

The multigenre paper: Increasing interest, motivation, and functionality in research

The multigenre research paper can be a viable alternative to the traditional research paper usually taught in high school. Excerpts from papers and reflective comments from students are included.

Traditional high school research papers have received much criticism over the years. Almost 20 years ago, Macrorie (1980) labeled them "the most unoriginal writings the world has ever seen" (p. 54). Zemelman and Daniels (1988) stated that "teachers dread term papers as much as students do" (p. 256). Dellinger (1989), a high school teacher, called the traditional high school research paper a "clip and stitch" exercise that was "a pale caricature of what it was supposed to be" (p. 31). Another high school teacher, Baird (1992), commented that the main characteristics of traditional high school research papers seem to be "apathy and unconcern" (p. 67). Because of this criticism, many teachers have made changes in their teaching of research-based papers: changes that have made the content more relevant to students' lives and interests; changes that have incorporated research tools other than books, such as interviews and Internet data; changes that have made the presentation more accessible and interesting to audiences other than academia.

While many teachers have made these changes unheralded and unknown outside of their classrooms, a few have published reports of the varying approaches they have taken. One approach was the mystery paper: Kraus's (1978) students researched unsolved murder cases and the times in which they occurred through newspapers on microfilm; solutions were presented in a narrative format that still allowed for formal documentation of sources.

Another approach was Macrorie's (1980) I-search paper, which allowed students to research a topic of personal interest, using both print materials and interviews, and to present the research in a personal narrative about what and how they learned. A variation of this approach was Jobe's (1991) collaborative "we-search" project.

A third approach was a survey-based project: Dellinger's (1989) students worked both individually and in small groups to produce position papers, surveys, graphs of survey results, I-search papers (see Macrorie, 1980), and fictional "saturation reports." A fourth approach maintained the traditional research aspect but changed the mode of presentation: Coleman's (1994) student groups published newspapers about their topics, whereas Peacock's (1987) students presented their findings in letter-style reports with separate bibliographies.

A fifth approach was Romano's (1995) multi-genre project: While students researched their topics with traditional tools, they were encouraged to "meld...fact, interpretation, and imagination" (p. 109) by using different genres of writing to present different aspects of their research.

No matter what changes these teachers and others (e.g., Baird, 1992; Benson, 1987) made in their approaches, all of the reported projects seemed to interest and excite students. At the same time, they still taught research and documentation skills. They showed that research and research papers could be taught in ways that were far more meaningful and enjoyable for students and teachers alike.

Like many teachers who, unnoticed except by their students, experiment with changes in teaching the traditional research paper, I have tried a number of variations over the past 30 years. Most recently, however, I tried Romano's variation on the presentation of research: the multigenre paper. This paper requires students to research a topic—usually a person, but events, eras, or other subjects could certainly be the focus—using all the tools of research available today. Students do not, however, merely "clip and stitch" their findings. Instead, they write a number of pieces that integrate what they have learned from their research, presenting their interpretation of the research through different genres of writing.

For instance, rather than stating that someone was born in a particular year and place, the student might create a birth certificate, the flyleaf of a

Bible, a birth announcement, a hospital invoice, or a letter to or from the new parents. Or, rather than describing a traumatic event, the student might write a newspaper article, a personal letter, a condolence note, or a journal entry to provide a particular tone and voice to the event.

This kind of presentation does not necessarily provide a smooth flow of information or lead to the proving of an academic thesis; it requires that the student think about what has been researched and interpret it from the subject's point of view or the point of view of others from that time period. This interpretive mode also requires creativity along with thought, and it further requires students to use their knowledge of many different types of writing in terms of style, organization, and format. The multigenre paper does include a standard bibliography, but it does not include in-text citations because of its presentation. It can, however, include endnotes that explain each genre in terms of the source of information and the reason behind the use of that genre.

Other than the bibliography and endnotes, the paper ends up looking like the documentation upon which biographers and historians base the narratives they write but which is often not included in their work. Because of these differences, the multigenre project seemed to me like an interesting alternative to the traditional research paper. But would students find it so? And would it still teach the curriculum-required skills?

An unstructured experiment

When I decided to have my students try writing a multigenre research paper, I had neither a definition nor a model of one. However, the students to whom I was introducing such a paper were not high school students; they were undergraduate secondary English education majors enrolled in a course on teaching writing at an urban southwestern U.S. university. All but one of the 14 students were female, and all were middle class Caucasian, ranging from their early 20s to early 30s in age. I, therefore, believed that they could handle the amorphous concept and take an active role in defining and creating the multigenre form. As pre-service teachers, they might also benefit by helping to design ways it could be taught and, if they went through the process of writing one them-

selves, be more inclined to use it or a variation of it with their future students. Thus, if this experiment failed or succeeded, I might be affecting far more students than those I taught directly.

Our biggest problem in beginning the multi-genre paper was that we didn't know what one actually looked like. We read Romano's (1995) explanation in *Writing With Passion* as well as Ondaatje's (1970) *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, the multigenre book on which Romano based his idea. Although we analyzed both books, they didn't quite solve our problem in terms of what a paper should look like. Without making any decisions, we proceeded with the research. Research tools were not a problem; in fact, the students were more adept than I at finding sources not only in books, journals, magazines, and newspapers but also on CD album covers, videos, and Web sites. Rather than keep note cards, however, the students kept learning logs, which included notes on presentation ideas—drafts and format sketches—along with their research notes.

Another problem was teaching my students the forms of different genres, especially since we had brainstormed all the different types of writing people do and created a list of well over 100 different items within various categories. Not only could I not teach all these forms in one class, but also such teaching did not fit my plans for a class in how to teach writing, not a writing class per se. Furthermore, since I was requiring only eight genres per paper, would I limit their selections by teaching specific genres? Bowen (1991) did teach specific genres, and while she did not describe what her students included in their papers, I inferred that the genres taught were the main ones used by her students. In our class, the brainstorming and the learning logs seemed to be enough to solve this problem. Students often referred to the list to trigger ideas for presentation formats, and the drafts and sketches they mixed into their learning logs allowed me a chance to provide feedback on genres that needed some instructional assistance.

Our final problem was the grading criteria. Romano (1995) identified his basis for grading as well as changes he had made along the way. My students did not want as much emphasis on the learning log as he had placed. But because they were drafting in their learning logs, they did not

want a separate draft to be evaluated. We thus downplayed the learning log but added a reflection piece on the whole process that was to include their comments on the process and how they might use the multigenre paper with their future students.

The number and types of genres became another issue in terms of grades. Although we had previously established that eight different genres were required, various questions arose concerning similar genres and repetition of genres. For instance, did a journal entry by the research subject count as the same genre as a journal entry by her husband? Did a newspaper feature story count as the same genre as a newspaper obituary? Did a personal letter count as the same genre as a letter to the editor? These questions were never fully answered. Instead, the students were told that if they had doubts about having repeated a genre, then they needed to add another genre. The students also questioned whether I would be grading each genre or the paper as a whole. We decided I would look at the whole but keep count of the number of genres.

As I looked over learning logs and drafts, I, like Romano, became worried about documentation and possible plagiarism in some cases. I brought up Romano's idea of endnotes, which the students quickly accepted. We also discussed the minimum number of sources that should be used. After discussing these problems with the students, we decided that grades would be based on the extent of their learning logs, the inclusion of at least eight different genres, the thoroughness of endnotes explaining their selection of material and genres, and the accuracy of their bibliographies.

As may be obvious from the grading criteria, there was no attempt to grade the presentation format or the depth of the research. This omission stemmed from the fact that we still had a major problem: what a multigenre paper should look like and, through its presentation, what it shows about the subject and the student's learning. To avoid this problem for other teachers who may be interested in using the multigenre approach, the purpose of this article is, therefore, not to show what I did in the classroom but, rather, to show what multigenre research papers can look like and discuss whether or not they are a feasible and useful option to the traditional research paper.

The students' multigenre papers

The students selected their topics for research on the basis of interest alone. I encouraged them not to select authors because I felt the temptation to use the author's words might be too great and because it might be difficult for them to imitate an author's style if they chose to write from the author's point of view. Of the 14 students in the class, only one chose an author, Emily Dickinson. One student chose an event, the Holocaust, rather than a person, and another chose a group, the Beatles, rather than an individual, but the other 11 students chose such people as Joan of Arc, Princess Diana, Houdini, John Coltrane, Ben Hogan, Ben Franklin, Glenn Miller, Eva Peron, Gene Kelly, Mary Fielding Smith (a Mormon leader), and one student's own grandfather.

As they took notes on their research, they were also encouraged to make notes on the type of genre the information might fit into best or to draft a piece that might become part of their later presentation. Their drafts became part of their learning logs, and they received feedback on them when they turned them in at the halfway point. All of the drafts became part of their end products, sometimes in their original form, sometimes incorporating suggested changes. The students used a wide variety of genres—41 different types of items—in their final products (see Table), but the most widely used genres were poems (all 14 students) and letters (10 students). Posters were the next most popular genre (6 students) and obituaries, interview articles, and lists (all used by 5 students) were next. The other genres, such as sheet music, a receipt, a tabloid cover, a wedding invitation, and a recipe, were used by individuals.

Almost all of the students presented each genre separately so that, as in Ondaatje's (1970) work, there were blank spaces on many pages. A few students intermingled genres, using white space to indicate a change of both genre and time. For example, the student who wrote on Princess Diana included a television/radio announcer's broadcast of the funeral procession interrupted with imagined scenarios of Diana's last evening. Her mixed-genre piece was spaced over four consecutive pages. Another student presented the overall story of Glenn Miller as a single interview with Miller but interrupted it to show different written "evidence"

Genres used in student papers

Genres	Usage
Newspaper article: obituary	5
Newspaper/magazine article: feature story	2
Newspaper article: column	1
Newspaper article: personal or want ad	3
Newspaper article: news story	4
Newspaper/magazine article: interview	5
Newspaper (tabloid) cover	1
Newspaper review of movie, book, concert, etc.	3
List (achievements, events, names, supplies, etc.)	5
Narrative story	3
Play	2
Poem	14
Sheet music	1
Personal letter or note	10
Formal letter	1
Letter to editor	1
Memo	1
Journal/diary entry	4
Descriptive paragraph	4
Television/radio announcer	2
Definition	1
Poster (wanted poster, playbill, concert, movie, etc.)	6
Conversation/dialogue	2
Dual thoughts (inner dialogue)	1
Stream of consciousness	4
Photo caption (sometimes with photo)	3
Eulogy	2
Wedding invitation	1
Doctor's report	1
Birth certificate	3
Recipe	2
Receipt	1
Envelope	1
Extended metaphor	1
Trivia facts	1
Quotes	1
Greeting card	1
School essay	1
Game	1
Book cover	1
Map	1

Note: The usage of genres was measured by the number of students who used each item rather than the times a genre was used because some students used particular genres more than once.

of what Miller was referring to in the interview; for example, when Miller mentioned sending a card to his girlfriend, the next page was a greeting card with a brief note in it supposedly from Miller, and when Miller mentioned how he earned the money for his first trombone, the interview was interrupted to show an essay he might have written for school about "what he did last summer." Because the students also used different fonts for different genres, each page often had a very different look from previous pages (see Figures 1 and 2).

Although bibliographies were required, the actual papers didn't look like a great deal of research had gone into them. That is, certain genres were very short, and documentation was not in evidence within the genre presentation. The endnotes, however, provided an explanation of each genre that included the source for the material and how the genre had been selected or inspired. These endnotes not only helped to identify the genres for the reader, but also provided insight to the sources used as well as the students' thought processes. They also allowed the students to bring in information that had not been included in the paper. For instance, the student who wrote on Ben Hogan wrote an endnote that provided far more information than the 17 syllables of her haiku could (see Figure 3). Similarly, the student who wrote on Joan of Arc provided far more information explaining the poster she had created than the poster itself could (see Figure 4). The student who wrote on Emily Dickinson gave insight to her own thought processes as well as additional information, showing connections between her reading, her interpretation of Dickinson, and her own life (see Figure 5). All of the students had extensive endnotes, perhaps to be able to show more knowledge than the genres themselves included, perhaps because it was the first time they had been given an opportunity to explain why they wrote as they did. Whatever their reasons, the endnotes seemed to satisfy both their needs and mine in terms of assuring that they had, indeed, researched their topics well. The endnotes, to me, were as interesting and readable as the papers themselves.

What the students thought

Because this was an experiment of sorts, the students were asked to reflect on their experience

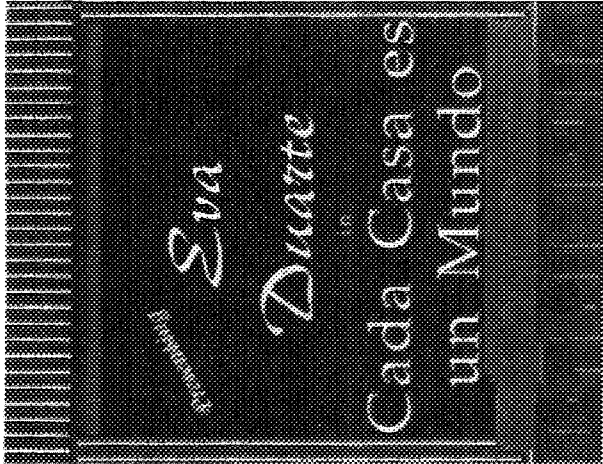
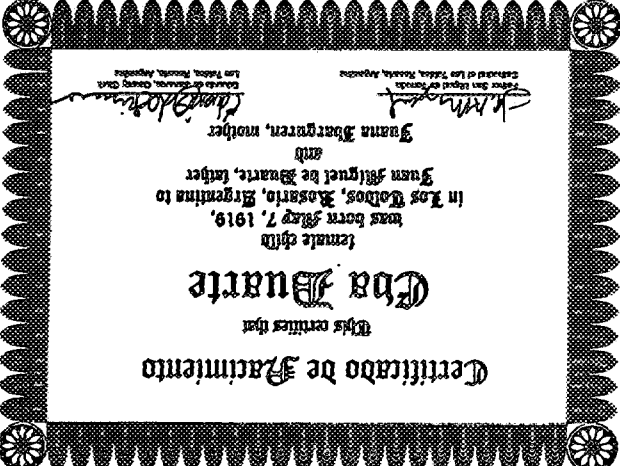
and its potential use in their own classrooms. While there were different criticisms of the way I had "taught" the paper and its placement in our class schedule, the students were overwhelmingly in favor of it. The young woman who wrote on Glenn Miller said that she "had a ton of fun doing this multigenre research paper." She felt like she "learned more about the person [she] chose than if [she] had actually done the standard, much overused research paper." The student who researched her own somewhat mysterious grandfather also said that she "loved doing this assignment. It added a new twist to writing and to research; it allowed for creativity."

The student who wrote on the Beatles said, "It never occurred to me that writing could be so much fun!" The student who researched Mary Fielding Smith found that choosing what she wanted to write about her subject's life gave her "freedom [that] was invigorating," and she hoped "that excitement spilled over into [her] paper." The student who wrote on Houdini found that not only was the paper "fun to put together," but also that it was "a great deal of work—not really hard work, but thoughtful work.... I found that the most strenuous work was the exploration that took place in my mind."

Students all saw potential use for the project in high school classes, though all wanted more structure, examples, and modeling than I had provided. Two students were so enthusiastic about the project that they passed on their enthusiasm to their mothers, both English teachers, who began their own multigenre projects. The student who wrote on Eva Peron said the following:

I had such a great time writing this paper! It was so unlike any paper that I had ever written that it was really refreshing and exciting. At first, however, I was really scared and apprehensive because I did not think that I was creative enough to write a paper from different points of view that included so many genres. After I started writing, though, I got really excited. In fact, I even called my mom, who is an English teacher, and suggested that she try assigning a multigenre paper in her classes! Well, my mom actually took my suggestions. She is trying a multigenre paper in her composition classes.

Figure 1
A student's multigenre paper on Eva Peron

<p>The Actress</p> <p>acting always acting no one must know my true feelings no one must know me I get everything power money by acting they say I'm a bad actress but they don't know I'm feeling them all with my act no one knows I'm dying inside being smothered to death by a life I detest when will I find someone to take care of me someone who actually loves me will marry me maybe someday but I have no hope no light no care for the future I am tired of acting</p>	<p>Eva's Mother Reflecting on Eva's Life</p> <p>Eva never was happy with her lot in life. She abhorred the fact that she was considered illegitimate. In fact, she went so far as to change the day I gave birth to her to make herself legitimate. Can you imagine it? (Ay, Carumbal! No reverence for the pains I had to get her here.)</p> <p>Eva was always very beautiful. She knew from the time she barely started hablando-barely talking-how to get her way. She knew how to use her looks to twist people around. I always knew she would make her mark. She just needed the right time and circumstances. Colonel Peron gave her what she needed. Now look what she did in her short life...I'm so proud... (pause to collect herself). Her father would have been proud, too...If only I could still tell her...</p>
	<p>Requiem</p> <p>My colonel, Why have you abandoned me? I know you are scared to be left Alone. But I need you Now More than ever. The odor my body exudes sickens you, along with my screams of Agony. You can no Longer stand to Be near me. The cancer that eats away my body seems to have also rotted our Love. I thought that our love transcended that of the body. I see now I was Wrong</p>
	<p>Journal entry for Raquel Luis Gonzalez-a descominado and member of La Partida Feminista</p> <p>October 30, 1947</p> <p>Today I went to a political rally for La Partida Feminista. Evita gave a great speech. We all stood and clapped. She does so much for us. Finally there is a leader of our country from the ranks of the people. I admire her courage to rise from poverty to fame-from una casa humilde to La Casa Rosada. She feeds and clothes our children.</p> <p>Santa Evita. Santa Evita? How can I hate someone that I love so much. Did you see the way she flaunted her designer clothes today? And that rock on her finger? Oh, yes, Santa Evita is not humble. Santa Evita will do anything it takes to remain in her position of power. I heard the other day from Senora Avila that if you don't agree with Eva and Juan, you simply disappear. That can't be true... She feeds and clothes our children....</p>

(continued)

Figure 1 (continued)
A student's multigenre paper on Eva Peron

<p>Descamisados Descamisados My people, my Reason for living. I am their Hope Their Inspiration Their Shining Star that lights a path through the miserable darkness of their Existence. And yet, I am one of them. I can hear their babies Starving Crying in the night. I have been Where they are. I must never abandon them. Who will save them if not ME?</p>	<p>End Notes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birth Certificate - I decided to make a birth certificate after reading in each of my sources how much Eva hated being illegitimate. She hated it so much that she even changed her date of birth by about three years so that she would be legitimate. (She destroyed all of the original records and had new ones made.) At the time that she claimed that she was born, her father's wife had died, so by Argentine standards, even though her mother wasn't her father's wife, Eva would have been considered legitimate. 2. Play Preter - This idea came to me after seeing a time line of Eva's life in her deathbed autobiography. She was in a lot of plays, but I believe that this particular one (Cada Casa es un Mundo [Each House is a World]) was the first in which she had a leading role. 3. Stream of Consciousness - Well, this is the first stream of consciousness anything that I've ever done. It was hard to just let go of punctuation and just let my thoughts flow as if I were Evita. It was kind of neat, though, to just sit and daydream and think like someone else. I got this idea after skimming through the first few chapters of Alicia Dujovne's book on Evita. Dujovne makes Eva seem so malcontent. I had to do something with that! 4. Argentine Tabloid, La Estrella (The Star) - This seemed to be the perfect way to portray the upper class's dislike of Eva. The story of Peron's latest flouzy seemed to fit right in with the other sensational news that a tabloid would cover and exploit. According to each of my sources, Eva definitely did not infuriate the Argentine populace. She only infuriated the "important" people.
<p><i>My Dearest Chulina, My love. Come closer, my greatest I am missing you desperately. I am finding the saying "absence makes the heart grow fonder" to be very true. One beautiful country forces well in your absence, though you are sorely missed. Upon being a hope and light to our people that is strongly missing when you are gone. Upon remembering seem to need to look in your mirror. El país del Río de la Plata asks for your return. I know that the love of Europe is going well. I am very proud of you, my negrita. You are representing us well. General Franco sent his regards yesterday, saying that your visit to Espana couldn't have gone better and that you are a charming woman. I know that you will be forthcoming in Italy and France also. Quarta, the guards I sent with you tell me that your health seems to be falling and that you are looking tired. You must take better care of yourself. Eat right, get some sleep, and get back in good health. Your country needs you. I need you.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Carlos En amor, Juan</p>	<p>singled-handedly formed and led La Patria Feminista—the Feminist Party. Through Evita's efforts, thousands of Argentine women became informed about national issues. Many are also now employed and helping to support their families.</p> <p>There will be a state funeral beginning July 28. Eva will remain laid out for viewing until all those who have a desire to pay their respects have been able to do so. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Argentine Shelter for Abandoned Children.</p>
<p>DROUGHT CONTINUES IN PAMPA Suffering in their fields "used Air" of Buenos Aires, capital city</p> <p>LA ESTRELLA</p> <p>EVADUARTE</p> <p>SNAGS PERON</p> <p>Colonel Juan Peron's latest bimbo shocks and infuriates the Argentine nation</p> <p>ADOLF HITLER BUYS HOUSE IN PATAGONIA Seller accepts famous art collection as down payment on \$100,000 house in Patagonia</p> <p>Presidenciera Peron? Will the next occupant of the Casa Rosada (Pink House) by the colonial, savior Colonel Juan Peron, recently returned from military school in Europe?</p>	<p>The Washington Post July 26, 1952</p> <p>Death of a "Saint"</p> <p>Eva Peron, the "Rainbow of Argentina," succumbed to cancer today in her home in Buenos Aires. At 33 years old, Evita was considered one of the world's leading ladies. She will be greatly missed by her people.</p> <p>Eva Duarte de Peron was born in the small rural town of Los Toldos. Eva was the daughter of Juan Duarte and Juana Riquelme. Eva's father died when she was five, but she is survived by her mother, her sisters Elisa, Blanca, and Erninda; her brother Juan; and her husband, Colonel Juan Peron, President of Argentina.</p> <p>Eva, known to her people as Santa Evita, was all but revered. She was honored by various international government leaders throughout her reign at Peron's side. She managed to get Argentina back into the hands of the people and out of the hands of foreign businessmen. The work Evita is most noted for, however, is creating employment for her people through the Argentine Department of Labor and Welfare.</p> <p>Senora Peron was also famous for her work to bring politics and a vote to Argentine women. She</p>

Note: The paper on Eva Peron (title page not shown) consisted of (a) a birth certificate, (b) a movie poster, (c) a stream-of-consciousness from Eva's mind, (d) a tabloid cover featuring Eva and Juan Peron's relationship, (e) a letter to Eva from Juan Peron, (f) a poem by Eva about "her people" (the *descamisados*), (g) a journal entry by a *descamisado*, (h) a poem by Eva to Juan, (i) a memoir by Eva's mother, (j) a news article on Eva's death, and (k) the first of several pages of endnotes explaining the student's choices of genres. Not shown is the bibliography.

Figure 2

A student's paper on Mary Fielding Smith

<p style="text-align: center;">Woman of Courage A Tribute to Mary Fielding Smith</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Woman of Courage Mother in Israel Giving her best potatoes to the Lord Giving the best years of her life to Him</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faith Trust Knowing he would provide Never wavering Following the prophet Following the path to Zion Mother of a prophet Wife to the Patriarch Repairer of the breach Bridgebuilder to Zion Pioneer heroine Martyr for the cause</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Significant Events in the Life of Mary Fielding Smith</p> <p>July 21, 1801 Born in Hoxden, Bedfordshire, England 1834 Joins brother Joseph and sister Mercy in Toronto, Canada</p> <p>May, 1836 Baptized into the Mormon Church Spring, 1837 The Fieldings move to Kirtland, OH Dec. 24, 1837 Marries Hyrum Smith after the death of his first wife, cares for his 4 children</p> <p>May, 1838 Mary and Hyrum move to Far West, MO Feb., 1839 Mary and the Mormons flee from mobs to Nauvoo, IL</p> <p>June 27, 1844 Hyrum is martyred in Carthage jail Sept. 8, 1847 Mary and her family leave Nauvoo for Winter Quarters June 4, 1848 Mary and family leave Winter Quarters for Salt Lake Valley with Captain Lott Sept. 22, 1848 Mary and family arrive in Salt Lake a day before Captain Lott Sept. 21, 1852 Mary dies in Salt Lake of pneumonia</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Mary Fielding Smith. This photo was taken after Mary and Hyrum settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. As wife to the Patriarch and co-creator of the temple Penny Fund, Mary established herself as a prominent Nauvoo woman.</p>	<p>Hyrum Smith Liberty Jail Liberty, Missouri</p> <p>Mary Smith Nauvoo, Illinois 20 January 1839</p> <p>My dearest Hyrum,</p> <p>I do not know if this letter will reach you but I feel to write regardless. Emma brought you love from her visit in December and daily we pray for your safe return. Surely the Lord has seen our suffering and will release you from your bonds with haste:</p> <p>Young Joseph is nearly two months now. He is a beautiful boy. Mary has truly been a blessing from the Lord as I have been weak to nurse. Fear not for me, dear Hyrum, for I shall be well. The Lord is watching over us and we are being provided for. We have come to Nauvoo from the horrors of Far West and are attempting to make a home of this marshland. I am ever so grateful to be gone from Missouri and pray for your joining me and leaving the wretched state as soon as the Lord will allow. We were able to salvage some belongings from the ransacking the mobs did to our home. We were blessed to rescue Joseph from under the mattress where he had been thrown in the mob's fury. The Lord was with us always.</p> <p>I must close. Please know our thoughts and prayers are with you continually.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">With love, Mary</p>
<p>oh Hyrum, Hyrum! have they shot you my dear Hyrum are you dead? oh speak to me, my dear husband I cannot think you dead please rise up and speak my name hold me in your arms I cannot suffer your loss alone please be with me grief fills my soul and calls to the heavens oh Lord why how will I live without him how could they take him from me how will I go on how but I will oh Lord help me be my balm of Gilead the Comforter help me walk through the valley of the shadow of death without my love</p>	<p>Widow Beats Captain to Salt Lake Valley Site</p> <p>SALT LAKE — In a remarkable act of courage, Mary Fielding Smith, widow to Patriarch Hyrum Smith, has beat Captain Cornelius Lott in the Salt Lake Valley.</p> <p>Oxen raised from the dead and a storm sent from Heaven entered Mary's victory.</p> <p>The unique race of widow against Captain occurred when the Captain ordered the company to make the trek to the Salt Lake Valley. According to one witness, the Captain said she "would be a burden to the company" and should return to Winter Quarters.</p> <p>Witnesses say Mary was silent before she replied, "Captain, I will beat you to the Valley, and I will ask no help of you."</p> <p>With this challenge, the race was on.</p> <p>Travelers with the company say the Captain tried to make the journey more difficult for Mary. Once he spoke her in the</p> <p>middle of the night with the faint cry of Indian.</p> <p>On another occasion, he crossed Mary's path by forcing her to send her oxen west, John ahead to the next company to check accordingly on one of her charges.</p> <p>One of Mary's most difficult moments on the journey was when one of her oxen lay down and died. Witnesses say the Captain remarked that the company would have to help her and that she "would be a burden to us."</p> <p>Determined not to burden others, Mary produced a vat of concentrated oil and had two brethren assist her to get on. It rose up and continued in the journey, now to the Captain's astonishment.</p> <p>Mary's good character never wavered throughout the journey. When the Captain lost several cattle as the last company of the journey, Mary was the first to offer assistance. In return, the Captain returned her request and</p> <p>recused her of poisoning his livestock.</p> <p>As they neared Salt Lake in September, the race heated up.</p> <p>The final morning of their journey, one of Mary's oxen was mysteriously missing. The Captain instructed the rest of the company to leave without her. In characteristic faith, Mary prayed and asked God for help. They found the ox shortly afterward and watched as storm clouds gathered and broke loose directly over the Captain and the remainder of the company.</p> <p>Since Mary missed the rain storm, she was able to proceed around the introduced wagers of her company and continue on to reach the Valley a day before her company.</p> <p>When her brother asked if they should stop and wait for their company, Mary replied, "Joseph, they have not waited for us, and I see no necessity for us to wait for them."</p>	<p>Mary Fielding Smith SALT LAKE — Mary Fielding Smith died today, the 21st of September, 1852, after an illness of eight weeks.</p> <p>Widow to Patriarch Hyrum Smith, she is survived by her children, Lovina, of Nauvoo, Illinois, and John, Jeremiah, Sarah, Joseph, and Martha Ann of Salt Lake; her brother, Joseph Fielding; and her sister, Mercy Fielding Thompson.</p> <p>Mary will be remembered by all Saints as a mother in Israel. After the martyrdom of her husband, she was single-handedly responsible for the trek of her household of eighteen to the Salt Lake Valley.</p> <p>Mary was a faithful member of the Church throughout her life and will be remembered as a stalwart woman of Zion.</p>

Note: The paper on Mary Fielding Smith consisted of (a) title page with "praising poem," (b) timeline of major life events, (c) map showing Mary's life journey, (d) song that might have been written by Mary, (e) photo and caption of Mary, (f) letter Mary might have written to her husband while he was incarcerated, (g) stream-of-consciousness of Mary on seeing her husband in his coffin, (h) news story on Mary's race to Salt Lake, and (i) Mary's obituary. Not shown are endnotes and bibliography.

The student who wrote on Emily Dickinson was enthusiastic enough about the multigenre approach that she employed it the next semester in her student teaching. She set up parameters similar to the ones we had established and made it an alternative to the traditional research paper. One major difference, however, was that the students

had to research a British author. Another was that the students made notes on cards to make this part of their research equivalent to what the students writing the traditional research paper were doing. A third difference was that she had a sample paper to show them—the one she had written for my class. Not all students opted to try the

Figure 3
Poems on Ben Hogan and endnotes explaining their origin

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Holy Man</i></p> <p>Ben Hogan Mysterious, Determined, Silent Professional Golfer Sinking, Traveling, Rising Upon ancient courses A keeper of dreams.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Planned Precision</i></p> <p>Feeling the wind blow Watching the smoke wisp through air The golf ball takes flight</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Childs Play</i></p> <p>Hardhearted Obscure Grave Appeal Neglect</p>	<p>I chose the Hero Poem because that is what Ben Hogan became to me. Next I chose the Haiku, which are poems usually about the natural elements. Ben used to watch the trees move in the wind to find out which direction the wind was going. He also used the smoke from his cigarette. I thought that was neat that the slow-moving smoke from his mouth directed his shot. I learned this technique of Ben's in the book <i>Hogan</i>. The last poem I wrote to show how Hogan was a product of his childhood. Living in poverty and facing the world without his father was something I saw alter Hogan's entire perception. However, this was also something I did not quite understand. I figured by writing this type of poem I could touch on the idea or situation and still feel as though I expressed my true feelings.</p>
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Figure 4
Wanted poster for Joan of Arc and endnote explaining its origin


<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE</p>  <p>FOR HERESY</p> <p><small>BY COURT ORDER JOAN OF ARC IS CONVICTED OF ACTS OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE CHURCH AND HERESY SENTENCE TO BE BURNED AT THE STAKE AS JUST PUNISHMENT FOR HER CRIMES.</small></p> <p><small>HE WHO PRESENTS JOAN OF ARC TO THE COURTS SHALL BE JUSTLY REWARDED.</small></p> </div>	<p>I decided to do this <i>wanted</i> poster because I <i>wanted</i> to show just how much her head was <i>wanted</i>! Harold Notttridge's book, <i>Joan of Arc</i>, tells how Bishop Cauchon, a friend of the English and an enemy of King Charles, had a lot of influence at her trial. The judges were under his influence, and Cauchon wanted Joan dead. If Cauchon could prove that Joan was a witch who called up evil spirits, he could prove that King Charles', coronation was not God's will. If this were to happen the English could rule France. I could just imagine Cauchon posting up these wanted signs.</p>
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Figure 5
Metaphor on Emily Dickinson and endnote explaining its origin.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Energy Thief</i></p> <p>Emily Dickinson is the flame of an intoxicating candle that draws to itself the energy of a moth. The curious moth approaches the light, the smell, the force of the flame, and circles round and round. Unable to break free from the fascination of the flame, the moth flies closer and closer. Searching for the center of the energy, the source of the force, the moth becomes blinded and flies directly into the flame. The little fire snaps, crackles, and pops when consuming the moth. Its body gives off a burst of beautiful light. Emily is the flame that fascinates and exhausts people; the light that consumes others in order to grow stronger, the energy thief waiting for its next victim.</p>	<p>This extended metaphor came from a quote I'd read by T. Higginson wherein he said of Emily, "I never was with anyone who drained my nerve power so much. Without touching her, she drew from me. I am glad not to live near her." It reminded me of an essay I'd read by Annie Dillard having to do with a moth being drawn to a flame. I saw Emily as a flame that attracted the energy of another living thing in order to use it to make herself stronger. I was also reminded of something Maggie [a classmate] said to me about stealing other people's energy when she's in an elevator with them. I thought an extended metaphor would be a good way to describe this new perspective of Emily.</p>
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multigenre paper, but those who did were as enthusiastic as my students had been. A student who had researched Jane Austen said the following:

I enjoyed this type of paper versus a standard paper because I have never felt this close to an author before. I feel like I have reached out and touched her soul, not only that but she has touched mine. Getting to know an author like this was a wonderful experience. It was seriously stimulating to try and probe their minds and inner thoughts.... This paper gave me the chance to learn more about the person without just sticking to plain and boring facts. It was exciting because while you were searching their soul, I was also able to do a little soul searching on my own as to why did this author intrigue me the way she did.... I am extremely grateful that I decided on a multigenre instead of the normal boring standard paper.

Another student also seemed grateful:

Throughout doing all these multigenres I realized that I learned more than doing a regular research paper. I really got to know the person I had to write about and at some point the person I had to be. I enjoyed this assignment. The only thing that I did not like was all the typing because I wrote more than a regular research paper and because of that my wrists hurt. Besides that, this was the

best and most educational report I have ever had to do. To think about it, it is kinda sad to know a senior did a great report only once.

Both the college and high school students' comments seemed to indicate that they liked the multigenre option and felt it was not only feasible but also useful.

Discussion and implications

The two multigenre papers shown provide a brief glimpse of what such a paper can look like. Many of the other papers had much more text, but these two showed a wider variety in looks. All of the papers were interesting to me as a teacher because of the students' creativity in presenting their information and the care they seemed to have taken to make their pages look like the genres they were using. This readability factor seems to be one convincing argument in favor of the multigenre research paper.

Despite its interest in terms of content and presentation, the material presented in the different genres did not necessarily "prove" to me that the students had done a great deal of research, but the endnotes did. Had I evaluated the learning logs more frequently, as note cards often are in

high school classrooms, my fears about the depth and thoroughness of the students' research might have been allayed sooner. As it was, the students used a wide variety of resources to gather their material, digging as deeply into their subjects as I could have hoped. The learning logs and endnotes also showed that they had thought deeply about the information they found. In their learning logs, they often added interpretations of material noted, questioned conflicting information, and identified additional avenues of research to pursue. In their endnotes, they provided information that not only explained what was omitted in the genre presentation but also included connections to their own lives. The research aspect of the multigenre paper seems, thus, to be another convincing argument in favor of its use.

The use of genres other than the typical research paper also seems to be an argument in its favor. Current theory notes the importance of writing for different audiences, which also means using appropriate genres for that audience (Boiarsky, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Tompkins, 1993). The standard five-paragraph essay and documented research paper are oriented toward academicians only. Real life writing seems to be made up more of letters, memos, invoices, maps, recipes, directions or instructions, flyers, and other practically oriented documents. The students' use of 41 different kinds of writing in their multigenre papers showed their awareness of such writing and their ability to use it, making it a valuable exercise in writing for life rather than school.

Research has shown that students often write differently for themselves than for school, taking more time and effort on their personal writing than on their school assignments (Vacca & Vacca, 1996). The reflective notes from both the high school and college students seemed to indicate that the multigenre writing was more like personal writing for them. They spent time and effort selecting the appropriate genre and trying to write it effectively. Different students indicated that they surprised themselves with how much time they spent on the project, with how much more thought they put into this project than others, and how much more they wrote. That high level of effort seems to be another argument in favor of using the multigenre paper.

Some of the effort spent on the paper was more technical as all of the students, both high school and college, used computers to create the different forms of different genres. Students created greeting cards, birth certificates, flyers, newspaper formats, and other documents that looked far different from a typical research paper. They experimented with fonts to try to re-create the look of different documents; some even scanned in photographs, used different papers and colors, and played with special effects to get the looks they wanted. They came to know both their software and hardware far better than before. While this technological expertise may not be the province of the English classroom or could be handled through separate assignments, the students chose to hone their computer skills in order to present an effective piece of work, perhaps a far more compelling reason than any computer assignment could ever be.

A final argument for use of the multigenre paper lies in the creativity involved. It often seems that academic/research writing is totally separated from so-called creative writing. The blending of research and creativity seems especially fitting for adolescents who have a need to express themselves in ways different from adults and yet have a need to show what they've learned. The multigenre paper encourages creativity in several ways: Students are not only forced to be creative merely in selecting different genres, but they are also allowed to be creative by using forms other than academic writing, such as art, poetry, music, short stories, and other creative styles of expression. The reflective papers indicated that students seemed to take pride in their creations of both the individual genres and the multigenre paper as a whole.

The multigenre research paper is certainly not the only option to the traditional research paper, and it may not be greeted by all students as enthusiastically as it was by these students. However, it clearly seems to be a viable option that deserves further consideration. Like a traditional research paper, it allows teachers to teach research skills per the English curriculum, and it allows teachers to teach notetaking and bibliography skills. Unlike the traditional research paper, it encourages teachers to teach students to think about what they've learned from their research and to make use of what they already know about different genres of writing.

The biggest hindrance to its inclusion in many classrooms may be a lack of understanding what it is and what it looks like before undertaking it. That lack of understanding pushed one high school student into opting for the traditional paper in the student teacher's classroom, but after seeing a friend's multigenre paper, she said, "I wish I had done a multigenre paper. I didn't know they would be so neat." Her wistfulness and the enthusiasm of the students who wrote multigenre papers seem to dispel the "myth of dullness" (Perrin, 1987, p. 53) about research. Indeed, the multigenre research paper is far from dull for either teachers or students. It is a refreshing alternative that incorporates practical skills and creative thinking, allowing students not only to enjoy the process of research but also to take ownership of the products they create.

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