DIGITAL STRATEGIES AND TOOLS TO INCREASE INFORMATION LITERACY IN NINTH GRADE STUDENTS

By

Melissa Simmons

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Capstone Project Facilitator(s): Vivian Johnson & Melissa Erickson
Context Expert: Patty Strandquist
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CHAPTER ONE

A Digital Argument for the Future

Introduction

Looking around my ninth grade English classroom, students encounter daily permeation of technology to aid learning including cell phones, Chromebooks, iPads, tablets, electronic gadgets, videos, digital resources, and so much more. Ruggiero and Mong (2015) report that 99% of teachers use technology on a daily basis in their classroom to support student learning so it is likely that what I see regarding the presence of technology in my ninth grade classroom in a public high school is not unusual. However, in spite of the heavy presence of technology, a large percentage of my students are not developing the necessary skills to become competitive in their digital future because teachers do not employ the necessary strategies to support them.

According to Howell (2018) it is often assumed that teachers are expected to teach multimodality practices, but a majority rarely receive any explicit guidance in how to do so. With these issues in mind, it has become a focal point in my teaching practice to implement more resources for teachers to successfully teach digital strategies to students. This capstone project aims to explore researched, digital strategies and tools to support informational literacy within a ninth grade argument unit, and leads to my research question: What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?
With $3 billion dollars spent annually on digital instructional content in K-12 education, according to Education Week writer Benjamin Herold (2016), and thousands of educational resources at teachers’ and students’ fingertips, one would assume that students are more prepared than ever to enter a workforce that requires 21st century skills. These skills include how to identify, find, and analyze well-researched documents, synthesize and evaluate this information, and present it in a logical and visually appealing manner. In fact, according to a Pew Research Center Survey (2016), six-in-ten adults believe that the public K-12 education system has a lot of responsibility in making sure the U.S. workforce has the right skills and education to be successful in today’s economy.

With so much riding on the successful implementation of digital skills in the classroom and with teachers who may not be well-equipped to educate students on these skills, what happens to those students who cannot keep up and fall behind in this digital age because they have not been taught how to use the digital tools? Or what about those students who are far ahead of their peers and require a challenge to further develop their skills beyond what the teacher can provide? This struggle to find a balance between reinforcing and extending student learning through digital strategies has lead me to my desire to enhance my current argumentative unit to increase students’ information literacy.

In this chapter, I will discuss my own personal journey and experiences using digital tools and strategies as a student in high school and college as well as a marketing assistant before becoming a high school teacher. These reflections will give explicit insight into my successes and struggles as a student and entry-level professional that have
lead to my initial interest with teaching strong digital strategies. The chapter will then transition to a discussion of my shifting perspective and experience as a ninth grade English teacher which will lead into a final exploration of my rationale and context of my research. Lastly, this chapter will cover the significance and impact that my capstone project will have on my professional growth as well as the wider impact of digital strategies for English teachers and students in the future. The next section will turn to a reflection of my personal experience with digital tools in school and my earlier career.

A Reflective Journey Into the 21st Century

Throughout the two decades of my own public school education, I remember learning how to plan, organize, and write an effective essay; how to analyze a work of literature and lead discussions based on my analysis; and how to synthesize hundreds of researched facts and information into a complete project, essay, or presentation. But, I have no recollection of explicitly learning how to use any digital tools that existed to effectively research articles, take notes, or make a presentation aside from the very basics. In high school from 2004-2008, there was often little need to work on computers aside from conducting small research projects, typing papers after handwriting first drafts and creating basic powerpoints or posters. Even though the technology existed, there seemed to be little to no emphasis on the importance of digital skills in any of my classes, and thus much of my learning was self-taught. As a straight-A student, this hardly seemed to affect me. However, this realization began to trouble me as my college education began.
At the beginning of my undergraduate career in 2009 it felt as though other students were ten steps ahead of me with Moodle, Google Classroom, digital databases, note taking applications, citation tools, collaboration technologies, and PowerPoint capabilities. It felt as though all of them were taught how to navigate the abundance of resources that permeates our culture. One example that remains significant to me was during my last semester as an undergraduate in 2013. We were assigned to work collaboratively on a presentation with a group of four students, and with three of us commuting to school daily, this posed a problem. Suddenly, one student in my group quickly created and shared a Google Doc and Google Slides documents with me and I began to fully realize the shortcomings of my knowledge of digital tools. Shortly after college, my drive to expand these skills increased.

In 2016, I began working as a marketing associate for a small software company, and was again given a large opportunity for growth in my digital knowledge and skills. Working in a fast-paced environment that required me to work remotely from anywhere in the country, it became necessary to educate myself on the digital platforms and tools needed to complete my job. These tasks included learning how to design my written content into visual infographics using programs such as InDesign and PhotoShop, as well as creating and hosting webinars and presentations for customer tutorials and industry trade shows with video and voice applications. There were even digital applications and tools to help me research and take notes from a marketing perspective. Although my experience with these digital tools when starting was minimal, the significant factor to my success in this role was that the company equipped me with the education and
learning opportunities needed to foster and grow these skills. As Howell (2018) pointed out earlier, this digital education is not currently occurring for teachers in public schools. Just as I was given this opportunity to learn and cultivate my digital skills, teachers need to provide the same skills to their students.

Despite this newfound exposure to the saturation of technology in my career, it still came as a shock to see the necessity of these concepts in the school environment. After deciding to attend graduate school to receive my Minnesota Teaching License, I experienced significant exposure to the digital, multimedia strategies and tools that many teachers were using in the classroom. Many teachers were using Smart Boards and Promethean Boards for student engagement and participation, or iPads and computer applications for literacy interventions. It was certainly exciting as a new teacher to learn about all of the amazing programs and resources teachers now have to facilitate student-centered lessons and activities and to teach students how to analyze and synthesize information in so many dynamic ways.

Shortly after beginning my first teaching job in 2018, however, it became clear that many teachers in my building and department are not using technology in all of the amazing ways that are offered to them, because they simply do not know how. These findings have greatly influenced the context and rationale of research for my capstone project that will be discussed in more detail next.

**Context and Rationale of Research**

All of this past experience with digital tools made a huge impact on me when stepping into a classroom as an eighth grade English teacher during Student Teaching in
Spring 2018. Although I had been in classrooms previously, I had never been in a classroom for the entirety of a researched argumentative unit. Since researching and writing papers is somewhat of a special interest of mine from college, this unit was immediately interesting to me and made me think about all of the digital strategies I had learned about over the past years and could now use as a classroom teacher. What was most impactful from this experience was the ease of access to digital devices to conduct research, take notes, write papers, and share information. The possibilities to use and enhance students’ digital skills seemed endless.

However, when beginning to investigate and grade students’ research notes and outlines, it became clear how common it was for students to use their Chromebooks just to blindly copy and paste without truly thinking about what they were finding. Still, there were others who had trouble even finding the information from the articles to support the arguments they were making with their research, or knew little about how to connect to the information they were finding at all. With all of the amazing and dynamic tools available to teachers and students, it quickly became important to me to figure out how to use these tools to my advantage to teach and engage student learning in an argumentative research unit in more ways than just a written essay.

Beginning my first teaching job in Fall 2018 as a ninth grade English teacher, I was faced with the challenge of working with a Collaborative Team (CT) that was very disjointed and did assignments and lessons that could not have been more diverse. There were teachers using digital resources to enhance student learning and others that used technology sparingly while falling back on more traditional strategies. Having seen both
approaches used with varying levels of success my first trimester, it was not until starting my first research unit with my own students that it became clearer how some students excelled with these digital approaches and others fell behind.

As a new teacher, I am consistently working with students of the “Generation Z” area, defined by Turner (2015) as individuals who have never lived in a world without advances in technology such as smartphones and the Internet. Based on Generation Z’s defining qualities it is easy to assume that every student is proficient with any and all technology because these students are often classified as the first generation to be raised in the smartphone era, and have never lived in a world without the Internet (Turner, 2015). However, it has become abundantly clear during this first year of teaching that my students require and desire help when working with digital tools. The hard truth is, often times, my ability to help them, while far beyond some teachers, is still lacking. This realization forced me to reflect back on my earlier thoughts during student teaching and begin thinking about how I could enhance my argumentative research unit to include more digital tools to engage students of all levels and increase their digital skills.

This project will be an important addition to enhance an argumentative research unit because it is crucial for students to use a multitude of digital tools and strategies to effectively research, analyze, synthesize, and present information whether in high school, a post-secondary education setting, or in their careers. By giving my students multiple, digital strategies to use in a unit that requires analysis and synthesis, they will begin and continue to learn how one must be well-equipped to face a digital future successfully. The next section will continue to cover the overall significance and impact that my
capstone project will have on my professional growth as well as the wider impact of digital strategies for English teachers and students in the future.

**Potential Impact of the Capstone Project**

The answers discovered from my research question, “what digital strategies does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy,” will have a huge impact on my professional growth, my students and colleagues, and the wider scope of English teachers looking for ways to improve their digital teaching practices.

In my teacher education program, professors often emphasized the importance of failure. Being ready to try new strategies, fail, revisit, and try again was a cornerstone philosophy that has become ingrained in my teaching practice. Although still new to the profession, it is important for me to strive to try new teaching strategies to reach my students. As American philosopher John Dewey (1944) once said, “If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow” (p. 167). This capstone project will have a significant impact on my professional growth and will benefit my students for a successful future in the ever-changing digital landscape of the 21st century. This project has given me the opportunity to put aside my own educational experiences and biases of how teachers taught me in the past, so that it is possible to meet the needs of my current students.

When looking around my current school, it is clear that teachers who are willing to adopt new styles of teaching are the ones who continue to push and challenge themselves to find new opportunities for students to develop and grow. My project will
potentially give these teachers the resources to bridge the gap with teachers who struggle to find new, digital strategies to enhance their teaching practice. The potential for increased teacher collaboration is something that is extremely important to me having worked hard to find a balance on my own Collaborative Team (CT) between teachers who were begging for change and others who heavily resistant due to the lack of viable resources. Not only does this project offer enhancements to an argumentative research unit, but it will also provide a solid foundation for tools that other teachers can easily access and use throughout other units and across disciplines to promote collaboration for the benefit of teachers and students alike.

Finally, this project has potential significance to a wider scope of English teachers beyond my school and district who continue to look for resources to improve their digital teaching practices. With the overwhelming amount of teacher resources looming around the Internet, it seems significant to have a single resource such as this project curriculum that educators could rely on as a toolbox for strategies that could be pulled from when teaching research to students. Although this project is focused on a ninth grade English classroom in an argumentative research unit, the strategies explored and applied in the capstone could be applied to a multitude of English units in any high school grade level and activities including literary analysis, narrative exploration, and socratic seminar discussions, just to name a few. This project even has the potential to be applied to other subjects to incorporate digital skills that can be transferred between English to social studies and even to science.

**Summary**
With technology ever permeating our schools and global world it is vital for students to discover and utilize strategies that strengthen their technological skills to fit into a 21st century world. Students must be equipped with the necessary skills to meet the demands of the evolving workplace that places informational literacy as a top criteria for prospective employees. In a study conducted to discover employer perceptions of information literacy in the workplace, researchers Raish and Rimland (2016) found that employers seek individuals who are able to use digital resources, create and share artifacts using digital resources, and collaboratively work in teams. Based on my own experience struggling to locate, use, and implement digital tools to effectively research, articulate, and present information, this capstone project aims to explore multiple, digital strategies available to teachers and students, and determine how teachers can successfully implement these strategies into an argumentative research unit for a ninth grade English classroom to increase students’ information literacy.

In Chapter Two, I will discuss the research and literature that has been written about technology use in the real world including the future expectations of digital skills that students should possess as they move into post-secondary education and careers beyond high school. This chapter will also explain a general overview of the relationship between students and technology including the potential impacts that technology has in their educational and personal lives. The final sections of Chapter Two will explore current multimodal practices for nonfiction in classrooms and what digital tools and strategies exist that have been implemented successfully in English classrooms. In Chapter Three I will explain a general overview of the design and implementation of my
capstone project and end this capstone with a concluding reflection of this project in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter analyzes research that explores the suggested tools and strategies students are expected to be equipped with beyond high school in order to answer the question: *What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?* Looking deeper at the research that explores students’ successful use of digital strategies in the classroom will reinforce the rationale behind this capstone project. Each year students enter and leave high school unprepared to handle the level of digital tools that are expected of them to be successful. Through this literature review, it will become clearer what specific skills students may be lacking and how these skills can be better implemented into the classroom.

The literature review chapter begins with an overview of the real-world application of digital skills that are deemed necessary in a future teeming with technology. Along with an overview of the specific digital skills, this section will also describe the technological skills employers prefer when seeking new employees. This research poses a significant insight into the digital skills that students are expected to be proficient in as they begin their careers and gives a clear expectation for the skills that should be included in this capstone project.
The section that follows will move from the technological impact in the workplace to exploring technology’s impact on adolescents who will be referred to as Generation Z (Turner, 2015) throughout this literature review. This particular section of the chapter will begin with a general overview of Generation Z and then move to the more specific impacts of technology that will include both negative and positive impacts as well as an additional discussion about technology and the potential interaction of the adolescent brain. This research is vital to my capstone project in order to understand the possible impacts that technology implementation may have on young high school students.

The chapter will then turn to a discussion about multimodal instruction in the classroom to highlight some of the key ideas from the research to support the implementation of multimodal tools in this capstone project. This section will also cover a brief outline of the theory of multimodality which aims to improve student engagement and use of digital skills through multiple modes of communication which is the foundation of research for my capstone project.

The final section of the literature review will provide an examination of the most relevant and useful digital tools and strategies that will be applied to the research unit within the capstone project. To support these digital tools and strategies with research, the second part of this section will explain the successful application of these digital tools and strategies within actual classroom studies. This research has significant impact and direct application to my capstone project and much of what is explored in this section will influence that implementation of these digital tools and strategies into the project.
Real-World Application of Digital Skills

Digital literacy, as Martin (as cited in Koltoy, 2006) defines, is a person’s ability to use digital tools to “identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyse and synthesize digital resources, construct new knowledge, create media expressions, and communicate with others” (p. 216). As a teacher it is clear to me that today’s students must learn how to adopt these qualities of digital literacy in order to successfully navigate the technological landscape and remain competitive in the 21st-century job market as well as lifelong learners and consumers of media. This first section will provide an overview of this current digital landscape and give substantial background to the importance of these digital skills.

The second section will discuss the application of digital skills in the workplace and highlight what employers are seeking in future employees as new technologies continue to be adopted each year. The final section will further the discussion of the necessary skills that students currently in high school are lacking, but will need to possess after they graduate and enter the workforce.

The necessity of digital skills and literacies. Using information effectively and efficiently within a society that increasingly values the necessity of lifelong learning are becoming more vital with each passing year (Koltay, 2011). Traditionally, the concept of literacy has encompassed multiple forms including print, visual, and electronic modes of communication. However, in Koltay’s (2011) research, he explains that literacy is now tied heavily to technology and culture which requires a full-on commitment to lifelong learning to achieve literacy, including information literacy. Šorgo, Bartol, Dolnicar, and
Podgornik (2017) define an individual who is information literate, to possess the following abilities:

- Determine what information is necessary
- Assess required information quickly and accurately
- Evaluate this information critically
- Apply and use this newfound knowledge for a precise purpose
- Fully understand the legal and ethical implications of the use of this information.

When combining this definition of information literacy with innovative technology, the awareness of information widens to also include the appropriate use of digital tools to effectively execute these same tasks. In the classroom, this means that teachers must not only teach students the necessary skills to search for and apply information, but they must also teach students how to effectively use digital tools in order to acquire information literacy.

Although technology is a resourceful tool, it cannot be used as a substitute for critical thinking skills. Several researchers (Malafi, Liu, & Goldstein, 2017; Koltay, 2011) describe how with copious amounts of information readily available through multiple, digital platforms, the possession of critical thinking skills is essential to precisely discern, interpret, use, and share information, and successfully sifting through this variety of information can only be achieved through the employment of digital tools. In a capstone project that explores the use of digital tools to improve students’
information literacy, it will be crucial to include the proper digital tools that will enhance these critical thinking strategies in a way that will promote student success.

**Application of digital skills in the workplace.** Employers are increasingly seeing the value, and even the necessity, of employees who possess proficient levels of information literacy and who can effectively use digital tools to access and communicate information. Malafi et al. (2017) describe information literacy in the workplace as an employee’s ability to identify when information is required, locate this information effectively based on clear evaluations, and organize this information in such a way that can be created or presented to an intended audience. Unfortunately, as Raish and Rimland (2016) have discovered throughout their research, employers continue to be consistently shocked by the absence of well-developed information literacy skills of students as they enter the workforce. Although students may possess some of the skills desired by employers such as being able to give a basic summary of researched information in a PowerPoint, most students have little experience applying these skills in a dynamic environment.

Problems that arise in the workplace are not so easily solved as in an educational setting where an individual must simply search through prescribed library databases in order to summarize information using a specified number of research articles. In the real world of business, Malafi et al., (2017) describe the environment as dynamic and may shift continuously if resources are not readily available, more information is uncovered, or deadlines are tightened. Employees who can successfully navigate these workplace
complexities in the digital age will continue to be in high demand by employers. (Raish & Rimland, 2016)

**Skills to prepare for the future.** Technology is becoming an increasingly important resource which students must be able to confidently navigate in order to remain competitive in an era where digital skills are key. This emphasis on digital skills continues to increase the demand for effective information literacy instruction (Raish & Rimland, 2016). Unfortunately, Saavedra and Opfer (2012) point out that it is becoming more apparent that students are not developing these 21st-century skills because students are not being explicitly taught how to research or synthesize information using digital tools. Not developing these 21st-century technology skills leads Malafi et al. (2017) to highlight the importance of students having real-world experiences in school to simulate an environment where they can develop strong and flexible information literacy skills.

These real-world experiences include having students draw conclusions from a variety of diverse sources, uncover author credibility, and discover researcher biases using digital tools. In these real-world experiences students must also learn to develop effective strategies to use these tools. Students need to be prepared to face cognitive challenges that arise while researching to improve their use of digital tools and increase their information literacy. Raish and Rimland’s (2016) research on employee perceptions of digital skills is a great example of the need for information literacy in current society and instilling students with these desired skill sets will not only further their education, but it will also enhance their careers.
The research discussed in this section offers information about the current digital landscape that students will need to navigate as they enter the workforce and the specific application of digital skills that employers expect from young employees. This research is vital for teachers exploring information literacy and digital skills in the classroom to have a clear understanding of what skills students must be equipped with to be successful in an ever-changing technological future. The next section will explore the possible effects of technology on young adolescents to take into account any possible cognitive or developmental implications of adding more technology into the classroom at a younger age.

**Technology and General Overview of Generation Z**

This section will define and explain the unique generation that makes up current high school students and what their lives may look like with the advent of technology in and out of school in recent years. The section that follows will discuss teacher assumptions of students’ abilities to use technology in the classroom with minimal guidance and will follow with a discussion on technology usage and potential emotional impacts on adolescents.

Finally, this section will end with an exploration of technology’s potential interactions with adolescent brain development. Research on technology and current adolescents will help to provide both sides of the debate about the negative and positive effects of technology on students’ cognitive and social development. It is important to understand how implementing digital technology resources and tools into a curriculum could have different effects on students and their social and cognitive development.
Generation Z includes individuals who were born between the mid-1990s and the late 2010s, and as discussed by Turner (2015), this generation makes up the majority of the current youth in America. Turner (2015) goes on to define Generation Z as those who have never lived without the Internet and have become accustomed to technological advances such as tablets, smartphones, social media, flat-screen TVs, and experience constant communication and connection. Thus this generation is aptly nicknamed as the I-generation, net-gen, and digital natives and, for the remainder of this capstone, will be referred to as either Generation Z youth or digital natives. Due to this familiarity with technology, Turner (2015) believes that Generation Z demonstrates a higher level of proficiency and comfort with technology than any previous generation. Based on this information and other research explored in this section, it is clear that students encounter a vastly different experience as adolescents than previous generations.

Students continue to be exposed to technology at an increasingly higher rate than any generation that has come before them. In a Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts study conducted for the Kaiser Family Foundation (2010), 2,000 youths aged 8-18 responded that their media exposure was higher than any other activity besides sleeping with numbers approaching over eight hours of total electronic multimedia exposure in a day. Rideout et al. (2010) also found that the amount of phone use is not limited to students who have wealthy parents as survey findings indicate about 60% of respondents have cell phones with median incomes of $30,000 or less a year.

Mobile devices are not the only forms of technology that teenagers are exposed to, a majority of homes contain a multitude of technological advances. As Rideout et al.
(2010) point out, most Generation Z homes have an average of four TVs, three DVD players, two CD players, two radios, two computers, and two video-game consoles, and the majority of respondents of the study reported parents enforced little to no regulation of media content accessed or media use time limits.

Assumptions regarding technology usage and information literacy proficiency. Although students are readily exposed to multitudes of media on a daily basis, assumptions about their ability to successfully use technology in the classroom should not be overestimated. As stated earlier, Turner (2015) claims that the overexposure of and heavy use of technology in students’ lives can create a learning environment where students have a higher proficiency and comfortability with technology. However, Šorgo, Bartol, Dolnicar, and Podgornik (2017) refute this claim based on survey data which revealed that familiarity with and ownership of multiple devices and applications is a poor indicator of information literacy and has no effect on information literacy proficiency. Although digital natives interact daily with these technologies, Šorgo et al. (2017) maintain that their daily, digital activities do not necessarily relate to the actual coursework and skills needed to advance their academic or professional capabilities. It is my goal to build my students’ digital skills through the use of this capstone project to alleviate this common misconception. To accomplish this, lessons in the project will guide students through technological applications and skills.

Technology usage and potential emotional impacts on adolescents. As with many other 21st-century innovations that provide convenience and streamline information, technology may come at a cost to adolescents. In a study conducted on
Generation Z youth aged between 13 and 17 by Palley (2012), 86% of U.S. respondents indicated an emotional attachment to the Internet and would be upset if they were to give up their Internet usage as a punishment. Palley (2012) also found that participants in the study reported negative feelings if they were forced to give up their cell phone or texting a friend as a punishment over other forms of punishment such as not receiving any allowance money or no being able to purchase a new video game. Perhaps the most troubling impact of technology on digital natives is their use of technology as a form of escape. Turner (2015) explains Generation Z’s frequent use of technology may be linked to their desire to avoid struggles that arise in their daily lives offline, or to find a place where they fit in by using escapism and fantasy to possibly fill an emotional void.

Aside from the emotional attachment of adolescents to technology, there are concerns of technology's effects on youth’s ability to properly focus. To further emphasize this point, George, Russell, Piontak and Odgers (2018) discovered in their results of a multilevel regression model that there was an increased association between same-day attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder (CD) symptoms and the amount of time spent using digital technologies and the number of text messages sent. George et al. (2018) illustrate the importance of their findings because this information suggests that the amount of daily, digital technology that adolescents use predicts an increase in conduct and self-regulation problems. Leung and Lee (2012) reaffirm these findings suggesting that youth who are “addicted to the Internet” often lose track of time and have difficulties with self-regulation that ultimately result in negative consequences including missing class, work, or social engagements.
Despite continuous concerns about the effects of technology on adolescents, there remain a variety of positive impacts reported in the review of the research for this capstone. In the same study mentioned previously and conducted by George et al. (2018), findings reported that on days adolescents spent more time online and on sending more text messages, they reported fewer symptoms of both depression and anxiety. The authors remark that these findings are remaining consistent with an emerging body of research that points to a correlation between time spent online and reduction in depression for youth who are using their time online to connect with others in a positive and productive way. There is even a possibility that many of these adolescents may already be suffering from mental health problems and George et al. (2018) theorizes that these youth may be positively using technology to cope with or distract themselves from negative thoughts or symptoms that are associated with anxiety and depression.

Along with positive effects on mental health, studies evaluated by Mills (2016) revealed that students are more readily able to remember where to locate specific information than to remember the specific information itself. Mills (2016) asserts that this would suggest students are adapting to the near-constant access of the Internet and realizing that it is more efficient to remember how to access information than to remember many pieces of this information. This suggestion further correlates with the research explored earlier by Raish and Rimland (2016) who believe that being able to adapt to changing technological environments is a vital 21st century skills to be successful in the future.
There is also a positive social implication of familiarity with technology and social networking sites. In the same studies analyzed by Mills (2016) individuals who use social networking sites reported less peer-related loneliness which suggests that Generation Z youth are using social networking sites to develop their social skills in order to develop healthy peer relationships. Leung and Lee (2012) also report positive outcomes of social networking sites and found that adolescents who have more familiarity with the online tools and consider themselves social-structural literate were less likely to be the target of harassment online and offered less private information online. Leung and Lee (2012) explain that “This reinforces the notion that adolescents who are competent with internet tools and understand how information is socially situated and produced tend to be knowledgeable in accessing, locating, retrieving, and evaluating information necessary online for making important life decisions” (p. 16). These positive impacts of technology are key to accessing a capstone project that explores information literacy in a high school English classroom, and will influence student social interaction and collaboration in a research-heavy unit.

**Technology and potential interactions with adolescent brain development.**

There also remains a concern that technology can negatively affect an adolescent’s brain development. In his book *Talking Back to Facebook*, author Steyer (2012) reveals that the high volume of technology exposure can potentially disrupt youth’s neurological development. For example, Steyer (2012) explains that young adult brains are sensitive to stimulation, and because of technology, are being constantly activated. The lower cognitive regions of the brain that stimulates impulse control, he explains, is becoming
constantly activated by continuous neurological arousal. Steyer (2012) also blames this constant arousal to the overexposure of social media notifications, updates, and text messages.

Steyer (2012) along with other research conducted by Child Psychiatrist Giedd (2012) speculate that the overstimulation of impulsive control in young brains may be linked to a higher risk of attention problems. Multitasking, for example, is rising in popularity among students with Giedd (2012) reporting results of a Kaiser Foundation survey that found while teens complete homework, they are almost always doing something else (e.g., instant messaging, listening to music, texting, searching the Internet, updating/viewing social media pages). In similar studies reported by Giedd (2012) MRI scans conducted on subjects 20 years old confirmed that when an individual is engaged in multitasking, the prefrontal cortex becomes “bottlenecked in the brain’s ability to process and prioritize competing streams of information” (p. 103).

Additionally, Steyer (2012) points out that with the advent of Google, a culture of finding a swarm of answers within seconds has continued to change the way in which digital natives are able to write, reflect, and concentrate. A prominent concern of both Steyer (2012) and Giedd (2012) is that with the ease of this immediate information, and with the increased adoption of teens multitasking, “mile wide, inch deep” thinking is being promoted and patience and persistence that is required for in-depth research and writing is being diminished. However, Giedd (2012) remains hopeful that young people might be able to properly train their brains to effectively switch between tasks due to the
adolescent brain’s ability to quickly change in response to the demands of the environment known as brain plasticity.

The research discussed in this section offers information about the unique qualities of Generation Z and the impact that technology has on their lives inside and outside of school. Furthermore, this section explores both the negative and positive implications of technology on adolescents that should be accounted for in any exploration of technology and students. The next section will shift focus from exploring adolescents and technology to instead exploring adolescents’ experiences with current nonfiction instruction in the classroom. This upcoming section is significant to the capstone project as it describes the practices that should be avoided when working with nonfiction text which can readily be applied to an argumentative research unit.

Multimodal Instruction in the Classroom

This section will begin with a primary focus on the push for multimodal texts in today’s classrooms before turning to an explanation and analysis of the theory of multimodality. The theory of multimodality as defined by Albers and Sanders (2010) in their book Literacies, the Arts, and Multimodality is the “. . . multiple ‘modes’ or communicative forms (i.e., digital, visual, spatial, musical, etc.) within various sign systems that carry meanings recognized and understood by a social collective” (p. 8). Overall, this section will further highlight the need for multimodality practices in classrooms and will influence the overall approach and practices implemented in this capstone project.
Nonfiction reading and writing instruction in schools have traditionally sought to prepare students to encounter digital information in a controlled environment rather than in their day-to-day lives. Researchers Kohnen and Saul (2018) reinforce this idea as they point out that rather than prepare students to encounter information on the Internet as they would in a real-life environment such as their daily lives, teachers and curriculum developers prefer to control the information students access online, avoid any controversial topic that may distract students, and manage searches that are safe rather than authentic with the false belief that they are teaching students to become better adult readers and writers. Unfortunately, due to this lack of ability to move beyond interacting with digital information in a controlled written text, students are lacking in multimedia literacy.

According to research compiled by Doering, Beach, and O'Brien, (2007) students need to move beyond just using the web to simply access information and move to becoming active communicators by using Web 2.0 tools. These Web 2.0 tools are referred to by Doering et al. (2007) as next generation Internet capabilities that include blogs, social media sites, and online collaboration platforms. Current teaching practices of multimedia often involve creating PowerPoint projects with just the teacher in mind instead of both reading and creating material on the web to both understand and produce multimodal digital texts (Doering et al., 2007).

Experiencing nonfiction information should not be limited to printed text and a single mode of interaction. Instead, researchers Albers and Sanders (2010) explain that students must experience information through a multiple settings and texts in order be
truly literate in today’s society. This literacy includes the ability to read and create a range of print-based and online texts such as newspapers, websites, books, Kindle, etc., participate in virtual settings that use interactive and dynamic digital tools, and critically analyze multimodal texts that may integrate visual, musical, dramatic, and digital literacies (Albers & Sanders, 2010). Albers and Sanders (2010) point out in their introduction to *Literacies, the Arts, and Multimodality* that children and adults alike use visual, audio, and technology media to capture, develop, produce, and publicly publish all types of products. They also noticed that these uses of technology have begun to seep into the literacy within English classrooms. Their work in multimodality greatly influences the approach taken in the capstone project and provides a strong rationale for the integration of multimodal literacies within the project.

Not only does multimodal literacy provide students with applicable skills as they enter the world beyond high school, but Albers and Sanders (2010) believe that these literacies create an interactive and dynamic environment that promotes social and cultural practices. Therefore, technology should not be included in curriculum just because “it should be.” Instead the implementation of technology is meant to increase participation, collaboration and allotment of knowledge among students that has never been achieved before (Albers & Sanders, 2010). Certainly technology in the classroom is not completely new. Educators have been using PowerPoint, interactive Smartboards, projectors, and computers for years. However, multimodality has created a purpose for new technologies to be used in more dynamic ways. For example, Albers and Sanders (2010) explain that educators can use blogs to do the same sort of things we already know such as write
letters, yet the integration of these new technologies allows students, and educators, to create something uniquely new such as Podcasts, self-running PowerPoints, and YouTube videos just to name a few.

Research explored in this previous section explains some of the problematic nonfiction literacy practices that have continued to be implemented in English classrooms. Whether these issues are the result of teacher comfort or curricular guidelines, researchers such as Kohnen and Sual (2018) agree that these practices do not work to improve students’ abilities to navigate information as adults. Additionally, this section described that along with abandoning restrictive research practices, effective nonfiction instruction should encompass multimodal practices to promote student engagement and increase digital skills and literacies to prepare students for the future. Digital tools and strategies used in the classroom, detailed in the next section, will further highlight the use of technology to promote information literacy and digital skills in the classroom setting.

**Digital Tools and Strategies**

The research on digital tools investigated in this section will help to provide well-researched and explicit strategies and tools that can be implemented to enhance digital use in an argumentative unit in the English classroom. There will be several sections that will be dedicated to multimodal, digital tools that can be used for the final creation of their argument presentations. This research will also help to provide information that could be extended to other possible units within an English classroom. The final part of this section will shift from specific digital tools and strategies to a focus
of how digital skills can be used successfully in the classroom with the goal that these researched strategies and tools will influence the capstone project.

Requiring students to take a written argumentative essay and transform their argument into a multimedia presentation can completely change the approach and outcome of the intended argument. Huang and Archer (2017) explain that the choice of media can affect the type of argument that is constructed and often result in a more complex argument. They further demonstrate this by illustrating that an argument in written form is fixed while an argument presented in a visual or multimodal manner has the opportunity to change based on audience reaction, last-minute additions, and presenter’s knowledge (Huang & Archer, 2017). While this approach to argumentation may seem ideal and expands student knowledge, Dalton and Howell et al. (as cited in Howell 2018) point out that familiarity with these digital tools is crucial for teachers to successfully implement them. The following subsections will provide brief overviews of these digital tools and give examples of how to apply them to an argumentative presentation.

**Multimedia presentations.** Based on professional experience, when most students receive an assignment to give a presentation, their initial go-to application leans towards the more traditional approach like PowerPoint presentations. However, these applications are limited in their scope to enhance students’ digital skills. With digital applications such as Google Suite and Prezi, students can use a familiar approach to presentations with digital enhancements.
Google Suite for Education is a completely free platform powered by Google that is being used by over 80 million educators and students globally and uses a host of applications including Gmail, Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Classroom just to name a few (Premack, 2018). Each of these applications includes a multitude of capabilities and tools to enhance students’ skills with presentations, and Google Suite is compatible with any digital device. Google Slides, similar to PowerPoint, is one of the unique tools that students can use to create presentations. In particular, Google Slides, according to writer and reviewer Duffy (2016), is easy to learn with easy-to-navigate toolbars and has a feature that highlights tools users may need as they create their slideshows in real-time. Importing images and video are also possible, and, because Google Slides is included in Google Suite, import features can link directly from Google Drive (Duffy, 2016).

Perhaps the most important and unique element of Google Suite is the collaboration feature (Duffy, 2016). Students can easily create and work on the same slide in real-time in groups, and teachers even have the ability to give feedback in real-time on documents that students are currently working on. Google also constantly updates and adds new features to the Google Suite including an enhanced color theme customization, an audio insert function, and even an ability to enable captions within a presentation (Wolber, 2019). These new functions allow even more versatility for students to enhance their digital skills by incorporating multimedia and creativity within a slideshow.
Prezi is another more traditional platform for presentations with a unique twist: the slides are built within a canvas instead of a traditional slidedeck. Users can decorate the canvas anyway they would like with texts, images, and videos and then to create the actual presentation, users simply operate a viewer to zoom in or out on different parts of the canvas in a set order (Duffy, 2016). With the unique canvas design, information is organized and does not have to move in a linear fashion like a regular PowerPoint (Prezi, 2019). For students, Prezi is also easy to learn and PowerPoints can be converted into Prezis or students can use a multitude of templates that include customizable charts to take researched information and present it into a seamless visual form (Prezi, 2019). In fact, when compared to traditional PowerPoint presentations, Moulton, Türkay, and Kosslyn (2017) found within a study comparing PowerPoint and Prezi presentations that participants evaluated Prezis as more organized, engaging, persuasive, and effective.

**Infographics and interactive posters.** Infographics, an abbreviated term for information graphics are visual representations of information that usually contains a story embedded in it to convey information (Majooni, Masood, & Akhavan, 2018). The main goal of an infographic according to Majooni et al. (2018) is to scaffold abstract information to a reader that is presented in a visually appealing way. Majooni et al. (2018) report that in their study conducted on the effectiveness of infographics that when infographics had an effective layout, it was significantly effective in conveying information to viewers. Based on these results, students may be able to effectively use infographic applications such as Canva and Glogster to successfully convert their arguments into a visual presentation.
Canva is “a user-friendly design tool that makes it possible for businesses, marketers, bloggers, and other individual professionals to create eye-catching images without graphic design experience” (Canva Review, 2017). Users of Canva are able to employ multiple features that make designing media content simple and organized. The Canva (2019) website lists the steps to create a one-of-a-kind infographic that include selecting a template, adding graphics and visual elements, customizing colors and fonts, and adding in the desired information. Canva is also a free platform that can easily allow students to download and share their work. According to Canva Review (2017) powered by award winning CMS Critic, the ease of use and reliable online design have contributed to the growing popularity of this visual creation platform.

GlogsterEDU is a global education platform that allows students and educators to create innovative posters that include a multitude of multimedia elements including text, sound, images, videos, and graphics (GlogsterEDU, 2019). Although Glogster is classified as an “interactive poster” it incorporates many of the same elements as an infographic, but also adds many more interactive features to enhance student presentations. In the study conducted by Howell (2018) referenced earlier in this literature review, students created infographics of their arguments using Glogster with large success. Due to this project and aid of digital tools, students in Howell’s (2018) study were able increase access to multimodal forms of argumentative representation which increased students’ awareness of multiliteracy perspectives. Both Canva and Glogster are both unique platforms that give students an opportunity to interact with arguments in a completely digital and interactive way.
Successful implementation of digital tools and strategies. The successful implementation of a multimodal approach to literacy offers students what researchers Huang and Archer (2017) explain as an opportunity to experiment with a variety of genres for presenting academic argument. What follows are three examples of studies conducted to measure the successful implementation of digital tools and strategies into English classrooms to improve student literacies.

The first study, conducted by Huang (2014), investigates the incorporation of a web-based reading strategy into a reading curriculum. In Huang’s (2014) study, Group 1 was designated as the online reading strategy group while Group 2 was designated as the paper reading group. The groups were given the same reading, but in their different format modes and then asked to identify the main idea and details.

The online reading strategy group (Group 1) identified the main idea and details with more proficiency than the paper reading group (Group 2) (Huang, 2014). The interactive features, ease of retrieval, and flexibility of the online strategy function in Group 1 of Huang’s (2014) study show a facilitated reading development among the participants and confirms the positive results of other studies of multimedia support in online reading environments.

One of the main notes of positive feedback received from participants in Group 1 was the highlighting function for vocabulary in the module with 75% of the students indicating that the color-coded highlight function was useful to track parts of the article and to easily facilitate a second read of the article to ensure understanding (Huang, 2014). Although there were multiple instances of positive feedback from participants, 25% of
the participants of Group 1 in Huang’s (2014) study did express their dissatisfaction for the length of time and degree of effort required in order to become familiar with the modules for the online reading. This confirms research explored earlier in this chapter that expresses the need to fully support students and plan extra time to allow students to become familiar with the new technological applications and avoid extra stress.

Other instances of the successful use of digital tools in the classroom were compiled by Darling-Hammond, Zielezinski, and Goldman (2014) and involved the use of interactive computer-based instruction (CBI) systems to help at-risk students learn new skills. These CBI systems can diagnose student levels of understanding and customize the material they engage with to differentiate instruction, offer interactive instructional activities, and provide more detailed feedback for students to track their progress (Darling-Hammond, Zielezinski, & Goldman, 2014). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) programs like these have been successful because they allow students to demonstrate stronger engagement, self-efficacy, more positive attitudes towards school and overall skill development.

In several ninth-grade English classrooms with a large number of at-risk students that were previously predicted to fail or had failed English previously, Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) explains that these students actually outperformed high-track classes in their school on state tests due to the technology-rich classroom that allowed students to engage in assignments using CBI. Some examples Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) found to be successful CBI use included “... engaging in multimedia content creation to communicate ideas about the material they are studying by creating reports, graphic
representations of data they have researched or developed, websites, PowerPoint presentations, video production, digital storytelling, and other means” (p. 9).

It is important to note that although these technologies provide interactive and engaging experiences for students, Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) conclude from student interviews that the availability of teacher support for some of the more challenging learning concepts was critical to the successful implementation in the classroom. They also note that both students and teachers agreed on the importance of a variety of learning choices of how computers were used to write or create multimedia projects so that students could continue to learn through inquiry and personal interest. This note is vital to keep in mind throughout the creation of the capstone project in order to scaffold the use of technology programs and to also provide student choice within these programs to avoid falling into some of the practices that Kohnen and Saul (2018) explained do nothing to prepare students for the real-world of research.

The final study explored in this section was conducted by Howell (2018) on 9th and 10th grade English classes with the goal of improving student arguments by incorporating the blend of cognitive elements e.g., claim, evidence, and reasoning, with social practices such as designing arguments using multiple modes of digital tools to provide sociocultural context. Howell (2018) explains that in this intervention, students used Google Sites and GlogsterEDU to create arguments as infographics and websites.

Prior to the intervention, Howell (2018) had students complete questionnaires about argument and found that most students believed that argument was limited only to written language; however, after the intervention, students’ awareness of arguments as
both multimodality and as writing increased from 7 students before the study to 18 students after. Although arguments against the implementation of more digital tools still abound due to the concern over distraction, Howell (2018) asserts that the use of these digital tools for academic purposes resulted in positive student engagement. She states that “Students in the 10th-grade class showed particular initiative with the digital, multimodal arguments, engaging in the intervention when they were otherwise disengaged and disruptive in their other classroom activities” (Howell, 2018, p. 539).

Students were also particularly receptive to the multimodal use of tools because of its unique use of scaffolding and organization for their arguments. One student Howell (2018) interviewed after the intervention stated, “‘I liked it [the website project] because it helped you organize stuff like lay it out the way you want to’ ” (p. 538). Based on my personal experience, students often struggle to synthesize and thus properly organize their research to support their arguments, so Howell’s findings show great promise for overcoming this obstacle for argumentative writing and presentations. As with the previous studies explored by Darling-Hammond et al. (2014), Howell (2018) also notes some student frustration with mastering the digital tools which further emphasizes the importance of scaffolding the use of these digital tools in the capstone project to support students new learnings.

Summary

The research explored in this chapter reaffirms my belief that the incorporation of digital tools in an argumentative research unit through multimodal applications is necessary to engage students in 21st-century learning experiences that will improve their
informational and digital literacies. To address the research question *What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?* this literature review considered the variety of digital skills that students should be familiar with in the workplace beyond high school and explored a multitude of digital tools to increase student engagement and understanding of argument in both written and multimedia forms. From this exploration, key digital tools and strategies were selected for implementation in the capstone project to address the “necessary digital skills in the workplace.” The research reviewed within this chapter also helped to answer the research question by highlighting the successful application of digital tools in English classrooms and will influence the subsequent lessons in this project to promote positive Internet usage behaviors in order to create a lasting and positive impact on students’ abilities to research, synthesize and apply information explored digitally.

The next chapter outlines the overall context and rationale for this capstone project. Chapter Three will address the overview of the capstone project, the research and theories that support the rationale of the project, as well as the setting where the project is expected to take place and the expected participants of the project. This chapter will conclude with an overall description of the project including the needs assessment, design, implementation, evaluation assessments and a summary of the projected timeline of the project.
CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

Based on the analysis of this literature review, my research question: What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy? became clearer in my mind. The research explored in the previous chapter reaffirmed the notion that implementing digital tools into a research argument had positive results and increased student engagement. Studies conducted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) and Howell (2018) both found that by allowing students to use digital tools to form and present arguments, it increased students’ overall engagement with assignments and for Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) the use of a technology-rich classroom also increased overall scores on state tests.

Although these digital practices are slowly being implemented in classrooms, there are still inconsistencies between what skills employers expect their incoming employees to possess and the actual lack of necessary, digital skills (Raish & Rimland, 2016). This problem, along with an increasing issue of teachers’ inability to properly scaffold these digital strategies and tools, continue to affect students’ ability to successfully navigate and apply digital skills (Darling-Hammond, L., Zielezinski, M. B.,
& Goldman, S., 2014). And although these skills are vital for future employment, as mentioned previously, these skills are also essential life skills that all learners will need to be proficient in regardless of their future career prospects. These key findings were crucial to the creation of this project curriculum and the successful implementation of digital tools and strategies in 9th grade English classrooms.

In this chapter, I will explain the main components of the capstone project as well as the major goals that I aimed to accomplish, both of which influenced the creation of this curriculum project. The chapter will begin with a project overview of the design of the curriculum, assessments, and implementation followed by a section dedicated to the project setting and participants. A discussion describing the connection between the capstone project and the research that reinforced this digital implementation will come next to provide an adequate support of researched ideas. Finally, Chapter Three will conclude with a framework for the completion of this project as well as a timeline for the implementation in the discussed setting.

Project Overview

The goal of this capstone project was to redesign the final weeks of curriculum for an existing ninth grade argumentative unit to include the use of digital strategies and tools. This curriculum was intended to give students the opportunity to take the research they conducted on an argumentative topic and create a multimodal presentation where they practiced learning and applying digital skills using technological applications and strategies. Although the primary purpose of the project was to increase students’ use of digital skills, the project was also intended to increase student engagement and comfort
level with digital tools. The project was implemented in my classroom during the research unit typically covered in the second trimester of students’ English experience, with the intention that other ninth grade teachers in my department will implement these same strategies into the same research units.

**Design.** The capstone project was designed to replace four weeks of curriculum in an existing argumentative research unit. These lessons were intended to increase students’ use of digital skills and information literacy through a multimedia presentation based on their written argument by giving students access to a variety of tools with scaffolded instruction to avoid frustration and increase engagement.

The previous research unit within my school was a combination of an argumentative research paper and presentation which made up the majority of a twelve-week trimester. This presentation used a required template and was restricted to Google Slides which did not allow students the opportunity to explore creative interests and become familiar with other digital applications and strategies. This unit also often resulted in student burnout with their chosen topic which lead to a lack of student motivation and engagement.

This capstone was designed to replace this prescribed research paper and presentation by splitting these larger assignments up into two separate units. Instead, the project was designed for students to complete a smaller version of a research paper earlier in the trimester, which addressed initial research and writing skills, and was not featured in this project; However, it is important to note that those skills were addressed previous to this project. The curriculum for this project focused on students conducting research on
a new topic (not featured in this curriculum) to create an advanced and creative presentation using Google Slides, Prezi, Glogster, or Canva that successfully incorporated multiple media for argumentation. Within this 4-week curriculum, there were multiple lessons that introduced students to these digital applications to practice with before choosing a digital medium to adapt and share the research of their arguments.

The design of the lesson plans in this project was based off of the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2011) in their book *Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units*. The premise of this design, as the name “backward design” suggests, is to start the design of any unit or lesson with the end in mind. The benefit of this design is to give the unit a clearer focus and keeps the short-term and long-term goals in mind throughout the lesson planning process (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Understanding by Design (UbD) includes the following three stages—Stage 1: Identify Desired Results, Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence, and Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction Accordingly (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). In order to achieve the desired results, this unit creation began with the creation of the Final Speech Rubric (Appendix A) followed by subsequent lessons that resembled the UbD framework.

Finally, this curriculum considered the work of authors Howell (2018), Huang and Archer (2017), and Darling-Hammond, Zielezinski, and Goldman (2014) who have all conducted extensive research and studies on the successful implementation of digital tools in classrooms. In particular, Howell’s (2018) work successfully implementing digital tools as a form for students to express argumentation with multimodality had inspired the design of this capstone. Students in her study completely changed their
minds about what argumentation means in the 21st century and by having students experience arguments through technology was one of the major rationales for the change in the current curriculum.

**Implementation.** The curriculum of this capstone project was implemented in three phases. Note that the initial research collection that consists of students researching a new topic as another opportunity to practice research skills previously learned was intended to happen before this 4-week curriculum and was not featured in this project capstone. The first phase featured in this curriculum focused on scaffolded mini lessons for students to become familiar with a variety of digital tools and programs followed by the second phase in which students chose the medium they were most comfortable and engaged in working with. This second phase also included specific resources for each digital application for students to self-guide and troubleshoot as they created their presentations. The third and final phase of this curriculum was intended to come after students’ presentation creation and involved students presenting their multimedia presentations in front of an audience. The project also allowed the opportunity for students to engage in self-reflection about argumentation and their use of digital skills and tools.

**Phase 1.** The first part of the curriculum implementation focused on a series of mini lessons that covered a variety of digital tools and programs that students used in their presentation creations. These platforms included two traditional presentation resources (Google Slides and Prezi) and two platforms that challenged students’ creativity (Canva and Glogster.) Each day of this first phase examined one of these
researched digital applications with example projects featured in Appendix B. Students received direct instruction from the teacher through a modeled example that students replicated by creating mini assignments that demonstrated their learning. These lessons included the major features students needed to know to cover the basics of the multimedia and also included formatives for students to practice turning pieces of their arguments into a visual representation.

The specific authors and theories that ground the work of this project included the work of Albers and Sanders (2010) who explored the theory of multimodality and its positive impact on 21st-century learners (Halliday, 1985; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This was a major component to my project because this research laid the foundation for the concept that digital tools and multimedia should be implemented into the classroom to increase students’ digital literacy skills.

**Phase 2.** The next phase of this capstone project moved away from direct instruction and gave students the opportunity to choose the digital tools and applications that they wanted to work with as they began the creation of the argumentative presentations. Students chose from Google Slides, Prezi, Glogster, and Canva. Students were encouraged to choose an application that challenged them and options for these choices were limited based on pretest and formative assessment results from Phase 1 (Appendix C). Once students chose the application that they wanted to use, students began creating their speech outlines (Appendix D) and their multimedia presentations of their arguments. During this time, students created multimodal representations of their
arguments that included the use of at least two mediums including text, videos, voiceovers, music, charts, or images.

**Phase 3.** The final piece of this unit was to give students the opportunity to present their argumentative presentations. Students spent part of this phase practicing their presentations as well as actually giving the presentation in front of an audience. During the actual presentations, students were assessed on both the content of their arguments as well as their ability to present the information in an organized and practiced manner. After the presentations, students self-assessed again using a similar Google Form (Appendix C) from the beginning of the unit on their digital skills and the teacher formally assessed the presentation and use of medium and creativity.

**Assessments.** Formative assessments were included within the first week of the presentation project creation. Students practiced such skills as paraphrasing direct quotes by creating slides to show the process as well as using their researched, statistical information to create charts, videos, or other visual products that were incorporated into their presentations. The goal was to have students build their familiarity and use of a variety of digital tools throughout this first week to then apply these skills as they created their final argumentative presentations. Students were assessed informally using Google Forms at the beginning of the unit to self-assess their use of digital tools as well as during weekly checkpoints that kept students accountable for their work (Appendix C).

Students were also initially assessed through a short pretest that had them create a short presentation using Google Slides (Appendix C). This pretest included directions that asked students to insert images, hyperlink words, create animation, and other
basic-level actions within a presentation application as well as completed a self-reflection after the pretest for students to self-assess their digital abilities. Most of my students have familiarity with Google Slides or PowerPoint, so it seemed fitting to have students use an application that was familiar to them in order to assess these beginning skills. The final assessment of this curriculum was the quality of their argumentative presentation that was based on their use of visual information to present the vital points of their arguments.

**Project Setting and Participants**

As noted in Chapter One, this project was intended to take place in a suburban public high school in a ninth grade English classroom. This school is located in a large second-ring suburb of a major metro area in the upper midwest. The size of the district is very large with over 38,000 total students, with five major high schools, six middle schools, twenty-four elementary schools, and other additional alternative learning centers (ALC’s). The enrollment of the high school where this curriculum will be implemented is around 2,300 students in grades 9-12 with typical English class sizes around 30 students. This school setting has an increasing population of diverse students, but is mainly 80% white and around 30% of students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (Minnesota Department of Education).

A typical classroom has access to a chromebook cart that is shared among the school with an easy checkout process for teachers to share throughout the school year. This school supplies an extensive internet connection that experiences minimal connection interruptions. The classroom setting for this curriculum project consists of
students who are enrolled in regular English (e.g. not honors) in their second trimester of English their freshman year of high school.

Also included in the intended audience and participants are other English teachers who are looking for models of how to integrate technology to support learning objectives. My hope was that other teachers in my English department be able to take the digital tools implemented in the project and use them in other related research or presentations to continue to enhance students’ ability to navigate the increasing amount of digital tools available to them. In particular, this project was intended to be adopted by my fellow ninth grade teachers that gave our students a shared experience and practice with the use of more complex technology.

Summary

This chapter explored the rationale and design/implementation of my research project to answer the research question: *What digital strategies does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?* This chapter also explored the specific research that supports the implementation of this project as well as the project audience and setting.

The next chapter will describe the final outcome of the capstone project as well as the overall reflection of the project as a whole.
CHAPTER FOUR

Project Reflection

Introduction

The purpose of my project was to create a curriculum that implemented digital tools into a research argument to improve students’ ability to work with technology. Based on previous argument units I have implemented in the past, it was also my goal to design a curriculum that enhances student understanding of argumentation to create well-researched and creative arguments. Although I had this clear goal in mind, I was not exactly sure how to create a digital-focused argumentative unit until finding a research study conducted by Howell (2018). In her study, Howell (2018) created an assignment using an application called Glogster that allowed students to create an interactive website of a social issue to present an argument for a change on this issue. After reading more about Howell’s (2018) findings, and reading more about a digital application I had never heard about, I began to wonder what other applications were out there that could help students create arguments and practice their digital skills. Thus, I discovered my research question for this project creation What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?

In this chapter, I aim to reflect on the process of answering my research question as well as the key understandings of this project to better understand the implications and
impact that it may have on my professional future. The chapter will begin with the initial reflection on the project understandings that have impacted myself as a learner, researcher, and as an educator. After this reflection, the chapter will focus on making further connections to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and review the most important research that has influenced this project creation. Next in the chapter, I will discuss the possible limitations of the curriculum in the classroom, and then conclude the chapter with a final discussion of the future implications and the possible impacts that this project may have on the research of education and future educators.

Project Understandings

This capstone project has given me the opportunity to reflect on all that I have learned as both a learner and as an educator. First and foremost, one of the key understandings I have taken away from this process was the importance of reflection and a willingness to try new strategies in the classroom. Growing up as an overachiever, being called a failure was the ultimate insult to my pride, but as an educator, I have learned that this is one of the greatest compliments. As I began this process, I continuously went back and forth on the quality of my curriculum design and idea because it never felt “good enough.” And even though there are still times that I am unsure about portions of my project, I have learned that even if one of my lesson plans does not go well, I am more than prepared to take a step back and reflect on the successes and failures in order to make it better next time.

I created this project because I wanted to ensure that my students could continue to grow their digital skills. Initially when I started this project, I had focused more
heavily on wanting to change a unit that I felt was unsuccessful. However, I quickly realized that I needed to make my project about my students and change a curriculum that may have felt unsuccessful for them. After reflecting on my ninth grade curriculum, I realized how many students were still lacking basic digital skills and how this was impacting my current argumentative unit. Before designing this curriculum, students were focused on a one-size fits all digital presentation with Google Slides based on the same topic they had researched for the previous 8 weeks, and it was stripping away student creativity and engagement. By splitting up the research paper and argumentative presentations into two separate mini units, I have been able to design a curriculum that challenges students’ engagement and creativity, while also cultivating their digital and argumentative skills to match a 21st century world. In the first unit, students can focus on the necessary skills to research and write an argument, and then have the opportunity to apply and expand those skills to a second unit, the main focus of this project, that will then challenge them to use argumentation in a completely innovative and digital way.

Lastly, this capstone project has unexpectedly given me the opportunity to expand my own knowledge and comfort level with digital tools. As mentioned previously in Chapter One, I did not experience an education where I learned digital skills in a classroom and was more self-taught. Although this has helped me learn to experiment with technology, there is always so much more I wish I knew that I could implement into my classroom. This project has been the first step in achieving that goal, and will work as a blueprint for the process to create an even more technology-rich environment for students to continue to grow and cultivate their digital skills. In the next section, I will
return to the literature covered in Chapter Two and discuss the research that most heavily influence the creation of my capstone project.

**Connection to Literature**

The process behind the literature review in Chapter Two was both the most time-consuming piece of my capstone project and the most important piece as the research revealed the most vital elements within my project. The main reason why I wanted to create a curriculum that implemented more advanced technology was because of my own experiences as a student struggling to navigate technology in college and as a teacher in the classroom watching my students face the same challenges. I quickly realized after I began my research that others shared my opinion including author Koltay (2011) who has conducted research on the importance of students expanding their digital skills to be prepared for a digital workforce. Although important skills such as literacy are extremely important to me as an English teacher, Koltay (2011) asserts that literacy is no longer just the written word, but is also heavily tied to technology. This idea played a huge role in the creation of this project and allowed me to explore different strategies to bring this technology into my classroom.

My capstone project was also heavily influenced by specific case studies of teachers implementing technology successfully into their own classrooms. In particular, a 2018 study performed and analyzed by Howell that focused on presenting arguments in a digital form was one of the most influential studies I came across in my research. In this study, Howell (2018) asked students survey questions before beginning the argumentation unit and focused on students’ ideas of what argumentation should be.
Howell (2018) found before beginning the study, that most students believed argumentation was limited to written language since that had been their main experience with arguments so far in their education. However, by the end of the study, after students had successfully created an argumentative project using a digital application, student responses revealed that they were now more aware that argumentation could be presented entirely with multimodal elements (p. 538).

I decided to take a similar approach to implement in my project by posing the questions *What do you believe an argument is? How are arguments practiced in school?* as a journal prompt for the first day of the unit rather than as a survey question. Based on the experience that Howell (2018) presented from the study, I realized how important this realization would be for students within a unit aimed at increasing their digital skills. Based on Howell’s (2018) findings, I even decided to use the question *What is argumentation and how does technology affect an argument?* as a guiding question for the entire unit to continue to bring students’ focus back to this idea throughout the unit. I further incorporated the survey into my own Google Form linked on Day 20 of the project calendar titled “Post Presentation Google Form” that students were asked to complete on the final day of the unit. The form asked student multiple reflective questions about their experience working with the digital applications and ended with the following question *After completing this presentation/speech, what do you think argumentation means?* to not only receive feedback from students, but to also provide them with another opportunity to reflect on how technology plays a role in argumentation.
Howell’s (2018) research along with the work of Huang and Archer (2017) were instrumental in the decision to try Glogster as one of the digital platforms I wanted to explore in this project. I knew from reading the work of Huang and Archer (2017) that the choice of media that I chose for students to express their arguments would affect the complexity of said arguments, so upon reading Howell’s (2018) experience with Glogster, it seemed a clear choice. Throughout the search to find other digital platforms to use in my project, the work of multiple authors including Malafi et al. (2017) and Raish and Rimland (2016) also greatly influenced the applications that I wanted to explore. Malafi et al. (2017) and Raish and Rimland (2016) research emphasizes the importance of a student’s ability to successfully apply their skills from school to the real world, such as navigating technology in order to organize and present researched information in a logical fashion using effective digital tools. Based on this research, I knew I needed to find other digital platforms that could provide students with this real-world application that employers are now heavily seeking from future employees in the 21st century. Faced with this knowledge, I was quickly able to further narrow down my search to Prezi and Canva, both of which are heavily used currently by large companies throughout the United States for marketing and presentation purposes (Canva Review 2017, Prezi 2019).

This section focused on the research that influenced the creation of my project and recalled specific information from multiple authors and case studies in support of this capstone. I will now shift the focus to discuss the possible implications as well as professional benefits that this project will bring to other teaching professionals,
specifically those whose goal it is to bring more technology into an argumentative research unit.

**Possible Implications and Limitations**

My project was designed to bring more digital experience for students into the classroom and to expand their ability to create arguments using multimedia through creative technological platforms. What makes this project unique is that it is designed to promote student choice using digital tools, but is also scaffolded and supported for students to properly learn all of the variety of applications including Google Slides, Prezi, Glogster, and Canva. Although the integration of technology into the classroom is important, Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) note through their own extensive research that teacher support and scaffolding is critical to successfully implement new and complex technology into a classroom unit. I have worked hard to provide those necessary tools for both teachers and students within this capstone project to both support and promote the positive use of technology.

Overall, this capstone project will benefit the profession in two possible ways. First, this project will help teachers of any subject to begin to integrate technology into their classrooms in a small way that may lead to further technology usage in the future. Many teachers I have worked with have shied away from using too much technology in their classrooms because they are not sure how to build the technology in their lessons or they are not comfortable with the overwhelming variety of digital applications that exist for teachers to use. My project is intended to help teachers learn about just a few digital tools that they can use in the classroom for students to design creative and engaging
presentations. Although my project only uses four of these applications, four is a reasonable number for any teacher who wants to begin this exploration. This curriculum can also easily be adapted to only include two or three of these applications for those teachers who may feel overwhelmed with more, but want to dip their toes into using multimodal applications into an argumentative research unit.

Second, my project also has the potential to raise awareness of the lack of equity that exists for students who do not have access to technology and are falling behind in these digital skills. As discovered in research conducted by Raish and Rimland (2016), employers are often shocked by the lack of well-developed digital literacy skills of young incoming employees. The creation of this project promotes the equal access of technology to all students to improve their digital skills, especially for those students who do not have regular access to a computer at home. So often, young students are expected to know how to use technology based on the assumption that they have possession of a smartphone along with a permeation of other technological advances, but the skills required to send a text message are a far cry from synthesizing research into an organized presentation (Šorgo et al. 2017). Through the creation of this project, my hope is that educators will continue to realize that technology needs to be taught explicitly in schools in all subject matters to give students the opportunity to learn and cultivate these important skills.

**Limitations.** One of the major limitations that my project assumes is the daily availability of Chromebooks and high-speed internet or other available technology for student use to successfully complete this digital presentation. I realize that not all school
districts have technology available to students on a daily basis, so that would present a challenge for any teacher implementing my curriculum to its full capacity; however, there would still be potential to modify the curriculum if some technology and internet were possible a few days a week. My project also assumes that teachers have access to a classroom portal such as Google Classroom or another teacher resource to create student assignments such as Google Forms and to quickly collect and assess student work. While not required for my curriculum, it is intended to be fully accessed online for students to have quick and easy access to all resources in one easy-to-use platform as they navigate the more complex digital tools.

A final limitation that this project may pose is the added cost of the digital applications. Although every one of these applications, Google, Prezi, Glogster, and Canva, have free, online accounts that any online user can access, there are limitations to these free accounts. Google Slides is completely free, however, to get the full potential of Prezi, Glogster, and Canva, it does cost a monthly or annual fee for educators with prices ranging based on the number of students or classes the user intends to use. While cost is not required, it is highly recommended to give students the full opportunity to learn to work with more complex digital tools.

Although my project has some limitations and assumptions associated with the successful implementation, there remain significant positive implications. My project allows a way for professionals to implement technology in an innovative way that not only promotes student creativity and engagement, but also allows students the opportunity to increase and practice the digital skills that they will need to cultivate to be
successful adults in the future. In the next section, I will focus on my personal plan for the use of my capstone project in my own classroom as well as within my school’s English department.

**Looking to the Future**

I fully intend to use my completed project during my next research unit and will begin this experience by also sharing this resource with my ninth grade English team. Previous to the project, I have had many discussions with my team about adapting our current research unit and implementing new resources to improve the quality of student arguments and presentations. My capstone project is designed to be user-friendly with a complete calendar overview with hyperlinks to all supplemental materials to promote easy sharing with my colleagues. Eventually, my goal would be to share this resource with my other colleagues in other grade levels, but intend to pilot this curriculum first with my team first in order to make any additions or changes.

Looking back after completing this capstone project and reflection, I have also decided to make it a goal to work with my English department to continue the conversation about technology implementation. I am fortunate enough to have a large amount of access to technology in my district, but despite having these tools, my colleagues and I would still benefit immensely from more advanced professional development on the digital resources and strategies. Our district strives to offer helpful professional development by introducing new resources, and I would love to work with my district to create professional development sessions that could be adapted from this project.
Summary

This chapter focuses on the reflection of my capstone project process as I searched to answer the research question *What digital strategies and tools does the research recommend be added to an existing argument unit to increase students’ information literacy?* Throughout this search, I discovered a few key understandings including the importance of self-reflection for myself and for my students, how I could make an existing unit more engaging for students to better equip them with a digital skill-set, and ultimately ended up adding more digital strategies and knowledge to my own tool kit of teaching resources. Throughout this chapter, I was also to reflect on the specific literature that impacted the creation of this project as well as the overall implications that this capstone project could bring to the teaching profession as a community and within my own English department. I ended this chapter speaking to some of the potential limitations of this curriculum while also addressing my future plans to implement this unit in my own classroom as I work with my colleagues to enhance the future of our classroom technology and resources.
REFERENCES


Literacies into an English Education Program. *English Education, 40*(1), 41-60. Retrieved from JSTOR.


## APPENDIX A

Lesson Plans Calendar & Links

### WEEK 1
**WEEKLY FOCUS:**
Practice Using Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday Day 1</th>
<th>Tuesday Day 2</th>
<th>Wednesday Day 3</th>
<th>Thursday Day 4</th>
<th>Friday Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Google Slides</td>
<td>Prezi Slides</td>
<td>Glogster</td>
<td>Canva Tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest Self Reflection</td>
<td>Tutorial &amp; Practice</td>
<td>Tutorial &amp; Practice</td>
<td>Tutorial &amp; Practice</td>
<td>&amp; Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Introduce Speech Assignment</td>
<td>-Example</td>
<td>-Example</td>
<td>-Example</td>
<td>-Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUE: Prezi Formative</td>
<td>DUE: Google Slide Formative</td>
<td>DUE: Prezi Formative</td>
<td>DUE: Glogster Formative</td>
<td>DUE: Canva Formative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WEEK 2
**WEEKLY FOCUS:**
Adapt Research to Presentation / Speech Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday Day 6</th>
<th>Tuesday Day 7</th>
<th>Wednesday Day 8</th>
<th>Thursday Day 9</th>
<th>Friday Day 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze &amp; Evaluate Evidence</td>
<td>Speech Outline</td>
<td>Integrating Quotes Activity</td>
<td>Outline Workshop</td>
<td>Outline Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-EXAMPLE</td>
<td>-Choose Multimedia &amp; Topic</td>
<td>-Outline Workshop</td>
<td>DUE: Check-In #1</td>
<td>-Counterclaim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WEEK 3
**WEEKLY FOCUS:**
Using Presentation Tools / Constructing Multimedia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday Day 11</th>
<th>Tuesday Day 12</th>
<th>Wednesday Day 13</th>
<th>Thursday Day 14</th>
<th>Friday Day 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing Multimedia Presentation</td>
<td>Constructing Multimedia Presentation</td>
<td>Constructing Multimedia Presentation</td>
<td>Constructing Multimedia Presentation</td>
<td>Constructing Multimedia Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Search for Image/ Multimedia</td>
<td>-Search for Image/ Multimedia</td>
<td>DUE: Check-In #2</td>
<td>-References Page (Example)</td>
<td>DUE: Check-In #3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WEEK 4
**WEEKLY FOCUS:**
Presentations / Final Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday Day 16</th>
<th>Tuesday Day 17</th>
<th>Wednesday Day 18</th>
<th>Thursday Day 19</th>
<th>Friday Day 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
<td>Day’s Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Signup</td>
<td>Finalize Multimedia Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Finalize &amp; Rehearse Presentations</td>
<td>DUE: Presentation</td>
<td>DUE: Presentation</td>
<td>DUE: Presentation</td>
<td>DUE: Presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DUE: Post Presentation Self Reflection
### APPENDIX B

#### Superlative Presentation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A - Sophisticated</th>
<th>B - Skilled</th>
<th>C - Sufficient</th>
<th>F - Insufficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evidence and Reasoning</strong></td>
<td>Introduction is engaging and focuses the listener on the argument through a clear thesis.</td>
<td>Introduction attempts to engage through story or list and the thesis makes the argument clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(introduction, conclusion, &amp; transitions)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transitions connect each section of the speech and make the focus of each paragraph clear.</td>
<td>Transitions are present but do not always show the relationship between sections. Focus of each paragraph is clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Organization is logical.</td>
<td>Organization is mostly logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion summarizes what the speaker proved.</td>
<td>Conclusion summarizes what the speaker proved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence and Reasoning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>Speaker provides strong evidence to support their topics.</td>
<td>Speaker provides some strong evidence to support their topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Speaker thoroughly explains how the evidence supports their topic.</td>
<td>Speaker somewhat explains how the evidence supports their topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker uses correct verbal citations to provide the author, year and credibility of each source.</td>
<td>Speaker uses mostly correct verbal citations to provide the author, year and credibility of each source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker chooses a strong counterclaim and rebuts it in a way that is fair and respectful of others.</td>
<td>Speaker provides a counterclaim and a rebuttal that is mostly fair and respectful of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multimedia</strong></td>
<td>Student faces their audience throughout the speech</td>
<td>Student faces their audience most of their speaking time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Student engages the audience w/ vocal variety emphasizing content.</td>
<td>Student varies their voice occasionally to enhance info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student controls posture and gestures and uses them to emphasize points.</td>
<td>Student controls posture and gestures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multimedia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multimedia enhances understanding for each topic of the presentation and show advanced knowledge of the chosen application.</td>
<td>Multimedia enhances understanding for most topics of the presentation and shows knowledge of the chosen application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multimedia includes a references page that is correctly cited and hyperlinked.</td>
<td>Multimedia includes a references page that is correctly cited and hyperlinked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multimedia includes two or more digital mediums including: text, videos, voiceovers, music, charts, or images.</td>
<td>Multimedia includes two digital mediums including: text, videos, voiceovers, music, charts, or images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student references multimedia to draw audience attention to it.</td>
<td>Student references multimedia to draw audience attention to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multimedia sometimes supports and distracts from the presentation. Does not show knowledge of chosen application.</td>
<td>Multimedia is not cited correctly and/or hyperlinks are missing or. References page may be missing completely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connection to content not always clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Superlative Presentation Google Slides Example

- 1.2 million acres of protected land
- 30 campgrounds
- 450 miles of trails

"South Dakota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan", 2018

(Wind Cave National Park and Jewel Cave National Monument are] two of the longest cave systems in the world...140 miles and 170 miles... (Yost, 2019).

"Briarcliff Campground, SD"

"Mount Rushmore National Memorial", 2018

"Yosemite, SD"
Florida v. South Dakota

References


References (Multimedia)

- "South Dakota" YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LwQnZKs23w
Superlative Presentation Prezi Example

South Dakota
National Parks
Dakota Badlands
Deadwood
Best Vacations

Deadwood
(Mood Vibes, 2017)

South Dakota is the best place to vacation
(Priyanka Dash, 2014)

1.2 million acres of protected land
50 campgrounds
450 miles of trails
(South Dakota National Parks Commission, 2016)

Mount Rushmore
("Mount Rushmore National Memorial", 2009)

[Wind Cave National Park and Jewel Cave National Monument are] two of the longest cave systems in the world...140 miles and 170 miles....
(Yosti, 2019).

Mount Rushmore
("Mount Rushmore National Memorial", 2009)
Superlative Presentation Glogster Example

South Dakota is the best place to travel to in the U.S. because it is the most extensive national park and many historical landmarks.

1. Florida v. South Dakota
   - Beaches are crowded
   - Lakes are well-sealed
   - Attractions are not as diverse
   - Four distinct seasons

2. Florida’s 2 national parks are close to each other

3. Not crowded because of the seasons

4. Beach National Parks

(Made by Glogster.com)
Superlative Presentation Canva Example

South Dakota is the best place to vacation.

**National Parks**
- 1.2 million acres of protected land
- 30 campgrounds
- 450 miles of trails
  ("South Dakota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan", 2018)

**Wind Cave National Park**
[Wind Cave National Park and Jewel Cave National Monument are] two of the longest cave systems in the world...140 miles and 170 miles....
(Yost, 2019).

**Mount Rushmore**
The National Park System (2019) states that "Mount Rushmore symbolizes the ideals of freedom democracy and pays tribute to 4 presidents invaluable contributions to the U.S."

**Bear Butte**
Jim Robbins (2006), also says "As many as 8,000 Indians from 30 tribes around the country travel to Bear Butte" It is "one of the most sacred sites in North America."
Florida v. South Dakota

Beaches are crowded
Florida’s 2 national parks are not good places to camp
Hot & humid in the summer
Limited activities because there is never snow (swimming)

4 distinct seasons (never too hot)
Range of activities because of the seasons
Not crowded
Better National Parks

So, the next time you are wondering where to travel for an amazing experience, think no farther than the majestic state of South Dakota!
APPENDIX D

Pre-Test

Directions: Complete the following tasks on the next slide.

1. Write your name and move it to the top center of the slide. (1/2 point)
2. Change your name to “Montserrat” font, size 36-point, and the color purple. (1 point)
3. Change the theme OR the background of the slide. (1 point)
4. Insert an image using the “Insert” tab. (1 point)
5. Resize the image so that it fits on the slide, and then center it below your name. (1 point)
6. Select the image and using the “Insert” tab, create animation to the image such as “Fly in from bottom” (1 point)
7. Create a new slide. (1/2 point)
8. On this second slide, insert a video using the “Insert Tab” (1 point)
9. Format your video so that it starts playing at 1:00 minute in. (1 point)
10. Insert a new text box. Write a title for your video.
11. Open a new tab and go to Google.com. Copy the URL in the address bar and link your URL it to the title you created. (1 point)
12. Turn in your pre-test and then complete the “Pre-Test Self-Reflection” Form

Pre-Test Self Reflection

Pre-Test Self-Reflection
Complete this form after taking your multimedia pre-test.
* Required

1. Email address *

2. What hour do you have English? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Hour 1
   - Hour 2
   - Hour 3
   - Hour 4
   - Hour 5

3. Who is your English teacher this Trimester? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Ms. Simmons
   - Mr. Hull
   - Mr. Milbauer
   - Ms. Brown

4. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when adding in and changing text? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea. HELP!  I am an expert.
5. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when including a hyperlink in your presentation? 
   Mark only one oval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   I have no idea, HELP! | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
   I am an expert.       | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

6. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when inserting an image? 
   Mark only one oval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   I have no idea, HELP! | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
   I am an expert.       | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

7. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when animating (adding movement) to a slide? 
   Mark only one oval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   I have no idea, HELP! | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
   I am an expert.       | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

8. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when formatting a video on your slide? 
   Mark only one oval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   I have no idea, HELP! | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
   I am an expert.       | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

9. When inserting an image or video, I have trouble with: Select all that apply. 
   Check all that apply:
   - Finding an Image/Video.
   - Resizing the image.
   - Moving around the Image/Video.
   - Cropping the image.
   - Inserting the image.
   - Formatting the video for time.
   - Other: ____________________________

10. How much text is enough to include on a slide? Select all that apply. 
    Check all that apply:
    - As much as can fit so the audience can read my notes.
    - All of my notes so I remember what to say.
    - Just enough for the audience to understand.
    - None, besides my citations. I let my images do the talking for me.
    - I try to paraphrase information to include only what is necessary.

11. What is the biggest challenge for you when creating a presentation? Explain your answer.

12. Is there anything else you would like your teacher to know about your presentation?
Check-In #1

Your email address (msimmons02@hamline.edu) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not required.

* Required

1. Email address

2. What hour do you have English? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Hour 1
   - Hour 2
   - Hour 3
   - Hour 4
   - Hour 5

3. Who is your English teacher this Trimester? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Ms. Simmons
   - Mr. Hull
   - Mr. Milbauer
   - Ms. Brown

4. Which multimedia application will you be using? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Google Slides
   - Prezi
   - Blubster
   - Canva

5. How far are you on your outline? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Wait, what outline?
   - Completed the introduction.
   - Completed the introduction and reason 1.
   - Completed the introduction, reason 1, and reason 2.
   - Completed the introduction, reason 1, and reason 2, and counter argument.
   - I think I am done, but I need to go over my outline and add all the information I have.

6. What do you need to complete tonight & this weekend to stay on track for on-time completion of the outline by the due date? Be specific with task. *

   

7. What is one question, concern, or comment you have about the outline so far? *
Check-In #2

Your email address (msimmons02@hamline.edu) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not required.

1. Email address *

2. What hour do you have English? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Hour 1
   - Hour 2
   - Hour 3
   - Hour 4
   - Hour 5

3. Who is your English teacher this Trimester? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Ms. Simmons
   - Mr. Hull
   - Mr. Milbauer
   - Ms. Brown

4. Which is the farthest step you have completed? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Found 1-2 multimedia for my project with source information.
   - Found 4-6 multimedia for my project with source information.
   - Found 8-10 multimedia for my project with source information.
   - Created the document for my project.
   - Began inputting my multimedia into my project.
   - Well into inputting my multimedia and outline information into my project.

5. What specific homework do you need to assign yourself to be through Step 6 above by the end of the week? About how long do you think that will take you & when will you complete that homework? (Specify days, and approximate times of day) *

6. How will you remember to do that work on those days? *

7. What questions or struggles do you have at this point? *
Check-In #3

Your email address (msimmons02@hamline.edu) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not msimmons02? Sign out.

1. Email address *

2. What hour do you have English? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Hour 1
   - Hour 2
   - Hour 3
   - Hour 4
   - Hour 5

3. Who is your English teacher this Trimester? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Ms. Simmons
   - Mr. Hull
   - Mr. Milbauer
   - Ms. Brown

4. Which is the farthest step you have completed? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - I have not started my project.
   - I have begun inputting my multimedia into my project.
   - I have begun inputting my multimedia and outline information into my project.
   - I have completed half of my multimedia project.
   - I am ALMOST done with my multimedia project. I just have a few more things to do.
   - My multimedia project is complete and I am ready to practice and edit, and create my notecards!

5. What specific homework do you need to assign yourself over the weekend to be ready to present next week?

6. How will you remember to do that work on those days? *

7. What can your teacher do to assist you so that you complete your project on time? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Nothing, I'm good!
   - Check in with me more often during class time.
   - Set up a 1:1 meeting with me during class time for a 5-minute conference.
   - Schedule a time for students to come in before or after school, so that I can come in and work on my project.
   - Other:
Post Test Self Reflection

Post Presentation Self-Reflection
Complete this form after taking completing your presentations/speech.

* Required

1. Email address *

2. What hour do you have English? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Hour 1
   - Hour 2
   - Hour 3
   - Hour 4
   - Hour 5

3. Who is your English teacher this Trimester? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Ms. Simmons
   - Mr. Hull
   - Mr. Milbauer
   - Ms. Brown

4. On a scale from 1-5, how confident are you when adding in and changing text? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea, HELP!  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  I am an expert

5. On a scale from 1-6, how confident are you when including a hyperlink in your presentation? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea, HELP!  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  I am an expert.

6. On a scale from 1-6, how confident are you when inserting an image? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea, HELP!  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  I am an expert.

7. On a scale from 1-6, how confident are you when animating (adding movement) to a slide? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea, HELP!  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  I am an expert.

8. On a scale from 1-6, how confident are you when formatting a video on your slides? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   I have no idea, HELP!  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  I am an expert.
9. When inserting an image or video, I have trouble with: Select all that apply. *
Check all that apply:
- Finding an image/video.
- Resizing the image.
- Moving around the image/video.
- Cropping the image.
- Inserting the image.
- Formatting the video for time.
- Other: ____________________________

10. How much text is enough to include on a slide? Select all that apply. *
Check all that apply:
- As much as can fit so the audience can read my notes.
- All of my notes so I remember what to say.
- Just enough for the audience to understand.
- None, besides my citations. I let my images do the talking for me.
- I try to paraphrase information to include only what is necessary.

11. What has been the biggest challenge for you when creating this presentation? Explain your answer. *

   ____________________________

12. What has been the greatest success for you when creating this presentation? Explain your answer. *

   ____________________________
## APPENDIX E

### Superlative Speech Outline

#### Slide 1 / Image 1 – Attention Getter:

| **Hook:** | Think of an interesting Question, Statistic, Memorable Quote |

#### Slide 2 / Image 1 – Introduction:

| **Thesis Statement** | [Insert] is the best [insert] due to its [insert criteria 1] and [insert criteria 2]. |

| **Speech Preview** | • Criteria 1  
• Criteria 2  
• Counterclaim |

#### Slide 3 / Image 2 – Background Information:

| **Background Information** | What is important for the audience to know about your topic? List 2-3 points: |

•  
•  

#### Slide 4 / Image 3 – Argument 1 (Part 1)

| **Topic Sentence for Argument 1** | The first reason [insert] is the best [insert] is because [insert]. |

| **Intro to Evidence** | Author (year) credentials, description of evidence |

| **Evidence 1** | Copy in quote here |

| **Quote** |  
| **Paraphrase** |

| **Explanation / Connection to Argument 1** |

#### Slide 5 / Image 4 – Argument 1 (Part 2)

| **TRANSITION** | (Explain what you are going to talk about next in this section.) |

| **Intro to Evidence** | Author (year) credentials, description of evidence |

<p>| <strong>Evidence 2</strong> | Copy in quote here |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence for Argument 2</th>
<th>The second reason [insert] is the best [insert] is because [insert].</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro to Evidence</td>
<td>Author (year) credentials, description of evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence 3</td>
<td>Copy in quote here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation / Connection to Argument 2</td>
<td>(Explain what you are going to talk about next in the presentation.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 7 / Image 6 – Argument 2 (Part 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro to Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation / Connection to Argument 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide 8 / Image 7 – Counterclaim (choose another subtopic to compare your own to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce subtopic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compare subtopic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rebut opponent</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Slide 9 / Image 8 – Conclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Summary of Points</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restate Thesis Statement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clincher:</strong></td>
<td>End with a powerful note. This might relate to your “Attention Getter” from the beginning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>