

Hi all I'm Denise Landrum Geyer and I'm so sorry I couldn't be with you all in person today. There's a perfect storm of elements that came together and it was just not possible for me to travel to Kansas City to be with you all but my co-panelists were gracious enough.

To allow me to record this presentation and then they're going to share it with you and if technology works out you know everything crossed for that hopefully I'll be able to participate in the Q&A part of the end of your Google Hangouts.

We'll see what happens; so my portion of the panel I gave it a title *Essaying as laboring and languaging in the composition classroom*, got to work in those theme words right so talking a little bit about the genre of the essay what that means and how that fits into composition first year and upper-level classes as well and since I'm not there, I mean I would have given you this information anyway, but since I'm not there like I said I'm an associate professor of English and The Writing Center coordinator at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, which is in Weatherford Oklahoma, my Twitter name @denisejeanne and my Gmail account I would give you my SWOSU email except it takes me a lot longer to get through the inbox so if you're interested and you want to contact me about anything please feel free also going to post this video and the slides presentation on my blog which is. You are all down at the bottom to me Sean a. Wordpress.com.

And so that way you have information if you want to contact me or do I continue the conversation that equals.

So something that I am just always interested in and fascinated by and with the idea of what the genre of the essay is I think that the essay gets a bad reputation, only associated with a very specific thing in our world sometimes and that means that the word loses some of the.

Aspects of the genre that that are really useful and could really be an interesting addition or way of thinking through writing with our students so start off with I

went to yield favorite the OED Oxford English Dictionary and looked up the word essay.

And the definition I have on the screen right now is probably the most typical definition that we would associate with the word essay as a noun a composition of moderate length on any particular subject or branch of the subject originally originally implying want of finish and a regular undigested piece according to Samuel Johnson but now set of a composition more or less elaborate in style The Limited in range so you know it's a short piece of writing a lot of the things that are assigned in classrooms are given the name I say and there's nothing wrong with that necessarily but I think that sometimes we use the word essay and.

It's becomes associated with something very specific and that is the big pony and a scientific essay structure a little more tightly composed.

And it's also just sometimes the essay is just considered especially by students to be just something you write in school which is more like a theme or even an article and you know the essay had a life outside of the classroom won't say it came from somewhere we all know that and I think that's part of what I'm interested in doing in the classroom with essays is reclaiming that history of where the genre came from and what it really mean for students and how we talked to them about writing and how we help them understand.

How they write an and how they approach a topic so instead of thinking about say as of now and I think part of what we have to do is reclaim essay as a verb.

We all know essay comes from you know Michelle de montaigne although really essays were around before him but as a French word essay a means to try something right it's a verb meaning to try or attempt.

And that's something that I think we really need to capture again and then really show our students the potential here so Ruth Ellen vouchers auras and Elizabeth mittman talk about what's the essay in the politics of the essay on this is something that's a few years old but they say essays make a case for something they not only present evidence they also interpret that evidence essays are also frequently marked by a tendency to wander around a subject to investigate various have toward a point to enjoy the possibility of digression must not all essays are philosophically constructed as meat and salad are they often partake of the elliptical The elusive the Ender.

TSA itself can take on any number of identifiable guises.

And that's what I think we need to reclaim the essays often been referred to as like a baggie genre is a term that has been used with the essay and that we all think we know what an essay is but it's kind of a catch-all term in a lot of ways like we we apply the word essay to a wide variety of texts and a lot of times the word does apply cuz it is a Wandering through a topic grappling with the subject it's just that the form looks a little different.

But I think that in all of this discussion what has gotten lost is that process of journey through something we think of an essay often as a finished product that is handed to us composition in a lot of people because of that Association think that we need to maybe move Beyond essays of course multimodal composition is important and of course stealing another job.

The essay is just one component but I think it's a very viable component that we don't want to just throw out.

Because there's so much to it that we're missing a lot of times.

So what I am putting forth here is that we start using the word essay as a verb again or more fully in a composition classroom so it have in front of you is the verb definition of essay so to essay is to put to the proof or try on to test the nature Excellence Fitness of something I'm to practice by way of trial to try by tasting to try to do affect accomplish or make.

And I think that that's what we really need to be looking at helping our students understand that when they're writing or composing in any situation really I'm in the same position to do something they're working through a process in trying to figure it out.

And that's where I'm headed with this if we think of the idea of.

Passing as a verb you know a saying is journeying to essay is to Journey.

Which means that a saying is a form of laboring in the in the composition classroom.

Diane and the focus in San is that actual Act of Labor it's not so much the end destination as it is the focus on how the labor and processed is unfolding and then I think that's significant for students.

And in all of my research over the years something that I've come across that I think is really interesting and useful to students potentially is that again the essay has have developed as a genre outside of classroom walls it has an evolution and a life that has happened over the years and there are certain rhetorical common places that tend to happen a lot in the genre of the essay so there to tow boy that I have identify that that come up quite a bit in essays that I think can be particularly useful in the teaching of writing impose on the first rhetorical to post that I have identified is multiplicity which the word means probably what you think it means but I've called him multiplicity because.

Does thing that happens a lot of times in essays is that authors are going to bring together multiple and often contradictory viewpoints and it's not just that they're bringing together contradictory viewpoints from other sources which happens a lot.

Can invite writers to Grapple with the contradictions they have within themselves on a topic they may feel one way but they may also feel the other way and essays if we think of essaying in the ACT journey through something allows them to see those viewpoints.

Somehow put them into a space together to better understand what's happening.

So it says on the screen, rather than hiding the conflicts they have on an issue SAS often expose the many different positions they have on a subject using the genre to work through their own ideas and opinions with readers so it's a collaborative effort writers can represent these multiple viewpoints in the number of ways by citing outside sources or by delineating different viewpoints to the form for structure of a text so again because the essay is that kind of baggy jean or that kind of allows for a lot of creativity not only in content to put in warm.

It's a genre that you can use the form in such a way to really.

Demonstrate to readers.

How does viewpoints are coming together and what's happening.

The other topos rhetorical to post that I've identified on the genre of the essay is something that I call meh duplicity so it might seem kind of cheesy cuz I'm trying to make them similar words but I like it so Medical City.

Is the idea of writers showing their process to readers in the text it again we have a very robust discussion in our field about the ideas of writing about writing.

I'm writing as the subject of a composition class and that is part of it but it goes beyond that again because if we think of the essay as this is genre that has a lot of that allows for a lot of different forms.

In floor mats.

You can show your process to readers through the structure of the text just as much as you can through talking about your process.

Again showing process in essays goes beyond and explicit discussion of the writers process that that's part of it and that's an important part but writers can also show their process through metaphor comparison between the subject of their essays in their process as well as through experimental forms and lyric sa Zara thing that we need to acknowledge and kind of think about how we incorporate them into our discussions of essays and essays can allow you know when you use these experimental forms you're allowing manipulation and experimentation was form in order to deliver content and complex reflective ways hopefully that allow for an implicit meta-commentary of the writers process ease their investigations of an essay's architecture now that might sound like a lot for a first-year composition class it is but then again if we think of a saying as a laboring or a journey through something for sure composition is just starting point if we can. To start to recognize that they have a process which is a big struggle like when you talk to students about what's your process I mean obviously we're working with them as well it's an essay through the ideas process but just the recognition that they have a process can sometimes be the most important moment for them and then we go from there we build.

So again these two common places that I've seen and I found these in a published materials and you might think of different essays creative nonfiction essays that you've enjoyed reading where this was happening.

So it published writers are doing this with the essay as a genre outside of the classroom then how can we incorporate this.

Classroom what can we do with it how can we make it work so they're two different.

Exercises that I've done with students and different kinds of composition classrooms I've done both.