Instruction With Multimodal, Multiple Texts

JILL CASTEK
Dear Educator,

The 21st century has brought with it a tremendous evolution in how adolescents engage with text. As adolescents prepare to become productive citizens, they must be able to comprehend and construct information using print and nonprint materials in fixed and virtual platforms across disciplines. In 2012, the International Reading Association published a revised adolescent literacy position statement as a guide for supporting adolescents’ ongoing literacy development.

The goal of the authors of the statement was to create a living document that brings educators’ classrooms to life and makes the eight recommendations of the position statement achievable. This series, Literacy Practices That Adolescents Deserve, brings readers inside real classrooms with practical, research-based strategies to implement in classrooms and schools.

We invite you to read the text, follow the links, and consider how this may become a part of your work and the work of colleagues.

Fondly,

Heather Casey, Rider University
Susan Lenski, Portland State University
Carol Hryniuk-Adamov, Child Guidance Clinic Winnipeg School Division
Series Editors

The downloadable PDF of the full revised position statement and additional adolescent literacy resources from ILA can be accessed online at www.reading.org/Resources/ResourcesbyTopic/Adolescent/Overview.aspx.

It’s 6:45 a.m. and Jocelyn, a 10th grader, wakes up to her phone’s alarm. It’s followed by a digital voice reading aloud the reminders she’s set for today, the weather report, and the music news headlines. Before she gets out of bed, she grabs her phone and navigates to her messages. She watches a YouTube clip and text sent from Jamie: “just wanted to make you LOL.” Jocelyn replies with a picture of the brownies she baked and decorated for Jamie’s birthday “C U soon.” It’s 6:50 a.m. Jocelyn rushes to get ready for school.

Your morning may have unfolded something like Jocelyn’s did—although the resources and networks you accessed and the digital device you used may have differed. For instance, you might have read the news on your tablet, delivered via an app such as Paper, which is linked to Facebook, and not only caught up on the day’s happenings but also dialogued about it within an online community. Although some of us might be fearful or hesitant about digital engagement, we see the changing landscape unfolding all around us: We are surrounded by tablets, smartphones, and computers. Interactions with digital information presented through multiple modes including images, voice, music, and video have become the norm. New technologies have transformed our literacy lives, offering instantaneous access to online information, resources, digital tools, and one another.

The immediacy of communication and the ubiquity of digital devices are transforming how adolescents use literacy to access texts, create and share ideas, and form social relationships with others (Smith, 2014). Although adolescents use digital devices with increasing frequency to create and share content online (Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, & Smith, 2007), neither they nor their teachers typically view this kind of participation as reading and writing. At the same time, the multimodal texts and digital literacy practices that adolescents engage in outside of school may not be allowed or available to them during the school day. According to the International Reading Association’s (IRA) 2012 position statement on adolescent literacy,
Literacy Is Undergoing Constant Change

In today's digital landscape, change is, and will always be, a constant factor. The accessibility of online texts, together with the abundance of applications available online to annotate, respond to, and dialogue about ideas, makes it possible for students to not only access information but also make sense of content in new ways. To do so, however, students need to become flexible with their literacy practices. They need to become problem solvers who can analyze situations and the tasks required of them and use the literacy knowledge and practices they have learned inside and outside the classroom to achieve their learning goals.

Indeed, the literacy instruction we have always provided had similar goals, but today's digital landscape is even more complex, as the resources available online grow exponentially and the tools available evolve constantly. Critical thinking, for example, becomes especially important as less skilled readers are susceptible to manipulation and can fall prey to media messages that are shaped for commercial gain. Experience plays a part in the development of a flexible literacy skill set, and we must provide students with supported opportunities to engage with these tasks in school if they are to become college and career ready.

Skilled online readers move between different texts and tasks, find and make sense of multimodal resources, and use crowdsourcing techniques to ask questions of peers and other experts as they make sense of ideas (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Castek & Coiro, 2015; Jacobs, 2012). We know that students' ability to accomplish these tasks depends on their range of online experiences in both academic...
and out-of-school contexts. It is important that teachers evaluate students’ abilities so they can design instruction that better prepares them to comprehend online information and create digital texts (Castek & Coiro, 2015; Wilhelm, 2014).

Though many of our students do not yet possess the skills and strategies to be efficient readers and composers of multimodal and multiple texts, students who do not have regular access to digital devices, for example, because of their socioeconomic status, run the risk of further marginalization (Ahn, 2011). As educators, we must consider the “inequalities in young people’s access to new media technologies and the opportunities for participation they represent” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 12).

Not providing opportunities in school to navigate new technologies and multiple, multimodal texts is no longer an option. It is up to us to provide both instruction and opportunity for all students to develop these essential skills for reading, writing, and communicating in the digital age. It is not only imperative for college and career readiness, but it is also critical to being an informed citizen and living a fulfilling life (Jenkins & Kelly, 2013; Wilhelm, 2014).

What Does Learning Online Involve?
The Internet has become the defining medium for information gathering and communication in the 21st century (IRA, 2009). The online reading experience is increasingly nonlinear and involves accessing information by searching (usually with a search engine), and then synthesizing ideas read across multiple texts. Online texts take multiple forms: videos, discussion threads, crowdsourced content such as Wikipedia, and so forth. Synthesizing from such diverse sources is a complex task that requires critical evaluation at every level. Learning online also increasingly involves the use of embedded digital supports such as text-to-speech features, annotation and translation tools, and spaces designed for dialogue and reflection. In these ways, the entire experience of reading online differs significantly from reading books (Beach, Anson, Kastman Breuch, & Reynolds, 2014; Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

As readers strive to make sense of unimaginably large volumes of information, additional comprehension skills are required to navigate this rich online landscape (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013). Teaching adolescents how to navigate this complex terrain has profound consequences for literacy instruction.

Leu et al. (2013) suggest that “teachers become more important, though their role changes,” (p. 1158) within classrooms where new technologies are used for information gathering, content creation, and collaborative networking. Further, adolescents need teachers who are sensitive to the competencies that young people bring to comprehending and producing texts of many forms and functions. At the same time, they need teachers who can help them develop into ever more competent readers and writers. (IRA, 2012, p. 7)

In order to think about instructional implications and examples, it is important to define clearly what is meant by multimodal texts and how they can be used and created with the digital devices often used in classrooms.

What Are Multimodal Texts?
Multimodal texts incorporate a variety of modes to communicate ideas. These modes include, but are not limited to, image, sound, movement, text, and gesture. Multimodal theory (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) suggests that the integration of various modes is key in meaning making and that language is not the most privileged mode. The interaction between modes is significant, and no single mode communicates on its own. Modes are shaped by readers’ social
and cultural background, and no two readers interpret multimodal texts in exactly the same way. What is important for adolescents to understand about multimodality is that meanings can be conveyed deliberately by the choices authors make as well as in how the messages are received by each individual. This effect can be achieved nontextually through the choice of color, alluding to different nuances present in popular culture, and by evoking different feelings and emotions using image, sound, movement, and gesture in addition to text (Jewett & Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Consider for example the choices eighth graders made when creating a video to promote safe driving practices (see Figure 1). *Death Is Calling* contains no dialogue but conveys a strong and clear message about the dangers of texting while driving. Skilled readers and writers must consider the author’s purposes and choices as they make meaning and construct ideas across modes. Likewise, we must provide students with instruction in thinking through how multimodality affects how we teach comprehension and critical analysis of multimodal texts.

According to Hull (2006), literacy [in the 21st century] requires learners to strategically choose among available technologies, media, and modalities for communication when accessing information and sharing ideas, suggesting that students need to learn to anticipate the intended audience when interpreting and decoding messages.

---

**Figure 1. Screen Capture From Student-Produced iMovie Trailer Death Is Calling**

*Death Is Calling* contains no dialogue but conveys a strong and clear message about the dangers of texting while driving. Skilled readers and writers must consider the author’s purposes and choices as they make meaning and construct ideas across modes.

---

**Related Resources for Continued Study**

*Understanding and Creating Digital Texts: An Activity-Based Approach* (Beach, Anson, Kastman Breuch, & Reynolds, 2014) offers resources and teaching ideas that intersect with six social practices involved in use of digital tools:

1. Contextualizing digital texts
2. Making connections between digital texts and people
3. Collaborative understanding and creation of digital texts
4. Adopting alternative modes of communication
5. Adopting alternative perspectives
6. Constructing and enacting identities

*The Media Education Lab* at the University of Rhode Island is one of the leading providers of multimedia curriculum resources for K–12 media literacy education. You’ll find a wide range of free online resources to use in your classroom.

*Media Smarts* is Canada’s Center for Digital and Media Literacy:

- Visit [General Information](#) to access information about using digital media in your classroom.
- Visit [Teacher Resources](#) to access many dynamic and useful resources and classroom tools for teachers.
- Visit [Intersection of Digital and Media Literacy](#) to learn more about how skills and competencies for digital literacy and media literacy intersect and to access resources for developing essential skills for playing, learning, and working as citizens of the digital world.
and to be skilled in creating messages that respond to different audiences for specific rhetorical purposes. Learning these skills requires teacher support but also involves giving students the freedom to make intentional decisions about what they create and how they create it.

**Designing Instruction With Multiple, Multimodal Texts**

Conversations I’ve had with teachers suggest that designing instruction with multimodal, multiple texts can be overwhelming. Many teachers are not able to locate these types of texts online readily and thus need to learn more about how to integrate the use of multimodal and multiple texts to foster desired ways of knowing and thinking in their classrooms. Wilhelm (2014) notes that even with the latest and most powerful technologies, the teaching/learning situation requires a teacher to do the following:

- Make learning matter
- Provide a meaningful situation that requires and rewards learning
- Offer focused assistance in that context in order to develop the strategies necessary to complete the project at hand (p. 60)

The following examples are intended to provide some guidance in what to consider when getting started.

Ms. Jacobs (all names are pseudonyms), an eighth-grade math and science teacher, works to design instruction in ways that engage her adolescent learners and support their literacy and content learning. She creates real-world projects that have multiple audiences and invites her students to integrate a range of digital tools in meaningful ways to support real-life problem solving. To do so, she planned opportunities for students to create multimodal projects, in a redesign of her year-end service-learning project described in the following section.

What is unique about Ms. Jacobs’s approach to this multimodal project is the way she encourages her students to participate in designing assignments. She recognizes that the Common Core State Standards call for students to use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010).

Ms. Jacobs also understands that her seventh-grade students are primary consumers of media and know what entices audiences. She values this knowledge and encourages them to keenly apply it in ways that aren’t often called for in school. The following excerpt illustrates how Ms. Jacobs used transmediation (Luke & Freebody, 1999), the process of translating a work into a different medium, to support her students in creating multimodal texts.

**Ms. Jacobs Redesigns a Service-Learning Project**

“Texting while driving is deadly, let’s put that on our poster” eighth grader Melissa tells Anna, her partner. These students are infusing important information they learned about safe driving into a handmade poster they designed to tack up around the school as a public service announcement. However, given the importance of the topic, and the audience they intend to persuade, Ms. Jacobs’s students push for ways to create an even more memorable message to promote safe driving habits.

“Wouldn’t it be great if we could turn this project into a video?” Jason suggests. It is clear from the group’s reaction that all the students are on board and, consequently, so is Ms. Jacobs. She immediately picked up on their interest and recognized their motivation to engage in creating a multimodal text that infused images, voice, text, and music for a distinct purpose—to deliver a persuasive and informative message to their peers and to the wider community.
This new knowledge was distributed throughout the classroom as peer support was encouraged and nurtured. Completed digital products can be viewed from ShowMe (username jill.castek@gmail.com, password safedriving), and Safe Driving VoiceThreads. See Figure 2 for a student-created VoiceThread.

Transforming the assignment from a poster to a multimodal composition extended Ms. Jacobs’s original vision for the project, but ultimately the experience culminated with the same end goal of producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010).

Ms. Jacobs recognized there were two elements important to the design of her instruction: collaboration and experimentation. Collaboration was widely fostered by encouraging students to turn to one another as resources to help figure out how to accomplish their goals. For example, one group of students using ShowMe wanted to include text in their presentation (there is no feature in which students can type using a keyboard). Other students offered one another a workaround, demonstrating the use of the notepad feature and taking a screenshot to import typed text into the project. Other students offered a different option and hand wrote text on a piece of paper in bold marker and took a picture of it to import into their project. Another group of students shared how to use a

Students had a choice of three multimodal tools: (1) iMovie, a video creation app that makes shooting and editing a video a snap, (2) ShowMe, an app that makes it easy to create a storyboard with images and drawing and includes a voice-over feature, and (3) VoiceThread, a collaborative, multimedia slideshow that holds images and allows creators and viewers to add voice-over comments.

As the project took shape, and students began using the tools, they discovered many new features of the apps and became skilled quickly.
finger to write the message manually on the tablet’s screen. These insights reinforced the idea that step-by-step instruction on how to use an app may not be necessary or ideal when executing a multimodal composition project. Instead, building students’ emerging digital competence is much more of a collaborative and discovery-oriented process.

Time for experimentation was also needed. Ms. Jacobs’s students were eager to learn how to use the apps offered to them. Although her instincts told her to model for students, it became clear that experimentation with the apps was a more efficient approach. Thus when new technologies are being used, a new role for the teacher is created. Ms. Jacobs quickly realized she needed to become more comfortable circulating to encourage peer support in addition to offering time for exploration and self-discovery. Students working in pairs provided an ideal balance of having only one pair of hands touching the screen and one mouth providing critique or direction. Pairs, when freely chosen by students, had differing levels of technology skill and a similar working style. Ultimately, students learned through the support of each other, and their projects were a truly collaborative process.

4. Analyze and transform texts—Skills include understanding and acting on the knowledge that texts are not neutral. Texts represent particular views, silence other views, and influence people’s ideas. Text designs and discourses can be critiqued and redesigned in novel and hybrid ways.

Many teachers do a good job of addressing the first and second resources when implementing literacy instruction that focuses on idea generation with paper and pencil. Ms. Jacobs’s first iteration of the service-learning project had students interpreting statistics on safe and unsafe driving and making sense of information provided by an insurance agent who came to talk with the class about safe driving practices.

However, through the process of transmediation, Ms. Jacobs encouraged students to transform their static poster by composing a project that integrated image, voice, music, and drawings with graphs, charts, and other visuals to communicate a new meaning. Ms. Jacobs’s two technological iterations helped her to understand that the app used to create the second iteration of the project was not user-friendly for students. She realized that the third iteration could provide a more efficient approach if her students focused on the process of creating the poster rather than the technology itself. It was crucial that she not let her students become bogged down by the technology, but instead focus on the content and process of creating the poster.

Using the Four Resources Model With Multimodal, Multiple Texts

The Four Resources Model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) provides a framework through which to examine multiple and multimodal texts, and therefore expand modes of representation possible within a lesson:

1. Break the code of texts—Skills include recognizing and using features such as the alphabet, sounds, spelling, conventions, and patterns of the text.

2. Participate in the meanings of text—Skills include understanding and composing meaningful written, visual, and spoken texts from within particular cultures, institutions, families, communities, and nation-states while drawing on existing schemata.

3. Use texts functionally—Skills include knowing about, and acting on, the different cultural and social functions that various texts perform both inside and outside of school. Knowing that these functions shape the ways texts are constructed, their tone, their degree of formality, and their sequence of components. Includes using (and creating) texts for a variety of purposes.

Four Resources Model Revisited

- Critical Literacy, School Improvement, and the Four Resources Model
- The Four Resources Model
  New generations of teachers in several countries use the Four Resources model in meaningful ways. See a sample of references from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom:

  Australia
  - A Socio-Cultural Approach: Resourcing Four Roles as a Literacy Learner
  - Teaching Reading Using the Four Resources Model: Text Analysing
  - What Successful Readers Know and Do

  Ontario, Canada
  - Critical Literacy

  New Zealand
  - Reconceptualising Literacy: Critical Multiliteracies for “New Times”

  United Kingdom
  - The Five Resources of Critical Digital Literacy: A Framework for Curriculum Integration
reading, Diigo served to help students target specific information, link ideas related to their prior knowledge, summarize key points, and engage in reflection while they were reading. In essence, students’ own ideas and responses on the collapsed and expandable sticky notes (the number on the sticky note indicates how many student responses are in the thread) serve to make a single digital text both multiple and multimodal.

The online annotations provide insights into students’ comprehension processes. Peers can make public their questions and connections and have the added advantage of reading others’ responses and developing a deeper meaning as they and their peers delve into the text together. They may also track their own and others’ meaning making. As they read response annotations, they can identify possible misconceptions that need to be clarified. In their own self-assessment, students may be able to identify when they had an “aha” moment in comprehension as well as pinpointing when their comprehension broke down.

To track comprehension, teachers and students could work together to create a rubric for assessing comprehension and levels of response. Collecting an initial annotation early in the term and then near the end of the term could help to determine if there was growth in the types of interactions and depth and breadth of response. This would help the teacher know who needs extra support to make deeper inferences. Development of a teacher- and student-negotiated assessment tool modeled after the one available here could be a useful place to begin.

When Ms. Kramer examined her students’ work, she grouped responses and looked for patterns that would help her adjust her instruction. She found that 77% of the annotations fell under the response ideas. This process involved functional analysis of the audience and critical analysis of the message. Students were aware that the project was a school assignment, but they went beyond what was expected for school and skillfully designed their message to be remembered and acted on by those outside the classroom. Their goal was to influence viewers’ ideas and actions.

As such, the multimodal composition project offered students the opportunity to reflect on what was communicated and to internalize the message for themselves (Castek & Cotanch, 2013). In doing so, the students deepened their own literacy development in ways that using a single mode wouldn’t have allowed. Engaging students in the act of creating multiple and multimodal text helps students learn to use, produce, analyze, and transform ideas, thus tapping into the higher levels of the Four Resources Model.

### Annotating With Multimodal, Multiple Texts

Consider another example of multimodal instruction: annotation of digital texts. This section examines the choices made by Ms. Kramer, a fifth- and sixth-grade science teacher who recognizes the potential of multimodal and multiple texts to support students’ understanding of complex topics and ideas. Even though she hadn’t asked students to annotate digital texts before in her science instruction, she saw potential in students responding to text and one another through annotation using an app called Diigo.

Diigo is an online bookmarking tool that allows users to highlight sections of texts and attach annotations to those sections in ways that serve to mediate active, focused, close reading. In Ms. Kramer’s classroom, students added sticky note annotations to a text to share questions and connections with their peers and to locate and respond to specific places in the text where their peers added their own annotations (see Figure 3).

In contrast to paper-and-pencil annotations, which support discussions after
Ms. Kramer found there were several assessment benefits to having students annotate multiple digital texts that could inform instruction. First, by examining students’ individual highlights and annotations, she could see that students were reading actively, and she could see the connections and questions they had about the content. She recognized that this record of students’ thinking was an important way to provide formative feedback about their understanding of the text. Second, she had a record of students’ questions, which allowed her to plan further instruction around students’ areas of interest. She noted, “As I read students’ annotations, I’m finding out what their questions are and following up on where I want them to go further.” In addition, she noted that the expanded text with students’ reflections allowed for an extended dialogue. Because adolescents are social beings who want to hear their peers’ thoughts and reflections, this approach makes productive and academic socializing possible.

Finally, Ms. Kramer remarked that the Diigo dialogue allowed students to explore alternative perspectives and alternative response practices. Public comment practices are common in digital media and learning how to share opinions online that include reasons and textual evidence with a diverse readership is a vital 21st-century skill.

Ms. Kramer found there were several assessment benefits to having students annotate multiple digital texts that could inform instruction. First, by examining students’ individual highlights and annotations, she could see that students were reading actively, and she could see the connections and questions they had about the content. She recognized that this record of students’ thinking was an important way to provide formative feedback about their understanding of the text. Second, she had a record of students’ questions, which allowed her to plan further instruction around students’ areas of interest. She noted, “As I read students’ annotations, I’m finding out what their questions are and following up on where I want them to go further.” In addition, she noted that the expanded text with students’ reflections allowed for an extended dialogue. Because adolescents are social beings who want to hear their peers’ thoughts and reflections, this approach makes productive and academic socializing possible.

Further Reading and Classroom Resources for Teaching Annotation

Print Texts


Online Resources

- ReadWriteThink.org offers a helpful learning plan for supporting student annotation: Teaching Student Annotation: Constructing Meaning Through Connections
- Teaching the Core blog author Dave Stuart Jr. offers teaching insights in his article “Purposeful Annotation: A “Close Reading” Strategy That Makes Sense to My Students”
- A video resource from the Thinking Channel introduces Thinking Notes: A Strategy to Encourage Close Reading

Websites for Online Annotation

- Annotate is a free and interactive annotation and image editing program
- Diigo is a collaborative tool that allow students to highlight web texts and to view, read, and respond to one another’s annotations on collapsed digital sticky notes
- DocAS is an app that provides students with features that allow them to add annotations to PDF texts that can be customized for font, size, and text color preferences
- iAnnotate is an online tool that allows students the opportunity to read, mark up, and share digital texts

Creating Videos to Express Understanding

Digital devices are great for students to use to access multimodal content such videos and animations, virtual field trips, and e-texts. They also provide a diversity of ways to create content. Designing assignments that encourage
students to plan, design, and produce projects digitally calls on students to think across modes of representation that can include text as well as images, sounds, and music in ways that transcend paper-and-pencil products. Multimodal composition taps into students’ creativity and engages them in making sense of complex ideas in a new way. Recording a voice-over script extends the composition process, making the final message come to life in new ways.

Consider the choices Mr. Young makes in the design of a culminating project in his seventh-grade science class. He is a tech-savvy teacher who is eager to engage his students in projects that expand their means of expression of complex ideas. However, he recognizes that science vocabulary and science concepts can be difficult to grasp and that students need time and multimodal means to make sense of ideas. He uses images and hands-on materials regularly to help students make connections with processes such as plate tectonics. The following scenario captures a weeklong project students engaged with in collaborative groups. Prior to moving to digital tools, students used a variety of materials (e.g., clay, cardboard, felt, sponges) to make models they could use to illustrate tectonic plate movement at different boundary types.

Carlos and Jasmine talk excitedly as they create a multimodal text in their science class on the iPad. “Let’s make sure we emphasize that California sits on a transform boundary. We can put in an image of the coast and draw arrows showing the Pacific Plate moving north and the North American plate moving south. Then, we can add our voice-over to tell more about plate movement on the fault line,” Jasmine suggests. “Yeah, then we can add in a video clip,” Carlos contributes, “so when we edit everything together, it explains how the plates catch on each other and jerk suddenly during an earthquake” (see Figure 4).

The videos students authored offered them multiple avenues to express their understanding in creative, interactive, and transformative ways. Throughout the creation process, online discussions took place as students participated in connected learning, sharing ideas in a digital community with the same device they’re using to complete their plate tectonics project. Carlos and Jasmine use the feedback offered by this community to refine their work accordingly. The ways these young people are using new technologies and experiencing texts are transforming their literacy practices. Mr. Young recognized that having students not only read but also create multimodal texts requires that he transform his classroom practices and allow students to draw on the technology skills and modes of communication they often use outside of school.

As the preceding vignette in Mr. Young’s classroom shows, the modes of communication that adolescents use as they work with digital technologies and new media enable them to navigate across text types as they gather information and share ideas. For example, students locate texts and read information online and offline as they create fixed and moving images, pairing them with drawings and voice to author their own hybrid texts. As students engage in multiple text comprehension and represent their thinking in multimodal ways (using images, voice, text, and action sequences) with the aid of digital tools, they work collaboratively to share what they have learned and are deeply engaged.

Mr. Young knows his students’ use of digital tools has helped them deepen their science understanding while enhancing their literacy skills—expanding access to literacy practices that adolescents deserve. He’s enthusiastic about the potential of multimodal texts, both for engaging students in information gathering online and in having them create their own digital content.
while dialoging face-to-face and through the use of texts and discussion boards. The rich reading and composing that happens as a result of these connected experiences fosters a level of literacy development that doesn’t happen when working with just one mode at a time.

The use of multiple communication channels by teachers such as Mr. Young is creating school activities that are more collaborative and relevant to students’ everyday lives. By creating a synergy between understanding and producing interactive, collaborative, and multimodal texts, teachers like Mr. Young are providing their students with rich opportunities to make meaning and extend their understanding of content and multimodal communication simultaneously.

**Conclusion**

Although new technologies hold tremendous potential to enhance teaching and learning, turning that potential into reality is a complex and multifaceted task. For educational opportunities to be relevant to students and teachers, classroom instruction must adapt and change for both teachers and students to keep pace with the workings of new technologies in out-of-school spaces. With the wide variety of networked applications that permeate the Internet today, students can explore, create, and share ideas in dynamic ways. Providing instruction with multiple and multimodal texts makes it possible for students to create projects and express ideas that extend their meaning making. It also enables students and educators to create a place where digital communities can form. Creating such a learning space provides teachers with greater flexibility to monitor and support student learning.

Regular use of various digital platforms such as those introduced in this article provides students with valuable opportunities to use their creativity to explore ideas and share what they know in ways that engage them and extend their ability to communicate, access information, and make sense of complex ideas. Providing instruction across the curriculum with multiple, multimodal texts goes a long way toward ensuring that all students will become skilled in the digital literacies that are a vital part of our 21st-century world.

**Questions for Reflection**

- How might the incorporation of literacy practices focused on producing and consuming multiple and multimodal text discussed in this article influence your students’ (future or current) learning and engagement?
- Consider the comparison of the more traditional approaches to adolescent literacy development and some of the new literacies discussed in this piece. Does the use and creation of multimodal texts using digital tools influence adolescent literacy development in ways that using traditional literacies does not? In what ways might these literacy practices support college and career readiness?
- What challenges could be introduced when implementing instruction that integrates the use and production of multiple and multimodal texts? What resources could you draw on to support your students and overcome these challenges?

**References**


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jill Castek is a research assistant professor at Portland State University, Oregon, with the Literacy, Language, and Technology Research Group. She is the principal investigator on an Institute for Museum and Library Services grant focused on digital literacy acquisition among vulnerable adult learners and another focused on problem solving in technology-rich environments. Jill has more than a decade of experience working with striving readers and English learners. Her research examines opportunities for reading, writing, and collaborating on the Internet to extend literacy and content learning. She also explores a variety of instructional strategies to support online reading comprehension. Jill is a contributor to the Literacy Beat blog that focuses on literacy teaching ideas that make the most of Web 2.0 technologies. Her work also appears in the Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, The Educational Forum, The Journal of Education, The Reading Teacher, and Reading & Writing Quarterly, among other journals. She can be reached at jcastek@pdx.edu.

“Literacy Practices That Adolescents Deserve” is edited by:

Heather Casey
(Rider University)

Carol Hryniuk-Adamov
(Child Guidance Clinic
Winnipeg School Division)

Susan Lenski
(Portland State University)


