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Introduction

EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION
Theories, Pedagogies, and Practices of Multimodality

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SITUATING THE COLLECTION

In the last two decades following the publication of the New London Group's (1996) "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures," the notion of literacy has significantly changed. The group called for an expansion of the definition of literacy beyond the alphabetic-only to account for meaning-making practices in visual, auditory, behavioral, and spatial modes. Many rhetoric and composition scholars have theorized similar multimodal approaches to engage the notion of literacy, specifically writing, in the composition classroom. The list includes, among others, scholars like Cynthia Selfe, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Stuart Selber, Anne Wysocki, Geoffrey Sirc, and Jody Shipka, who contend that since writing includes signifying practices in multiple mediums—print, visual, aural, graphics, animation, and such—writing instruction should consider this plurality of composing mediums and attempt to scaffold students' composing abilities in all possible modalities of expression, hence engaging multimodal theories and pedagogies in writing classrooms.

A quick review of scholarship in the field reveals that the theoretical conversations around multimodal composing are already quite sophisticated in some respects, but the pedagogical translation of those conversations has not reached the same level, particularly among instructors new to multimodal practices, who often struggle with the question of *how* to adopt multimodal instruction in their classrooms. This situation has created an uneasy gap between theory and practice and between students' preferred literacy practices and actual instruction in writing classrooms. Multiple studies into students' literacy practices have found our students are writing more than ever with a great variety of composing technologies and forums widely available to them (Lenhart 2012; Lenhart et al. 2008; Madden et al. 2013; Purcell, Buchanan, and

Friedrich 2013; Yancey 2009), but the primary focus and medium of our instruction has mostly remained traditional print.

Cognizant of this discrepancy between students' regular literacy practices and composition instruction, Jessie L. Moore, Paula Rosinski, Tim Peeples, Stacey Pigg, Martine Courant Rife, Beth Brunk-Chavez, Dundee Lackey, Suzanne Kessler Rumsey, Robin Tasaka, Paul Curran, and Jeffrey T. Grabill (2016) express the fear that our "students are moving beyond the scope of many writing pedagogies" (9). In fact, Moore et al. raise a serious question about pedagogical approaches being adopted in first-year writing courses across institutions of higher education in this country: "Many universities have required first-year writing courses, presumably with the goal of preparing students for future writing in and beyond the academy, but are they meeting this goal if they are not accounting for these 21st century differences?" (9). Similar questions and concerns are also raised by other scholars in the field. For instance, Geoffrey Sirc (2012) notes that rhetoric and composition has yet to fully embrace composing technologies other than traditional print. If this continues, he adds, it's very likely our writing instruction will become increasingly irrelevant to the literate lives of our students. Along similar lines, Collin Brooke (2009) openly warns, "Our disciplinary insistence upon the printed page, if it persists unchecked, will slowly bring us out of step with our students, our institutions, and the broader culture of which we are a part" (23).

Even though some scholars in the field have persuasively argued for the value of multimodal composing practices and the learning that occurs in the process, implementation of multimodal instruction has remained nominal in many writing programs. Attempts at implementing multimodal approaches are sporadic at best. Even those attempts are mostly individual instructors' initiatives in a handful of institutions. Multimodality—so highly hailed in scholarship as the means of preparing the writers and communicators of the future—is largely ignored in most of writing classrooms. Frankly speaking, multimodality is still far from being a norm in the majority of writing classes, and it is miles away from being adopted by a large section of writing instructors and programs. Even the scholarship is not adequate; it must further expand its horizon by being more aggressive in exploring the pedagogical potentials of a new and evolving set of composing technologies. New composing technologies keep coming, and the current ones keep changing; therefore, we must keep abreast of them first and then regularly theorize them in our disciplinary frames, with particular focus on their pedagogical value for writing classrooms.

This anthology moves in that direction by helping both veteran instructors and newer entrants into multimodality map its scope and its pedagogical potentials. The fourteen chapters in this collection explore new horizons of the scholarly conversation on multimodality while presenting an array of theories, pedagogies, and strategies for engaging multimodality in classrooms. By presenting research on the implementation of multimodality in diverse contexts, this collection attends to the ever-increasing chasm between those scholars and instructors who are already confident and competent with multimodal theories and pedagogies and those who are not but are interested to move in that direction.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF SOME RECENT MULTIMODAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES

As indicated above, the theoretical conversations surrounding multimodality have been quite sophisticated. Randall McClure (2011), for instance, introduces the idea of web 3.0 and discusses "how the Semantic Web might alter the research process and, more importantly, the research-writing relationship" (316). William I. Wolff (2013) similarly investigates what counts as writing in a web 2.0 environment and finds that web 2.0 spaces such as blogs, wikis, Twitter, and so on are spaces for writing like traditional print medium and "have their own grammars, styles, and linguistics" (212). He argues that "effective and successful compositional engagement with Web 2.0 applications—Yancey's 'new composition'—requires an evolving interactive set of practices" (212). He further claims that our learning about these practices has the potential to transform how we conceptualize writing and how we teach this art within and outside a Web 2.0 ecosystem. The point Wolff is trying to make is that we must productively engage these various writing spaces and modes in our composition classrooms.

Moore et al. (2016) actually present a little snapshot of the composing technologies our students use on a daily basis: "Notebook paper and pencil, word-processing programs, cell phones, and Facebook: these are just a few of the composing technologies today's students use to write in their everyday, academic, and professional lives" (2). Rebecca Tarsa (2015), a digital writing and rhetoric scholar, calls new forums of writing available to students "digital participation sites," which "offer a wide range of opportunities for deploying both digital and alphabetic literacy skills, and have proven incredibly successful in creating the literacy engagement that frequently proves elusive in composition instruction" (12). She maintains that since most of our students "are active in digital

participation spaces at some point in their lives (Jenkins et al.), this makes them a rich site of inquiry for theorizing literacy engagement, especially in relation to students' existing everyday literacy activity and practices" (12). All these scholars are pointing to an exigence that calls for a more robust engagement with multimodality in writing classrooms.

The notion of multimodality itself is deeply explored and fleshed out in published scholarship. Yancey (2004), in "Looking for Sources of Coherence in a Fragmented World: Notes toward a New Assessment Design," writes that "print and digital overlap, intersect, become intertextual" (89), implying that multimodality is closely connected with digitality. In fact, the field of digital rhetorics in general has framed multimodal writing as composing with digital technologies and has explored ways to develop assignments that facilitate students' work with a great variety of semiotic resources. But Jody Shipka (2009) is cautious about not conflating multimodal with digital. For Shipka, multimodal is more inclusive than digital alone. She quotes Russel Wiebe and Robert S. Dornsife Jr. to illustrate her point:

> Instead of seeing the computer as the only technology with which composition ought to be concerned, we wish to show that only when other contemporary media—television, video, photography, music, and so forth—are considered, and the notion of a "text" broadened to include everything from conventional essays, to paintings, photographs, videos, and hybrids that we have yet to imagine, can "computer composition" really become a living discipline in an academy that responds seriously to the lives its students live. (Shipka W349)

Shipka theorizes multimodal composing as what she calls "a composition made whole" that invites students to purposefully utilize a wide variety of texts, tools, and practices while composing a text of their choosing (W363).

This is a small sample of recent scholarship published in the field, which shows it is trying to keep up with innovations happening in the field of information and communication technologies, but it is not yet comprehensive enough and requires further expansion with the study of different unexplored dimensions of multimodality. This collection takes a small step in that direction.

While stating there has not been much multimodal instruction in the majority of composition classrooms across the nation, we do not mean to imply there have not been any attempts to engage multimodality in writing classrooms. In fact, there are some excellent examples of instructors implementing multimodal curriculum successfully in their classrooms. Diana George (2002), for example, takes up the New London Group's

literacy-as-design paradigm, saying it is relevant for composition in a visual age: "For students who have grown up in a technology-saturated and an image-rich culture, questions of communication and composition absolutely will include the visual, not as attendant to the verbal but as complex communication intricately related to the world around them" (32). By practicing design as a teaching trope, George attempts to undo the privileging of print over other semiotic modes.

Similarly, John Pedro Schwartz (2008) discusses a course he taught at American University in Beirut using a "Museum-based Pedagogy" with "the museum as a means for teaching the five literacies that are already or rapidly becoming central to our curriculum: verbal, visual, technological, social, and critical" (29). He sees museums as feasible and potential sites for "teaching students to understand multimodal ways of meaning-making in their social, technological, and institutional contexts" (29). He further adds that "the discovery and employment of the museum's means of persuasion develop competence at analyzing and using forms of communication that are common to other spaces and texts" (29).

Furthermore, Dale Jacobs (2007) implements composition as a design trope by making comics the major resources and assignments in his composition classroom. He posits that media convergence—convergence of image and text—is evident in comics, and comics can be the sponsors of multimodal literacy. According to him, students' engagement with comics both as classroom resource and the medium of composition could be a productive way to introduce students to the notion of multimodality in action. Yet another instance of innovative pedagogical response is Rebecca Wilson Lundin's (2008) "networked" pedagogy, which she believes "gives us an opportunity to make visible, and subsequently reevaluate, the received wisdom of our field concerning the definition of writing, models of authorship, classroom authority, and more" (433). She discusses and embraces wikis as productive sites for practicing networked pedagogy, as students interact with each other in the network in "a completely user-editable environment" (434) blurring the roles of author and reader, thus calling into question the traditional authority of writers and readers. Steven Fraiberg's (2010) multilingual-multimodal framework of writing, which engages "students in activities involving juxtaposition, filtering, selection, and recombining" (118), adds another innovation in pedagogy.

Along similar lines, J. Elizabeth Clark (2010) adopts ePortfolios, blogging, and digital storytelling as assignments in order to prepare students for the future of writing which, in her view, will be "based on a global, collaborative text, where all writing has the potential to become public"

(28). She calls it "an intentional pedagogy of digital rhetoric" (28) aimed to foster interactivity, collaboration, and sense of ownership and authority among students.

WHAT THIS COLLECTION DOES AND HOW IT DOES IT

Our collection builds on and extends existing theoretical and pedagogical conversations pertaining to multimodality in writing classrooms. It speaks to a diverse set of audiences from different academic levels and institutional contexts. One of our anonymous reviewers summarizes what this collection is all about in this succinct statement:

> I was particularly struck by the range (or diverse sampling) of contexts, issues, and concerns represented in this collection—face-to-face and online instruction, instruction at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, L2 instruction, discussions about UDL, assessment, process, transfer, risk-taking/experimentation and dealing with resistance and frustration. I was equally impressed by the range of media types covered in the collection: audio assignments, blogs, comics, videos, digital stories, photo essays, and screen casts, just to name a few. The range and diversity exhibited in this collection helps to underscore the great variety of ways in which, audiences with which, and contexts in which one might engage as well as research multimodal texts and practices. . . . I expect this collection will have something (or, in fact, many things) for anyone interested in multimodal practice. Importantly, while celebrating many of the benefits and outcomes associated with multimodal approaches, the collection does not shy away from shedding light on (and offering suggestions for coping with) the frustration, fear or doubt that often accompanies multimodal practice. Put simply, the chapters of this collection do a fine job of articulating, exploring, and situating (theoretically and in terms of other scholarship in the field) key questions and issues of concern to those who are practicing multimodal approaches to composing, often times by underscoring how multimodal approaches and techniques relate to, build upon, and remediate more familiar/traditional practices, methods, and concerns.

More important, this collection attempts to bridge the existing gap between many theories and practices of multimodality, hence the title *Bridging the Multimodal Gap: From Theory to Practice.* A majority of chapters in the collection bring scholarly frameworks and practices of multimodality together and offer theoretically grounded strategies, suggestions, and best practices for teachers and scholars interested in further exploring and engaging the emerging theories and practices of multimodal composition.

Fourteen excellent chapters are organized into four thematic sections and an afterword, namely, discourses in multimodality; multimodal

process work; composing across media: affordances, learnings, and challenges; multimodal assessment; and afterword. These categories are arbitrary, of course, created for the convenience of readers, but many of the chapters across these sections intersect and nicely complement one another in both theoretical and pedagogical terms. The thematic grouping is done only on the basis of the primary focus or orientation of the chapters. No question, many of the chapters would fit into more than one section, but doing so would confuse readers. So, we have chosen a safer option and placed a set of thematically aligned chapters under four different sections.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

In the first chapter, "On Multimodality: A Manifesto," Rick Wysocki, Jon Udelson, Caitlin E. Ray, Jessica S. B. Newman, Laura Sceniak Matravers, Ashanka Kumari, Layne M. P. Gordon, Khirsten L. Scott, Michelle Day, Michael Baumann, Sara P. Alvarez, and Danielle Nicole DeVoss present a wonderful and passionate manifesto that provides a foundation of principles that can underlie the conceptualization and application of multimodality. The tenets in this chapter emphasize the need for critically considered and self-reflexive multimodal composition, providing a foundation that echoes throughout the other chapters of this collection.

In the second chapter, "Re-imagining Multimodality through UDL: Inclusivity and Accessibility," Elizabeth Kleinfeld places multimodality into conversation with architectural principles of universal design in order to advocate for a universal design for learning (UDL); such a design ensures reflexive, multimodal practices that accommodate all student needs even before students declare those needs. By preemptively addressing the heterogeneity of our classrooms, UDL-informed multimodal composition challenges assumptions about communication while allowing instructors to emphasize traditional, rhetorical appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos. Rather than single out students by accommodating needs individually, UDL-informed composition allows instructors to frame accessibility rhetorically.

In chapter 3, "Dissipating Hesitation: Why Online Instructors Fear Multimodal Assignments," Jessie Borgman shares experiences that will help online writing instructors new to multimodality take their first steps toward multimodal assignments. Acknowledging such impediments as the lack of face-to-face time in online writing classes and instructors' hesitancy when new to multimodal assignments, Borgman applies a cost-value assessment of multimodal composing in online (only)

instructional settings, ultimately offering concrete suggestions for incorporating multimodal assignments in the online writing course.

Mark Pedretti and Adam Perzynski explore the value of recordings in their composition classrooms in the fourth chapter, "Reversing the Process: Video Composition and the Ends of Writing." Students in Pedretti and Perzynski's study composed separately in both video- and text-based formats, which allowed for a comparative analysis of students' experiences, and the findings indicated increased awareness of process and varied perceptions of product. These findings challenge prevailing theories of process-oriented composition instruction that dominate our classrooms, as students reported video production required more advanced planning and allowed for less postcomposing revision.

In the fifth chapter, "Thinking beyond Multimodal Projects: Incorporating Multimodal Literacy into Composing and Reflection Processes," Tiffany Bourelle, Angela Clark-Oates, Andrew Bourelle, Matthew Irwin, and Breanne Potter help instructors enter the world of multimodal reflections and process work. While most discussions of multimodal practices focus on multimodal composition as the telos of an assignment (a trend reflected within this very collection), these authors share their practice of using multimodality during the early-composing and final-reflection stages. They note that broadening the use of multimodality can help instructors and scholars develop their pedagogies and practices.

Steven Alvarez's work for chapter 6, "Archiving Digital Journaling in First-Year Writing," centers on blogs, and it takes a more practice-oriented approach by discussing the use of blogs to bridge students' formal and informal language use as they transition into academic English. Through comparative evaluation of the transition from informal, online journaling into formal and revised, multimodal portfolios, his participants developed a more rhetorically nuanced and process-oriented understanding of writing and academic English.

In chapter 7, "Blogging Multimodally: A Multiyear Study of Graduate Student Composing Practices," Kathleen Blake Yancey reviews students' self-expression through multimodal composition. The setting of the graduate classroom sets her work apart from many of the chapters that precede it. In the absence of directions for word count, students responded to the multimodal syllabus and early assignments that integrated images, taking up the invitation to become (increasingly) multimodal. Yancey analyzes eleven student blogs that formed essential classroom discussion, noting changes that occurred over a ten-year span, by the end of which students inclined toward fully multimodal blog

entries that used as many words as those sparsely multimodal entries of preceding years.

Jennifer Buckner reminds readers not to limit multimodality to common expectations for (often visually dominated) digitality in chapter 8, "When Multimodality Gets Messy: Perception, Materiality, and Learning in Written-Aural Remediation." She reports findings from an empirical study of six first-year composition students' remediation from written to audio modalities, anchoring it to her conception of semiotic synesthesia. Ultimately, she finds that remediation can lead students into generative moments of dissonance that produce resonance, as students strengthen their understanding of composition through overcoming the challenges of remediation.

Rebecca Thorndike-Breeze, Aaron Block, and Kara Mae Brown approach multimodal practice from the genre of comics in chapter 9, "Entering the Multiverse: Using Comics to Experiment with Multimodality, Multigenres, and Multiliteracies." The authors introduce instructors to the practice of using serial art in the classroom as subject matter with which to develop critical thinking skills, to increase students' awareness of multiliteracy and genre, and to provide inspiration and modeling for students' remediation of their compositions.

Like Buckner's work and that of Thorndike-Breeze, Block, and Brown, Joel Bloch discusses remediation in chapter 10, "Digital Storytelling in the L2 Graduate Writing Classroom: Expanding the Possibilities of Personal Expression and Textual Borrowing." Bloch shares a detailed account of his practices with graduate students, wherein students remediate a text essay on their discipline and enter it into a digital story. In this interdisciplinary, graduate writing classroom, students furthered their understanding of writing in their respective disciplines through multimodal compositions in which students defined their fields of study and their individual relationships thereto.

In chapter 11, "Multimodality, Transfer, and Rhetorical Awareness: Analyzing the Choices of Undergraduate Writers," Stephen Ferruci and Susan DeRosa address the challenges and benefits of bringing multimodal projects into diverse classrooms of predominately first-generation college students, many of whom enter college having had little access to the technologies that allow for multimodal composition. The authors discuss their use of creative discourse-community ethnographies (DCEs), which led students to compose public-service announcements. They analyze students' textual and multimodal compositions, along with metanarratives students tracked throughout the process of remediation, concluding that students' engagement with multimodal compositions

increased their understanding of the rhetorical situation while facilitating their ability to critically discuss their rhetorical choices.

Chapter 12 switches gears and moves the discussion towards addressing the questions of assessing multimodal projects. In "Distributed Assessment from the Runway to the Classroom: A Model for Multimodal Writing Assessment," Areti Sakellaris makes a passionate argument for establishing a material connection to multimodality as demonstrated by the fashion industry. Like many of our authors, Sakellaris marks the conflation of multimodality with digitality and argues that evaluating tangible multimodality through Rei Kawakubo's fashion designs expands understandings of composing and the ways in which the composition classroom relates to knowledge across the curriculum.

In chapter 13, "Multimodal Pedagogy and Multimodal Assessment: Toward a Reconceptualization of Traditional Frameworks," Shane Wood further explores assessment in the multimodal classroom. While retaining the notion of grading multimodal projects, Wood advocates for the use of alternative assessment methods, namely the grading contract, to account for students' process throughout multimodal composition rather than exclusively grading the final product. Through contracts, he contends, instructors can emphasize the value of process work to the students.

Finally, in the afterword, titled "(In Lieu of an) Afterword: Rewriting the Difference of Multimodality: Composing Modality and Language as Practice," Bruce Horner observes that, by definition, notions of difference, such as those used to understand language and multimodality in relation to one another, derive from and reinforce prevailing hierarchies, hegemonies, and norms. He then advocates that composition's scholarship and practice resituate difference as a natural and neverending product of composition. Situating his discussion within translingual and transmodal theory, Horner argues for the subversion of dominant conceptions of multimodality and language (their segregation and definition through difference), which will increase students' agency over their composing processes and rhetorical choices.

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