

CREATING A MULTIMODAL ELEMENT IN WRIT COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Report of the Multimodal Study Group
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We begin with two basic observations: (1) More types of messages are circulating prolifically and rapidly through our culture than at any other time in history. (Consider everything from blogs to videos, sound clips to photographs, as well as articles, websites, presentations, and more; (2) Individuals now have the capacity (and increasingly, the expectation) to compose and circulate through multiple communicative means. With individual writers gaining production capabilities previously possessed only by graphic artists or engineers, demands on writers have gotten more complicated. The very process of composing is altered, not only the nature of the final products. In addition to traditional forms of writing, texts now are increasingly accompanied (and occasionally replaced) by images, still or moving, and by sounds. Even print artifacts include design features formerly beyond the province of writers, and Web publication affords distribution possibilities previously restricted to formal editorial and publishing apparatuses. Owing largely to the vast possibilities that digital tools and networks have enabled for creating and circulating artifacts, the nature of reading has greatly expanded, if not transformed. Whether these changes are for the better is a complicated issue, but these changes cannot be ignored. The National Council of Teachers of English, for example, has produced important position statements on the new “21st Century Literacies.”

As Deborah Brandt has demonstrated, the history of literacy in the last 200 years is marked by ever escalating definitions of what it requires. Just as writing courses in the late 1980s taught wordprocessing, and courses in the 1990s taught how to find and evaluate information on the Web, courses in the 2010’s will need to meet new demands. Increasingly, the ability to write involves the ability to create multimodal texts--not exclusively but in addition to longstanding forms. On a laptop campus like DU, this means using computers in dimensions beyond recording, storing, and finding information. As writers learn the skills and rhetorical strategies needed to produce multimodal texts, they also must acquire the critical reading skills vital to understand when such texts are unreasonably manipulative or insufficient.

These developments have placed particular pressures on first year writing courses like WRIT 1122 and 1133 at DU. While written language is—and must remain—the primary focus of these courses, composing has taken on more dimensions. One of them, design, rearticulates an ancient stage in the communication process. Modern writing instruction takes many of its emphases from classical rhetoric, whose areas of concern included generating ideas (invention), organizing them (arranging), choosing the appropriate language (style), and devising the best manner of delivery (design). That last area fairly withered, as speech was mostly cleaved from writing and as anything beyond producing double-spaced typed text was deemed beyond the borders of the composition course. New modes of production and new media have revived the canon of delivery.

In a seminal 2004 article, Kathleen Blake Yancey argued, “Literacy today is in the midst of a tectonic change,” with a concurrent need to expand the scope of writing instruction (298). If 19th century technologies created a world of readers, 21st century technologies have created a world of writers, with more people producing more language than at any other time in history. Much of

this new writing has new characteristics. Stanford writing directors Marvin Diogenes and Andrea A. Lunsford characterize it as “a form of communication that still looks a lot like traditional print literacy but that is deeply inflected by other media, including spoken words and sounds, video, and images of all kinds” (142). Accordingly, Stanford added a new first-year writing requirement designed “to build on the analytical and research-based argument strategies developed in [the first course] through more intensive work with oral, visual and multi-media rhetoric” (147). The course enacts Elizabeth Daley’s argument that “full literacy demands the ability to write [for], as well as to read” multiple media, that students must learn “to write for the screen” (37).

Multi-modal literacies challenge past assumptions about the relationship between words and other textual elements. Anne Wysocki notes that visual images have traditionally been seen as supporting or illustrating the words on the page, which carry the piece’s information and content. Indeed, that’s true in some texts. In others, however, language is subordinated to image, and in still others, the modes interact synthetically to produce a truly new means of representing and conveying ideas. Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress distinguish between “transformation” and “transduction,” the former referring to the re-arrangement of text within a single mode (for example, restructuring words syntactically within a written text) and the latter referring to the translation of text from one mode to another (for example, from written to visual) which brings with it “a change of entities” (175). In a current article in the field’s leading journal, Cindy Selfe makes an extended argument for aural production as an element of composition courses.

But what does this mean for the role of multimedia in writing courses? Stanford’s writing faculty acknowledge that devoting so much energy, time, and indeed enthusiasm, to technological tools can leave students wondering whether they are actually learning how to write, and whether their writing is improving. In response, Diogenes, Lunsford, and their colleagues sought to balance traditional academic and “real-world” writing with the analysis and production of multimedia texts. The resolution, they found, was to emphasize that the course is one in rhetoric, research, and *presentation*, but not advanced training in media production.

Nationally, the response in some writing programs to these technological evolutions has often been helter skelter; professors have often simply included some multimodal assignments or instruction without seriously and systematically exploring what they displace and with what consequence. There’s a risk, ultimately, that multimodal courses go so far that they no longer are courses in writing. The DU writing faculty want to integrate some elements of multimodal writing in a measured and careful fashion. Our goal is to expand students’ writing repertoires in ways consonant with the curriculum’s core focus and emphasis.

Almost every article and book chapter I have read includes a seemingly obligatory statement that multimodality and technology should supplement existing pedagogies rather than replacing the key content of rhetoric and writing in composition classes. Or perhaps it’s a matter of tweaking or reframing current pedagogies. But the reality is that we have 10 weeks in a quarter, and we are already trying to cover a great deal, especially in 1133. So, what gives?

All curricula involve choices based on perceived value. When I shifted my focus to rhetoric, critical literacy, and cultural studies years ago, that meant abandoning essays based in the modes and personal essays. When we designed 1133 to focus on multiple research traditions, we had to reduce the amount of time we could devote to the really skillful deployment of a single type of research. I personally think that having students design PSAs for civic causes is as/more valuable than having them write another essay about the defining moment of their high school career, so I have no problem with the loss. My students seem to agree, get more engaged during the class, and are more likely to actually use what they have created beyond the class. *Jen C.*

Overview of Our Processes

To devote systematic attention to these issues, Doug Hesse wrote a grant that was funded by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Five writing program faculty members (the authors of this report) each spent 120 hours from August 2 to August 20, 2009, creating a set of principles, learning materials, and teaching practices for incorporating multimodal elements into the WRIT 1122/1133 sequence. We met from 10:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday, to discuss common readings, share ideas, debate issues, draft materials, and set tasks for ourselves. Between these meetings we worked individually in reading and writing projects, and the general trajectory of the discussions was from conceptual to practical, from identifying issues to learning new technologies and thinking how we might best teach them to our colleagues and to our students. At the end of this period of intense work, we planned a one-day workshop to be held on September 2, 2009, which will include all program faculty. We also planned a series of follow-up events for the fall 2009 quarter.

The Framework of Our Investigation

We began our work by brainstorming all the questions we could imagine that might our decision of whether to require multimodal elements in our writing courses and, if so, how. We eventually sifted them into several categories:

A. Questions of definition.

1. What constitutes multimodality?
2. What are the distinctions between multimodal, multimedia, mixed genre, new media; between digital and nondigital compositions?
3. How does multimodal literacy support student-learning, in ways equal to or more beneficial than traditional text-on-paper composition?
4. What terminology should we share as a faculty and with our students?

B. Questions of goals.

1. To the extent that multimodal compositions are a focus of attention in our courses, to what extent should that focus be on analysis/critique v. production/performance?
2. Should the focus of WRIT courses be “rhetoric” (with means of delivery unspecified and, thus, admitting to all available means of persuasion) or should the focus be “writing”?
3. Should the shift toward multimodal composition be regarded as a means or an end? Should our focus be on the production, process and/or analysis of

artifacts in various modalities?

C. Questions of Status

1. What multimodal practices currently go on in WRIT classes at DU? In other disciplines at DU? Outside DU?
2. What kinds of texts do students currently need to produce as a function of school, of work, of civic engagement?
3. What kinds will be valuable/useful in the future?
4. Should our orientation be practical—figuring out what students need to do—or aspirational, figuring out what students should do, including sometime in the future?

D. Questions of Pedagogy.

1. Under what conditions does multimedia support learning or pedagogical goals?
2. Should we put the emphasis on developing skills/awareness or on developing artifacts?
3. What kinds of skills and knowledges should students acquire? How?
4. What kinds of products should students compose?
5. What does class time look like in a course including multimodal practices?
6. What does out of class time look like?

E. Questions of logistics/implementation.

1. What is the best way to implement any changes in the curriculum?
2. How should faculty be trained?
3. What resources should support our efforts.
4. How can we effectively and comfortably evaluate/assess multimodal work?
5. How might we make use of the model of existing units (like centers at Texas, Michigan State, Ohio State, and Michigan Tech) to help our faculty as a whole

develop the proficiencies we will need as instructors?

6. Who is already using these technologies (human resources) and what physical (equipment, software) resources are already available? What resources need to be located/developed/purchased?
7. With the understanding that the program and DU are satisfied with our current course definitions and goals, what modes/technologies can support each of these goals most effectively?

A. Questions of Definition

While “multimodal” has emerged within composition studies as focal term for the kinds of efforts we explored, some confusion exists between this term and “multimedia” and, to some lesser extent, “multigenre.”¹ By “mode,” we follow the practice of most scholars and mean the semiotic system through which a text is produced. Kress and van Leeuwen ask us to consider, for instance, the semiotics of the image, the semiotics of sound, etc. More plainly, we concentrated on five modes:

- alphabetic (words, written language)
- oral/aural (sound)
- visual: static image
- visual: dynamic image(s)
- mixed.

Traditionally, composition courses have focused on the alphabetic mode (a cumbersome but necessary term), with occasional visual/static modes included, usually in the form of graphic elements, or in terms of visual design (typography, white space, color, and so on).

An **assignment** can be unimodal if it requires just one mode (write a paper, deliver a speech), or it can be multimodal if it requires students to mix two or more modes (combining words and images, for example, or combining sound and image). A **course** can be unimodal if it asks students to produce all assignments in only one mode (write papers, create podcasts), or it can be multimodal if, within a single assignment or across two or more assignments, it requires students to use two or more modes.

Many of the documents we encounter on a daily basis are already multimodal; television programs include both images and sound, for instance. We may have been teaching our students to compose multimodally all along, with assignments that incorporate graphics (images, charts, etc.) into their alphabetic texts. Most online sites are multimodal (using text, sound, and images together). Illuminated manuscripts are multimodal. For example, *The Book of Kells* is multimodal because it uses both images and text to communicate meaning. Graphic novels are multimodal for the same reason. Storyboards, scrapbooks, comic strips, posters are considered multimodal along with the more well-know new media of videos, podcasts, and websites.

¹ A further complication is that “mode,” within composition studies, has historically been used to designate particular “modes of discourse” (narration, description, exposition, and argument) in a generally discredited framework for organizing writing instruction.

It is worth noting that even if the final *product* is unimodal (a radio essay, for instance, using only sound), when we consider the planning and designing of the piece, we may discover that the *process* is multimodal—incorporating alphabetic writing in the planning stages, before the actual sound production of the piece.

In contrast with modes, as we've defined them in this context, media refers to the means of distribution (or publication) and reception of information. Print is one medium and, obviously, the one that has dominated college writing courses for the past century. Speaking (a presentation to a present audience) is another. Live radio is a third, television a fourth, web-based artifacts another and so on. Any medium may be uni-modal or multimodal. An artist might work in multiple media--acrylics, clay, photography, and so forth--all of which are examples of a single mode: the visual. Historically, students in writing classes have produced, quite literally papers. When they upload them to be read online, they are using a different medium; however, a simply uploaded paper, in a Word or PDF format, arguably is not taking full advantage of the digital medium. "Media" do not require technology.

B. Questions of Goals

We considered very carefully several justifications for including attention to modes other than writing in our courses. As one might imagine, the professional literature is replete with solid reasons for broadening the scope of college writing courses. Following are several arguments for doing so. However, we were explicitly aware of many arguments against including multi-modality and many costs of doing so, as well. We go on to discuss costs and drawbacks.

Justifications

- Analyzing multiple modes broadens students' rhetorical analysis abilities, especially their ability to interpret and critique digital media that have come to dominate much of civic life.
- Teaching multimodal literacy broadens students' ability to make informed choices about the more effective modality for communicating in a particular rhetorical situation. Focusing on the different affordances of different means of delivery bolster students' rhetorical knowledge and awareness in the same way that focusing on audience and discourse community do.
- Teaching multimodal literacy can help students to demonstrate practical knowledge of academic research traditions. For example, creating a research poster helps students to practice writing in the scientific research tradition (and to distinguish this writing from the interpretive research tradition). Teaching multimodal literacy can help students to transfer the writing skills they learn in our classes to other disciplines that use multimodal writing.
- Selecting details for some multimedia projects (such as podcast or video) helps teach students specific strategies for focusing a written essay, choosing the most effective details to support an argument for a particular audience and for a particular purpose. (Selfe and Takayoshi 3)
- Working with multiple modes teaches students to compare the affordances and constraints of these modes with those of print texts. (Selfe and Takayoshi 3)
- Exposing students to a wider selection of modes prepares students to write effectively in wider kinds of situations, both inside and outside the university, by expanding students' possible means of persuasion.

- As the means of producing different kinds of texts in different kinds of modes become pervasive, individuals will be more and more responsible for production in those modes. The days of the typing pool and *Mad Men* dictation have fairly well disappeared. Even in (perhaps especially in) personal and interpersonal life, the ability to design different kinds of documents is increasingly required—not design at high levels, but at a level beyond posters consisting of centered Arial text.
- Writing scripts, progress reports, and reflective essays for multimodal projects develops students’ writing skills. Even if a final product displays little writing, the process of making and documenting it generally involves substantial writing.
- Digital resources and connectivity facilitate composing processes that are qualitatively different than pre-digital, pre-networked composing.
- Teaching students to produce within multiple modes prepares them to meet the demands of an increasingly digital, global professional life.
- The types of texts most widely circulating in the public/popular sphere are increasingly multimodal. As a result, the nature of the reading experience is changing for many audiences. At the very least, this change is additive, with new kinds of reading being practiced (reading as linking, images and texts, shorter messages, etc); potentially, this change is substitutive, as new modes reading displace older ones.
- Teaching students to compose in multiple modes potentially increases student engagement in the composing process, as many students appreciate and use some of these modes more frequently than printed texts. Students may be attracted, in other words, to modes that they experience regularly and perceive as relevant.
- Incorporating multimodality is an important way of representing ourselves to students and to the campus as a whole. It may garner positive attention to our program, striking various constituencies as innovative—which it is, for a program of our scale.

Especially within the limits of a ten-week quarter, I love reminding students that what I’m expecting from them is *not* a mastery of these particular major papers, but rather an extended and intense engagement with all of the processes of writing, which include invention, brainstorming, free-writing, drafting, revision, researching, peer-review, conversing, editing, as well as delivery. Gone are my days of collecting the huge stack of “final papers” four times per quarter, and assigning grades based on the merits of finished material. Here are the days—sometimes maddening, time-intensive—of trying to attend to the particular moment of each student’s current location within the larger process.

With that said, yes, I acknowledge that “product matters” at some level. I wouldn’t reward a student with an A who continuously stalled during the process and ended up submitting ninety pages of fourteen different projects, each of which failed to come to fruition. As I said earlier, part of the process includes editing and polishing certainly. But how students arrive at that polished place is very significant to me, and I assess them on their conversations with me, their astute observations in class, their willingness to make mistakes and revise, even their willingness to challenge assignments as I’ve presented them.
David

Reservations

Although we believe there are many compelling reasons for including modes in addition to writing in writing courses, arguments against multi-modality can come from many sources, including teacher fears and lack of knowledge, the dearth of needed technologies, the bureaucratic strictures of existing course requirements and justification, the lesser status of new genres, and so on.

We can't agree with Cindy Selfe's claim that there are no costs to incorporating multimodal course elements; Selfe observes that just as some faculty across the disciplines misguidedly protest WAC with the plea that they can't include writing assignments because it would displace important course content, so too would it be narrow-minded to oppose multimodality out of fear for having to give up things. We disagree, which is different than saying what is given up might be replaced with something more valuable.

We presume that there's a finite amount of time that we can or should expect to devote to composition courses, a practical limitation both for teachers and students. A common convention is to have students spend 2 or 3 hours outside of class for every hour within, which makes a kind of basic sense. Therefore, students should spend about 8-12 hours a week doing homework for WRIT courses, and we can simply add more on. Some might claim that multimodal work is so engrossing to students that it seduces them to devote more time (and they aren't really doing 8-12 hours of homework each week anyway). Be that as it may, we're working with the presumption here that the amount of time available for students is pretty well fixed.

Practice in Writing. Like any other art or skill, writing development is facilitated through practice. Writing extensively is a necessary (if not altogether sufficient) element of learning to write well. If aspects of the course are given over to producing textual elements other than words, then students will write less. Instead of producing five papers, for example, they may produce four, plus a fifth project perhaps involving—but not exclusively consisting of—words. Or instead of producing a total of 10,000 words among several papers, students might produce 9,000 words that are combined with images, the time that might have been spent generating more text being needed to make, edit, and design the documents. Now, there's no magic calculus that will say writing 10 percent fewer words means 10 percent less development of writing ability. Neither would we assume that the new projects, resulting in artifacts beyond alphabetic texts, are less important. Our point is simply that, on this crudest of measures, one potential cost of multimodality is the number of words being generated.

A critical/analytic facility unique to writing. Without making any value judgments, we note that written texts foster a different kind of thinking and presentation of ideas than do other kinds of texts. On the one hand, written language has the capacity to make explicit assertions and reasons—and to provide the connections between them. The relationship between writing and thinking, which we customarily associate with language, is complicated, with writing being a certain way of preserving, disciplining, and revising thought in language that, once recorded, can be debated, revised, or repurposed by others. The purest case of this might be court judgments and legal opinions, which “fix” the law in written language rather than other modes. Our claim is not that thought occurs only in language or that other modes of transacting with the world (intuition or hunch, for example, or affect through sound and smell) are trivial. Rather, writing affords a particular mode for generating, couching, preserving, and transacting ideas that does not exist in pure visual images, for example, or in music. On the other hand (the one hand came up a dozen lines earlier), writing has the capacity for aesthetic ambiguity, too, as in its lyric capacity or the way that a novel can suggest a world that requires the imaginative participation of the reader to flesh out. Spending less time on writing means less opportunity developing the kind of critical/analytic facility unique to this mode. The question boils down to this: Is writing ultimately so important that it remains the key focus of the course, so rich in difficulty and complexity, so important in its own right—to

students, the academy, the culture—that we ought to continue focusing on it and let the other modes fend for themselves?

Experience with more genres and types of writing. In addition to the traditional academic paper of thesis/support, which inculcates the kind of critical facilities suggested in Cost Two, there are hosts of writing types that one might practice, acquiring facility and understanding in doing so. If we are going to make space in composition courses for modes other than writing, we should equally consider the host of genres that we don't currently have students practice. Why not poems or fictions as well as traditional academic essays? Why not memoirs or lyric essays? Why not journalism or New Journalism? The principle at stake here is opportunity cost; my choice to pursue one new enterprise comes at the cost of other enterprises I might have pursued instead.

In my own classes, I have tended to weigh analysis more heavily than production when it comes to multimodal assignments. I do this because 1) I don't want students to become inhibited by a fear of failure when experimenting with new modes or technologies and 2) I am holding them accountable for learning certain analytical skills, and for developing their writing in ways that I do not feel they must be held accountable for mastering certain technologies, for instance.

I would also say my courses to date have privileged analysis (as a mode of production)—that includes analysis of artifacts created by others outside the class, analysis of peers' materials, and self-reflection. While I emphasize process in my course design and sequencing of assignments, the reflective/analytical assignments I give often focus on analyzing product, not process.

...
I have a lot of questions about the applications of technology as a means of multi-modality in my own classes—so, for instance, let's say I assign a 5-minute documentary as the final project in a class on the rhetoric of documentary of film. I'd have some really basic questions to begin with: is five minutes too long? How short is still potentially effective for this medium and genre? What examples of 3-5 minute interesting documentaries (that is, ones that make arguments rather than simple reportage, instructional video etc.) can I show my students? All this before I even get to the questions of, do my students have access to appropriate digital editing software, and can I teach them how to use it? *Alba*

academic essays? Why not memoirs or lyric essays? Why not journalism or New Journalism? The principle at stake here is opportunity cost; my choice to pursue one new enterprise comes at the cost of other enterprises I might have pursued instead.

The identity of the course and the writing program. There is a familiar spot for writing or composition courses in the academy. Whether or not faculty across campus actually understand what's being taught in writing courses, they take those courses as a familiar part of the academic landscape. Faculty believe that writing well is important, and so it seems a given that composition courses have a spot (though if only they'd be more successful!). It threatens the stability of things to say that the writing course is about Composition Writ Large, that is, about making not only written texts but also those featuring modes beyond or instead of words. The cost is one of clarity or identity for the program. Now, this very well could be a cost worth sustaining, as a new identity is created to replace the old. Still, there may be misunderstandings among our colleagues across campus about our choice to teach these technologies (worst case scenario: "If the writing program would just focus on writing, we wouldn't be getting papers with these errors from our sophomore/junior/senior students.").

Turf. Do the new modes "belong" to composition studies? As has been well-rehearsed, rhetorical education split in the early part of the 20th century when speech communication and writing parted ways. So, when composition invokes its rhetorical roots, there's at least a speed bump in its lineage, as those aspects of orality/aurality have "belonged" to communication studies. There's a philosophical dimension to the question of whether writing=composition=rhetoric, but there's an at least intriguing bureaucratic question of which faculty on a campus get to "house" podcasting or video-making, for example. (The issue parallels other debates, such as the location of film in the academy: In theatre? English? Communications?) One possibility is that new units need forming, an amalgam of communications and writing faculty, a true department of rhetoric.

Classroom time. We need to consider to what extent we are willing to sacrifice class time to dealing with technical issues. Mundanely, there is often class "time suckage" when it comes to technologies breaking

down, students not coming prepared, etc. Workshop time in which students practice using these technologies might no longer be available for use in previous ways.

Faculty good will. Like any new pedagogy, there will likely be a learning curve, where faculty resist and/or become frustrated with creating, teaching, and assessing multimodal courses. There may be a loss of ease or tranquility about our course materials; stirring things up can be refreshing but also stressful. This would be more acute if people are told they need to incorporate a specific technology/assignment, rather than allowing them to gravitate to modes with which they feel most comfortable. Faculty will need time to prep courses, learn the technologies themselves, try out assignments, etc. Student engagement might not increase, or might even decrease, if lecturer presentation of multimodal practices is not rich and engaging.

Course integrity. There is a potential for “gee whiz” activities that, while flashy and engaging to students and faculty, are not very consistent with course goals.

Budget. Money allocated to support this initiative is not available for other initiatives.

C. Questions of Status

One justification for teaching rhetorical awareness through multimodality is that these modes are increasingly prominent in our society. Certainly that is true in what might be called the “civic” or “popular” realms. However, how widespread is multi-modal production in the academic and work spheres? If, for example, we focus courses on academic discourse and there is little occasion for students to use modes and media beyond traditional writing, then a justification dwindles. (There would remain other important justifications, such as rhetorical awareness and, of course, production in the civic sphere.) We can teach rhetorical/composing tools—appeals, tight paragraphs, synthesis—with any type of text. But if professors still want 4-page essays with clear thesis statements and transitions, with no images, will our broader definitions of composing and rhetoric prepare students for that? Would they be better served, in the short term, by just sticking to traditional writing?

The prevalence of multimodal writing across the DU campus and across national disciplines is something our group just has not studied. We can infer some of this from the student reports in the longitudinal study, but this would be an area for more investigation. Similarly, the group did not research the kinds of communications now dominant in work place situations. Presumably, there are some studies of this question, so a future task will be to do that research.

We did some quite preliminary investigations into course wide requirements for multimodality in American college and university writing programs. It’s certainly true that hundreds of individual writing faculty are including this kind of emphasis in their writing courses; the question was how prevalent the requirement was across all sections of a course. The short answer seems to be “not very,” though this is based on a query to the Writing Program Administrator’s listserv.

- Stanford University requires students in its second writing course to present their research in a mode in addition to a written paper.
- Kent State University requires students in both its first year courses to design various kinds of documents including visual elements.

- Texas Tech requires a photo essay in its English 101 course and requires that work in English 102 include modes in addition to writing.
- Michigan Tech has course goals that require student performance in written, visual, and oral modes.
- West Point requires a single multi-modal composition in its FYC course: a 5-8 minute reflective presentation representing a student's portfolio, integrating visuals in some way, to be given at the end of the semester.

The WPA Outcomes Statement for First year Composition is silent on the question of multimodality. There is a statement on composing in electronic environments, but the overwhelming (almost exclusive) emphasis is on alphabetic texts.

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the *kinds* of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first-year composition, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- How to engage in the electronic research and composing processes common in their fields
- How to disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms in their fields

More work remains to be done to ascertain the status of multimodality on campus, as well as its function in professional settings.

D. Questions of Pedagogy

Ultimately, the study group concluded that we should require some element of multimodality in our first year writing program, beginning with a pilot process in winter 2009. That led to a complex further discussion about the nature of that requirement. Following are the areas we discussed and our conclusions.

Purpose of the requirement and appropriate performance levels. The course goals should be “practical understanding” of the rhetorical issues involved in the choice of compositional mode. By practical

understanding, we mean something more than the ability to recite truisms about different modes and audience. Instead, students learn to apply principles in analysis and some techniques and strategies in production. Students should learn both “about” and “by doing.” We do not—can not—mean “professional” or even “skilled amateur” performances in the various modes—any more than we currently do so in our writing requirements.

Emphasis on existing course goals. There are multimodal projects that reinforce rhetorical analysis and deepen students’ understanding of audience/purpose/context, and there are multimodal projects that do not. So is this true for writing assignments. In WRIT 1122 at least, the reason our students write editorials on current affairs for specifically designated publications, for example, is that this assignment focuses their attention on issues of news source bias, public readership, kairos, while also bringing to the foreground issues of ethos, readability, the use of civic/public discourse, occasional humor, concision, certain types of evidence (like analogy and metaphor, perhaps even hyperbole) that would be less persuasive in the context of an academic paper. We need to ask how any given assignment reinforces central course goals. This is why assigning a basic “documentary on racism” may not be as rhetorically-informed as having students compose a political campaign or public service announcement that is geared toward a particular generation or a specific group of consumers. At issue, then, isn’t a question of *should I teach students how to video-edit because it’s engaging, pertinent to their everyday lives, more aligned with contemporary life, etc.*, but rather, *should I teach students how to video-edit because video itself is the most appropriate mode for delivering a public service announcement.* In other words, the integration of mode needs to occur not for the sake of integrating it alone, but rather for the sake of its being the most effective and most appropriate mode for fulfilling this particular writing task.

The ratio of analysis to production. At issue is the extent to which we should have students analyze (generally, write about) artifacts that others have produced versus having them produce artifacts of their own. The issue, of course, applies to conventional writings as well as multimodal productions, and it’s a matter of some timely complexity. For example, a recent article by Elizabeth Wardel in CCC argues that first-year composition should teach students *about* writing in the university instead of how to write *in* the university. In other words, Wardel proposes that we teach first-year students our disciplinary knowledge about language and discourse. Nonetheless, we ultimately believe that some level of production is important, even if the goal ultimately is rhetorical sensibility. In other words, one understands techniques and choices “from the inside,” as a producer, in a way that differs from and supplements learning only analysis. Still, some questions that address these tensions include: How much production of multimodal texts should first-year composition include? How much analysis? How much disciplinary knowledge? How should these components interact? For example, is the production of texts a vehicle for being able to analyze a text better?

Why do we emphasize reflection? In my own classes, I justify reflection in part because it asks students to ethically reflect on their choices. George Bush’s team produced some rhetorically astute, technically adroit videos. So did Hitler’s.

Is reflection a necessary component to assignment-making or does the need vary based on the assignment? Is there a distinction between adding reflection to a research paper, for example, versus a video? Within the present context of our classes, I believe, in response to the second question, the answer is yes. I have assigned research papers and not asked students to hand in an accompanying reflection. Is this the very best practice? I don’t know. I do know that when I submit an article to a journal, I do not include an accompanying reflection. Perhaps we should. But the article “speaks for itself.”

However, when students are producing a video, for example, I do not ask the work to speak for itself because I do not assume that all students have the technical abilities to have this voice. I do not assume that the process becomes visible in the product. Instead, to assess the work, I often find myself assessing what students tried to do. This is different from how I teach the research paper, but perhaps more appropriate to the actual situation. As my understandings build, I can see my assessment methods shift from say 25% (product)/75% (reflection) to 75% (product)/25% (reflection). *Jen N*

In most effective pedagogies, analysis and production have a symbiotic and cyclical relationship. For example, in 1133, one might ask students to read and analyze quantitative research studies before they conduct a survey and write an IMRAD report. They get a feel for some of the factors involved in quantitative research and an idea of what these reports look like, which guides their process. However, the process of designing, conducting, and writing up a study gives them a much better understanding of what is involved, which allows them to conduct more insightful analyses of published quantitative articles in the future. As far as integrating multimodality at different levels, it may be possible and effective to analyze multimodal texts without asking students to produce them—and several of us have done that for years—but it wouldn't be pedagogically sound to ask for production without analysis. Still, we should require some amount of production.

Imagine that Johnny, Jenny, and Juan all produce videos for an assignment that asks them to address the question whether racism should be a concern at DU through a five minute video. Do any of them get an A?

Johnny is a Final Cut pro and has created a work that both addresses the task with rhetorical astuteness but also is technically adroit. However, his accompanying reflection is perfunctory, even rapid; he asserts that his work speaks for itself. "The Godfather is not a better or worse film based on whatever Francis Ford Coppola says about it," he claims.

Jenny is a real amateur when it comes to video production; this is the first video she's ever made, and in terms of production values it shows. However, much of the content she has included shows a thoughtful engagement with the task posed; people watching her video are steered toward a clear position on the question. She writes a detailed commentary that explains the choices she made and the effects she was trying to create.

Juan's video is a mess. He presents five minutes of footage, true, but it all seems raw, even if there are some moments here and there of real potential and power. However, Juan writes a profound reflection in which he not only explains, with candid eloquence the shortcomings of his work but also provides a brilliant plan (shot for shot, edit for edit) for the work he'd like to create if he only had the time and expertise. Furthermore, he includes a three-page explanation of the racism he sees on campus, complete with quotations from several individuals to illustrate his point.

Doug

The ratio of performance to reflection. At issue is how much should we emphasize (and reward) what might be called "performance," that is, the quality of the artifact created, vs. what might be called "reflection," that is, the creator's ability to analyze, comment on, or explain the artifact that he or she has made. To put this most crassly, should students be graded on the quality of their project they create or their ability to discuss their creation? Multimodal or nonexclusively written projects foreground an evaluative dilemma that is present for most compositional situations in which we ask students to provide a commentary or reflection on their work. In any task, there may be a gap between the text that a writer has produced and that writer's ability to articulate or comment on it. However, in the case of technologies other than writing, those gaps may be both more apparent and more pronounced.

Evaluation. One common misgiving among faculty is that they don't know how to evaluate multimodal projects. We believe that devising and applying assessment criteria is quite doable, that the challenge is less that projects are somehow ineffable than that they are simply unfamiliar, that faculty may not have the experience or analytic vocabulary to feel comfortable judging them. After all, writing teachers have learned to internalize accommodations for the disparity between the levels of student and professional accomplishment. We don't expect students to produce *New Yorker* quality essays to receive an A, for example. However, we might not have an equivalent sense of accommodating texts produced in other modes. We don't know how to calibrate the following ratios: An "A" student video is to a Spike Lee documentary as an "A" student essay is to a *New Yorker* article. Part of the faculty development process, then, will involve how to evaluate multimodal projects.

Course goals. After discussing all of these pedagogical issues, as well as the justifications and reservations, our group decided to propose a new goal for WRIT 1122, a goal to be piloted in a few sections during 2009-10.

Students in WRIT 1122 should

- Demonstrate practical knowledge of the concept “rhetorical situation,” through the abilities both to analyze and to write effectively in different kinds of situations.
- Demonstrate proficiency with basic elements of rhetorical analysis (such as logos, ethos, and pathos) in a range of texts, and the application of that facility in their own writing.
- Demonstrate practical understanding of various rhetorical advantages and limitations of different compositional modes (writing, image, sound, singly or combined) and, when sensible, different media (for example, print, performance, or networked digital devices)
- Demonstrate the ability to produce writing that effectively provides evidence and reasoning for assertions, for audiences of educated readers.
- Demonstrate the ability effectively to incorporate written sources into their own writing and to document source materials.
- Demonstrate the ability to use feedback to revise their own writing and the ability to provide useful feedback to others.
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and proofread their writing.

“Practical understanding,” as noted above, is demonstrated both through production, using at least one mode other than written/alphabetic, and students’ reflections on their own efforts and their analysis of works by others. Faculty do not need to have students produce in all possible modes and media, and students (or others) should not expect expert performances.

E. Logistics

If we can’t support faculty who are teaching with and about new modes, it would be inappropriate to ask them to do so. Similarly, if the program and campus infrastructure cannot support multimodal practices, whether through hardware, software, or help, class time will be unproductive. Many faculty don’t feel they have the expertise to teach multimodal/media projects, and many feel they lack the time and resources to learn on their own. If we make increasing our multimodal and technological proficiency and presence a programmatic priority and devote time and resources to these projects in the fall, we can alleviate many reservations.

With technology, as with most things, the best way to learn is by doing. Engaging each other in multimodal and multimedia/ technology projects that will lecturers individually and the program collectively will also increase confidence as well as knowledge. One development method is to have faculty complete projects directly related either to their own teaching or to the support and promotion of the program. Some examples:

- Develop individual portfolio pages to introduce faculty and their courses to incoming students.
- Develop multimodal PR materials to improve our program’s and courses’ reputation on campus and generate student enthusiasm. This could include material for the website, videos, brochures, podcasts, etc. We would want to showcase some of these materials at a pre-registration meet-and-greet.

- Develop multimodal course materials to enhance pedagogical delivery and increase student engagement. These could be assignment-specific materials created by individual faculty, or we might consider topics/issues we all face and how we might help one another and share resources by collecting or creating multimodal/media content that we can all employ in our classes.
- Develop multimodal presentations and/or work spaces to facilitate committee work and initiatives.
- Based on recent administrative directives, explore the best options for maintaining course materials online and establishing interactive options as contingency plans for epidemics or inclement weather.

These projects would tap our creativity, increase our confidence, and serve as a foundation or bridge for curricular innovation in the future.

Although faculty may be reluctant for practical reasons including lack of time and resources; lack of expertise; lack of confidence, there may be a more pressing issue: lack of conviction at a theoretical or practical pedagogical level. Some colleagues (inside and outside our program) resist a turn toward multimodality out of a concern for what we're *no longer teaching* if we begin devoting time to teaching these things instead. We can imagine colleagues responding, Yes, I agree that this is important – but is it *as important as* **FILL IN THE SKILL?** To approach this issue, part of our mission remains to get a greater sense of colleagues' various positions on multimodality, its uses and limitations, and a sense of what they feel multimodality cannot teach or displaces in terms of our current course goals. The piloting process will allow more confident faculty to blaze pedagogical trails (and deal with any mountain lions), leaving others to benefit from their experiences.

We should also listen to colleagues outside of the program, some of whom might be surprised to find out that we're pursuing these lines of inquiry at all, the most reductive response being *That's very cool! But it's not college writing.* We should continue to build our annotated bibliography and select practical readings that illustrate the appropriateness of our multimodal endeavors.

Because much multi-media composing is done by groups or project teams, it may behoove us to have small groups collectively design and debug some multimedia assignments, so that we could 1) tap into the individual and collective wisdom in our faculty and 2) avoid overwhelming individuals who are willing but uncertain.

Finally, in terms of faculty knowledge, "I prefer not to" will ultimately not be an option. Because composition faculty will have considerably more skill as writers than as producers in other modes, the goal is not that everyone must become Ira Glass or Spike Lee or Art Spiegelman. Still, it is possible to establish levels of competence with basic technologies and principles such that teachers can help students produce texts in modes other than writing. The writing program must support in three areas:

1. Hardware and software

We need to provide faculty and students access to digital video and sound recording equipment. While some students own or have easy access already, many do not. There are issues not only of fair access but also of pedagogy at stake. For video, a number of Flip cameras are best suited to the task. It's reasonable for the library to consider purchasing such equipment; after all, other programs on campus may benefit from some central technology resources. Doug has discussed strategies with the library for accomplishing this.

The Writing Program will devote some of its equipment money to purchasing enough cameras and recorders for some level of piloting. However, we cannot afford a program-wide purchase. We will pursue pooling some funds in a matching fashion.

In terms of software, we will strive to keep to what students have on their computers or can download free. In terms of sound editing, for example, we propose using Audacity. In terms of video editing, Movie Maker or iMovie would suffice for our purposes. In terms of visual design, Publisher is fine for Windows, but there is no Mac version. In fact, with about 40% of incoming students bringing Macs to campus, we have to plan for two platforms. It's desirable to have students be able to complete these projects on their own computers; even though it may also be desirable to have the needed software loaded on library computers, if students are to perceive the value of DU's laptop requirement, they need those computers to do what we modestly need them to do for classes. It could be reasonable to have students buy some software, in the way that they have to buy textbooks, but this is a last option that should be considered carefully.

The bottom line is that we need to have enough hardware and the right kinds of software to minimize frustration for students and teachers.

2. Access to equipment

Even if the writing program could afford to purchase all the hardware needed, it wouldn't have the means to check out and track it. The library views this as a reasonable extension of its services. However, distributing hardware is not a trivial matter and will require time and expertise: to catalog the equipment, develop policies for checking out and securing it, for processing returns, and so on. The library staff will seek writing program input in developing some of these procedures, and it can also consult other library professionals. At this point, the library believes it can set up checking out equipment by the winter quarter.

3. Support

Even though the goal will not be to have students produce anything close to "professional" quality (it would be foolish to expect much proficiency, given the various course requirements), students will still need support on both rhetorical and technical levels. Some of this can come through informal channels: friends and roommates; some will come in class meetings. But students need formal places to turn.

Eliana Schonberg notes that it would be possible and desirable to have both rhetorical and technical support come through the Writing Center. However, it would take resources for hiring and training consultants (undergraduate and graduate students) with particular aptitudes for this work. In the short term, the consultants can probably deal with rhetorical issues. After all, under Eliana's leadership, the center has been exploring how to help student writers with multimodal projects.

Nancy Allen, Dean of the Library, described possibilities for identifying technical help and organizing it through the library. Students could perhaps identify needs to library professionals who might then match them with the right kinds of help, which students would get through appointments.

Similarly, the writing program will need to develop a sense of faculty members' areas of expertise and encourage people to call on one another for help—and to respond when asked.

Next Steps

September 2, 2009, retreat. During this all-day retreat, faculty will acquire hands-on experience with two modes of production with which they may be unfamiliar: video, audio, and document design. They will also share ideas and knowledge about using technology and teaching the courses.

Fall workshops. We will provide faculty development for multimodal teaching during the fall quarter. Most of these sessions (a total of six hours or so) will take place during the Tuesday afternoon sessions.

1) The State of the Multimodal Composition Classroom Today: Trends in Scholarship and Practice. A one-hour presentation with Q&A led by Multimodal Group for all faculty. If the retreat information is complete, this might be a place where we could report on what other campuses have done, our own partnerships at DU, who is publishing in this area, etc.

2) Designing Effective Multimodal Assignments for Our Courses: Considerations, Best Practices, Examples. A workshop that will address maintaining a focus on rhetoric in our assignment design, avoiding TTS (Total Time Suckage), keeping accessibility in mind, how to handle fair use in the world of multi-media, and back up plans when technology fails. For all faculty. Before we hold this workshop, we should put out a call for best practices from the faculty at large—we do not want to create something that is boring for some of our colleagues.

3) Evaluating Multimodal Assignments. The name pretty much says it all. A discussion/workshop facilitated by the multimodal study group for all faculty.

4) Technology Trouble Shooting. This series of quick workshops is designed to bring everyone up to a basic level of proficiency with the technologies available in their classrooms and on their laptops. Faculty will self-select into groups addressing topics with which they are not yet familiar. Topics could include: How to handle differences in platform, or differences in program (Word for Vista and Word for the Rest of Us, etc.). How to make use of the LCD projectors in our classrooms, to create a gallery in DUVaga, to use Blackboard, to acquire other basic proficiencies identified by the MSG and the Professional Development Committee as necessary. These workshops should be facilitated by the MSG and the Professional Development Committee.

5) Optional Additional Training, or What I really want to know how to do is . . .

In response to the inventory collected during the retreat, the MG will identify a series of workshops to teach any interested faculty member about specific technologies, resources, practices, etc. Sessions will be facilitated by Multimodal Study Group Members, and anyone else who is willing and has know-how. (These might run concurrently with 4, depending on who is interested in what, levels of proficiency, etc.)

Winter 2009 pilot program. We will pilot multimodal requirements in a few sections of WRIT 1122 in the winter quarter rather than initiate them in all 70+ sections. We should target the number of pilot sections in relation to the amount of equipment (and support) we can provide. Piloting will help us estimate our hardware needs; we should also try to track the volume and kinds of help inquiries these projects will generate. There are several unknowns; we can mitigate some of them, but others will be resolved only through practice. A copy of the pilot call for proposals is included as an appendix to this report.

Establish dialogues with other constituencies at DU. We need to find out what campus interests and expectations are regarding multimodal composing. It will be very helpful to meet with Digital Media Studies faculty and with some Communication faculty.

Establish some research projects. From a somewhat self-centered programmatic perspective, this would be a chance for us to try something new and share our results with other programs.

Note: A growing list of practical resources, compiled by Multimodal Team Members and maintained by Jennifer Campbell, is at <http://multimodalwritingresources.wikispaces.com>

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Barton, Matt. "Embrace the Wiki Way!" *MattBarton.net*. 21 May 2004. 9 Feb 2009 <
http://www.mattbarton.net/tikiwiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=4>.

This is a brief and entertaining piece about using wikis in composition, with an emphasis on the types of projects that are well suited to wikis (group research projects, reference guides, resource directories) and those that are not (portfolios, argumentative essays, personal creative works). This is a good example of how we should be sure to use the right tool for the job.

Brandt, Deborah "Accumulating Literacies" *College English*, 6(57), (1995). 648-68.

Brandt, Deborah. "Sponsors of Literacy" *College Composition and Communication* 49.2 (1998); 165-85.

Carter, Locke. "Argument in Hypertext: Writing Strategies and the Problem of Order in a Nonsequential World." *Computers and Composition: An International Journal for Teachers of Writing* 20:1 (2003): 3-23.

Hypertext is made from nodes that are linked to other nodes that guide the reader, but the reader chooses how much to read and the order in which is read. Thus, traditional argument structure doesn't work in hypertext. Carter "present(s) concepts of informal logic, stasis theory, primacy/recency/repetition effects, spatial metaphors, and textual coherence as a starting point for building a rhetorical understanding of argumentation strategies in hypertext."

Colby, Rebekah Shultz and Richard Colby. "A Pedagogy of Play: Integrating Computer Games into the Writing Classroom" *Computers and Composition: An International Journal for Teachers of Writing*, 2008; 25 (3): 300-312.

In this article, our colleagues argue that traditional distinctions between work/play and classroom/gamespace create barriers to computer games' integration into academic settings and the writing classroom in particular. After arguing that the history of rhetoric offers a basis from which teachers and students can see the arbitrariness of the work/play distinction, the article offers an argument that reunites the relationships between computer game theory and writing

pedagogy, calling it a pedagogy of play and basing it on the theory of emergent gaming. An example, from the authors' World of Warcraft class, supports the argument through a studio model of composition in which, while playing the game, students work concurrently either individually or with their peers to create self-selected documents centered around and addressed to the WoW game community. These documents are immediately published on online sites that WoW players read. The authors argue that the process of learning through the game supported by rhetorically meaningful writing tasks engages students in complex ways as they consider both academic and professional options for writing. This article is useful for thinking about how multimodal objects can be productively incorporated into our writing classrooms. It adds to our discussion so far about the tension between incorporating reflection versus production of multimodal texts into the writing classroom by taking up the tension between incorporating media into the first-year composition room as objects of analysis versus as games that are played. In addition, specific student project examples are offered and easily understood by the 1133 lecturer curious to see how other colleagues are developing their classroom practices.

Daley, Elizabeth. "Expanding the Concept of Literacy" *EDUCAUSE Review*. Mar / Apr 2003. 32-40.

Dangler, Doug, Ben McCorkle, and Time Barrow. *Expanding Composition Audiences with Podcasting*. < <http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/podcasting/classroom.htm> >.

This is an interesting site that includes an overview of podcasting and discusses its potential for composition in the classroom, in writing centers, and in our professional work. The classroom audiences section is most relevant for us; the authors argue that podcasting helps students improve their writing style and consider delivery more as they compose for a broader public audience. A sample assignment and rationale are linked.

David, Carol, and Anne R. Richards, eds. *Writing the Visual: A Practical Guide for Teachers of Composition and Communication*. West Lafayette: Parlor, 2008.

This collection focuses on student analysis of visual rhetoric rather than on student production of visual artifacts. Essays include analyses of photographs, documentary films, and political cartoons, with practical pedagogical advice on how to include such artifacts in the composition classroom in order to support an understanding of rhetorical elements and to deepen students' engagement with visual artifacts. Two chapters include some focus on student production of visual artifacts: L. J. Nicoletti's "Mediated Memory: The Language of Memorial Spaces," which asks students to design a public memorial and to reflect on the rhetorical decisions involved in such a design; and Alyssa O'Brien's "Drawn to Multiple Sides: Making Arguments Visible with Political Cartoons," which has students compose and upload political cartoons that support accompanying written editorials about a current political issue.

Davidson-Shivers, Gayle V., Barry Nowlen and Michael Lanouette. "Do Multimedia Lesson Structure and Learning Styles Influence Undergraduate Writing Performance?" *College Student Journal* 36.1 (2002): 20-32.

This article presents the somewhat inconclusive results of a study about using multimedia to teach students about brainstorming and outlining. They attempted to measure the relative effectiveness of random delivery (has all the nodes there but no dictation of how students will proceed through them,) and fully prescribed (student only controls the pace) lesson designs. There were a number of flaws in the research design, but it seems students found both types of lessons easy to use and helpful.

DeVoss, Hawisher, Jackson, Johansen, Moraski, Selfe, "The Future of Literacy" *Literate Lives in the Information Age*. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004.

Ferriter, Bill. *Digitally Speaking* . < <http://digitallyspeaking.pbworks.com> >.

Though this wiki is written by and, ostensibly, for middle school teachers, it is a rich resource for educators at all levels. The site includes pages on a number of multimodal technologies--blogging, podcasting, wikis--that present technology definitions, rationales, tutorials, links galore, and student and professional examples. These examples might be particularly useful, as will material on expectations and assessment that transfer across educational level. (Ferriter also maintains a more wide-ranging blog called the Tempered Radical that often deals with education, technology, resistance, and the like. I would love for Cate to have a teacher like this, and I am impressed and shamed by his tech savvy and productivity with a public school teaching load.)

Herrington, Anne, Kevin Hodgson, and Charles Moran, eds. *Teaching the New Writing: Technology, Change, and Assessment in the 21st-Century Classroom* . New York: Teachers College Press, 2009.

While much of this collection represents issues and practices associated with primary and secondary education, Part III: Bridging to the College Years includes a couple of potentially useful articles. "Scientific Writing and Technological Change: Teaching the New Story of Scientific Inquiry" discusses of technology and multimodality shape the teaching of scientific research and writing--from proposals to assessment--at Greely High School and MIT. In "Student Engagement and Multimodality: Collaboration, Schema, Identity," Peter Kittle shares an approach top multioimodal document creation used in his Advanced Composition for Future Teachers course and claims that students became so invested and engaged in their projects that they became markers of identity for students in the class. He also notes that he was learning many of these technologies alongside his students for a simultaneous professional project, which actually benefitted his pedagogy rather than harming it. The article describes several student projects and the evaluation rubric used to assess them. "Multiple Modes of Production in a College Writing Class," is another teacher-lore article that highlights specific assignment and assessment practices. It is reassuring in its claim that one need not be an expert to "dive in" to multi-modal work, but concludes with notes about how the authors have learned from their experiences and plan to make appropriate changes in future sememsters. One interesting point that relates to our previous discussion is that the assignments discussed bridge analysis and production. Quoting Kress, Julie A. Myatt proposes that "providing students with assignments that allow them to critique someone else's design choices while at the same time being mindful of their own will help prepare them for a future in which 'the facilities of design rather than those of critique will be essential for equitable participation in social, economic and cultural life'" (187).

Kolb, David. "Association and Argument: Hypertext in and around the Writing Process." *New Review of Hypermedia & Multimedia* 11.1 (2005): 7-26.

Kolb outlines four phases of scholarly writing--survey, analysis, evaluation, creation--and discusses how different types of hypertext, such as page and link structure, stretch text, and link mapping, can facilitate reflection, argument, and evaluation.

Kress, Gunther and Theo Van Leeuwen. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* . London: Arnold, 2001.

Kress and Van Leeuwen take a semiotic approach to multimodality, articulating a "multimodal theory of communication." In their work, they emphasize four "strata" of multimodality: discourse, design, production and distribution. Discourse and design, they argue, constitute the "content" of the message being delivered. Production and distribution make up the "expression" of this content. This is a theoretical text, that draws heavily upon linguistics, and so may not be of immediate pedagogical use. That being said, they argue in favor of our multimodal awareness or fluency, as it is "no longer tenable" to consider language as "the central means of representing

and communicating” (111). They also argue that in our use of various modes and media, we engage in a variety of non-abstract “communicative practices” which include discursive, production, and interpretive practices, as well as practices related to design and distribution. Toward the end of their book they reflect, “We may be approaching a time when the question is not so much ‘what discrete modes are occurring together?’ as ‘what ensembles of [semiotic] resources are being produced?’”

Kress, Gunther. "Gains and Losses: New forms of Texts, Knowledge, and Learning." *Computers and Composition* 22 (2005): 5–22.

Liu, Ziming. "Reading Behavior in the Digital Environment: Changes in Reading Behavior Over the Past Ten Years ." *Journal of Documentation* 61.6 (2005): 700-712.

Liu's research suggests that "screen-based reading behavior is characterized by more time spent on browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading more selectively, while less time is spent on in-depth reading, and concentrated reading." These findings have implications for how we design and teach multimodal projects that are intended to be read on screen and raise questions about the affordances and constraints of such projects for presenting sustained argument or communicating complex material.

Mackiewicz, Jo. “Comparing Powerpoint Experts’ and University Students’ Opinions about PowerPoint Presentations.” *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication* 38.2 (Jun2008): 149-165.

This article provides a solid review of the literature on PowerPoint design from academic and professional sources before presenting the results of a student survey about their reception and production of PowerPoints. Mackiewicz’s comparison of expert and student opinions can inform the teaching of PowerPoint design and presentation skills.

Murray, Joddy. *Non-Discursive Rhetoric: Image and Affect in Multimodal Composition* . Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009.

One interesting aspect of this text is its interdisciplinary nature; Murray draws on linguistics, cultural studies, and neuroscience to propose a theory of composing that unites the discursive and non-discursive. Non-discursive elements add meaning to the text at every strata or stage (Kress): production (affective elements of composing, intuitive logic), distribution (video quality, interpretive performance), and consumption (affective connections between consumer/collector and text/artifact). Non-discursive elements are not just supplemental, though, and Murray posits the image as central to everything we do with symbol systems and, indeed, to thought itself. Murray argues, “The value of non-discursive texts, therefore, is that it thrives and derives its meaning-making from the complexity and ambiguity of its medium, whereas discursive language works best when it reifies and reduces complexity and ambiguity as it goes along” (5). On the other hand, Murray’s text seems to be quite complex and ambiguous throughout. ☺ This text is highly theoretical, dense, and often not particularly well written or edited, so I wouldn’t recommend it as practical for our purposes at this time. The section that would be most useful is Chapter 5: Composing Multimodality.

Nakakoji, K., Y. Yamamoto, M. Akaish and K. Hori “Interaction Design for Scholarly Writing: Hypertext Representations as a Means for Creative Knowledge Work.” *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*. 11.1 (June 2005): 39-67.

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Rice, Jeff and Marcel O'Gorman, eds. *New Media/New Methods: The Academic Turn from Literacy to Electracy*. West Lafayette: Parlor, 2008.

Salaway, Gail, Judith B. Caruso, and Mark R. Nelson. *The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology*, 2008 (Research Study, Vol. 8). Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research, 2008. < <http://www.educause.edu/ecar> >.

Selfe, Cynthia L. *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*. Hampton, 2007.

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Stein, Jared. "Defining a 'Creepy Treehouse.'" *Flexknowlogy*. 9 Apr. 2008. 9 Feb. 2009 < <http://flexknowlogy.learningfield.org/2008/04/09/defining-creepy-tree-house/> >.
Stein explains that "any move to integrate or aggregate new institutional tools or systems with pre-existing tools or systems already embraced by the community may be seen as creepy treehouse, in as much as it may be construed as institutional infringement upon the social or professional community of it's participants." Basically, educational uses can take all of the "cool" out of technology tools and spaces. While we may be tempted to use popular tools/spaces to interest the students or harness their enthusiasm for extracurricular writing, we do so at the risk of invading their privacy and stifling their autonomy and creativity. (This idea extends beyond the digital/social networking realm. For example, zines aren't cool because they are zines, but because they are fan-driven, underground, DIY publications. A classroom-based "zine" that is grade-driven, institutionally-sanctioned, and done for the teacher might not be so cool.) An interesting discussion follows in the comments section.

Tierney, Robert J., Ernest Bond, and Jane Bresler. "Examining Literate Lives as Students Engage With Multiple Literacies." *Theory into Practice* 45(4): 359-367.

This article is based largely on a longitudinal case study of a multimodal program in an economically challenged, racially diverse secondary school. What might be most useful for us is the authors' employ sociopolitical perspective: "Our conception of new literacies (those associated with digital technologies and multimodal representations) is grounded in an understanding of multiple literacies as social practices. Based on our observations of students in supportive classroom environments, individuals and groups afforded opportunity to engage as teams with digital literacies learn an array of new ways to explore and share ideas. These individuals are able to contribute together and separately to enhanced explorations of their worlds with new and dynamic genres that afford an image-enhanced, complex layering of concepts, as well as the means for rich explorations, exchanges of ideas, and problemsolving. Depending upon how these new literacies are introduced/situated, they can make a significant contribution to shifts in the lives of individuals and groups politically, economically, and socially."

Tryon, Charles. "Writing and Citizenship: Using Blogs to Teach First-Year Composition." *Pedagogy* 6:1(2006): 128-132.

This is a brief and reader-friendly overview of a blog-based pedagogy designed to get students writing for public audiences about current events to foster better writing and citizenship. Tryon discusses benefits, such as engagement and rapid feedback, as well as drawbacks like potentially negative responses from the public.

Vie, Stephanie. "'Generation M' and Online Social Networking Sites in the Composition Classroom." *Computers and Composition* 25.1 (2008): 9-23.

According to Vie, "Compositionists should focus on incorporating into their pedagogy technologies that students are familiar with but do not think critically about: online social networking sites, podcasts, audio mashups, blogs, and wikis" because technological literacy involves more than just how to use the technology. Vie notes, however, that many instructors are far behind entering students in terms of technology use and even savvy teachers may encounter resistance to using these technologies in class.

Wardle, Elizabeth. "Mutt Genres" and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University? *CCC 60.4* (June 2009): 765-89.

"The goal of teaching students to write for the university assumes that in first-year composition students can be taught ways of writing (genre and genre knowledge) that they can then transfer to the writing they do in other courses across the university. This goal and its underlying assumption are problematic for a number of reasons illustrated here through a study of a large midwestern composition program. The study validates theoretical critiques of general skills writing courses made by genre and activity theorists over the past decade. The difficulties of teaching varied academic genres in only one context suggest we might better serve first-year students by reframing the goals of FYC, such that the course does not promise to teach students *to write* in the university but rather teaches students *about writing* in the university." (Abstract)

Wysocki, Anne Frances, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2004.

Wysocki, Johnson-Eilola, Selfe and Sirc individually, and to varying degrees, define new media, articulate the affordances and limitations of new media, compare new media literacy with print media literacy, and discuss ideas for why and how writing classrooms can respond to incorporating new media. The authors also offer their own assignments and assessment strategies for the new media classroom. Because each chapter in the book includes a short article which is followed by assignments by the authors, the format effectively addresses both theory and practice. The theoretical portions of the book overlap with some of the author's previous publications, particularly Selfe's. However, I found the book to be useful overall. The authors argue that "theory and practice should clasp like hands" and pedagogically the book is a good reference tool. Specific chapters will be more useful to our teaching practices than others. I would recommend Anne Wysocki's chapters as they helped me to think about specific and varied ways for incorporating visual analysis and design into my first-year composition course, specifically 1122. These assignments range from analyzing the visuals on a postcard to building more technical compositions. In addition, lecturers who teach literacy narratives will find the assignments and assessment rubrics in Selfe's "Toward New Media Texts" helpful; this chapter offers a sequence of activities that ask students to compose a visual essay which represents and reflects on their own literacy practices.

Welch, Kathleen. *Electric Rhetoric*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1999.

Wysocki, Anne. (2001). "Impossibly distinct: On form/content and word/image in two pieces of computer-based interactive multimedia." *Computers and Composition* 18 (3), 209-234.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Made not only in Words: Composition in a New Key." *College Composition and Communication* 56.2 (2004): 297-328.

Appendix

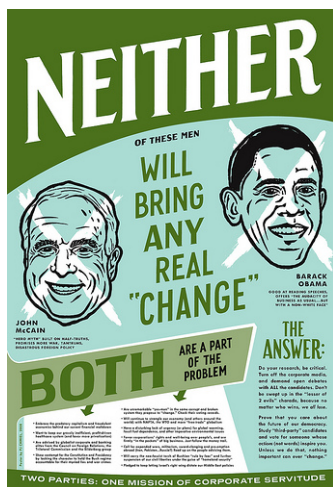
Call for Pilot Course Proposals

Multimodality in WRIT 1122/1622

Due October 1, 2009

We are excited to announce that in winter 2010, the Writing Program will pilot sections of 1122 or 1622 that include a multimodal component. These sections will ask students to demonstrate practical understanding of rhetorical advantages and limitations of at least two compositional modes (writing, image, sound, singly or combined) and different delivery media (for example, print, performance, networked digital device). Students in these courses will have access to recorders and Flip cameras, checked out through the library.

If you would like to teach one of these sections, submit a 1-paragraph proposal. Please address what kind of multimodal assignment(s) your course would include, paying attention to how multimodal composing will attend to the established course goals of rhetorical awareness. All lecturers are invited to apply, regardless of their current technical expertise. By applying, you agree to participate in the following:



1. **Three meetings.** (two during fall 2009 and one during the winter 2010). We hope that these meetings will offer a network of support by including:
 - Discussions about best practices research
 - Workshops for multimodal assignments
 - Question and answer sessions about new technologies
2. **Assignment posting.** Lecturers will post multimodal course assignments and supporting documents to Portfolio to support and to inspire other faculty teaching multimodal courses.
3. **A brief, informal report.** By June 2010, pilot lecturers will produce a short report that details their experience and suggests future directions for multimodal course design.

Please submit your proposals by October 1, 2009, by sending an email to Amy. Use the subject heading "Multimodal Pilot."