

Chocolate and Change

Gaming for Social Justice

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Welcome to Parkway Northwest High School for Peace and Social Justice, Philadelphia, PA! This small public school was reimagined as a school for peace and justice through a community effort in 2005. According to Elliott Seif (2009) in an article in *Educational Leadership*, this effort “enhanced the culture of the school;



gave students opportunities to reflect on their own values, beliefs, and behaviors; offered enriched academic learning experiences; and encouraged students to serve others.” The library was often abuzz with researchers. Students, crowding around computers, books, and magazines, became researchers in order to teach others what they were learning. The student center, with a college student to act as the “guide on the side,” was a force in cocreating curriculum and developing leadership capacity for peace and social justice in our students and staff.

As a school, we practiced a model of a collaborative teaching environment in a program we called SHARE (Spanish, History, Art, Research, and English). SHARE celebrated and supported student-led teach-ins and workshops with the support of our school librarian and many teachers. My involvement in SHARE grew out of a strong desire on my part to get away from overuse of worksheets and prepackaged curricula. As a school, we came together in SHARE to strengthen

our college preparatory curriculum, involving 9th-graders in college-level discourse and research while employing sophomores, juniors, and seniors in mixed-grade groups to develop leadership skills. As a staff, we were well aware that students were entering college, but the statistics about how many students finished college were not as clear. In 2010 a report issued by the School District of Philadelphia using data from the National Student Clearinghouse suggested that just one out of 10 students who entered a public high school as a freshman in 1999 earned a degree from a 2- or 4-year college 10 years later (Mezzacappa, 2010). Some of us on the staff decided that in order to prepare students for college, we should engage in college-level work, read college-level texts, and treat all students as if they were researchers from the moment they entered our doors.

In 2014, we have no librarian, no student center, and our computers, while much loved and cared for, have all seen better days. Our school lost numerous research tools essential to a college preparatory school. The SHARE model (with the central goal of students learning to teach others) unraveled. Facing these losses at our school and, indeed, the erosion of public education in Philadelphia forced me to focus on my values. I believe in the power of education for peace and social justice. As a young teacher, I learned firsthand from teachers in the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative what happens when you provision your class with rich materials that keep natural curiosity alive. While the budget scenario in Philadelphia is draconian at best, as a class we used our imagination and creativity to "resist together the obstacles that prevent the flowering of our joy" (Freire, 1997/2013, p. 69). We continued to work in the room that used to be the library. We talked about what kinds of environments encourage deep research and rich composition. We did not use the budget as an excuse. At the same time, we did not excuse the politicians who made these lasting scars on the face of Philadelphia's public school system. Thinking globally gave us the power to reach out to educate one another about issues that were even more dire than what we were confronted with every day.

Thus, even in the face of funding inequality, we encourage one another as teachers to integrate themes of social responsibility into academics. We are often invited to teach a course that reflects the values of our peace and justice school. Though I am the full-time Spanish teacher, I was invited to teach a class for freshmen called Multicultural Ethical Issues. We began the course with a close reading of Martin

Luther King's "Christmas Sermon on Peace to Ebenezer Baptist Church" (1967), with a focus on this part:

It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality. Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world? You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for the sponge, and that's handed to you by a Pacific islander. You reach for a bar of soap, and that's given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning, and that's poured into your cup by a South American. And maybe you want tea: that's poured into your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you're desirous of having cocoa for breakfast, and that's poured into your cup by a West African. And then you reach over for your toast, and that's given to you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half of the world. This is the way our universe is structured, this is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality.

Together, we explored issues of access to water, food, education, good work, and peace, always with the goal of educating others about these issues and taking some action together as a class toward creating a better world for all of us. After I shared my research about these issues with my students, they were encouraged to do further research and create teach-ins or conferences for their peers around these issues.

As Paulo Freire (1997/2013) writes in *Pedagogy of Freedom*, "There is a relationship between the joy essential to teaching activity and hope. Hope is something shared between teachers and students. The hope that we can learn together, teach together, be curiously impatient together, produce something together, and resist together the obstacles that prevent the flowering of our joy" (p. 69). The Multicultural Ethical Issues course was not about memorizing the problems we face as humans on this amazing planet, but instead creating knowledge that could be shared with others, and eventually changing the world.

When I am teaching something new in my Spanish classes or in the Multicultural Ethical Issues class, I sit up on a stool and use the

SmartBoard to zoom in and out of the content, encouraging conversation, listening, reading, and writing. Students know they will see these words again on the test, and take notes on their phones or in their notebooks from me. When we are composing, the classroom becomes more of a liminal space. In their book *Inside Out: Strategies for Teaching Writing*, Dawn Latta Kirby and Darren Crovitz (2012) describe a *liminal space* as one where “typical power relationships between people are temporarily set aside in an effort to encourage fellowship, honesty, and understanding. Liminal spaces are spaces of change, growth and shifting meanings, with potential rewards for those venturing into them” (p. 49).

In our “liminal space,” we research together. We might watch a documentary and problematize what we’ve seen in classroom discussions. We read articles and chapters of books on the same theme. We do text renderings together. We write. Then it is time to share what we know with others during a teach-in. This is when students might create found poetry from the movie, choreograph a dance based on a section of the documentary, or make dolls to represent different people and their stories from the film and unit of study. The classroom comes alive with student work, student voices, and student research.

DESCRIBING THE PROJECT: THE TEACH-IN

As part of the Multicultural Ethical Issues course, we held teach-ins for other students at Parkway Northwest two times during the semester. For one unit, I used chocolate to explore questions about child labor, education, trade, and consumerism. I researched on my own about the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as organizations that were working toward these goals, like Oxfam. Oxfam is an international group devoted to partnership with organizations and individuals to end poverty in innovative ways. The MDGs, shown in Figure 5.1, are eight goals, adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, that encouraged the global community to address the world’s main challenges to development with a target date of 2015 (United Nations, 2008; www.un.org/millenniumgoals/).

No matter how good this kind of learning is, how much it invigorated my teaching and upped my game when it came to composing digitally for social justice, it was not easy to pull it off with such a paucity of resources. With these disastrous budget cuts as a backdrop,

Figure 5.1. The United Nations' Eight Millennium Development Goals

Source: United Nations, 2008; www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

I tried to take what I had learned from SHARE about the power of research and reciprocal teaching, and applied it on a smaller level in my class. I worked hard to make my own research processes as transparent as possible, while also engaging students in myriad ways to experience, explore, and research further about these peace and justice issues.

In an article for the National Writing Project's publication, *The Quarterly*, the author of *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*, Linda Christensen (2000), writes, "Students need opportunities to think deeply about other people—why they do what they do, why they think what they think. They also need chances to care about each other and the world" (Bigelow & Christensen, 2001). As I was teaching the course, I constantly encouraged students to find powerful tools that would work to educate their peers about the relationship between our role as chocolate consumers and global poverty (see Figure 5.2 for my instructions for a teach-in). In order to teach others, creating a worksheet just does not work. PowerPoint can be overused and sometimes feels like just another way to create lecture-style lessons. Powerful tools might include:

Figure 5.2. Christina's Instructions for the Teach-In

Teach-in Project

We will host a workshop for other classes at Parkway Northwest High School. In this workshop, we want your peers to analyze the role we play as consumers in the global marketplace, especially how our spending decisions impact others. You will create an active, hands-on presentation, and invite your peers to take actions about the cocoa trade. You will guide participants in a learning experience you design for them. You can this any way you want, except you may not use PowerPoint.

As part of your learning experience, you should also include some action that your peers can take to make a better world. Your peers should walk away with an increased awareness about the role of consumers in social justice issues.

- Creating an interactive textbook chapter
- Developing a photojournal
- Composing a short film
- Making a game

In regard to accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals, students felt that raising awareness about fair-trade cocoa and farming cooperatives and the role of women and children, as well as education and health care issues, would encourage their peers to be aware of their role and change their position from mindless consumer toward mindfulness and action. In the end, the teach-in was all about caring about each other and the world.

The way students chose to present their teach-in was always just that: a choice. This choice was also part of a high-stakes assessment of their learning in my course. How would their peers react to their presentations? How successful would they be at inspiring their peers to take action about these issues? How many people would they get to sign their petition, or write a letter to the company asking for better working conditions for their workers, or ask for fair-trade products from their local markets? Students often were expert at pinpointing effective media to reach their peers. What was my role as the teacher?

If you walked into my classroom during the preparations for these miniconferences, the air would be buzzing; our liminal space was *alive!* Students were choreographing in the halls, the drama group was rehearsing, students were busy researching, while others huddled

around a piece of paper writing outlines for their group rap. My role in those moments was one of a conductor of an orchestra, a connector, a catalyst: “Try this website. Look at the work of this filmmaker. You might want to check out GoAnimate (goanimate.com) to make that come alive. Focus on this part, let the rest go.”

As I walked around the room visiting groups in the throes of deciding how to share their research, I noticed Brandon and Tre looking perplexed. I’d seen these two in the library at lunchtime, listening to music and hunched over the computers. I didn’t know them very well. I knew Brandon attended a Tech Camp at a local community organization and that he had way more experience creating digital work than I. When I met with them, they both were at a loss about how to share their research about the perils of child labor in the chocolate industry as well as the promise of fair trade and local cooperatives. Around this time, I had just watched Jane McGonigal’s (2010) TED talk about how gaming can make a better world. “Do either of you know anything about how to make games?” I asked. Tre could work in Scratch (scratch.mit.edu). Brandon wanted to show us a website he’d started playing around with at his Tech Camp that summer. It was called GameStar Mechanic (gamestarmechanic.com).

At home, I live with two serious gamers. As a teacher, I became inspired by students in my classes who also devoted their time outside school to gaming. Jim Gee, a pioneer in gamifying the classroom and author of the book *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (2003), also lays out a wonderful, very accessible framework about how video games teach in an article in Huffington Post (2011). Gee writes that “gamers have to think like designers even to play, since they have to figure out how the ‘rule system’ in the game works and how it can be used to accomplish their goals. They can go further and ‘mod’ the game (make new levels or versions) by using the design software by which the game was made” (Gee, 2011). For Brandon and Tre, as well as other students in my Multicultural Ethical Issues course, games offered a powerful teaching tool for their peers. Further, creating a video game about the perils of the cocoa trade allowed two serious gamers, Brandon and Tre, to develop a message for their peers about the promise of fair trade.

I didn’t know anything about GameStar Mechanic at the time, and found out from Brandon that it was a closed community, built on the idea that you can learn how to build video games by playing games, gaining different building skills through different activities.

Brandon talked about the balance of video games: "They can't be too hard or they are impossible to play. Too much frustration is not good." I asked them to listen to Jane McGonigal's (2010) TED talk before they began designing the game, and checked in with them periodically. McGonigal begins her talk so powerfully: "I'm Jane McGonigal. I'm a game designer . . . My goal for the next decade is to try to make it as easy to save the world in real life as it is to save the world in online games." In discussions that followed, we talked about whether we really believed gaming could change the world. Tre was not so sure. Brandon wasn't either. They played games for lots of reasons, and none of them was to save the world. As I watched them work, I knew something awesome was happening, but anytime teachers allow for a great deal of student choice, it's always hard to know exactly what is going to happen.

To complete their game, Brandon had to finish his training in GameStar Mechanic. He did this in school and at home. Tre was the research arm of the duo, checking facts about cocoa farming, child labor, and fair trade. In *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Henry Jenkins (2009) describes the work of "participatory cultures," where collective intelligence and socially distributed cognition arise between people as they collaborate to solve problems. For Brandon and Tre, this participatory culture afforded them the chance to create together without relying on one person for all of the information they needed to get the job done. Brandon and Tre showed that we can know more and do more together with the right tools. Neither student needed to know everything about how to conduct the research, check source credibility, produce the argument, and develop the game, but they were able to collaborate effectively. In the end, Brandon called himself the "creator" and Tre called himself the "tester." As an observer, I saw both of them deeply engaged in the process and would say they developed the game together.

In a very short time (students have 2 weeks to put together their teach-ins), Cocoa Thief emerged as a powerful teaching tool. When time came for the workshops, I could only scrounge two laptops for their table, so not many of their peers could play the game at once. Cocoa Thief was created by Brandon and Tre to educate their peers about the perils of the cocoa industry and the promise of fair trade (see Figure 5.3).

Still, the crowd around their table was electric. Students stayed to watch and play, trying to beat the game, asking questions about how they created it, and signing a fair-trade pledge that Tre and Brandon

Figure 5.3. Cocoa Thief Start Page



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prepared for their classmates (see Figure 5.4). This pledge came from their reading and research on a campaign launched by Global Exchange, an international human rights group dedicated to social, economic, and environmental justice around the globe.

Figure 5.4. Brandon and Tre's Fair-Trade Pledge

FAIR TRADE PLEDGE

_____’s Fair Trade purchases and actions will change lives for farmers and villages who grow cocoa. More education! Less child slavery!

I/we resolve to take action this month (check all that apply):

- Talk about Fair Trade chocolate with friends
- Ask stores where I shop to go Fair Trade
- Look for Fair Trade symbols on my chocolate
- Buy Fair Trade Chocolate

Date pledge made: _____

Signature: _____

Adapted from Global Exchange Fair Trade Pledge.

Brandon and Tre both put hours of their time in school and out of school to create the game, play the game, and then make a walk-through for their game. As I looked back on their work together, their game, and their research, it was obvious they successfully completed the assignment. They engaged their peers by designing a game that re-created the feeling of working in the cocoa industry, with all of the dangers from overseers with weapons on the farm to dangerous factory conditions in cocoa-processing facilities. They talked up a solution: fair trade.

Brandon and Tre's project was part of many experiences during the teach-ins. In the end, the teach-in included the following projects:

- A cypher (group rap)
- A GoAnimate cartoon
- A choreographed dance
- A chocolate tasting and role-play

The variety of experiences allowed their peers many different touch-points during the teach-ins, ensuring that every student came away with a full picture of the complexities of the cocoa industry and our place in it.

As a high school teacher, assessing work like this is complicated by our numerical grading system. I use teacher-made rubrics to assign a number grade, as I did in this project. Did you hand in your research with citations? (10 points). Did you create a fact sheet about your topic, answering at least five questions to pull your research together? (10 points). Did you finish your presentation on time? (10 points). Did you have an "action" for your peers to take that correlated to your research? (10 points). Still, this rubric cannot get at the intricacies of creating these learning experiences and does not adequately express the complexities involved in creating digital work like a video game. How could I look at their work to gain an understanding of these many layers?

INSIGHTS FROM THE PROCESS

I entered into the process of looking deeply at the video game and the walkthrough with my colleagues with many other experiences of using the Descriptive Review Process behind me. In Philadelphia,

teachers from the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative (PTLC) have been meeting in one another's' homes for almost 40 years to describe work using the Prospect Processes developed by Patricia Carini and others. Along with these processes, PTLC strengthened my values around student choice, play, making, and collaboration. Centering my teaching in these values and processes has taught me to value the strengths of my students, to see them in their works, and to use these strengths to guide my teaching (Carini, 2001). Further, I learned about the power of oral inquiry processes to bring about change and equity as I gathered with colleagues from around my city to describe work from students of all ages. By focusing on one child, we speak back to top-down, blanket reform solutions (Abu El-Haj, 2003).

The stance that I learned from engaging in processes like the Descriptive Review of Work and the Descriptive Review of Practice (Himley, Strieb, Carini, Kanevsky, & Wice, 2011) gives me unlimited space to move around in as a teacher. I am not bound by what the student can't do. I am not hung up on what they need to learn. My teaching does not draw on a finite set of standards to guide my practice. Instead, through these oral inquiry processes, I can see the child's standards in the work. I come to know the student through the work. I can see the possibilities.

Through the Descriptive Review Process, Brandon and Tre's work came alive for me. In order to describe the work, I had Brandon and Tre create a video game walkthrough for their game, *Cocoa Thief*. The game was hard to play for adults who are not avid gamers and who don't have the time to learn the timing to beat the game. Brandon and Tre have clearly studied the walkthrough genre, because theirs was up there with the most informative I've heard. They used QuickTime to create a screencast—a recording of themselves talking while showing the computer screen, clicking through various elements of the game—and shared their walkthrough on YouTube. Walkthroughs, cheats, playthroughs, FAQs, and codes are tools gamers create to share with others to show how to play the game, highlight hidden elements, share surprises, and more. Gamers create them in many ways, written and with video. The walkthrough takes the audience through the game step by step. They are usually compiled on sites like YouTube (youtube.com) and GameFAQs (gamefaqs.com) and easily referred to when you get stuck in a game, or if you just want to see how someone else solved a particular problem. The idea to have Brandon and Tre make the walkthrough was purely for the audience of my peers,

so that when we engaged in the Descriptive Review of the game, we would get to see as much of it as possible. Turns out, creating walkthroughs is a perfect way to encourage the metacognitive work so at the heart of the Framework for Success in Post Secondary Writing (CWPA et al., 2011).

After Brandon and Tre made their walkthrough, it was obvious that the game itself was one text and that the walkthrough was another text. Each serves a different purpose. The game allowed their peers to enter into the world of a worker on a cocoa plantation, with all its perils. In the walkthrough, the creators of the video game explained their thinking about the social justice issues as well as details about how the game itself was created, the timing, and the level of difficulty.

Learning from My Colleagues: Engaging in the Descriptive Review Process

In the first part of the Descriptive Review, my colleagues shared what they saw/noticed in the video game that Tre and Brandon created, as well as in their walkthrough.

As I listened, I began to see different facets of the game and walkthrough emerge through the inquiry process. The game, which can be shared with others online, is a quest game with a 5-minute time limit. It has a title, *Cocoa Thief*. The directions tell the user what controls to use in order to collect cocoa beans, avoid overseers (snipers!), and escape the field. My colleagues shared how they saw a postcolonial society represented in the game. The inequities of society were reflected in the difficulty level of the game. The game was hard to play! My colleagues noted how the creators demonstrated a procedural understanding of the cocoa industry, from farm to factory. As the round continued, describing the design of the game from the visuals to the sound opened me up to see how Brandon and Tre reflected the duality present in cocoa production (see Figure 5.5). Each scene of the game presents a different aspect of cocoa production. Information bubbles popped up (where exclamation marks appeared on the screen) to interrupt play and give the player information about the cocoa trade, from field to factory.

What's working in the piece? As we continued with the Descriptive Review, I listened as my colleagues described what worked in the piece. By purposefully looking at what works, we rise against

Figure 5.5. Screenshots from the Cocoa Thief Game Demonstrating Concepts Related to Fair Trade

A: Opening Scene from the Cocoa Thief Game

Here, the duality of the lushness of the cocoa plants as well as the hardships and hazards for those harvesting the pods remind the player of the perils inherent in the cocoa industry.



B: Encountering an Injured Worker

Given the limited availability of characters in the game, here a mummy represents an injured worker that the player encounters. The speech bubble of the “injured worker” reads: “*sigh* My animals and my crops are going to be taken away.”



C: Question from the Main Character

In this speech bubble, the game’s main character (played by the gamer) asks another character in the game, “Are you protected with Fair Trade?”



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the prevailing winds that assess student work through the lens of deficiency.

Brandon and Tre were valued as game-makers, researchers, and collaborators for social justice. In the walkthrough, one of my colleagues pointed out that Brandon says, "It's all about patience," the patience needed to create the game, develop the characters, and make it playable.

The design of the game also worked for the audience. The use of different blocks (forest, industrial) as well as the familiar design made it visually appealing. My colleagues noted that since the game was hard, they had to interact with it over and over and over again. The fact that it was hard meant they had to take time out to play. This brought forth a sense of shared understanding. One colleague shared that games are motivating and engaging for students. She found herself getting very excited each time she made a little bit more progress.

Brandon and Tre came alive in the work as the conversation continued. I realized that I was seeing them in a new light. When I grade work in class, I very rarely feel close to a student, or gain deep insight into them as makers, designers, workers for peace and justice. Through this process, I saw Brandon for the first time as someone who worked hard to produce a very complex game, with Tre as lead researcher and tester. Since the game is built very effectively on the basic conventions of a quest, this led me to wonder how much time both students have spent playing, reading, and generally interacting with the quest game genre. Further, I realized how complicated the game must have been to put together. Neither student does much talking during group discussion or even in small groups. This game let me see the hard work they put into creating a tool that talks for them.

Brandon and Tre are also not highly interactive in class. Tre is great at keeping pace with me during instruction or in small groups, and Brandon might lift his head from his notebook once or twice during a class, but neither are highly interactive. However, my colleagues pointed out that the interactivity needed to get better at the game over time worked as a way to engage in learning the content and think about social justice issues. Another colleague suggested that for a teacher and a parent, the embedded meaning works: "My child and my students could learn something from a game that is fun to play." As one colleague pointed out, games are just "cool ways" to share knowledge, experience, and understanding.

The game was fun to play, but, as I mentioned before, it was hard. One of my colleagues who understood the workings of GameStar Mechanic pointed out that “balance is one of the notions of GameStar Mechanic—student is playing with that notion of balance and thinking through how hard it can be in terms of reaching the tipping point.” Brandon spent some time trying to explain this notion to me as they were creating the game. When my colleague noticed this concept, it validated Brandon’s process. This also made Tre’s role in the creation of the game (testing, playing, revising, offering suggestions) equally vital.

What questions does this piece inspire? Finally, my colleagues shared their questions about the game itself and the screencast describing it (see Figure 5.6). The screencast walkthrough that Brandon and Tre created ended up inspiring me to use this format for other projects, as a way for students to reflect on their work.

Figure 5.6. Cocoa Thief Demo on YouTube



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This round provided me with many places to go next with my teaching and learning. In summarizing this round of the process, I noticed questions centered around the content (fair trade), the process (creating a game and a walkthrough), and connectedness (how can others play this game? how can others learn about fair trade?). As we engaged in this round, questions emerged about the issue of fair trade: How well did the students really understand this concept? How did I know students understood the cocoa trade? Is there some kind of scaffolding the students could give to people like me (and maybe their parents?) who want to learn more about how to play the game successfully? And what about fair trade? These questions brought up some key points for me. Brandon and Tre's game was part of a larger workshop that featured many digital compositions about social justice and consumerism. While these two students may not have all the information about fair trade to 100% accuracy, the class's knowledge-making together expressed a very full picture of how buying fair trade positively impacts farmers and their communities. In fact, this called to mind the CCSS ELA Literacy Standard that asks students to "initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4, corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/11-12/4/).

As a teacher, I value the power of the entire Multicultural Ethical Issues class to express this knowledge together. I also value the individual student's ability to "present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4, corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/11-12/4/). This set of questions helped me think about ways I might have students provide scaffolding to their audience in order to clarify their own thinking about the issue or topic.

Throughout this round, we discussed the power of games and the power of walkthroughs (screencasts) in learning. Games need to be played over and over. Playing them over and over allows us to become steeped in the creator's world. This is different from composing for the page in some ways. But it's also similar to the way we go back over and over again to favorite books and poems and reread

them. The Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing highlights metacognition as a vital habit of mind for college readiness. So often, digital work in my class is rushed. With the popularity of Vine (vine.com) with its 6-second videos that loop and other short media, I struggle to find ways students can reflect on their work. Screencasting in QuickTime (or with the SnagIt Chrome extension) to make a walk-through provides a structure to talk through the digital work, expand on details, and let the audience in on the process used to create the piece.

Implications for Instruction and Assessment

Role of the teacher. Reflecting on the process, I realize no rubric could have captured the many angles through which my colleagues and I looked at the game Brandon and Tre created. As I encourage these students and the others I teach in Multicultural Ethical Issues classes or in my own Spanish classes, I continue to value the stance the Descriptive Review Process affords me. Whether I gather with teachers to look at student work in person or online, the power of oral inquiry gives me insight into the student's strengths as well as ideas for further works, different methods, and expanding my role as teacher and learner. During this process, I was also introduced to the Multimodal Assessment Project from NWP (MAP, 2013). When students compose digitally in my classroom, sometimes I have a hard time encouraging next steps and revision in the works they create. This framework gives me some tools to help scaffold those processes, while still valuing student choice. I am particularly excited about two of the domains, "substance" and "process management and technical skills," in this framework as I plan further projects and themes.

In terms of process, my colleagues' questions about how long students had, what criteria they were given, and what drafting this game looked like helped me see just how much time Brandon and Tre put into the game, both at school and at home. These students had their own criteria for the game (hard, but not too hard). Further, they knew that the game had to teach others about the perils of the cocoa trade and the promise of fair trade. Process questions from my colleagues about composing the game (Is there a way to make the icons/characters clearer to the user? Who are they? Who do they represent? What is their role?) gave me some places to go in my own practice with these students and their game as well as other students and their

digital compositions. During these student-led projects, my role can be one that pushes students to explain their work, to define their characters for the audience, and to produce explanations embedded in their work. Questions like, "I wonder if he will build additional levels?" and even "I wonder if there is something that the characters can do together that they can't do alone?" further helped me focus my role. Many times, I find myself marveling at the elaborate digital work my students create and have a hard time seeing where I might challenge them to rework and revise.

Going deeper and connecting more. The NWP's work with Multimodal Assessment further clarified how I might challenge my students to revise their work around the domain they call "substance." As I work with students, I want the substance of the digital piece to pack a punch. As I design further projects, I will use the language of the framework with them to get at what makes substance stand out in their work. This conversation encouraged me to think about the way I might conference with students during the composing to pose questions about genre and characters, and encourage them to go deeper.

While going deeper is certainly a goal of future work, I also want to think about how to connect work. In terms of the game, colleagues asked questions wondering why there were no comments on the game from the GameStar community, asking what the feedback is like from the online community, and how many students played the game the day of the workshop. I realized that I had a great deal to learn about how to make the work of my students connected. Just composing online does not ensure connectedness. How can I rethink the ways we share our multimodal compositions within our school community and with other communities in our city and beyond?

The Descriptive Review of Brandon and Tre's game helped me see where I can expand my role as teacher as students compose digitally and by hand to ensure that the complex messages of the work reach the audience in all of its nuance. The screencast is quickly becoming a vital tool as I encourage students to go deeper and connect their work with others. No budget cuts can hold us back as we compose digitally for social justice in these liminal spaces. Students' digital creations are powerful tools as we think globally and act locally here in Philadelphia. Look out for more young people like Brandon and Tre who will change the world one game at a time.