

## **A Review of the Book, Multimodal Composing Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations**

Abdu Al-Kadi (findtalib@gmail.com), Ibb University, Yemen  
Rashad Ahmed (rashadhse@gmail.com), Jacksonville University, USA

Title	Multimodal Composing Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations
Editors	Lindsay Sabatino and Brian Fallon
Website	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvg8p6gt">https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvg8p6gt</a>
Type of product	Edited Volume
Publisher	Utah State University Press
ISBN	978-1-60732-845-2
Year	2019
Price	Paperback Price \$29.95 Ebook Price \$24.95 30-day ebook rental price \$12.00

### **Summary:**

The book, *Multimodal Composing Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations*, edited by Lindsay Sabatino and Brian Fallon and published by Utah State University Press in 2019, is an impressive 283-page edited volume comprising fourteen chapters, a preface, and a glossary. The publication represents a collaborative effort of twenty-four research scholars who have brought critical themes of multiliteracies and multimodalities to the forefront of current discourse. The chapters build upon Ben's (2005) framework of learning needs, focusing on learners engaging with texts across multiple modes. The companion website (<https://www.multimodalwritingcenter.org/>) provides more details on materials that were difficult to incorporate in print. It includes podcasts, color images, videos, and other dynamic resources.

The publication is a collection of studies, commencing with an introduction in which the editors outlined the theme and contents of the volume, highlighting the expected future of literacies that involve all the senses when dealing with texts. In the introductory chapter, the editors clearly state that the volume was written “to prepare consultants to offer feedback on those projects by providing them with an overview of visual and audio design principles, the rhetorical nature of multimodal composing, and a variety of multimodal genres” (p. 3).

Following the introduction, Chapter 2, written by Brandy Ball Blake and Karen Head, focuses on storyboarding to help learners re-envision the ideas they need to communicate. Storyboarding is presented as a multimodal artefact integrating text, sound, and visuals. Chapter 3, by Brian Fallon, touches on meaning-making by combining text with image. The author discusses the interplay between text and image, likening multimodal writers to fashion designers in their ability to persuade, inform, and entertain readers, who are envisioned as multimodal readers. In addition, he illustrates how language can be represented visually, enhancing the textual narrative. Chapter 4, written by Sohui Lee and Jarret Krone, undertakes the brochures genre as an example of discourse that entertains, persuades, and advertises. Chapter 5, authored by Carpenter and Morin, discusses

academic research posters, describing them as “a multimodal outlet for sharing and displaying information, research, and scholarship” (p. 67).

The discussion on reader engagement continues in the subsequent chapters, covering a diverse range of topics. Chapter 6 explores Prezi and PowerPoint presentations, Chapter 7 examines infographics, Chapter 8 looks into e-portfolios, and Chapter 9 focuses on web design tutoring. The conversation extends to podcasts in Chapter 10, multimodal video projects in Chapter 11, public service announcements (PSAs) in Chapter 12, and the intersection of identity and social media in Chapter 13. In Chapter 14, the last chapter, Schoen and Blazer offer strategies for addressing ethical issues such as copyright, citation, and attribution in multimodal resources. The volume concludes with a well-organized glossary that delineates common terms employed throughout the text, thereby augmenting the reader's comprehension of multimodality. The provision of definitions for these terms significantly aids in grasping their application within multimodal contexts.

### **Evaluation:**

This volume is an exceptional compilation of fourteen chapters, rigorously examining multimodalities and multiliteracies and offering an extensive analysis of strategies relevant to twenty-first-century literacies. Amidst the burgeoning corpus of literature on the intricate topic of multimodality—a field witnessing rapid expansion—the volume stands out by adeptly addressing pivotal themes pertinent to twenty-first-century literacies. Throughout the book, the term 'consultants' refers to tutors or educators who guide students through multimodal texts, serving as expert users and interpreters. This usage helps establish a common language throughout the book and reinforces the focus on writing consultation and multimodal composing.

The book is a testament to the editors' and contributors' extensive knowledge and familiarity with multimodality and the strategies that promote multi-readership and multimodal writing. With contributions from experts in the field, the book explores a spectrum of themes, encompassing the opportunities and challenges inherent in multimodal discourse, ethical dilemmas, and instructional methodologies. The authors offer a thorough and contemporary exploration of diverse strategies in multimodal composition, delivering their insights in a style that is accessible to readers yet retains an academic rigor appropriate for a scholarly audience.

The book's focus on tools and applications outlines the framework for coping with the challenges of multimodal discourse and promoting the full engagement of readers' senses to interpret its content. In addition to discussing the affordances and challenges of multimodality, the book offers useful guidance on ethical considerations such as citation and copyright protection—a shared concern among researchers and publishers. The contributors utilized various techniques to yield results from diverse contexts and sources, which significantly extended the investigation presented in the book. The editors also managed to create a semblance of uniformity in the arrangement of the chapters. The references, podcasts, and videos used in compiling the volume are valuable resources that enhance the depth and breadth of the book's scope.

Despite all these merits of the book, it is worth noting that some topics in the book are linked to illustrations on the book's webpage, which may disorient readers and prevent them from

returning to their original page. Additionally, it is important to recognize that incorporating multimodality can pose concerns related to the cognitive load. Learners' cognitive abilities to comprehend and manage the information presented to them multimodally should be taken into account, as noted by Hopman (2022). Moreover, while the volume mainly highlights the effectiveness of wordplay and interactivity strategies in engaging readers, it could benefit from further exploration of the merits of multimodality in other pedagogical contexts, such as collaborative writing through portfolios and wikis.

Although written in an erudite tone, the content remains accessible to readers, enriched by a wealth of references, podcasts, and videos. The authors' use of clear and succinct language, supplemented by the glossary, effectively deepens the reader's understanding of multimodality. For a better understanding of the topic at hand, readers may also benefit from reading other volumes, such as *Writing Changes: Alphabetic Text and Multimodal Composition*, edited by Pegeen Reichert Powell and Arlene Archer, and Esther Breuer's *Multimodality in Writing: The state of the art in theory, methodology, and pedagogy*. Other relevant books and volumes include Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes' *Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*.

Despite the slight disorientation posed by external links to the book's webpage, this work holds vital importance for theorists, educators, academics, and students engaged in the realms of digital literacy and modern pedagogy. It provides insights into manipulating multimodal elements through pedagogical interventions. It serves as an indispensable resource for conducting research in multimodalities and multi-literacies. The wide range of issues the book covers may inspire other researchers to build on the results and further investigate the field. It provides a solid foundation for future research into specific variables within multimodal contexts. Future researchers might concentrate on specific variables highlighted in the book, examining their influence within their unique contexts for a more detailed investigation.

### References

- Ben, R. A. (Ed.). (2005). *A tutor's guide: Helping writers one to one* (2nd ed.). Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Hopman, R. (2022). *Digital reading strategies to improve student success*. Pearson.
- Lee, S., & Krone, J. (2019). Helping students make good design decisions. In L. Sabatino & B. Fallon (Eds.), *Multimodal composing: Strategies for twenty-first-century writing consultations* (pp. 51-66). Utah State University Press.