

Title: Practicing multimodal literacies in Collaborative Multimodal writing

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Proposal:

Today's multimedia environment challenges traditional definitions of literacy in humanities. In this environment, teaching and learning should be framed and informed by digital tools and technologies. In the meantime, digital humanities is concerned with not just the use of digital technology but how the use of digital technology changes the user's experience ("Glossary of the Digital Humanities"). Addressing these two key concerns of digital humanities, I present my work in one course that aims to improve students' multimodal literacies through collaborative composing of digital texts. The course I focus here is titled "Writing Across Borders", a course to enhance students' cross-cultural awareness of different writing patterns and traditions. A major component of this course is for students to collaboratively investigate specific social writing practices and analyze how such practices are rooted in rhetoric traditions and social values. Options include interviewing a bilingual professional business coach who constantly writes across languages, analyzing advertisements of same franchise in different countries, and so on. Students were asked to engage a variety of modalities as they compose: visual, audio, spatial, and linguistic. The final products students produced include a variety of multimodal genres such as a podcast, a profile interview, a blog site, and a web article. Students were frequently using social media tools to communicate with one another and to communicate with people across geographic borders to get information on their topics. They were also exploring various digital tools to best deliver the final digital texts. As [Matthew G. Kirschenbaum](#) asserts, digital humanities is more akin to a methodological approach than a simple investment on any one set of technologies. A valid question for us instructors to ponder is, as students move through such multimodal learning, how we encourage a learning culture that values collaboration, openness, nonhierarchical relations, and agility. (297 words)