

Multimodal Learning

for the **21st Century** Adolescent

Foster creativity, collaboration, communication, and comprehension.
Inspire, motivate, and engage students with print, visuals, and audio.

Use Web 2.0 to teach with real-world applications.

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Foreword by

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SHELL EDUCATION

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Multimodality: The Changing Nature of Texts

A Classroom Vignette—Technology in Professional and Personal Spaces

In early fall, before the students have arrived, your school has organized a professional development day (also familiarly known as “the one-shot inservice” or “drive-by inservice”), with a well-known guest speaker from out of town. You are seated in the cafeteria with other content-area teachers at your high school, trying to get organized for the thousand and one tasks confronting you at the start of the school year. Nevertheless, you are a good team player and you are interested in how you might incorporate TeacherTube, <http://www.teachertube.com/>, video clips, and other online resources in your classroom. You have been teaching high school English for a few years and you pride yourself on creatively trying new strategies and approaches to reach your students each year.

As the presenter gets underway with a *PowerPoint*® presentation introducing a variety of online teacher resources (including TeacherTube), you begin writing notes and recording the

Internet addresses (URLs) flashing on the screen. But within five minutes, the power in the cafeteria goes out, plunging the room into darkness. Everyone waits for the lights and the *PowerPoint*[®] slide show to come back on, but they don't. Other teachers begin making jokes about technology and everyone opens their cell phones to text message friends and family. You begin searching your Smartphone browser in the dark for Labor Day weekend getaways.

After a while, the principal comes in and says the power outage is widespread and the school will be closing for the day, in the interest of security. You breathe a sigh of relief, head out to the parking lot, text your friend, and drive to the mall.

You have a few ideas for incorporating TeacherTube video clips in your classroom, and that's a start. Your approach to incorporating technology is cautious, and it would have been better if the session today had gone forward as planned. Other teachers are chuckling and clearly not planning to do anything with today's professional development. Sound familiar?


Familiar Artifacts and New Literacies

Books, novels, magazines, and newspapers—artifacts of past generations—still remain on our radar. But, these hard copy, paper-based forms of communication are quickly being outpaced by online forms of text, often augmented with appealing and engaging visuals and media clips. The nature of reading is rapidly changing with new requirements needed in terms of design and production values for online material.

If we are going to get our students to think critically about the barrage of information that they encounter on the Internet, we have to incorporate multiple modes of presentation in to our lessons. It would be helpful, too, if our school sites had enough power to support these new technologies.

The new terms *multiple literacies* and *new literacies* are crucial for thinking about how we want to design curriculum in our classrooms. These are highly dynamic concepts, but in the interest of sustainable futures, we can expect electronic forms of text (and expanded possibilities for visual elements) to overtake older, print-based forms. How do we know this?

At a personal level, for me in our department office at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, we used to spend thousands of dollars on copying costs for our classes. We have shifted that emphasis toward an approach that is largely paperless by putting all of our meeting agendas, course materials, and announcements online. At a global level, mass collaboration on projects in business, science, education, and other fields can be conducted across national and state boundaries via Web 2.0 with its interactive elements (Tapscott and Williams 2008). Your students may be familiar with such examples of collaboration as MySpace, YouTube™, Blogs, Wikipedia, Google™ mail (Gmail™), Facebook, and other, evolving sites where communities thrive and exchange ideas. And, because the problems confronting future generations of students are monumental (e.g., environmental issues and sustainability), mass collaboration taps into a large, diverse talent pool. Creativity in teaching and learning will be crucial for our students' success in this world. Tapscott and Williams argue, "These changes, among others, are ushering us toward a world where knowledge, power, and productive capability will be more dispersed than at any time in our history—a world where value creation will be fast, fluid, and persistently disruptive" (2008, 12).



Terminology

Multiple literacies describes the changing nature of literacy as incorporating multimedia, the Internet, and other non-print media for sharing information (Bean, Readece, and Baldwin 2008).

New literacies refers to the types of ever-changing and expanding forms of text including the Internet (and Web 2.0 with its interactive features), instant messaging, blogging, ezines, websites, and so on (Bean, Readece, and Baldwin 2008).