



Empathizing with the community through multimodal advocacy projects

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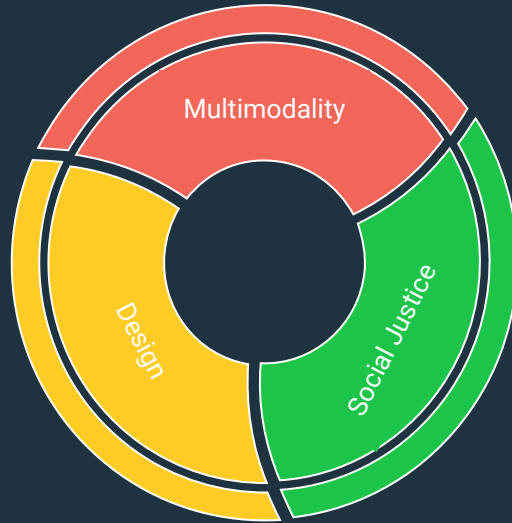


Motivation for this project

- Increased interests in community-engaged learning
- Use of technology in service-learning
- Multimodal projects intersecting with social advocacy issues
- The emphasis on “design”



Supporting literature



Supporting literature, cont.



Multimodality

- Multimodality and multimodal literacy have been treated by writing scholars with considerations of power and social action.
- The necessary literacy for using and creating multimodal products has been considered a critical technology skill in communicators (Selber, 2004).
- Multimodality “does not always emphasize instrumentality” but also flexible, critical thinking (Kimball, 2017).

Supporting literature, cont.



Design

- We consider design as a critical practice in writing instruction that holds considerable potential for fueling social action and social change (e.g., Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Shelton, 2020; Wargo, 2017).
- Design advocacy: social justice initiatives actualized through design (Jiang & Tham, 2019).

Supporting literature, cont.



Materiality

- The connections between materials, composers, and the literacy knowledge in the composing environment are often mapped onto the socio-material conditions of learning (Haas, 1996).
- “Maker” in writing education: Equip students with the necessary opportunities to address social problems with design tools that can turn ideas into reality (Bay et al., 2018; Breau, 2017).

Supporting literature, cont.



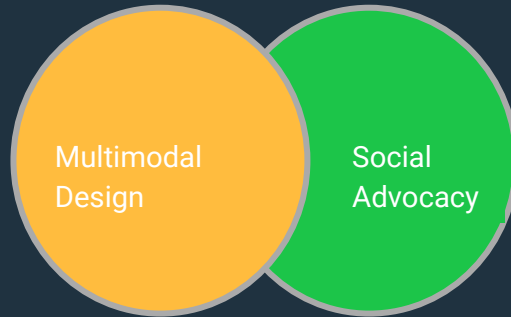
Social justice

- Writing Studies is progressively engaged with social justice pedagogy that aims to prepare students to be agents of change in the worlds they inhabit.
- Walton et al. (2019) and Jones et al. (2016) urge teachers to recognize, reveal, reject, and replace oppressive practices and engage with justice-building efforts.

Purpose of this study

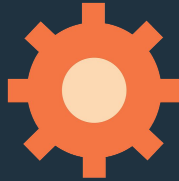


- Our present project serves as a continued expansion of the scholarly mission in multimodal advocacy. We aim to cultivate attention and discussion surrounding the key role of multimodal design in fostering social advocacy within and beyond writing studies.





Methods



Research Questions:

1. What **motivates** instructors to integrate multimodal social advocacy projects with their pedagogy?
2. What are the **technological implications** of multimodal social advocacy projects?
3. What are the **impacts** of multimodal social advocacy projects on teaching and learning?



Methods, cont.



Instructors

20 total participants (17 in public universities, 3 in private institutions)

Interviews

60-min interview via video call with each participant

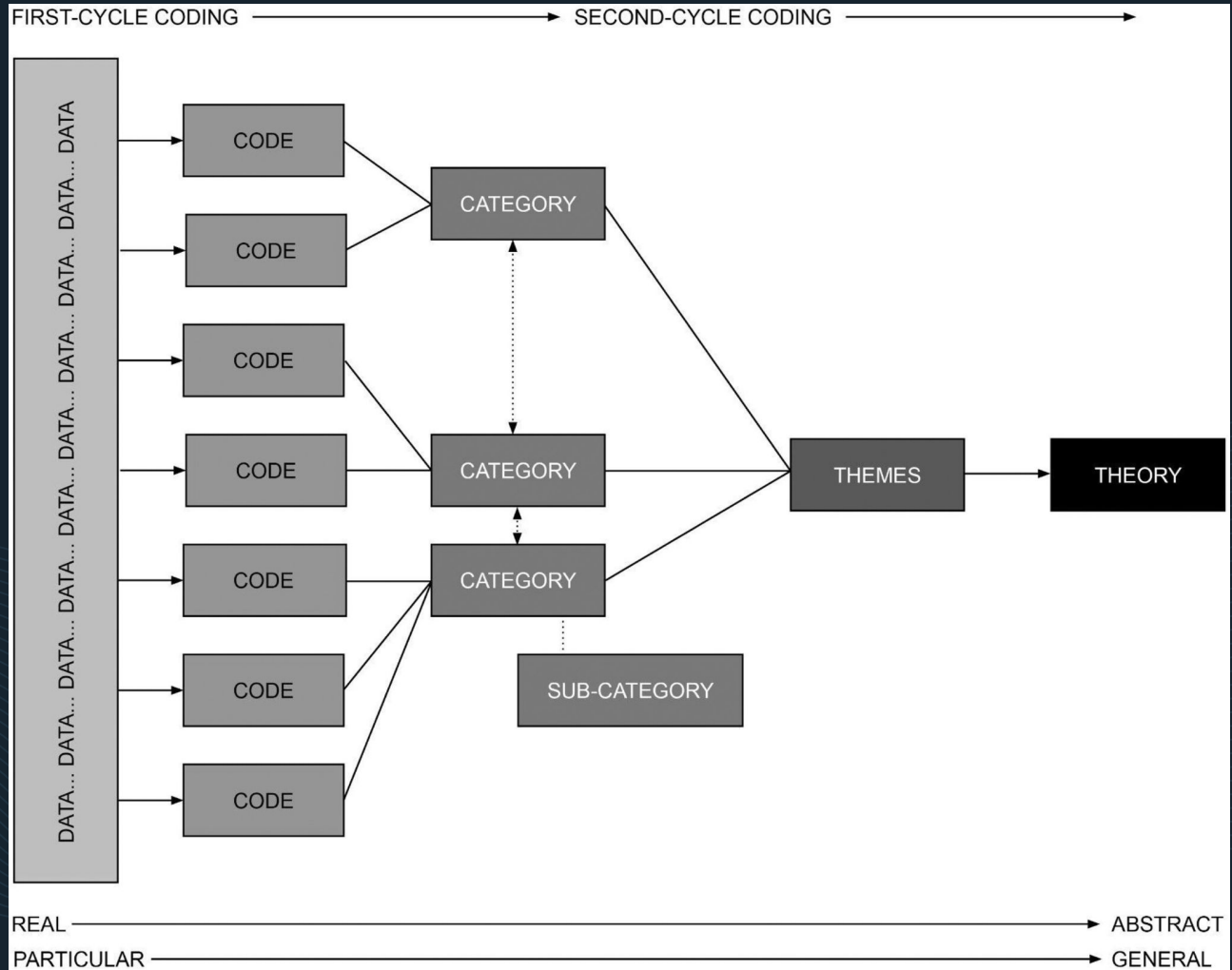
Coding

Qualitative coding (Saldaña, 2021) by 2 research assistants and us

Analysis

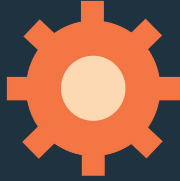
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Limitations



- Our study was limited by the number of volunteer participants
- We do not have programmatic assessment data to triangulate the responses from the participants
- Qualitative methods rely heavily on researchers' interpretation of data

Results



First-cycle (open) coding

- 7 initial classification labels were generated
- 30 codes emerged from 1,020 coded quotations
- Top codes have a frequency higher than 20 counts

Codes (Frequency)	Code descriptions	Sample quotes
Impact: good feelings (133)	Describes positive emotions experienced during the community project or the course	"By the end, it's always a joy. I love commenting on their work, I love these people, and doing composition pedagogy." "I really enjoyed being able to educate students about service animals."
Technology: type (130)	Describes the specific tool or platform used to perform the community project and/or related assignment Note: Here, we code technology as a tool or platform, not methods or processes.	"For designing, we used Canva here and there." "I do give them a timesheet, explain how to use it and how that can be helpful, but not a project management software."
Approach: pedagogy (94)	Describes the broad strategies in achieving the learning objectives	"For me, it was more of an implicit design. I was inviting students' expertise into the ways that they do assignments." "I was very careful to design assignments to have enough guidelines, but have enough room for students' own creativity and decision making while owning the assignment."
Impact: learning (74)	Describes the significance of the project on student learning	"I have students, to this day, who have already graduated, who come back and use their work from the Atlanta student movement project, the public web texts and videos that they produced; they use those to get jobs. They use those to further their understanding of interacting and other community projects." "Some of the best work that was done on this project was done by white male students who self-identified as more conservative leaning and it opened their eyes."

Results, cont.



Second-cycle (axial) coding

- Development of core categories with properties and dimensions
- Coding data based on thematic of conceptual similarities
- Axial codes represent the saturation of classifications found in overlapping meanings and observations

For example, “approach: pedagogy” and “approach: assignment design” were combined into an axial code that focused on course structure. This coding process created 10 axial codes out of the 17 initial codes from our first-cycle coding

Codes	Axial codes	Core categories
Approach: pedagogy (94)	Approach: focusing on the structure of a course	Approach: structure and materiality
Approach: assignment design (57)		
Approach: classroom environment (47)	Approach: situating a course within the materiality of learning	
Approach: real-world experience (44)		
Motivation: course objective (52)	Motivation: designing courses/projects to meet prescribed objectives	Motivation: objectives and relationships
Motivation: engaged/creative teaching (32)		
Motivation: personal connection (24)	Motivation: designing courses/projects based on existing relationships	
Impact: good feelings (133)	Impact: assessing outcomes based on affect	Impact: affect and pedagogy
Impact: bad feelings (30)		
Impact: learning (74)	Impact: assessing outcomes based on delivery and cultivation of knowledge/skills	
Impact: teaching (69)		
Technology: type (130)	Technology: denoting technology based on form	Technology: form and capacity
Technology: limitations (44)	Technology: evaluating technology based on capacity	
Technology: affordances (35)		

Results, cont.



Emergent themes

- Codes lead to more abstract categories
- Related categories grouped into emergent themes
- Thematic results corresponded with our research questions

Core categories	Properties and dimensions	Themes corresponding with research questions
Approach: structure and materiality	Property: The means for arriving at the design of a course and the community project relies on the curricular settings and environmental elements that affect students as well as instructors. Dimensions: Space and place--community settings, local vs. extra-local values	RQ1: Situated structures and intrinsic motivation instigate pedagogical design
Motivation: objectives and relationship	Property: The catalysts for community projects are fueled by predetermined learning objectives and interpersonal relations between instructors and community partners. Dimensions: Needs/goals and availability	
Technology: form and capacity	Property: The tools that enable community projects are selected and evaluated based on their strengths and weaknesses. Dimensions: Volition (choice) and value	RQ2: Functionality of tools shapes the products of pedagogy
Impact: affect and pedagogy	Property: The significance of community projects are reflected in emotional and sensible receptions. Dimensions: Situated vs dispositional emotions	RQ3: Impacts of pedagogy and projects manifest in affective and agentic manners
Challenges: instructor vs. student	Property: Structure of community projects can be interpreted through instructors and students' reactions. Dimensions: Actors and agency	

Discussion of findings



- Situated structures and intrinsic motivation instigate pedagogical design
 - Logistical conditions (course modality, length, duration)
 - Online interactions to maintain relationships with partners

Discussion of findings



- Situated structures and intrinsic motivation instigate pedagogical design
- Functionality and materiality of tools shape the products of pedagogy
 - What technology affords
 - What technology limits
 - “Discount” technology

Discussion of findings



- Situated structures and intrinsic motivation instigate pedagogical design
- Functionality and materiality of tools shape the products of pedagogy
- Impacts of pedagogy and projects manifest in affective and agentic manners
 - Situated perceptions (real)
 - Dispositional perceptions (preconceived)
 - Instructor agency



Implications



For course design & community relations

- An expectation needed to be established early on in the partnership
- Instructors need to consider what works best for a course without creating unnecessary burdens on themselves
- Instructors should pay attention to the legal implications of their decision to work or not to work with institutional offices when deploying community-based learning projects



Implications, cont.



For student learning

- Multimodal social advocacy projects can offer a meaningful learning experience to writing students
- Students may learn to articulate the affordances and limitations of tools
- Students can learn about specific issues and social affairs through their interactions with community partners



Looking forward



Contribution of this study

- Our study adds to scholarly conversations over the past decade about how to support students' literacy development through digital and new media learning (Ledbetter, 2018; Tinnell, 2016) as well as community-engaged learning (Deans, Roswell, & Wurr, 2010; Grabill, 2007).
- We extend the theorization of multimodal rhetoric and social advocacy (Sheridan et al., 2012; Warren-Riley & Hurley, 2017) by applying it to an examination of community-engaged learning projects.



Looking forward



- Service-learning lets students participate in worldmaking through social advocacy projects
- Instructors who felt more confident about their autonomy in the design of multimodal social advocacy pedagogy reported generally more positive outcomes from their projects
- Our aim to guide instructors in facilitating multimodal social advocacy projects, particularly in managing community relations and expectations, balancing workload, handling legal considerations with client projects, and articulating the benefits as well as limitations of such approaches



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Thank you!



Please check out our publication in the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, accessible via the QR code here.