

More often, composition classrooms are asking students to create multimodal projects, which may be unfamiliar for some students. Multimodal projects are simply projects that have multiple “modes” of communicating a message. For example, while traditional papers typically only have one mode (text), a multimodal project would include a combination of text, images, motion, or audio.

The Benefits of Multimodal Projects

- Promotes more interactivity
- Portrays information in multiple ways
- Adapts projects to benefit different audiences
- Keeps focus better since more senses are being used to process information
- Allows for more flexibility and creativity to present information

How do I pick my genre?

Depending on your context, one genre might be preferable over another. In order to determine this, take some time to think about what your purpose is, who your audience is, and what modes would best communicate your particular message to your audience (see the [Rhetorical Situation](#) handout for more information). For example, if your argument is articulated through images and graphs, it might make more sense to design a website rather than creating a podcast. Below, we’ve provided some examples of different genres and programs that can be used to create a multimodal project to get you started.

Designing Websites/Blogs

Sway
Blogspot
Wordpress
Tumblr
Padlet

Animations/Presentations

Moovly
Powtoon
Prezi

Podcast/Audio Recording

Audacity
GarageBand
Adobe Audition

Movie Editing

Windows Movie Maker
iMovie
Adobe Premiere Pro
Final Cut Pro

What features can I control?

Like a well-designed advertisement, all elements of your project should work together to create one cohesive message. Compositions can contain visual, motion, audio, and textual elements. Some traits under these elements will be emphasized to stress importance while others will be deemphasized. Your choices regarding how these elements and traits are used will be crucial—there is a large difference between choosing a background color because it “looks cool” and picking a background color that corresponds with your message and highlights the important features in your document.

Visual

Composition
Texture
Size
Color
Saturation
Focus

Motion

Zooming/Tracking
Camera Position
Perspective
Speed
Pan/Tilt
Editing

Audio

Volume
Speed
Pitch
Music
Tone
Frequency

Text

Size
Placement
Color
Diction
Tone
Font

Below are some screen shots of a Sway designed by a UIS student entitled “Community Gardens and the Local UIS Community,” which argues about how local community gardens can solve a national issue of food insecurity and food deserts. You can view the Sway online [here](#) to get a better sense of the background, motion, and organization, but we’ve highlighted a couple of important components of this Sway.

Introduction

Food insecurity and food deserts are national problems with local solutions. According to the *State Journal-Register*, as of 2008, there were over 15 food pantries in Sangamon County (“List of Sangamon County Food Pantries”). As of September 2015, food insecurity in Central Illinois is at a significant high. The poverty rate in Central Illinois is 17%, 3% higher than the state average. Food pantries are being overwhelmed and cannot keep up with the demand (“Food Insecurity Hits a High in Central Illinois.”). Food security is a national concern but is clearly also an issue here in the Springfield area. In order to address this solution, the community must act locally and one way to do this is through community gardens. **Community gardens improve the food/nutrition of a community by offering access to local food and food literacy, in addition to myriad other environmental, social justice, and community benefits. Locally, our UIS campus can benefit from starting a community garden.**

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Use of headings and bolding keeps the reader organized.

Background and colors should be intentionally selected. Here, the floral background and the green headings gives a natural feel, which matches the theme of the Sway.

Smaller paragraphs, as opposed to large, blocky paragraphs, engages the reader better.

Images and videos allow for readers to process information visually. Posting videos also allows readers to choose how they interact with the argument.

A campus garden at UIS is not just the right solution for the community, but UIS is also the right community for the solution. For instance, land security is a significant issue with community gardens, as many gardens have faced fines and regulations from local governments, in addition to the struggle simply to find and purchase available land. However, one of the best and most secure locations for community gardens are those located on public land, such as schools and parks (Ladner 190). Thus, UIS being a public school is actually one of the most secure locations for a community garden. Creating a campus garden is not “breaking new ground” but is simply following in the footsteps of many other universities with well-developed plans and demonstrated results. Excellent examples of campus-run community gardens exist; one of these prime examples is that of The Eagle Heights

Community at the UIS Community Garden

Introduction
Food Deserts and Food Insecurity
Community Gardens as the Solution
UIS Campus Garden
Conclusion

Organization of the topics follow in a logical order. The paper begins with defining the problem, moves to a solution, and then defines what is happening at UIS.