

As a Puerto Rican in the diaspora, or a DiaspoRican who has lived most of her life moving back and forth between Puerto Rico and the United States, I am acutely aware of the importance of connecting struggles across geopolitical, cultural, and identity-based markers. Living in and out of diaspora has taught me to be conscious of how linguistic and cultural conditions influence decisions I make in my writing, scholarship, and teaching, as well as how I approach the diversity of students in my classrooms. Drawing on my work in rhetoric and composition, which I approach through a transnational feminist and decolonial perspective, I help students critically question discourses that may affect them or other unprivileged communities while improving their abilities as writers and readers who understand how language can influence the lives of individuals or a collective. Whether teaching courses in Women's and Gender Studies or in Rhetoric and Composition, my pedagogy is undergirded by multilingual multimodality and critical media literacy from a transnational feminist perspective.

As a pedagogy, multilingual multimodality pays attention to different modes and languages used in communication, but I don't divorce these from the historical contexts in which they arise. For instance, my first teaching experiences were geared towards ESL students. Teaching basic and intermediate-level reading and writing courses at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez necessitated a focus on grammar and skill, yet I incorporated a culturally relevant critical pedagogy to teach them about different writing conventions that allow them to not only succeed academically, but also help them become comfortable engaging with English language texts more generally. While it was a constant challenge to balance the multiple levels of English language proficiency amongst my students, I succeeded in doing so by including into the curriculum the study of bilingual poetry by Nuyorican poets like Pedro Pietri and Tato Laviera, among other writers who incorporated a mix of English and Spanish. By studying this type of literature, students could recognize the bilingual language practices they often interacted with, as well as the multiple struggles of fellow Puerto Ricans living, and oftentimes overcoming, detrimental conditions in the New York diaspora. Students also read short stories by writers like Dagoberto Gilb, making cross-cultural connections about the issues different migrant populations face in the United States context.

As a writing teacher, I encourage students to consider choices made in composition processes based on genre and audience. For example, as part of my research on critical media literacy in an ESL college composition classroom, I coordinated an activity in which students interacted with local indie rock bands to exchange ideas about their writing processes. In this assignment, students attended a concert I organized where local bands performed at the university's amphitheater, an event that was also open to the general public. The students were then asked to observe how musicians discussed their song composing processes and to pay particular attention to how artists described the transformations their texts/songs went through in relation to the audiences they performed for. The goal was for students to consider writing processes more broadly, as something that also occurs outside of the English composition classroom. Much like drafting, the musicians noted how they would revise and edit their songs several times, until they had a final product. Student reflections on the event illustrated correlations between the writing choices and processes they were engaging in the classroom and those described by the different bands. For their last course project, students produced multimodal texts, such as songs about peace, newsletters about yellow journalism, and other self-selected topics related to their media consumption.

Similarly, in my teaching at Syracuse University, most of the projects I assign provide a space for students to be reflexive about the ways rhetoric operates in the different contexts they've been in. By studying and producing literacy narratives, I encourage students to consider the course topic of inquiry as they have experienced it at home or in other influential contexts. For instance, in the introductory-level writing course WRT 105: Practices of Academic Writing, I've engaged students in reflections about cultural literacies based on language, such as Geneva Smitherman's work on African American Language and language rights, Gloria Anzaldúa's examination of Spanish and English in "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," and how Native American authors like Sherman Alexie examine interrelationships of language and culture,

all of which afford a rich discussion and practice of reflexive genres like creative nonfiction. In addition, asking students to keep a reflexive log with brief reflections about the choices they make in their research and writing helps them chronicle construction of knowledge, noting how it can be expressed in a variety of forms, intended for a variety of audiences. This sort of reflexivity allows them to evaluate their shifting positions as they embark in writing. The log and other writing assignments provide a space for careful reflections on politics of language, class, race, and/or gender in cross-cultural contexts.

Critical awareness about cross-cultural conditions based on diverse identity categories can occur in numerous channels, or different ways of knowing and acting. To better facilitate students' rhetorical reflection around complex issues, I often bring in examples of contemporary media and encourage students to share their own interactions with digital media in order to ground scholarly concepts they learn in their research, helping them to compose more nuanced texts in a variety of modes. For example, I use an online, visual essay from *Foreign Policy* showcasing millennials in Cuba and their technological capabilities to question their depictions in light of friendlier political relations between Cuba and the United States. After studying this text in WRT 205: Critical Research and Writing, I ask students to keep a media log of the websites they interact with, and to study how representational politics of citizenship are brought up in their use of social media or in other multimedia productions such as music, film, or television.

Media texts also make their way into my curriculum for WRT 301: Civic Writing. Noting moments in which artists like Jesse Williams and Alejandro Iñarritu have enacted acceptance speeches in which they advocate for their communities, I remind students that civic communication doesn't exclusively occur in protests, or in Supreme Court communications like Sonia Sotomayor's dissent in *Utah vs. Strieff*. In this class, I invited social justice activists to speak about their rhetorical efforts towards accessibility, anti-war advocacy, and anti-immigrant rights reform, further showcasing real-life applications of multimodal civic writing. Students then produced a series of Real-World Genres for Real-Life Audiences multimodal projects, such as an illustrated timeline of a Syracuse building's historic involvement in the underground railroad, a YouTube video reading of an original poem titled "The ABCs of Poverty," and a website curating different resources to support Planned Parenthood.

In women's and gender studies courses I teach, I draw on the work I do as a writing instructor with a transnational feminist and decolonial pedagogy, which acknowledges different sociocultural and political positions. In my capacity as a Teaching Assistant of WGS 101: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, I supplement foundational feminist texts from bell hooks, Paula Gunn Allen, and the Combahee River Collective with video interviews featuring contemporary feminists such as Angela Davies. Using a variety of texts also affords nuanced discussions on intersex and transgender identities, as students read excerpts from *Middlesex* and listen to a public radio segment featuring KJ Rawson's explanation of the history and ethics of using the concept of transgender. Once again, besides academic essays, students in my discussion sections produced multimodal projects to express their understandings of course content, resulting in a paper bag "knapsack" including the students' unearned privileges, a "sexist monopoly" game showcasing heteropatriarchy, and a gender fluid hair-salon doll. The readings they did and texts they produced meant to encourage students to think about what a project of liberation might look like across multiple sites of oppression, and across different modalities of expression.

Besides a focus on language and rhetoric, in my classrooms I encourage students to pay attention to publics in and beyond temporary geographic contexts as a way to acknowledge other cultures and histories. As an educator, then, my pedagogy focuses on producing more conscious, critically aware, skillful and reflective global citizens who can communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and situations.