Shane A. Wood

Readings: *An Introduction to Multimodal Composition Theory and Practice p. 1-11; NCTE Position Statement on Multimodal Literacies p. 17; Contending with Terms: ‘Multimodal’ and ‘Multimedia’ in the Academic and Public Spheres (Lauer) p. 22; Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key (Yancey) p. 62*

English 998, Multimodality, Multimedia and Digital Rhetoric in Composition

The first thing that came to mind reading Lutkewitte’s introduction was how she notes the value of student “process” when referencing multimodal composition. It almost made me think that the move to multimodal composition, or the advancement in technology towards a more digital classroom, allowed some in composition studies to adapt the 1966 Dartmouth Conference idea – writing as a process – in a more ideal situation because a “turn” (so to speak) was happening that could make the idea more fundamental and pure. Following the Dartmouth Conference, the English classroom, while noting the importance of “process,” still valued (and still values?) the product of writing, in my opinion. The classroom, then, was never fundamentally rooted with writing-as-process because, historically, the product was valued over the process. Multimodal compositionists, from this introduction, seem to have hung its hat on the actual “process” in a way that previous composition theorists couldn’t do. Shipka emphasizes this point when communicating multimodal as “the complex way texts come to be” (3).

Discussion questions:

1. Pg. 4 talks about how Selfe and Shipka believe multimodal composition provides student agency. I'm interested in how they would define “agency” in this context. Does multimodal composition provide “equal” agency to all students regardless of race and socioeconomic status? I believe multimodality offers flexibility to all students. But, is flexibility and agency related?
2. The position statements on page 17-18 provide good insight on “what this means for teaching,” and I like how it talks about modes as codependent under bullet one. Bullet one speaks to how integration of multiple modes can help and enhance meaning, but I’m curious as to the negative aspects (if any) in integrating multiple modes. Is there a possibility when multiple modes blur understanding and comprehension instead of “enhance”? What might that look like in the classroom?