

USU Researchers Create Multimodal Framework to Support New Literacies

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Unlike traditional writing, multimodal compositions can involve text, images, and even audio or video.

Along with colleagues from three other universities, associate professor Dr. Amy Piotrowski and doctoral student Mary Ellen Greenwood of the School of Teacher Education and Leadership have developed and published an award-winning article about assessing students' digital multimodal compositions. Their work will help teachers support their students in developing and using new literacies, such as digital literacy and media literacy, which are vital for students to successfully participate in the digital world.

While English language arts teachers have long-established ways to assess and build competence in traditional writing, multimodal compositions that involve text, images, and possibly audio or video can be vastly different from traditional writing compositions. In their article, Piotrowski, Greenwood, and their colleagues lay out a framework for assessing multimodal compositions and giving feedback to students.

In order to help students make meaningful original compositions that reach their intended audience, the framework considers three domains: audience, mode and meaning, and originality. The creator's intended audience and actual audience are considered in evaluation, as is the effectiveness of the creator's chosen *modes*, or the methods and mediums they used to create meaning. In assessing the originality in a multimodal composition, teachers do not evaluate whether the creator has made an entirely new and original product; rather, they help

students think critically about how their work builds on existing work to create new meaning.

These areas of focus provide teachers with ways to provide useful, actionable feedback for compositions that rely on new literacies, helping students improve their current composition and impacting their future endeavors in multimodal composing.

Piotrowski and Greenwood's article received the 2022 Richard A. Meade Award from the English Language Arts Teacher Educators of the National Council of Teachers of English. The award is given to "published research-based work that promotes English language arts teacher development at any educational level and in any scope and setting."