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Readings: *Writing New Media* *(Ch. 1-3)*

English 998, Multimodality, Multimedia and Digital Rhetoric in Composition

One of the things that helped me the most this week was Selfe defining “new media texts” as “texts created primarily in digital environments, composed in multi-media…and designed for presentation and exchange in digital venues” (p. 44). Since the book is titled new media – something I didn’t know how to define – Selfe provided clarity: new media texts “place a heavy emphasis on visual elements and sound” and include “some level of interactivity” (p. 44). Selfe, ultimately, argues that composition teachers use new media texts in the classroom, and she seems to suggest that it be a primary element in the writing classroom. I have some reservations about this argument, mainly to the practical application new media texts have in/on other classes in academia. The composition classroom has certain expectations set forth by academia, and I believe one of the main goals the Academy places on the composition classroom and instructor is to prepare students for the “types” of writing that will be done throughout college. I think there’s a reasonable way to adhere to this push but also resist this push to some extent. In my opinion, resisting this push would offer new media texts to compositions students, but I don’t think that new media texts should be the *only* or even *primary* means of composing in the classroom. I think that one of our responsibilities as instructors is to help students succeed in other classrooms, not just ours. Therefore, a focus on academic writing seems to be a primary goal. Now I understand how elements and “skills” transfer from genre to genre from one type of writing to another, etc. For example, a student can critically think about the audience and genre expectations and purpose while composing a children’s book, and they can transfer that critical thinking to academic writing. I’m not trying to dismiss that. But, I do think, at times, what we think will transfer can often be convoluted; it’s difficult to know what transfers and what doesn’t transfer because we only have students for one semester. All of this to ask: how do we, as instructors, balance the importance of new media texts with the expectations placed on us through academia? (I guess that can count as one discussion question). My thought is that other classrooms aren’t having students engage in new media texts, or new media writing. For the most part, I believe most disciplines expect students to write a traditional paper. So, what’s our role in making sure/preparing students to be successful in their own fields? I’m thinking about the disciplines that may use new media texts more than traditional texts – design, art, etc. Our classroom includes these students. Exploring new media texts and compositions in our classroom would benefit and help these students. But, are they the majority? Overall, I’m trying to find some balance. Selfe comments on the importance of engaging students in “a full range of literacies” (p. 54). I agree. I think multimedia texts are important to our classroom, and I think they have plenty of room in academia. Selfe adds that composition studies is at “risk” of becoming “increasingly irrelevant” if we don’t engage in multiple literacies. I agree (**to an extent).** I believe that we would *also* become increasingly irrelevant if we don’t focus on alphabetic text.

Discussion question one (imbedded in response): how do we, as instructors, balance the importance of new media texts with the expectations placed on us through academia?

Discussion question two: the classroom, in my mind, is always catering to some individuals over others and, more or less, it’s impossible to avoid that. Connecting my last response to this week, what individuals/identities (race, socio-economic status, etc.) are benefited from a focus on new media texts? Alphabetic texts?