

An Example of UDL and Multimedia from Michael's Teaching

Another example of multiple means of expression comes from my own teaching, albeit in a middle school setting, but applicable to any level. In teaching *Of Mice and Men*, I always ask my students to understand how Steinbeck masterfully uses literary techniques such as foreshadowing, allusion, archetypal characters, imagery, and symbolism to make his book more powerful and impactful. When I first started teaching the book, I would always end the unit with an essay in which students used evidence to analyze Steinbeck's use of these literary devices. This was always a unit where I felt that students' eyes were really opened to author's craft and their essays would mostly reflect that, but I also found reading them rather boring and not as engaging as the in-class work they had done unpacking the novella. So, as an exercise, I decided to do my own analysis of his use of some of these devices, in an alternative way. I [wrote this song and created this video](#), called "The Descendants of Cain" with the help of an artist friend. I used this as a model for my students, who were then able to: write an essay, or a series of multimedia options including, but not limited to, writing a song, painting a picture, recording a podcast, choreographing a dance, or writing and filming a video to convey their own original analysis of *Of Mice and Men*. For all of the options that were not an essay, they needed to provide a written description of their work and how it conveyed their analysis; this write up needed to contain evidence, so regardless of the type of project students elected to do, their work strongly aligned with my goal of having students use evidence from the text to support their analysis of the text, specifically Steinbeck's use of literary devices. The output from students, even the essays, showed a much deeper and more nuanced understanding of the book than past iterations of the assignment. In offering choice for how students conveyed their understanding of Steinbeck's work, the level of engagement increased and the quality of the work increased. These are both laudable goals.