



New Media Rhetorics: Redefining Multimodality for the 21st Century FYC Classroom

Kathleen Marie Baldwin¹

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Abstract

Rather than “multimodality” or “new media,” this article puts forth and defines the term “new media rhetorics” in order to disrupt existing power structures through the acknowledgement of the power of orality/aurality, through the revival of delivery, and through the remix of classical rhetoric. Composition scholars, such as Cynthia Selfe, Kathleen Blake Yancey, and Kathleen Welch, have successfully made the case for embracing multimodality in the first-year composition (FYC) classroom. However, very real barriers continue to prevent a widespread adoption of multiliteracies pedagogies—chief among them the often conflicting, interdisciplinary terminology employed. The questions this article poses are what literacy scholars call this imperative and why. Literacy scholars must decide if we will let external forces influence our naming, or if we will do the naming ourselves. Both choices have consequences, but this article argues that the consequence of letting other fields define literacy studies’ terms is not only detrimental to literacy scholars and our standing within the university, but also to our students, especially those from marginalized groups who do not have a say in the matter.

Keywords

Multimodality, Multiliteracies, New Media, Rhetoric, FYC

Introduction

“By focusing on the human shaping of material, and on the ties of material to human practices, we might be in better positions to ask after the consequences not only of how we use water but also of how we use paper, ink, and pixels to shape—for better or worse—the actions of others”

¹ Kathleen Marie Baldwin is a PhD Candidate in Composition and Rhetoric in the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Email: kmbaldwi@english.umass.edu

(Wysocki, 2009, p. 59).

A Rose by Any Other Name...

Edward Shiappa's 2003 book, *Defining Reality, Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*, explores the sociopolitical effects of definitions, highlighting how the definition given to a specific term, and by implication the term itself, asserts itself as *the* norm: "Definitions put into practice a special sort of social knowledge--a shared understanding among people about themselves, the objects of their world, and how they use language. Such social knowledge typically takes the form of an explicit and often 'authoritative' articulation of what particular words mean and how they should be used to refer to reality" (Shiappa, 2003, p. 3). Shiappa argues that definitions should be examined through a rhetorical lens, one that examines both the "ethical and normative ramifications of the act of defining" (p. 3). Furthermore, Shiappa (2003) argues that "calls to adopt new definitions are calls to change our attitude and behavior" (p. 48). In short, there is power--and action--in defining terms. If rhetoric is also action, then the names literacy scholars² enact are of great importance. The terms literacy scholars choose to use, to echo Wysocki (2009), shape—for better or for worse—the actions of others. As such, literacy scholars must decide if we will let external forces influence our naming, or if we will do the naming ourselves. Both choices have consequences, but this article argues that the consequence of letting others define our terms is not only detrimental to ourselves as scholars and our standing within the university, but also to our students, especially those from marginalized groups, who do not have a say in the matter.

As literacy scholars, we teach our students about the very real power of language. We must also practice what we teach. So, what *is* the most appropriate term to describe how new media is, or more precisely, should be employed in FYC? How can literacy scholars use the power of naming to promote the ethical incorporation of multimodality in FYC? If literacy studies embraces new media/multimodal writing as an essential component of first-year composition (FYC), the question posed herein is: what do we call this imperative and why?

New Media/Multimodality in 21st Century FYC

The case for a multimodal approach to writing instruction has successfully been made over the past several decades. Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe (2007) along with others like the New London Group (2009) have pointed out that, though so much has changed in our students' production and interaction with texts outside of the classroom, far too little has changed inside the classroom:

Thus, while time marches on *outside* of U.S. secondary and college classrooms, while people on the Internet are exchanging and producing texts composed of still and moving images, animations, sounds, graphics, words, and colors, *inside* of many of these classrooms, students are producing essays that look much the same as those produced by their parents and grandparents. (Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007, p. 2, emphasis in original)

The required first-year writing course is a tough enough sell to students as it is. Many students arrive in their first-year writing course with extremely limited notions of what writing is and

² In this article, "literacy scholars" is used to describe literacy teacher-scholars at all educational levels and institution types, including writing teacher-scholars.

does both in the classroom and in the world. Writing is, for many, an exercise in regurgitation, not exploration. Most students arrive in their first-year writing course with one genre in mind--the canned five-paragraph essay emphasized in a culture of standardized testing. As a result, "writing" is often associated with tedium. And though the job of writing teachers is not necessarily to entertain, Takayoshi and Selfe make an important point: literacy scholars cannot establish a truly student-centered classroom unless we pay attention to the kinds of writing our students encounter and produce outside the classroom.

Not only do literacy scholars risk further alienating students by resisting the move toward multimodality, but we also risk failing to prepare them for their "social futures" as students, professionals, and citizens (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). In a similar call to multimodality, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (2001) observe in *Multimodal Discourse*, as society begins adopting new communicative practices, new semiotic resources are created to express thought in the most relevant, most effective way. Today, this includes using multiple modes in combination. Therefore, as a field concerned with communicative practices our classrooms should reflect the larger social changes in discourse (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 122).

Finally, Sonja K. Foss' (2004) "Framing the Study of Visual Rhetoric" provides an additional reason to pay attention to and move toward an expanded notion of rhetoric, one that accounts for the multimodal nature of our contemporary society. For Foss, like Wysocki (2004; 2009), expanding literacy scholars' notions of what constitutes writing includes an expansion of what constitutes rhetoric. An expanded, more inclusive notion of writing requires a likewise expanded, more inclusive notion of rhetoric, and specifically rhetorics that allow us--and our students--to analyze the diverse kinds of writing that daily influence our practical lives *and* to produce similarly meaningful and influential texts. On the whole, the argument has successfully been made within our field that fostering multiple literacies is an essential component of the 21st century writing classroom (Hawisher & Selfe, 1991; NCTE, 2008). However, what literacy scholars name this component, and thereby how it shapes our students' lives, has not been successfully resolved. One large factor literacy scholars are ethically required to consider is the role access plays in our naming practices.

Understanding Access

While the New London Group's (1996) treatise argues for greater access to cultural capital through a pedagogy of multiliteracies, it does not address how such a pedagogy may inadvertently create additional barriers to literacy. Because many educators conflate "multimodal texts" or "new media texts" with strictly digital texts, it's important to first understand the issue of access beyond access to the capital of the alphabetic text. For many educators and students, technology is a given. For others, however, it stands as a barrier. In order to ethically incorporate digital new media/multimodal texts into the FYC curriculum, access to technology must be addressed. But as the following research illustrates, "access" is a complex concept. Access is more than a socio-economic issue. Access is also cultural and critical.

Deepak Prem Subramony's (2007) ethnographic case study "Understanding the Complex Lessons of the Digital Divide: Lessons Learned in Arctic Alaska" complicates the discussion of the digital divide. Subramony's subjects live in a remote, yet oil-wealthy area that harbors a very strong tribal community committed to preserving their cultural heritage. As a result of their wealth, the small high school has an amazing array of technology used in the classroom on a regular basis (Subramony, 2007, p. 60). Yet, Subramony's observations lead him to conclude that

while most students embraced technology for consumer-based activities, “few appeared to be spending time acquiring or practicing” any significant producer level skills “such as programming, design, or hardware competencies” (p. 95). Moreover, interviews with faculty indicated few students had even expressed an interest in acquiring those skills (Subramony, 2007, p. 95). In this tribal culture, the technology that carries status is the snow machine, not the computer (Subramony, 2007, p. 64). How a culture values computer technology influences their access to it, how they choose to use it.

Though many college freshmen come to school with basic computer skills, namely word processing and web browsing skills, many others do not. And the majority of students who do not arrive with those skills are those from marginalized groups that may not have regular, physical access to computers and/or the Internet. But just as lacking as that physical access is the more important critical access. Even those who have physical access may not possess more than consumer-level skills, as Subramony’s (2007) study illustrates. Access equals neither fluency nor equality. Adam Banks (2006) zeroes in on this disparity in *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology*, arguing: “Access to technology means that members of a particular group know how to use it for both participation and resistance. Real access goes far deeper than the passive consumerism [...] it is about the ability to use computers and the Internet as a means of production, too” (p. 138). Thus, assigning digital textual products does have a place in FYC to develop students’ critical computing. Presenting students with the *option* of composing digitally encourages them to explore new technologies and software, while avoiding fore-fronting the use of technology itself as the sole desired end--a tendency that runs the risk of promoting the passive, uncritical engagement Banks warns against (Brooke, 2009, p. 89). Ethical writing instruction, then, means providing students with opportunities to compose rhetorically effective texts using the media they decide best attends to their intended audience and purpose, not relying solely on traditional alphabetic means of composing, nor on composing with technology for technology’s sake alone.

New Media, New Rhetoric

What literacy scholars decide to call a pedagogy of multiple literacies plays a vital role in the ethical dilemma outlined above. As Tara Rosenberg Shankar (2006) argues, “We need new concepts and new terms for referring to new phenomena” (p. 375). This article has reviewed several different terms that are in use for new media/multimodal writing. However as I proceed, I aim to demonstrate that certain terms are more apt than others, and that the schema “new media rhetorics³” is most apt in describing an ethical pedagogy and practice of new media writing in the 21st century FYC. What is most useful for first-year composition is an expanded notion of writing, and rhetoric, one that embodies the values of both our field and the role a first-year writing course plays in the larger university context. Essential to this task, however, is staying aware “that new technologies do not automatically erase or overthrow or change old practices” (Wysocki, 2004, p. 8). The goal of incorporating multimodality and New Media Studies into writing instruction within this proposed framework is to build upon traditional writing practices,

³ The phrase “new media rhetorics” is not original to this author and has been in circulation for some time. I appropriate the phrase to represent a set of practices and pedagogies that promote new media as a means to broaden students’ understanding of what writing is and does in the 21st century and expand meaning-making possibilities for all student composers.

not to simply replace them. Students, whether composing a podcast or an alphabetic text, need the ability to analyze and practice composing, in Aristotelian terms, with “the best available means of persuasion.” Whether one embraces an Aristotelian or Sophistic rhetoric, a Chinese or African rhetoric, an awareness of the “stuffness” of a text, of the richness of any given rhetorical situation, is what writing teachers strive to help our students discover. The schema “new media rhetorics” brings together the old and the new, offering writing and literacy studies a broader understanding of rhetoric.

“New media rhetorics” calls for a rhetoric of materiality. Such a rhetoric, in the words of Collin Brooke (2009), “prepares us as writers to *make our own choices*” (p.15, emphasis in original) by moving beyond an examination of the choices “*that have already been made for us*” (p. 15, emphasis in original). Such a rhetoric embraces multifaceted approaches to composition. Such a rhetoric encourages the use of multiple rhetorical traditions and values no one rhetorical form over another. Essentially, all rhetorics, at their core, are rhetorics of materiality. And “new media rhetorics” asks us to take up developing material awareness as our primary project in the FYC.

New Media, not Multimodal

I contend that using the term “new media,” as opposed to “multimodal,” promotes the most ethical and appropriate approach to new media writing in the FYC. I will explore the limitations of “multimodal” in a later section. The following examination of landmark works in New Media Studies by Bolter and Grusin (2000), as well as Manovich (2001) illustrate, “new media” in the context of new media rhetorics, emphasizes materially aware and rhetorically effective texts, and promotes critical media literacies.

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s (2000), *Understanding New Media*, develops a theory of new media based upon two defining logics, immediacy and hypermediacy, that work in concert to define “new media” as the process of remediation. Transparent immediacy describes the human desire to experience “reality” through our media without having an awareness that the experience is mediated Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 7). The logic of hypermediacy, on the other hand, works to make media visible and in doing so reminds us of our desire for immediacy (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 33). Bolter and Grusin point out that neither immediacy, nor hypermediacy are new and specific to digital media; hence, the “double logic” (p. 5) of remediation, “the representation of one medium in another” (p. 45). The tension between people’s dual needs of immediacy and hypermediacy draws awareness to the materiality of the text itself and pushes composers to seek new alternatives, consider new choices. Thus, the logic of remediation relies upon a material awareness, a defining characteristic of how new media is conceived in new media rhetorics. Additionally, as Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) definition of new media makes clear, new media need not be digital--a crucial notion for the purposes of ethical writing instruction. Digitality, then, is just one option within a rhetoric of materiality. Lev Manovich’s *The Language of New Media* further supports this claim (2001).

Materiality, Not Digitality

Manovich (2001) argues that scholars can trace the rise of new media in its current form by merging two competing histories: the rise of computing technologies (i.e. tabulators and cal-

culators) and the rise of image storing technologies (i.e. the birth of photography and film). Although Manovich presumes the digitality of new media, what is valuable about Manovich's theory of new media is the emphasis, once again, on material awareness. Manovich's description of new media objects asks viewers/readers--and their creators--to observe them as a collection of discrete building blocks that play a dynamic role in an object's communicative potential and practice (p. 27, p. 32, p. 34, p. 36, p. 46-7). These defining principles of new media presume that all new media "objects," in Manovich's words, are digital. However, defining new media as a solely digital further disadvantages those linguistically diverse students who may also be marginalized by limited access. The written word, the strictly alphabetic text has been, and continues to be, the currency of academia—and only when representing "prestige" rhetorics. As Shankar (2006) observes, "the ability to write has become completely identified with intellectual power, creating a graphocentric myopia" (p. 374). Thus, insisting on digitality as a condition of new media adds an additional barrier to academic success. What Manovich's (2001) heuristic does provide, however, is a focus on the materiality of texts. Such material awareness allows for a wide range of meaning-making options for first-year writers. New media texts, when conceived of as texts composed with material awareness, present opportunities to bridge the gap that remains between New Media Studies and writing studies (Ball, 2004; Wysocki, 2004). Insisting that a new media text is a materially aware composition (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Manovich, 2001) allows FYC teachers to both effectively and ethically employ an expanded notion of what writing is and does in the 21st century. Bolter & Grusin, and Manovich's theorization of new media illustrates that materiality, not digitality, is the lens through which to view New Media Studies' place in the FYC. The point of new media, as a pedagogy and practice is to expand meaning-making possibilities. And as Wysocki's (2004) definition of new media texts suggests, the goal of such a pedagogy is to make writers aware of the materialities of texts in whatever form they take and the many possible materials a text can be composed with: any text that calls attention to its own materialities can be considered a new media text. Wysocki (2004) adds, "[W]hat is important is that whoever produces the text and whoever consumes it understand... that the various materialities of a text contribute to how it, like its producers and consumers, is read and understood" (p. 15). Again, new media does not equal digital. Jody Shipka's (2006, 2011) work provides an additional example of this conception of new media. Shipka (2006) avers that asking students to compose in multiple media "helps to underscore the point that rhetorical and material soundness is not about producing the perfect text, but about being willing and flexible enough to think beyond, or to think in addition to, the repertoire of choices one eventually commits to as deadlines approach and texts are due" (p. 357). "New media rhetorics" asks students to consider that they do indeed have options, that they have the power to make a choice as to the best way to accomplish their rhetorical perspective.

New media texts, then, offer *all* students, in Cynthia Selfe's (2009) words "rhetorical sovereignty" (p. 642) and numerous new, exciting ways to express themselves, their ideas, and their learning, ways that research suggests better suit diverse learning styles and diverse language--and therefore rhetorical—backgrounds (Gardner, 1993; Mao, 2006). New media rhetorics' emphasis on materiality allows students to determine for themselves what form a text should take given their communicative goals and their intended audience (Shipka, 2011, p. 87).

As Michael Neal (2011) points out, Wysocki's (2004) definition of new media does present challenges in assessment, namely the ability to measure a reader's awareness of the materiality of a text (p. 92). However, I argue that new media rhetorics--with a focus first on the composer's material, and therefore rhetorical, awareness--best serves writing studies FYC. Such a

framework also pushes students to become rhetorically savvy readers. For the first-year writer, kindling their own awareness of the materiality of a text is an important first step towards a larger interaction with an audience. More importantly, “new media rhetorics” helps develop a writer’s ability to recognize the materiality and rhetorical moves in the texts they consume. In other words, becoming a rhetorically aware, materially conscious producer of new media texts also promotes a critical engagement with the texts one consumes, digital or otherwise.

Why Not “Multimodal”?

At this point the reader may be asking, what about “multimodal?” Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) define “multimodal” as: “The use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined--they may for instance reinforce each other...[,] fulfill complementary roles, ... or be hierarchically ordered...” (p. 20). Following Kress and Van Leeuwen, then, if literacy scholars choose to use the term “multimodal,” we are tacitly agreeing to the following: 1) mode and medium are two distinct entities and 2) design, not rhetoric, will be the focus in the writing classroom. Both premises are problematic and, I contend, misalign literacy scholars’ role in new media scholarship.

Mode and/or Media?

Integral to Kress’ definition of multimodality is a separation between mode and medium. To reiterate this definition, Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) argue: “Modes are semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of (inter)action[,]” while “media are the material resources used in the production of semiotic products and events, including both the tool and the materials used. [...] Modes can be realised in more than one production medium” (pp. 21-22). In “Contending with Terms: ‘Multimodal’ and ‘Multimedia’ in the Academic and Public Spheres” Claire Lauer (2009) explains, “the difference between modes and media can thus be looked at as a difference between design/process (modes) and production/distribution (media)”(p. 236). Following Lauer (2009), then, process and product are also distinct--a dichotomous parsing that adds distance between an author and the texts they produce. The goal of new media rhetorics as outlined herein is to do just the opposite; the goal is to make the processes of composition inseparable from the product, to develop an understanding of how everything that went into the creation of a text influences the meanings it imparts.

In addition, Kress (2005) defends a binary in which modes carry the meaning and media simply do the work of dissemination (p. 7). This separation of mode and media smacks of 20th century formalism in which “language is viewed as a tangible, secondary object overlaid on the substance of thought” (Welch, 1999, p. 41). Language, then, is simply the empty cistern that catches the rainwater that is thought. As a result, this split also presumes the neutrality of the means of dissemination, as though the material product does not influence how a text is read and valued. In order to separate mode from medium, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) necessarily “believe there can be aspects of a text that contribute no meaning to the text” (Wysocki, 2004, p. 14). Students may not have made the decision that the academic essay will appear on 8^{1/2} x 11 white paper; that choice was previously made for them (Wysocki, 2004, p. 14). Therefore, everything about a text offers meaning, though it may be rendered transparent through naturalization. A pedagogy of new media rhetorics strives toward revealing this transparency: a transpar-

ency potentially left unrevealed in the terms of multimodality. New media rhetorics ask students to examine the entirety of an object, including the processes by which and the contexts under which it is produced and distributed. Thus, multimodality as Kress (2005) presents it does not provide the same scaffolding for developing materially aware writers. I agree with Wysocki (2004)—media are modes.

Furthermore, by separating mode from medium, by creating a dichotomous relationship between word and image, form and content, the available material possibilities are limited: “There is much to question about using a logic of dichotomies in thinking about the possibilities of multimodalities” (Wysocki, 2006, p. 57). Kress’ (2005) logical limitation--the black-and-white, either-or nature of dichotomies--necessarily limits meaning-making potential for both the writer and the reader. In addition to limiting meaning-making choices, Wysocki (2006) also points to the other nefarious dichotomies scholars have been fighting throughout the twentieth--and now in the twenty-first century to dismantle: man/women, reason/emotion, civilized/barbarian (p. 58). Do literacy scholars really want to set up yet another potentially oppressive dichotomy?

Media necessarily carry cultural values and contribute substantive meaning to a text. As Bolter and Grusin (2000) posit, media and modes are inextricably bound in constructing and disseminating meaning; we need to read a new media text in its entirety and attend to not only what it says, but also how it functions (p. 67). “Whenever we focus on one aspect of a medium..., we must remember to include its other aspects in our discourse” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 67). And though modularity is a defining principle of new media for Manovich (2001), he is careful to point out that a new media object, like the database, “offers a particular model of the world and of the human experience. It also affects how the user conceives of the data it contains” (p. 37). The database is not simply a neutral container; the container shapes how its contents are organized, and therefore interpreted. Media are indeed modes; form is indeed content.

Design and/or Rhetoric?

Another potential barrier to multimodality’s usefulness in FYC is the emphasis placed on design, rather than rhetoric, which again presupposes a dichotomous split between process and product. However, the intention here is not to create another dichotomy between design and rhetoric. Instead, I highlight the contested and often undefined usage of both terms in the literature, as well as the potential to dichotomize process and product. Similarly to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) define “design” as “the organisation of what is to be articulated into a blueprint for production” (p. 50). Design is where, it seems, the magic happens. According to Laurer (2009), “design [...] emphasizes the development of ideas (invention) and the engagement with a process by which students make choices, receive feedback, and revise those choices concerning arguments they are making within a particular rhetorical context” (p. 236). But students’ decisions during the composing process happen as part of the production of the text, do they not? (Baldwin, 2015, p. 2). Where exactly does design end and production begin? The border between design and production is fuzzy (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 55; Baldwin, 2015, p. 2). If writing is a recursive process, why create a split between process and product at all? Furthermore, design as outlined within multimodality also suggests that our “blueprints” lack materiality, that the choices we make before production begins are not embodied and contextually rich (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, pp. 56-7). How can that be? How can design be both contingent upon and independent from production? How can design be based

within a rhetorical context, yet not material? I argue it cannot.

To reiterate, “design” is not necessarily antithetical to “rhetoric.” However, much of the literature on multimodality does not define “design,” nor does it explicitly discuss design’s relationship to rhetoric. This failure to define terms leads to confusion within both scholarship and in classrooms. It also limits rather than expands students’ notions of what equals “good” writing. Instead, I offer a more unified vision of multimodality in the FYC. In rhetorics of materiality--new media rhetorics--writers are not only taught to examine their ideas and the ideas of others, but also where and how (and why) those ideas came from; writers are asked to examine the range of forms their products may assume and what each form allows and/or disallows to be communicated. Ultimately, multimodality draws too many lines in the sand to be the most effective framework in the FYC classroom--lines that potentially limit, rather than expand, meaning-making possibilities.

New Media Rhetorics: Rhetorics of Materiality

In her exploration of terms, Lauer (2006) argues that we must use “multimodality,” “multimedia, and “new media” in order to prepare our students for the different contexts they will compose within, including after they leave the university (p. 226). I suggest that rather than using multiple terms that *do* continue to cause confusion within and without the field, using the existing term “new media rhetorics” is one alternative. If naming is action, literacy scholars must act to name our students’ and our own work in a way that reflects what we know to be best practices. “New media rhetorics” captures both the process and the product, as well as deconstructs the false dichotomy between mode and media. Furthermore, “new media rhetorics” allows for multiple approaches to new media composing in the FYC, and beyond. And what these varied approaches have in common is an emphasis on rhetoric, rather than design. After all, that’s our specialty as writing teachers. As Brooke (2009) posits in *Lingua Fracta*, “Like Wysocki (2004), I believe that, as teachers and students in writing, scholars in composition and rhetoric are indeed uniquely positioned to contribute to discussions and debates about new media” (p. 5).

In addition, an emphasis on rhetoric helps bridge the gap between the traditional alphabetic text our students still need to learn how to write and the new media texts that become increasingly important. Finally, “new media rhetorics” allows for more than one rhetorical form, challenging the hegemony of the white, masculine, heterosexual orientation of traditional academic discourse. Bump Halbritter (2006) observes, “as Janagelo (1998) suggests, we need a receptive, discerning, and anticipatory pedagogy to afford us a reasonable chance of hearing and responding helpfully to whatever it is our students have to say” (p. 332). And the framework of new media rhetorics has the potential to do just that. Let’s look at some examples to illustrate the openings the term new media rhetorics allow. More specifically, new media rhetorics ensure an ongoing place for orality/aurality, delivery, and classical rhetoric.

Embracing Orality/Aurality

Much like the revival of the fifth canon explored in the following section, new media rhetorics also revive the long-held, often culturally based, and still marginalized tradition of orality/aurality (Welch, 1999, p.48). In “Powerful Medicine with Long-term side-effects,” Charles Moran (2005) presents his concerns, concerns representative of many literacy scholars, about just how new media will impact the writing classroom. Moran laments the historical marginalization

of oral communication and pleads with us to ensure that our incorporation of new media rhetorics does not push orality/aurality further to the margins (p. 67). Selfe (2009) answers Moran's concern: "My ultimate goal in exploring aurality as a case in point is not to make an either/or argument—not to suggest that we pay attention to aurality rather than to writing. Instead, I suggest we need to pay attention to both writing and aurality, and other composing modalities, as well (p. 617). New media rhetorics promote the use of many different modes, not just the visual, but also written word, and much more. If anything, as Selfe argues, new media rhetorics make oral communication a more likely method of meaning making than ever before.

And recent work has promoted a valorization of oral/aural rhetorics, often exploring a mixture of sound studies, voice and popular culture. In "The Making of Ka-Knowledge," Rice (2006) puts forth an argument likening aurality in new media texts to DJing and the "sound scientists" of the hip-hop world. As Rice (2006) points out, "rewriting is the logic of the mix" (p. 275). In other words, the culture of sampling, of bringing together apparently disparate sounds to construct meaning, is a hyper-rhetorical act, one that serves our students and especially those from marginalized oral cultures well (Rice, 2006, p. 277; Rice, 2011, p. 286). Paul D. Miller's, aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid's, 2008 collection *Sound Unbound* also explores the many ways that the DJ-inspired remix builds knowledge through new media writing (p. 18). Ken Jordan (2008) observes, "as our tools for playing with sound grow in their capacity for expression, we discover new ways for sound to act on the body, and on consciousness" (p. 260). In addition to opening up new channels of communication for all students, new media rhetorics' elevation of orality/aurality "acknowledges aurality as an important way for making meaning for many people in this country--especially those for whom, historically, higher education has often been a part of a system of continued domination and oppression" (Selfe, 2009, p. 635). New media rhetorics in the FYC revive the tradition of orality/aurality, and in doing so chips away at the institutional racism inherent in insisting on strictly alphabetic texts.

Reviving Delivery

An additional opening that the phrase new media rhetorics provides is the resurrection of the fifth canon, delivery. The revival of delivery applies not only to how students present their knowledge, but also how instructors deliver literacy studies. Yancey's (2006) edited collection *Delivering College Composition* presents different perspectives on how delivery can be reconceived in light of 21st first century technologies and literacy scholars' expanded notion of what writing is and does. In her introduction to the collection, Yancey writes, "The hope is that this vocabulary, and this verbal map, will enable us to calculate the value of our current paradigm of delivery, with an eye toward being intentional about what college composing is, how it is best learned, and what that might mean for a curricular space that is affected and shaped by--indeed in dialogue with--a corresponding physical space" (p. 12). For Yancey (2006), delivery provides a valuable metaphor for critically examining how our past, present, and future work has and will continue to change what "delivery promeans and how it is perceived.

Beyond the metaphor, however, other scholars such as Andrea Lunsford (2008) also call for a more literal revival of the canon of delivery in the context of new media rhetorics. James Porter (2009) argues, "We need a robust theory of digital delivery to help us navigate these kinds of rhetorical complexities [...]. As Welch argued nearly thirty years ago, 'The fifth cannon [delivery]...is now the most powerful cannon of the five'" (p. 208). As Porter and Yancey (2006) assert, rhetoric as *techne*, as the art of creating effective, self-aware discourse, is "degraded when

it is taught or practiced as a set of *mechanical* procedures, rules or formulas to be followed, or patterns to be copied” (Porter, 2009, p. 210, emphasis in original) as it historically has been. The revival of delivery new media rhetorics encourages rhetoric as art by virtue of its focus on materiality, “involving a critical understanding of the purposes and effects of the art on audiences and the practical know-how to achieve those effects in new discursive situations” (Porter, 2009, p. 210).

Remixing Classical Rhetoric

Brooke (2009) also highlights the need to redevelop delivery in the 21st century. But Brooke goes further, detailing a reconceptualization of traditional Platonic/Aristotelian rhetoric for the digital age: “As helpful as the canons can be for understanding new media, however, it is also important to acknowledge the degree to which new media can help us rethink the canons” (p. 7). Brooke asks us to see the canons as an “ecology of practice,” that is as “mutable and dynamic,” as shifting “with changes in our discursive technologies as those technologies constrain particular strategies and make others possible” (p. 57-58). Thus, new media rhetorics do not ask us to jettison our use of classical rhetoric; it asks us to expand our understanding of how that rhetorical approach is changed by and changes new media texts. In other words, the focus on the materiality of texts that new media rhetorics call for requires a materially aware rhetorical approach, of which there are multiple options.

For example, Kathleen Welch (1999) in *Electric Rhetoric* also calls for a change in how we view and use rhetoric in the electronic age. Welch argues that it is Sophistic, Isocratic rhetoric that is more appropriate for a writing pedagogy that embraces new media--an “electric rhetoric.” Like Porter (2009) and Brooke (2009), Welch (1999) also sees delivery as the focus of this shift in rhetoric. For Welch (1999), a vibrant fifth canon is essential to realizing language as action and to giving orality its due place (p. 22). The electronic turn of the late 20th and 21st centuries provides the necessary catalyst for a re-performed, re-theorized approach to the classical rhetorics that have historically oppressed, refashioning them as ways of “including and empowering” students from historically marginalized groups (Welch, 1999, p. 142). Welch (1999) and Brooke (2009) illustrate that there is no one, “correct” rhetorical approach to new media. In fact, Brooke (2009) represents new media rhetorics and the canons as “ecologies of practice” to signal just that (p. 57). To insist upon that simply perpetuates the inequalities of a graphocentric academia. Instead, the concept of new media rhetorics expands possibilities for conceptualizing and teaching composing practices in the 21st century writing classroom.

Another example of a new media rhetoric is Jeff Rice’s (2007) *The Rhetoric of Cool*. Rice argues that Aristotle’s topoi, which have served print-based instruction by offering students a repository of ideas to work from, do not provide the necessary options for new media texts. The danger of relying on the topoi for new media texts is that it inhibits innovation and associative connection so crucial to digital environments (Rice, 2007, p. 33). Instead, Rice draws upon Gregory Ulmer’s recovery of Plato’s concept of *chora*, “the open receptacle of meaning.” According to Ulmer, “chora, when updated for digital culture, functions as an argumentative/narrative strategy 'by means of pattern making, pattern recognition, pattern generation...Choral writing organizes any manner of information by means of the writer’s specific position in the time and space of a culture’” (Rice, 2007, p. 34). According to Rice (2007), the concept of *chora* is a hyper-rhetorical practice that updates the topoi for new media” (p. 33). In the rhetoric of cool, contradiction expands the possibilities of multiple meaning, rather than under-

cutting the one fixed meaning topical rhetoric requires (Rice, 2007, p. 41). Thus, Rice's (2007) rhetoric of cool demonstrates once again that a new media rhetoric must denaturalize texts and examine them in relation to their materialities.

...Is Not a Rose

In the end, "new media rhetorics" evokes a rich and long rhetorical tradition that values persuasion with any and all available means. "New media rhetorics" attempts to disrupt existing power structures. Through the acknowledgement of the power of orality/aurality, through the revival of delivery and the remix of classical rhetoric, a redistribution of power occurs. New media rhetorics reject the Cartesian notions of authenticity and originality. Porter (2009) writes: "What we have in digital writing is a different economic exchange system than in print culture. Capital resides not so much in the original texts you produce as (a) in your ability to deliver and circulate texts in ways that make them accessible and useful to others and (b) in your ability to collaborate" (p. 220).

In other words, new media rhetorics strive to debunk the notion of a solitary figure slaving over an 8 1/2 x 11 page in order to produce a unique work the world has never seen before. Instead, new media rhetorics offer writers the opportunity to compose rich, meaningful, multi-layered texts in addition to the traditional alphabetic essay. New media rhetorics frame writing as an exploration of the many meaning-making possibilities available to writers. New media rhetorics embrace "the ability to weave together a variety of markers, experiences, texts, sounds, ideas, and so on, in complex ways as an alternative to print literacy" (Rice, 2006, p. 272). New media rhetorics ask students to be "willing and flexible enough to think beyond, or to think in addition to, the repertoire of choices one eventually commits to as deadlines approach and texts are due" (Shipka, 2011, p. 359). New media rhetorics represent an ethical, integrated approach to the incorporation of new media texts in the FYC.

References

- Baldwin, Kathleen. (2015). Assessing the new [media] rhetoric: Crossing disciplinary boundaries. Anne T. Demo (Ed), *Rhetorics across borders* (pp. 245-253). Anderson, South Carolina: Parlor Press LLC.
- Ball, C. (2004). Show, not tell: The value of new media scholarship. *Computers and Composition*, 21, 403-425. Doi: 10.1177/1354856505058366
- Banks, A. J. (2006). *Race, rhetoric, and technology: Searching for higher ground*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bolter, J. D. & R. Grusin. (2000). *Remediation, understanding new media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brooke, C. G. (2009). *Lingua fracta: Towards a rhetoric of new media*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Foss, S. (2004). Framing the study of visual rhetoric: Toward a transformation of rhetorical theory. In M. Helmers & C. A. Hill (Eds.), *Defining visual rhetorics* (pp.303-313). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Halbritter, B. (2006). Musical rhetoric in integrated-media composition. *Computers and Com-*

- position*, 23, 317–334. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2006.05.005
- Hawisher, G. E. & Selfe, C. L. (1991). *Evolving perspectives on computers and composition studies: Questions for the 1990's*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Janangelo, J. (1998). Joseph Cornell and the artistry of composing persuasive hypertexts. *College Composition and Communication*, 49(1), 24-44.
- Jordan, K. (2008). Stop. Hey. What's that sound? In Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid (Ed), *Sound Unbound, Sampling Digital Music and Culture* (pp. 245-264) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kress, G. (2005). Gains and losses: New forms of texts, knowledge, and learning. *Computers and Composition*, 22, 5–22. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2004.12.004
- Kress, G. & T. Van Leeuwen. (2001). *Multimodal discourse, the modes and media of contemporary communication*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lauer, C. (2009). Contending with terms: “Multimodal” and “multimedia” in the academic and public spheres. *Computers and Composition*, 26, 225–239. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2009.09.001
- Lunsford, A. A. (2006). Writing, technologies, and the fifth canon. *Computers and Composition*, 23, 169–177. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2006.02.002
- Manovich, L.(2001). *The language of new media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Miller, P. D. aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid. (2008). In through the outdoor: Sampling and the creative act. Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid (Ed.), *Sound unbound, sampling digital music and culture* (pp. 5-19). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Moran, C. (2005). Powerful medicine with long-term side effects. *Computers and Composition*, 22, 63–68. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2004.12.010
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2005). Statement on multimodal literacy. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/multimodalliteracies>
- Neil, M. (2011). *Writing assessment and the revolution in digital texts and technologies*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66 (60-93).
- Rice, J. (2006). The Making of ka-knowledge: Digital aurality. *Computers and Composition*, 23, 266–279. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2006.06.001
- Rice, J. (2007). *The rhetoric of cool: Composition studies and new media*. Urbana: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rice, J. (2011). Funkcomp. In Jeff Rice and Marcel O’Gorman (Eds.), *New media/new methods: The academic turn from literacy to electracy (281-296)*. West Lafayette, IN: Parlour (Adobe Digital Editions version). Retrieved from <http://www.parlourpress.com>
- Schiappa, E. (2003). *Defining reality, definitions and the politics of meaning*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Selfe, C. L. (2009). The movement of air, the breath of meaning: Aurality and multimodal composing. *College Composition and Communication* 60.4 616-663.
- Shankar, T. R. (2006). Speaking on the record: A theory of composition. *Computers and Composition*, 23(3), 374-393. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2006.05.002
- Shipka, J. (2006). Sound engineering: Toward a theory of multimodal soundness. *Computers and Composition*, 23(3), 355-373.
- Shipka, J. (2001). *Toward a composition made whole*. CITY: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Subramony, D. P. (2007). Understanding the complex dimensions of the digital divide: Lessons

- learned in the Alaskan arctic. *The Journal of Negro Education* 26.1 (2007), 57-67.
- Takayoshi, P. & Selfe, C.L. (2007). Thinking about multimodality. In C. L. Selfe (Ed.), *Multimodal composition: Resources for teachers*, (1-12). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Welch, K. E. (1999). *Electric rhetoric, classical rhetoric, oralism, and a new literacy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wysocki, A. F. (2004) Opening new media to writing: Openings and justifications.” In A.F. Wysocki, J. Johnson-Eilola, C.L. Selfe, and J. Sirc (Eds.), *Writing new media: Theory and applications for expanding the teaching of composition* (67-110). Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Wysocki, A. F. (2005). Awaywithwords: On the possibilities in unavailable designs. *Computers and Composition*, 22(1), 55-62. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2004.12.011
- Yancey, K. B. (2006). Delivering college composition: A vocabulary for discussion. In K. B. Yancey. (Ed.), *Delivering college composition: The fifth canon* (1-16). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.