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Readings: *Response to Casey’s question*

English 998, Multimodality, Multimedia and Digital Rhetoric in Composition

Last week, Casey asked:

“Where and how do multimodal/new media pedagogies overlap with genre pedagogies? What are the affordances and constraints of those contact zones of overlap? Is there scholarship that further delves into this overlap?”

Shipka’s quote that Casey highlights in this question is a good one, and I like how Shipka writes that a composition made whole “requires us to resist” some questions I think we either directly state/or imply in our classrooms in terms of what’s “good” or “well written” (and other “quality” based responses). Casey notes how Shipka is pushing us to a more “functioning” based pedagogy that allows classrooms to focus on the purpose of the composition, emphasizing the need to understand the rhetorical situation. To this, I’d say that there’s definite overlap in multimodal pedagogy and genre pedagogy. When I think of genre pedagogy, I think of emphasizing awareness: awareness of purpose, understanding audience, context, rhetorical moves/modes of persuasion, layout/design, and complimenting or subverting the genre conventions – all tied to the specific genre that the class is constructing/composing. I believe multimodal pedagogies are doing the same types of things: they are making us aware of the genre constructions of a particular medium (media?). What does it look like to compose a blog compared to a poster board? How does a website function differently/summarily to an essay written on a pair of jeans? Overall, the questions are focused on the “function” of the text/project, instead of the quality of “good” or “bad.” At the very least, it takes focus off the holistic evaluation of effectiveness and magnifies the exploration of the subtle parts of the project/text. I guess my question is: do we consider multimodality a “genre” or is multimodality made up of many different genres? Last semester, I wanted to say that genre was everything and everywhere, which, come to find out, it seems like that was an accurate claim from our readings. In a multimodal pedagogy approach, aren’t we teaching genres (just like we are through any other pedagogical approach)? So, I feel like the affordances are a knowledge of another type of genre – new media and multimodal ones which is different than simply looking at an alphabetic text. The constraints, in my opinion, come along with the audience that constructs the context of that genre. A genre acts and is acted on by a particular community. So, I would say the constraint is what community members are afforded the opportunity to understand the multimodal genres and what community members aren’t? In our classrooms, what particular community members have prior knowledge of the genre that may benefit them, and what community members don’t have that knowledge, and how does this influence or affect the classroom? Finally, the last question might be best answered by Dr. Reiff because I’m not familiar with any.