading or composing (or the teaching of reading or composing) in any form and context. Literacy narratives often focus on impactful memories about events, people, things, or places—times when one experiences success, failures, or any emotions associated with reading or composing. Through language in various forms, personal literacy narratives can serve as ways of constituting one's identity. Blake Scott (1997) observes that literacy narratives allow students the time to reflect on “everyday language acts they might normally overlook or dismiss as trivial” (p. 112), thus “throw[ing] into relief the knowledge and literacy they already have” (p. 113) and that such stories provide students the chance to “critique their literacies in light of the discourse communities to which they belong” (p. 112). Literacy narratives have become increasingly popular among teachers like Scott for their potential to introduce critical issues of race, class, and gender into the writing classroom.

Such accounts allow for students to study the cultural influences that shape students' identities as learners, as well as to examine the literate lives of those who are not students.

Indeed, a meaningful college experience should allow students to learn and grapple with literacy values and practices that are different from their own. Scholars of literacy and composition have noted that we can understand reading and composing as a set of practices and values when they are properly situated within the context of a particular historical period, a specific cultural environment, a cluster of actual material conditions, and the complex lives and experiences of individuals and their families (Selfe et al., 2013).

By using the term *literacy narrative* at its most granular level, I am referring to personal stories and accounts. These accounts are structured by “learned” and “internalized” understandings about literacy that are culturally constituted (Selfe et al., 2013). Such narratives are rich in meaning; they are simultaneously “practices and artifacts” (Brodkey, 1986, p. 26). And because our cultural understandings of literacy are “the tropic material of which literacy narratives are woven” (Selfe et al., 2013), an initiative like The HUMN Project may help to illuminate the constructedness of a student's cultural values and social identities. Michael Bamberg (2005) connects this notion of storytelling to an action-oriented study of “language in communities of practice” (p. 215), which focuses on the discursive nature of narrative:

Rather than seeing narratives as intrinsically oriented toward coherence and authenticity, and inconsistencies as an analytic nuisance, the latter are exactly what is most interesting. They offer a way into examining how storytellers are bringing off and managing their social identities in context. (Bamberg, 2005, p. 222)

This further complicates both the teaching and learning of writing, and thusly makes The HUMN Project as a whole even more complex and valuable.

In theorizing the contributions of literacy narratives and defining the work they can accomplish, Selfe et al. (2013) have identified five areas of interest for teachers of composition:

- Literacy narratives and the information they convey about identity and identity formation
- Literacy narratives and the information they convey about historical and cultural context
- Literacy narratives and the role they play in representation and agency
- Literacy narratives as social/political action
- Literacy narratives and what they can tell us about teaching and learning

These areas serve as the foundation (or themes) of The HUMN Project. In my first-year composition course where this project is deployed, learning units were structured around these themes with readings that complement the surrounding topics. In other words, the course and the project complete each other. Briefly, I began with students' personal narratives as way to enter the conversation on literacy and rhetoric of writing. Then, focusing on narratives as self-representations and a form of personal agency, I invited students to consider what constitutes the self and how language underlies meanings. By scrutinizing the rhetoric of power and social and political oppressions, I challenged students to consider the infrastructure of organized communities and how writing plays a role in creating knowledge and cultivating change. Finally,

we focused on some 21st century teaching and learning issues—such as access, knowledge divide, and media literacy—through the discussions of popular, digital, and visual cultures, as well as multimodality. I will also teach students how to employ ethnography as a way for research and self-advancement. The last unit of the course aimed to redirect students to thinking about what they have learnt while doing The HUMN Project and how they can transfer those knowledge into a research project, paired with their respective scholarly and professional interests (e.g., workplace narratives, health or medical humanities, digital storytelling, etc.).

Pedagogical Objectives

As a writing instructor, I place value on how language shapes the structures of our daily interaction and community development. While teaching, I strive to illuminate systems of struggles and oppression to unknowing students and focus on creating opportunities for conversations where inclusion, access, and students' relationship to writing are central concerns. It is my objective that students get an opportunity to explore critically and reflect rhetorically their thinking and writing skills through purpose-driven activities, helping them to adopt a disciplinary identity as writers who bring particular ways of seeing and ways of acting in and on the world around them.

Through The HUMN Project, I strived to guide students into thinking critically about their roles as emerging scholars and professionals in the society and how their literacy practices have served their personal and professional development. Following the footsteps of the Humans of New York project, I aimed to expand the landscape of literacy narratives to reach the wider campus community. I hoped, through the hands-on project, to help students experience a robust data gathering and reporting process via a quasi-ethnographic research methodology. Students would collectively design the research questions as relevant to the course theme, plan and execute the narratives documentation activities. To add value to this exercise, students were required to record and produce their corpus of literacy narratives in multiple formats, such as print, video, and audio. This allowed them to trace the digital literacy practices and cultural values of UMN citizens.

Learning from the Past: A Personal Anecdote

I am always fond of a popular Chinese saying that goes, the past is one's best teacher. There are valuable lessons to be learnt from one's past experience and those who ask the right questions are prepared to actualize greater potential in their future. My first encounter with writing literacy narratives was when I was assigned a digital literacy narrative assignment in my own first-year writing class. I remember writing about how I got my first cellphone and how short-text messaging had changed my relationship with writing in English. Then, in one of my master's level courses, I produced a narrative of teaching and learning with digital technologies. In both instances, writing a literacy narrative has helped me to reflect on my personal educational practices situated in lived experiences. Having benefited from such discursive reflection, I have in turn assigned literacy narrative in one of my first-year writing sections. Students did well in that assignment, even though nothing stuck out as exceptional from their work. In retrospect, I had not prepared the students well enough to consider the complexity of narratives and how they relate to identity and identity formation, historical and cultural contexts, representation and

human agency, and narratives as social and political actions. In The HUMN Project, I rectified these shortcomings by focusing on reading and working with scholarships that theorize literacy narratives as a systematic way of understanding class, race, culture, and identity.

Learning Opportunities through The HUMN Project

In “Narrative Theory and Stories that Speak to Us,” Selfe et al. (2013) contend that by writing self-reflectively, students may identify their roles and responsibilities as writers—a sense of ethos, develop understand of literacy and agency as writers, and develop awareness of their writing—how their writing can effect change in their community. By externalizing such literacy practice, The HUMN Project encourages students assume the role of critical agents who amplify the voices of the community. Specifically, the project aims to help students:

- See with a lens through which they may examine their literacy practice as critical acts of inquiry.
- Study the cultural influences that shape individuals’ identities as learners.
- Examine the literate lives of those who are not students.
- Develop a sense of narrative agency by producing multimodal literacy narratives.

As a multifaceted initiative, The HUMN Project also allows the instructor to engage with literacy narratives in different ways. Particularly, the project encourages the instructor:

- To explore patterns of local literacies and literacy histories.
- To reflect on the influences, people, and values that shape literate practices.
- To learn how to instruct and execute narrative documentation activities.

The HUMN Project Process

The HUMN Project is designed to be a semester-long project that is integrated with the primary purposes of first-year writing at the University of Minnesota, i.e. critical reading and thinking, rhetorical analysis, constructing arguments, and drafting, revising, and editing in various academic genres. This could certainly be localized for other university writing programs in two- or four-year institutions, as well as adapted for middle and high school writing courses.

The following outlines the steps involved in pursuing the project: (For full description and timeline of the project, please refer to the attached handout [Appendix 1] written for students as well as a sample timeline of the project as integrated in my course calendar [Appendix 2].)

1. **Prepare:** Introduce students to the idea of literacy narrative by reviewing the DALN (The Ohio State University’s Digital Archive for Literacy Narrative; <http://daln.osu.edu>) and Center for Digital Storytelling (<http://storycenter.org>). Facilitate in-class discussions and instruct students to produce their personal literacy/digital literacy narratives. Conduct peer reviews on narratives. Hold large-group discussions to reflect on the features of narratives.
2. **Plan & Practice:** Introduce the rationale and goals of The HUMN Project. Facilitate a workshop to collectively generate interview questions, set up ground rules and

boundaries, and evaluative criteria for outcomes in this project. Generate an interviewee consent form. Organize in-class simulations of street interviews, and then review and discuss what are some best practices and things to pay attention to when conducting interviews. Assign student working groups (pairs or groups of three).

3. **Produce:** Conduct Round One of actual interview. Allocate time for weekly check-in moments to discuss challenges and breakthroughs experienced by the students. Create a common drop-box for students to upload and share interview data from Round One interviews. Repeat this step for Round Two interviews.
4. **Publish:** Design or set up The HUMN Project web portal (via Tumblr). Facilitate workshops to coach students in reproducing textual narratives from their interviews. Hold proper sessions (including tutorials) to edit and render videos and audios from the interviews. Conduct large-group peer reviews on the final drafts before publishing them onto the web.
5. **Present:** Soft-launch The HUMN Project website in class. Hold presentation sessions for students to reflect on the lessons learned from interviewing people and working in groups, and discuss the data/findings from this project. Collectively create a document of recommendations for future studies or projects of a similar kind.

Readings for Students

To help students achieve the learning objectives of The HUMN Project, the following texts were assigned throughout the course as conceptual grounding for the project.

Foundational readings on rhetoric, arguments, discourse communities, and writing:

- Covino, W., & Jolliffe, D. (1995). What is rhetoric? In William Covino and David Jolliffe (Eds.), *Rhetoric: Concepts, definitions, boundaries* (pp. 3-26). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Grant-Davie, K. (1997). Rhetorical situations and their constituents. *Rhetoric Review*, 15(2), 264-279.
- Greene, S. (2001). Argument as conversation: The role of inquiry in writing a researched argument. In Wendy Bishop and Pavel Zemliansky (Eds.), *The subject is research* (pp. 145-164). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Swales, J. (1990). The concept of discourse community. In John Swale, *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings* (pp. 21-32). Boston, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Sommers, N. (1980). Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers. *College Composition and Communication*, 31(4), 378-388.

On narratives, literacy, and identity formation:

- Brandt, D. (1998). Sponsors of literacy. *College Composition and Communication*, 49(2), 165-185.
- X, Malcolm. (1965). Learning to read. In Alex Haley (Ed.), *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York, NY: Ballantine.

- Alexie, S. (1997). The joy of reading and writing: Superman and me. In Michael Dorris and Emilie Buchwald (Eds.), *The most wonderful books: Writers on discovering the pleasures of reading* (pp. 3-6). Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed.
- Strasser, E. (2007). Writing what matters: A student's struggle to bridge the academic/personal divide. *Young Scholars in Writing*, 5, 146-150.

On narratives, representation, power, and agency:

- Magee, S-K. (2009). College admission essays: A genre of masculinity. *Young Scholars in Writing*, 7, 116-121.
- Daya L. & Lau, S. (2007). Power and narrative. *Narrative Inquiry*, 17(1), 1-11.
- Ahearn, L. (2001). Language and agency. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30(1), 109-137.

On ethnography and multimodal composing:

- Ellis, C., Adams, T.E., & Bochner, A.P. (2011). Authoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1). Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>
- Grabill et al. (2013). Revisualizing composition: Mapping the writing lives of first-year college students. *WIDE Research Center*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.
- Takayoshi, P. & Selfe, C. (2007). Thinking about multimodality. In Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe (Eds.), *Multimodal composition: Resources for teachers* (pp. 1-12). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Palczewski, C., Ice, R. & Fritch, J. (2012). Visual rhetoric. In Catherine Palczewski, Richard Ice, and John Fritch (Eds.), *Rhetoric in civic life*. State College, PA: Strata Publishing.

Project Tools

As a multimodal project, The HUMN Project aims to give students an opportunity to play the role of producer and create a multimedia exhibition of the literacy narratives they collect during the project. The following are lists of production instruments students need for The HUMN Project.

For in-class simulations and actual interviews:

- Cameras with video-recording function (may be provided by students using their smartphones or rented from university libraries)
- Tripods and microphones (optional)

For post-interview productions:

- File sharing: Dropbox, Moodle, or Google Drive
- Video editing: Apple iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, or other software
- Audio editing: GarageBand, Audacity, Adobe Audition or other software

- Other premium production software and tutorials available through university libraries or media services
- Hosting site for The HUMN Project: Tumblr.com

Discussion Prompts

In my experience of teaching with literacy narratives, I have learned that not many students have a solid grasp of what literacy narratives entail. To prepare the class for meaningful discussions, well thought-out prompts are necessary. The following is a list of suggestions for in-class dialogues or writing prompts to get students started on thinking about their personal literacy histories and building the interview questions for The HUMN Project:

- Have you ever written or received a goodbye letter? A love letter? A poem? A note from someone you care about? What makes those writings significant to you? What are your experiences with reading and writing that help with understanding these writings?
- Did you learn to read by studying the back of a cereal box? A TV guide? An Ikea user manual? Who/What taught you to read?
- Have you ever felt illiterate? Can you tell a story about a time when you were punished or rewarded for reading or not reading?
- Elaborate on a time when you were rewarded for writing insightfully.
- Did your parents read you bedtime stories? What are the affective factors involved in learning to read and write?
- What does it mean to be a literate person? Why should we be literate citizens?
- What happens when someone is illiterate? Why are some people illiterate?
- What is the importance of literacy in the 21st century? In school? In the workplace?
- Can you describe a story about how others have helped you write and read?
- Can you recreate your first experience with using a computer? The first email you composed? Your first Facebook status? The first video you made and/or uploaded to YouTube?

The HUMN Project Assessment

The success of this project is primarily measured by the how well the final project turns out and how much the students have learned from its process. To encourage students to work collaboratively as well as independently during different phases of this project, two grades were assigned to a student upon completion of the project. A class grade was given judging at the overall quality of the final digital collection of literacy narratives. An individual grade was given by the instructor to a student based on the student's engagement with the project. Ideally, students should be able to articulate the following criteria, either through their final iteration of the project or verbal feedback:

- Clear, directly stated research intentions
- A description of what they found in their interviews and what conclusions that leads them to
- An explanation of "so what?" at the end of this project

- An insightful reflection of the learning that happens during the course of this project and recommendations for future researchers

Outcome

The final face of The HUMN Project was a website (Figure 2) that showcases interview videos and transcripts that students have curated over the course of the semester. Students have collectively decided on the layout of the website and how the videos would appear on the site. They have also chosen to feature quotes from their interviewees as bylines for the videos, and added emphasis (bold texts) to values of literacy they identified as key constructs in the interviews.

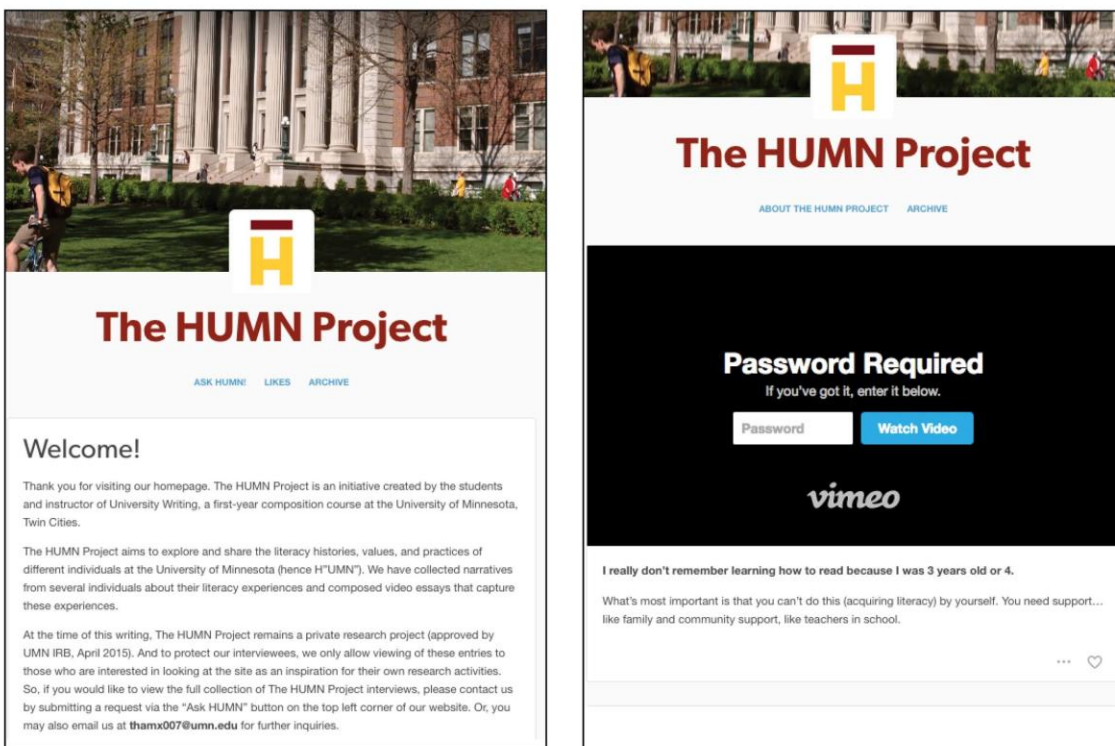


Figure 2. A screenshot of the homepage and videos page of The HUMN Project.

All of the interviewees have signed a release for their video recordings to be made public; however, our Institutional Review Board (IRB) has required this project to do its best in preserving the privacy of its subjects. For this reason, the entire website is password-protected, including the individual videos. Viewers of the site would need to acquire a special password from the site administrator (students and myself) to access the site and the videos. I will continue the discussion on logistical concerns with IRB at the conclusion section of this essay.

Student Reflections on The HUMN Project

At the end of the semester, my students participated in a public presentation of their work in this project. At the annual First-Year Writing Symposium organized by the writing program at our institution, students shared their experience in learning how about literacy sponsors, and collecting literacy narratives from their interviewees. They discussed how this project has made them more aware of the diversity within the campus community, and how it has changed their perspectives on the importance of one's literacy education on their social and professional outlook.

Taking advantage of the student ratings of teaching (course assessment) before the closing of the semester, I have collected individual student feedback on this project. Upon compiling all responses, three themes emerged:

- Learning about interviewing
- Applying literacy concepts
- Considering different values and practices

Students were excited that they got to conduct a project outside of the confines of the classroom. Specifically, they reported that being able to speak with people around the campus was an added value to their experience in the course. Students said that after completing The HUMN Project, they felt more confident approaching people and asking them for short interviews. Although this does not have a direct relation to the course objectives, it has certainly allowed students to practice a skill that is transferrable across disciplines and work contexts.

The second theme found in the student reflections was about the application of concepts learned in the course onto the production of The HUMN Project. Students reported that they liked being able to put the lessons into practice. They did so by using the vocabulary around literacy and literacy sponsors in their interview questions, which involved clarifying the terms for interviewees (sometimes by providing examples) when necessary. This way, students felt that they had mastery over the concepts of literacy beyond just reading about them in their coursework.

Finally, students also reported that they have learned to consider diverse literacy values and practices around the campus community. Although surrounded by largely similar academic and domestic cultures, students said that they saw differences in individual literacy histories, which informed their respective beliefs and attitudes toward certain literacy practices. This realization has helped students to be more aware about the people around them in terms of individual cultures—what it means to read and write, and using those skills, in those cultures.

Closing Thoughts

Working on The HUMN Project with my students has been a rewarding experience for myself as an instructor as it had taught me how to be agile and responsive to students' needs during the semester. Certainly, the benefits of engaging students through a class-wide, semester-long activity outweigh the technical efforts required to pull different pieces of a puzzle together. Getting IRB approval in conducting The HUMN Project is among the most challenging of those

efforts. As this project involved human subjects but without any immediate risks, it was required of the project principal investigator (i.e., the teacher) to acquire an exempt from IRB review. For me, it wasn't successful at first try; the IRB review committee returned the application after my initial submission asking for more information on how interview video clips would be stored or displayed. It was obligatory for me to ensure that all subjects' identity were protected through proper authentication requirement. Since it was the project's intention to showcase the curated literacy narratives, I had to make a case to the IRB about the educational purposes of this display and how the identity of the subjects interviewed might still be protected. In fact, Selfe et al. (2013) have also described their own struggles in developing the DALN and gaining their IRB approval for publishing submitted narratives. The best approach to a project of this nature, from my experience along with Selfe et al.'s, is to enroll volunteers for interviews rather than approaching them. For as long as the interview subjects offer their own narratives and provide written consent for release, the IRB would permit this sort of project.

I invite literacy educators and researchers to envision future iterations of The HUMN Project for their own classes. As demonstrated throughout this essay, literacy narratives are more than mere stories about people; literacy narratives often reveal societal issues including structural oppression, racism, institutional powers, among others—all of which have direct impact on how an individual learns to read and write. By engaging first-hand with everyday members of a given community, students may encounter personal accounts that show them what really happens outside the brick-and-mortar classrooms. These accounts would affect them deeply, especially when they connect and apply concepts that are taught in the classroom. As Paulo Freire contends in his landmark book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970),

For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (Freire, 1970, p. 21)

With an eye toward cultivating critical literacy, it was my hope that this community literacy narrative project would create an exciting rhythm in a composition course and give student a multimodal composing experience they may not have had otherwise. On a broader perspective, I also hoped this project will inspire those who might be touched by it, in one way or another, to think more critically about literacy and to develop a sense of narrative agency by creating and sharing literacy narratives with others. And as educators, I think we are in a favorable position to promote such experience.

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Appendix 1: The HUMN Project Description/Handout

The HUMN Project is a class initiative that aims to feature individual literacy narratives collected on the University of Minnesota campus. It is a cultural project that highlights individual literacy histories, practices, and stories. The outcome of this project is a digital collection of multimodal literacy narratives (text, image, video, audio) that provides a historical record of literacy practices and cultural values of the individuals interviewed.

What is a Literacy Narrative?

The following is an excerpt taken from the OSU Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN), which explains what a literacy narrative encompasses:

A literacy narrative is simply a collection of items that describe how you learned to read, write, and compose. This collection might include a story about learning to read cereal boxes and a story about learning to write plays. Some people will want to record their memories about the bedtime stories their parents read to them, the comics they looked at in the newspaper, or their first library card. Others will want to tell a story about writing a memorable letter, learning how to write on a computer or taking a photograph; reading the Bible, publishing a 'zine', or sending an e-mail message.

Your Role as Producers of The HUMN Project

As students of WRIT 1301 University Writing, Sec. 055, you have the privilege to be the producers of this project. You are given the opportunity to design the interview procedure, conduct the interviews, and publish collected data to a web portal. Through this project, you will learn to:

- see with a lens through which you may examine your literacy practice as critical acts of inquiry,
- study the cultural influences that shape individuals' identities as learners,
- examine the literate lives of those who are not students, and
- develop a sense of narrative agency by producing multimodal literacy narratives

Assuming the role of critical agents who amplify the voices in our campus community, you will develop an awareness of your own writing and how writing can be used to negotiate power and change in our society.

How the Project Will Unfold

Phase 1: Plan and Practice

We will first review some examples on DALN to identify features of a literacy narrative and produce our personal narrative as the initial process in this project. We will couple this exercise with readings on personal knowledge, power, and identity formation in political contexts. Then,

we will collectively generate interview questions, learning questions, interview “best practices,” and conduct a mock interview in class as practice.

Phase 2: Produce

There will be two actual rounds of interviewing in this project. You will be paired up with another classmate to conduct these interviews on campus following the reflections and discussions from our mock interviews. Between Round One and Round Two of campus interviews, we will check in regularly to identify challenges and breakthroughs experienced by everyone in the class. We will continue to read articles on representation, agency, and multimodal composing.

Phase 3: Publish

After collecting, rendering, and uploading all interview data onto Scalar, our hosting server for The HUMN Project, we will review, edit, and soft-launch the digital collection in class at the end of the semester. We will write a collect document to recommend directions for future studies or projects.

Evaluation

Your final iteration of The HUMN Project should result in a meaningful communication that motivates a relevant audience to take actions on the issues you have explored in this project. You will receive a group score on how effectively you and your class have communicated about these issues through the digital collection (i.e. quality of written and visual works, rhetorical strategies employed, overall persuasive value). You will also receive an individual score on based on your engagement with the project. This individual score will be a summation of your peers’ evaluation of your involvement in the working groups and my own evaluation.

Appendix 2: The HUMN Project Timeline and Course Calendar

The following calendar and activities may be altered any time during the semester if the need arises. Students are responsible for all announcements given during class, whether they are present or not.

Week	Tuesday	Thursday	The HUMN Project
1 1/20 1/22	Jumping In		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course and syllabus overview Goals and expectations What is First-Year Writing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Learning Network (PLN) The learning ecosystem Rhetoric and writing studies as scholarly disciplines 	
2 1/27 1/29	Understanding Rhetoric & Writing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Working groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Covino & Jolliffe (325-346) Introduction to Rhetoric The composing process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Grant-Davie (347-364) Rhetorical situations Introduction to The HUMN Project Assign working groups 	
3 2/3 2/5	Rhetoric and Literacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate personal literacies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Brandt (43-64) Read: X, Malcom (119-127) Literacy narratives Intro to MA 1: Literacy Narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Swales (215-229) Rhetorical appeals Conventions of writing Discourse communities 	
4 2/10 2/12	Rhetoric of Representation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate interview questions Generate expectations, or “ground rules”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Magee (460-468) Issues of representation Annotating a text Rhetorical & strategic reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review for MA 1 Collective generation of interview questions and expectations for The HUMN Project 	
5 2/17 2/19	Power, Identity, and Agency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In class simulations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Alexie (128-132) MA 1 due Intro to MA 2: Critical Analysis Writing a synthesis Academic documentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Daya & Lau (Moodle) Writing identities In-class mock interviews 	
6 2/24 2/26	Ethnography and the Writer-Scholar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 1 Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Ellis, Adams & Bochner (Moodle) Designing and writing ethnographies Documenting narratives 	1-on-1 Conference with Instructor	
7 3/3 3/5	Check-in Week, or <i>How are you doin'?</i>		
	1-on-1 Conference with Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and review PLN v.1 Peer Review for MA 2 	
	Rhetoric and Popular & Digital & Visual Cultures		

8 3/10 3/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Palczewski et al. (Moodle) MA 2 due Popular and digital cultures Visual rhetoric I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Grabill (724-739) Visual rhetoric 2 Media literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round 2 Interviews
9	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES ON 3/17 & 3/19		
10 3/24 3/26	Putting in Your Oar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Greene (27-39) Writing a research paper Writing arguments Intro to MA 3: Research Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing proposals Upload all interview data to shared folder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up data Upload to shared folder
11 3/31 4/2	Multimedia Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Research Orientation Meet at _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Takayoshi & Selfe (Moodle) Considering multimodality Review all narrative data; discuss editing and rendering strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit and render narratives
12 4/7 4/9	Hindsight 20-20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal due Read: Sommers (576-589) Refining your research questions Share and review PLN v.2 	1-on-1 Conference with Instructor	
13 4/14 4/16	21st Century Presentations 1-on-1 Conference with Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annotated bibliography due Review finalized collection of narratives for The HUMN Project Designing a Pecha-Kucha presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review finalized drafts of narratives
14 4/21 4/23	Getting Ready for the Finale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review for MA 3 Discussions of findings from The HUMN Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review for MA 3 Presentation Drawing conclusions from The HUMN Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of project findings Drawing conclusions
15 4/28 4/30	Pecha-Kucha Time! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA 3 Presentations Soft launch of The HUMN Project digital portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA 3 Presentations Produce recommendations for future HUMN projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft-launch The HUMN Project portal Produce recommendations for the future
16 5/5 5/7	That's a Wrap! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA 3 Presentations MA 3 due Share and review PLN v.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional revisions for MA 1 & 2 due Peer evaluations and reflections Course recap and evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer evaluations Reflections
