3 Design principles—(among many!)

There are nearly as many different principles guiding Designers in doing their work as there are Designers. Of course these principles at best have their own internal coherence that helps shape the ultimate product or experience being designed. As Designer Rob Stokes writes, “Designers, through training and experience, develop a different lens through which to see the world. They move through spaces, environments, and systems, making observations and developing insights about what works well and what doesn’t. They then use those observations and insights to create innovative solutions for everyday problems. If design is the crossroads of beauty and purpose, design-thinking is the intersection of creative and analytical thinking.”

As an exercise, try substituting the word “teachers” and “teaching” for “designers” and “design” in the quote above. How does that sound? Does the re-purposed quote seem to accurately reflect how teachers go about their work?

Stokes continues, “In today’s world of standardized tests and performance-based educational funding, students are not evaluated on the way they approach a problem, but whether or not they come up with the right answer. What happens when there are many right answers, as is often the case with non-linear design solutions? When can we start teaching students how to creatively evaluate their ideas? Design education typically begins at the college level, but if we wait until then to teach design thinking we are missing critical points in the growth of young minds, whose ability to think creatively is boundless. Teaching high school students to think like designers would help shape the way they look at the world around them and positively affect their future endeavors.”

Many educators have passion for and a deep understanding of their discipline and its core concepts, but frequently do not have in hand any controlling principles for how to teach/share/engage students IN the discipline. Often what is lacking is a purposing, or an attitude, or edge, or angle to teaching the content of the classroom. This is not to disparage teachers; indeed, teachers are inside a culture—Education—that often seems to insist on a deliberate bleeding out of attention to itself, as if no human being is there. The classic example of this is the typical college textbook; the textbook seems frightened of self-consciousness, self-awareness. When teachers can safely engage with the idea that “Design = thesis” their students’ work benefits, as does their own teaching.
Below are 3 Design principles that teachers can analogize from to help guide their choices in the classroom.

1. GESTALT DESIGN PRINCIPLE
Gestalt is a general description for the concepts that make unity and variety possible in design. It is a German word that roughly translates as "whole" or "form." Gestalt theory is involved with visual perception and the psychology of art among other things. It is concerned with the relationship between the parts and the whole of a composition. 4 Gestalt design concepts:

- **Closure**: the mind supplies the missing pieces in a composition
- **Continuance**: the eye continues in the direction it is going.
- **Proximity**: where items are in relationship to each other and how that impacts Gestalt.
- **Alignment**: lining up objects to organize and form groups

2. The 3 P’s
Designer Freddy Min (Netvibes) uses “The 3 P’s” to guide his design work on websites and other Internet platforms.

- **Publish**: make it easy for users to create content while expressing themselves.
- **Participate**: make it fun and engaging for users to interact with content as well as the creators of the content.
- **Personalize**: put the user at the center of the experience, in order to bring ownership, individuality, and innovation to the content.

3. The “Classic” Principles of Design
Designer Joshua McClurg-Genevese summarizes 5 basic design principles that are taught to beginning Design students. These principles can be used by both teacher and student in very different disciplines than Design in order to develop fresh ways to look at teaching and learning.

McClurg-Genevese writes, “There are many basic concepts that underly the field of design. They are often categorized differently depending on philosophy or teaching methodology. The first thing we need to do is organize them, so that we have a framework for this discussion. We can group all of the basic tenets of design into two categories: principles and elements. For this article, the principles of design are the overarching truths of the profession. They represent the basic assumptions of the world that guide the design practice, and affect the arrangement of objects within a composition. The axioms of our profession:

Balance  Rhythm  Proportion  Dominance  Unity
**Design Project: Challenges**

Early in the semester, teacher and students brainstormed possible design project challenges. The parameters: challenges should be multi-modal, involve analytic writing, link back to the books being used in the class, be project-based and involve collaboration when possible, include written critique of one’s own project.

Below is the result of the brainstorm. This list served as a guide for the projects taken on over the semester. Once a project was picked, the teacher wrote up the assignment with more detail, including design parameters, writing expectations, etc.

1) Design a Poster or bumper sticker— offers advice/raise awareness/convey an attitude about some environmental or community issue. Do this as part of community mapping exercise...create a logo that captures the spirit of the campaign.

2) Create a DJ set list that responds to some issue of the day with your opinion of the issue implied in your song choices. Design the CD package/burn the CD. write the accompanying text (liner notes) and supply pictures and graphic; prototype it and mock it up.

3) Research and write a Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) ad campaign---Identify a problem: “guys don’t recycle”—“shopping won’t make you happy”. Use the ad to raise awareness/explore the problem/offer solutions. Eric says we can get it on the school radio station.

4) Take a public space and convert it to an experience: a flash mob event, a role play, a sacred space, a community activity in a public space. The event can tell some story or reveal something about the community, or teach people, or confuse or entertain or is mysterious.

5) Design a game that captures community college student life. Research features of typical games. Game should include meta-cognitive choices. Could the game have a bad guy? Game can track the forces and issues and problems students face: miss the bus, get high, depressed, lost and scared; each player could be given a player profile. How do you “win” the game?

6) Design an physical exercise routine that puts you in touch with nature—routine can involve spiritual, words, music, partner, animals, ritual aspect, time of day...night, sounds that you listen for...inventory self during the routine. It is an exercise routine that involves all the senses out in nature. (You can film it and share it; the film demonstrates how to do the routine.)
7) Create a documentary film that explores some aspect of or issue found in your community. Think of the film as a way to reveal hidden truths.

8) Design an altar to something that is at risk in the world. We can get a place on campus to show them; shoe box size? Altars can be intimate, like Cornell boxes.

9) Design the book cover Jacket for your autobiography. Include Art, blurbs, review, title, etc. Base it on your relationship to environment. Write excerpts of the first chapter.

10) Design a multi-modal tribute to your hero.

11) Design your own super hero: what are their traits, faults, what are they trying to fix? How would they dress, what would they look like; do they have side kick? What motivates them?

12) Choose an object in your life that is very important to you. Find out how it is made, what resources are used, how did it get to you, whose hands touched it. Link this challenge with Story of Stuff.

13) Design a tee shirt that tells the environmental story of tee shirts.

14) Design a better world.

15) *NO POWER POINTS!* Unless it is a power point on why someone should hate power points.

16) Create a web site that holds all these design challenges made over the semester. It can be added to as we move through the semester. Students write meta-analyses of the different challenges.
Project #1: Book cover jacket for your autobiography

For this project you are creating a book cover jacket for your (imaginary) autobiography. There are a lot of aspects to you, and so to give some focus to the project, you are being asked to design this project around: your relationship to our Earth/Nature. We will discuss the many different ways you can approach and narrow this topic. Even though this autobiography does not exist, you will want to give some thought to what it might be like if it DID exist so that you can inform your design and writing choices. This project has 2 main parts to it:

1. The book cover itself.
   In class you identified many elements of a typical book cover, including:

   - Title,
   - Sub-title,
   - Synopsis/summary of book,
   - Author name and Author bio,
   - Critics’ Reviews,
   - Awards,
   - Excerpt/teaser/quote from the book,
   - (The elements above involve writing on your part)
   - Main Picture or Graphic,
   - Publisher/price/bar code/bookstore filing location/revision/edition

Remember to check your class notes for all the great advice/guidelines your class came up with for each element.
You discussed how these elements can be combined using color, fonts, shading, borders, and graphic elements. You also talked about what concepts can guide Design choices, including: Symmetry, Simplicity, Unveil book’s content, Create an emotional tone that echoes the book’s emotional tone, Build curiosity.

You will design and create the book cover either by using software and printing final version, or by cutting and pasting actual paper. You can make book cover any size.

2. An extended “excerpt” from the book.
   For this part of the project you will be pretending that the autobiography actually exists. You can pretend that the excerpt comes from any place in the book: beginning, some where in the middle, or the end. You will be writing a 5-6 page excerpt. (If you want to write more, go for it!) The writing should be double-spaced, 12 pt font, regular margins. You can include pictures or graphics in the excerpt, but be sure you still are doing the required amount of writing. Also, you are strongly encouraged to pull short quotes from our books, or outside sources (for ex. Internet) if you can find quotes that support your writing.

Project #1 is due: _____________.
Most homework over next 3 weeks relates to project; please keep up w/homework.
Project #2: Designing 2 posters around 1 issue

For this project you will be choosing an issue that is important to you, and you will do some research/reading/investigating to familiarize yourself with the different aspects of the issue. Then you will design 2 different posters responding to the issue. Like the first project, this one has two main parts:

1. The 2 posters.

Before you design the posters you need to:

A. Make yourself as much of an expert on the issue as possible. Even though the poster may have on it only a few words, behind that is your deep awareness of the issue.

B. Be clear about the purpose of the poster: Is it to raise awareness? Propose a solution? Assign blame? Inspire people to action? Visualize a different future?

C. Know your audience: Do you want to appeal to teens, the elderly, parents, workers, men, women, etc? If you know your audience that can help you decide the tone and look of your poster.

When it comes to the designing itself:

A. You will create 2 posters. They should be focused on the SAME issue, but should take a different approach. For example, one of your posters could take a humorous approach to the issue and be targeted to teens to raise awareness, while the other poster might be more serious, and be targeted to business people to get them to change.

You will design and create the posters either by using software and printing final version, or by cutting and pasting actual paper. You can make the posters any size, but I would recommend the bigger the better. (Maybe we will find a place around campus to post the posters after you finish the project.

2. A written critique of your posters covering the following:

For this part of the project you will have several things to write about and do:

A. You will offer an overview of the issue you picked. In doing that you can consider these questions: What are the problems? What possible solutions are out there? Why is the issue important to you? (4 pages minimum.)

B. You will offer an explanation for why you made the visual and word choices you did for each poster. What is the goal of each poster? (2 pages minimum.)

The writing should be double-spaced, 12 pt font, regular margins. Also, you MUST include short quotes from our books, or outside sources (for ex. Internet) that support your writing.

Project # 2 is due:___________
Designing your Community College Game

For this part of the project you will be designing a game that has as its focus the world of community college. You don’t need to cover the “whole world” of community college. Your game can, if you wish, focus in on a smaller aspect. For example in class we have talked about a game that is based around getting to class on time, or a game that explores preparing for college, or a game that is focused on Orientation to college. You will decide what kind of focus you want for your game.

Then you will begin to design the game by considering these questions:

• What is the goal of the game? How do you win the game? Do players play solo or on teams?

• What TYPE of game is it? We brainstormed a great number of game types, from Chance, to Strategy, to Values games, etc. Your game can of course be a hybrid of different game types; for example, you may have a game that combines Chance and Memory and Knowledge.

• How is the game actually played? What are the steps in playing it? If it is a board game, what does it look like? What kinds of pieces/elements does the game have—cards, dice, tokens, money, etc.?

Working with your team you will create the game. You will need to create all the elements of the game, including cards, board, etc. The game should be truly playable! You will want to test out the game with your team to discover any logical problems or glitches in the game.

The Draft day for the game is on ________________.

This is NOT a project that can be done at the last minute, so you will want to be very aware of your time management.

The game is due______________
For this Interview paper you will zero in on one or two aspects of the world of community college to generate your paper’s focus. (Of course you should be keeping in mind that what you learn in your research will be integrated into your game.) Then, you will be moving through a series of steps towards a final product: a 5 page minimum paper that investigates the areas that interest you. What are some possible areas of community college world you can investigate?:

Once you have settled upon your paper topic you will then generate a series (6-10) of "I Believe" statements. These statements are really nothing more than the different parts of your opinion about the topic. These "I Believe" opinions then form the basis of your questions that you will be asking. The most promising I Believe statements are not overly general: "I Believe everyone should volunteer" is probably too general. Also, they are not facts; for example, "I believe the Giants won the World Series" is a fact, not an opinion. "I Believe the Giants won the Series because of the team camaraderie" is opinion. (And if you had access to the Giants players, you could test this I Believe statement by asking them about their relationships with each other.)

The next step of course is to decide whom to interview. For this paper you will be interviewing 4-5 people. You will then be lining up your interviews and conducting them. Be prepared for the answers to your questions to surprise you--this is natural. The answers you get will sometimes support your opinions and sometimes will challenge them. This may force you to change your questions and "I Believes" around somewhat. That, too, is natural and to be expected.

Once you have conducted the interviews, you are ready to start shaping the answers into concepts that will form the body of the paper. ORGANIZE BY CONCEPTS--NOT BY PEOPLE. If a paper is organized by people--that is, if you have one long paragraph about what "John" thinks, followed by one long paragraph about what "Maria" thinks--your paper will be less successful.

You will also be expected to include quotes/support from outside sources that you think are helpful.

The Draft day is on __________________. This is NOT a paper that can be done at the last minute, so you will want to be very aware of your time management.

The paper is due __________________.
Multimodal Learning Through Media: What the Research Says

(excerpted from a Cisco Systems Public Information Education White Paper)

How People Learn – The Cognitive Sciences
Research over the last two decades has revealed volumes on the subject of how people best learn. A 2001 publication from the National Academy of Sciences, How People Learn, outlines important principles upon which schools should consider redesigning learning:
- **Student preconceptions of curriculum must be engaged in the learning process.** Students have preconceptions and prior experiences with many of the areas of study included in the academic standards. These are stored in long-term memory. Often some of those preconceptions turn out to be misconceptions. Student learning is greatly enhanced when each student’s prior knowledge is made visible (that is, read from long-term memory into working memory). It is at that point the student has the opportunity to correct misconceptions, build on prior knowledge, and create schemas of understanding around a topic. Learning is optimized when students can see where new concepts build on prior knowledge.
- **Expertise is developed through deep understanding.** Students learn more when the concepts are personally meaningful to them. In order to deeply understand a topic, learners not only need to know relevant facts, theories, and applications, they must also make sense of the topic through organization of those ideas into a framework (schema) of understanding. The development of schema requires that students learn topics in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them. This translates into a need for authentic learning in classrooms. (Note: Authentic learning is defined here to include three key concepts: depth of academic concept; or deep learning, relevance to person(s) outside the classroom, and student use of the key ideas in a production.)
- **Learning is optimized when students develop “metacognitive” strategies.** To be metacognitive is to be constantly “thinking about one’s own thinking,” in search of optimizing and deepening learning. Students who are metacognitive are students who approach problems by automatically trying to predict outcomes, explaining ideas to themselves, noting and learning from failures, and activating prior knowledge. Given appropriate scaffolding by educators and other adults, all students can learn metacognitive strategies. Despite recent advances, cognitive science is a relatively new field, and thus will undoubtedly continue to evolve as new research is conducted. New advances in functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have enabled cognitive sciences to look into the black box (that is, the brain) to investigate what has been up until recently, merely theories that fit patterns of behavior. That work will undoubtedly continue to evolve to inform educators.

3: Multimedia Design – Visual and Verbal Learning
Recent neuroscience research is beginning to verify the previously speculative theories of multiple researchers in dual coding, cognitive overload, and multimedia learning. While the field is still evolving, researchers have shown that significant increases in learning can be accomplished through the informed use of visual and verbal multimodal learning.

Much has been written about the principles of multimedia listed below. Most of the published research studies have been of short duration and were specifically designed for research analysis, but have demonstrated the veracity of these principles. However, emergent research on these principles, when applied in classrooms, has had mixed, albeit positive, results. Many of the researchers have commented that such mixed results may be due to the lack of specificity of the type of multimedia intervention (for example, specific combinations of modalities, formats within modalities, learner characteristics, scaffolding of learners, learner age, complexity and type of learning goals addressed, etc.)

Figure 8 provides results from across multiple studies, separating effects related to basic and higher-order skills. Figure 8: Impact of Multimodal Learning (Verbal and Visual)
The Impact of Multimodal Learning in Comparison to Traditional, Unimodal Learning

Findings Reported Separately for Basic Skills and Higher Order Skills, and by the Inclusion or Absence of Interactivity

- **Quadrants I and II**: The average student's scores on basic skills assessments increase by 21 percentiles when engaged in non-interactive, multimodal learning (includes using text with visuals, text with audio, watching and listening to animations or lectures that effectively use visuals, etc.) in comparison to traditional, single-mode learning. When that situation shifts from non-interactive to interactive, multimedia learning (such as engagement in simulations, modeling, and real-world experiences—most often in collaborative teams or groups), results are not quite as high, with average gains at 9 percentiles. While not statistically significant, these results are still positive.

- **Quadrants III and IV**: When the average student is engaged in higher-order thinking using multimedia in interactive situations, on average, their percentage ranking on higher-order or transfer skills increases by 32 percentile points over what that student would have accomplished with traditional learning. When the context shifts from interactive to noninteractive multimodal learning, the result is somewhat diminished, but is still significant at 20 percentile points over traditional means.

This analysis provides a clear rationale for using multimedia in learning. That said, the reader should be cautioned that the research in this field is evolving, with recent articles suggesting that efficacy, motivation, and volition of learners, as well as the type of learning task and the level of instructional scaffolding, can weigh heavily on the learning outcomes from the use of multimedia.

**Conclusion**

The complexity of teaching and learning becomes increasingly apparent as the physiological, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of learning become known. The percentages related to the cone of learning were a simplistic attempt to explain very complex phenomenon. The reality is that the most effective designs for learning adapt to include a variety of media, combinations of modalities, levels of interactivity, learner characteristics, and pedagogy based on a complex set of circumstances.

In general, multimodal learning has been shown to be more effective than traditional, unimodal learning. Adding visuals to verbal (text and/or auditory) learning can result in significant gains in basic and higher-order learning. The meta-analytic findings in this report provide insights into when interactivity augments multimodal learning of moderately to complex topics, and when it is advantageous for students to work individually when learning or building automatically with basic skills.
Excerpted from the NCTE website. For the full document please link to:
http://www.ncte.org/governance/MultimodalLiteracies

NCTE SUMMARY STATEMENT: MULTI-MODAL LITERACIES

Declarations concerning the broadest definitions of multi-modal literacies:

Integration of multiple modes of communication and expression can enhance or transform the meaning of the work beyond illustration or decoration. What this means for teaching: It is the interplay of meaning-making systems (alphabetic, oral, visual, etc.) that teachers and students should strive to study and produce. "Multiple ways of knowing" (Short & Harste) also include art, music, movement, and drama, which should not be considered curricular luxuries. All modes of communication are dependent. Each affects the nature of the content of the other and the overall rhetorical impact of the communication event itself.

Young children practice multi-modal literacies naturally and spontaneously. They easily combine and move between drama, art, text, music, speech, sound, physical movement, animation/gaming, etc. What this means for teaching: Children who grow up in impoverished or repressed literacy environments may not experience this important early literacy foundation. The over-emphasis on testing and teaching to the test may deprive many students of the kinds of multi-modal experiences they most need. An exclusive emphasis on digital literacies is not what most advocates of technology-rich composition advocate. Such an emphasis would limit students' access to other modes of expression.

The use of different modes of expression in student work should be integrated into the overall literacy goals of the curriculum and appropriate for time and resources invested. What this means for teaching: Students should be able to both read critically and write functionally, no matter what the medium.” (William Kist) In personal, civic, and professional discourse, alphabetic, visual, and aural works are not luxuries but essential components of knowing.

Because of the complexity of multimodal projects and the different levels of skill and sensitivity each individual brings to their execution, such projects often demand high levels of collaboration and teamwork. What this means for teaching: Teachers of the English/Language Arts already have models for this type of collaboration, such as those for producing a play. Any dramatic production includes speech, movement, costumes, props, sets, lighting and, sometimes, music and dance. Beyond the performance itself is the need for producing appealing programs and advertising. And, beyond that are the persuasive verbal skills needed to raise funds to produce the production. Other kinds of more traditional multi-modal projects also require this type of collaboration. When students produce brochures, literary magazines, books, videos, or greeting cards, collaboration improves the product and helps all students involved learn more.

The use of multi-modal literacies has expanded the ways we acquire information and understand concepts. Ever since the days of illustrated books and maps texts have included visual elements for the purpose of imparting information. The contemporary difference is the ease with which we can combine words, images, sound, color, animation, video, and styles of print in projects so that they are part of our everyday lives and, at least by our youngest generation, often taken for granted. What this means for teaching: Readers in electronic environments are able to gain access immediately to a broad range and great depth of information that not 15 years ago would have required long visits to libraries or days of waiting for mailed replies. The techniques of acquiring, organizing, evaluating and creatively using multimodal information should become an increasingly important component of the English/Language Arts classroom.

In digital forms, students, even very young students, are often more literate in the technical aspects of digital production than many of their teachers. Many students are frequently exposed to popular technologies, have the leisure time to experiment with their own production, develop the social connections that encourage peer teaching and learning, and may have access to more advanced technology than is available at school. The "definitions" of multi-modal composing may be written by educators, but they will most likely have first been pioneered by these young people. What this means for teaching: Students may find school instruction increasingly irrelevant. (National
Educators will have to devise ways of including students who are advanced-technology practitioners in the development of curricula, professional development experiences, teacher recruiting, and the setting of relevant policies.

Implications of the digital divide. Institutions and teachers must create ways to bridge the digital divide, providing access and resources for all students. More specifically, “for students [and teachers] we need to provide adequate, safe, and supported work time” (Dickie Seife). “We must call on our institutions to provide the necessary support and infrastructural, cultural, and technological adjustments, including access to technology for people with diverse abilities and needs” (BETHA group).

- Creating images, sounds, designs, videos and other extra-alphanumeric texts is an aesthetic, self-originated, self-sponsored activity for many writers. Digital technologies have increasing capacity for individuals to adapt the tools for their own information and communication purposes. Students have the capability to apply literacy skills to real world problems and knowledge-building. They are able to exercise creativity, work for social justice, and pursue personal passions (CCCEC Feb. 2004 position statement). They have the means to publish their work to a global audience. What this means for teaching? Young people are particularly adept at recognizing creative applications for new technologies, but their in-school work should be guided by the wisdom and sophisticated curricular knowledge of their teachers. In addition they need direct instruction in ethical, critical, and legal considerations. Students and teachers will need assistance in the skills of multi-tasking, accessing “just in time” information, problem solving, and prioritizing tasks and resources to accomplish the goals of their assignments. Their work may at times be more like that of the workplace than that of the traditional classroom. With more opportunities and greater ease in sending their work out into the world, the quality of the ideas and the effectiveness of the communication media will become more important and more relevant to students.

James Paul Gee’s book *Sociolinguistics and Literacies* (1990, Third Edition 2007) was one of the founding documents in the formation of the “New Literacy Studies”, an Interdisciplinary field devoted to studying language, learning, and literacy in an integrated way in the full range of their cognitive, social, and cultural contexts.

The paragraphs below are excerpted from the Wikipedia entry for James Paul Gee.

According to James Paul Gee, there are at least two reasons why we should consider literacy in broader terms than the traditional conception of literacy as the ability to read and write. First, in our world today, language is by no means the only communication system available. Many types of visual images and symbols have specific significances, and so “visual literacies” and literacies of other modes, or the concept of multimodal literacy, are also included in Gee’s conception of new literacies. Second, Gee proposes that reading and writing (the ‘meat’ of literacy according to the traditional notion of the term) are not such obvious ideas as they first appear. “After all,” he states; “we never just read or write; rather, we always read or write something in some way”. In other words, according to which type of text we read there are different ways in which we read depending on the “rules” of how to read such a text. Literacy to Gee, even if it is the traditional print-based literacy, should be conceived as being multiple, or comprising different literacies, since we need different types of literacies to read different kinds of texts in ways that meet our particular purposes or reading them.

Furthermore, Gee also argues that reading and writing should be viewed as more than just “mental achievements” happening inside people’s minds; they should also be seen as “social and cultural practices with economic, historical, and political implications”. So, in Gee’s view, literacies are not only multiple, but inherently connected to social practices. In order to expand the traditional view of literacy as print literacy, Gee recommends that we think first of literacy in terms of semiotic domains, by this, he means “any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities (e.g., oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sounds, gestures, graphs; artifacts, etc.) to communicate distinctive types of meanings”. There is a seemingly endless and varied range of semiotic domains, including (but certainly not limited to) cellular biology, first-person-shooter video games, rap music, or modernist painting. Most pundits would describe this conception of literacies as a key element in what has come to be known as the New Literacy Studies. In short, this theoretical and methodological orientation emphasizes studying language-in-use and literacies within their contexts of social practice.

“[The texts that students have produced in response to composition assignments have remained essentially the same for the past 150 years. They consist primarily of words on a page, arranged into paragraphs. This flow of words is only occasionally interrupted by titles, headings, diagrams, or footnotes.” (1)
Despite the persistence of this model of writing, increasingly, multimodal composition assignments are introduced into traditional composition courses. These multimodal texts "exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" and consist of web pages, films, and podcasts in addition to print-image hybrids such as brochures. Multimodal assignments take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies that include social networking sites such as MySpace, file sharing sites such as Flickr, and an emphasis on immediate, content-driven publication rather than a knowledge of programming skills. Still, these texts remain the exception, not the norm. While students often compose via multiple modes in their non-academic lives, connections between in- and out-of-class literacies are not explicit for many students.

When writing instructors do incorporate multimodal assignments, reasons they cite include existing student interest and engagement with multimedia (and therefore, an assumed increased interest in the multimodal composing process in general), a need to provide students with successful communication skills in both print and electronic environments as students learn and work in both, and a desire by instructors to teach writing skills that are relevant. Multimodal instructors recognize is not enough for students to merely analyze web texts and compose traditional print-based texts in response. Rea and White note that traditional rhetorical concerns persist in web environments but students cannot effectively critique web texts without experiencing the web composing process firsthand. Instructors of multimodal composition therefore "face the challenge of deciding how to incorporate various media into writing classes in ways that are not only fiscally and technologically viable but also pedagogically and ethically sound."

**SUGGESTED MULTIMODAL READINGS**


DESIGNING WITH DATA

Phrases like “Data Driven” and “Evidence Based” are heard every day in the community college environment. In the Acceleration in Context Initiative we have developed a particular philosophy and approach to working with Data.

One part of our approach is to access the creativity and playfulness of faculty by introducing AIC them to the concept of “Designing with Data.” We invite AIC educators to explore and arrive at new understandings about the Acceleration expressions they are shepherding by taking a multi-modal approach to Data gathering and synthesis. To Design with Data means to use raw data as a medium—literally—like a painter use oils or a potter uses clay. Just as raw IR data can be thought of as the material to be shaped into a coherent story, other kinds of data can also be shaped: Video and photography; students’ own classroom work; students’ evaluations of their educations; surveys; teachers’ logs; etc.

It is an overstatement to say that faculty shy away from or are intimidated by data; nonetheless, Designing with Data is one way to invite faculty into a conversation with all the many forms of data that swirl around their campus and classroom.

The vast reach of the internet give educators access to websites and software programs that manipulate all kinds of data into interesting forms: Word Collages, 3D creations, colorful eye-popping graphs and charts, professional looking animations. It is easy to do and gives professional looking results. (A very partial list of such websites includes: Wordle, Many Eyes, Muketo, Visual Dictionary, Animoto, Xtranormal, Green Patriot Posters.)

Designing with Data spurs creativity, offers a fresh lens for looking at what may seem old hat, functions as a brainstorming tool, and more. And frequently AIC educators achieve an elegance when Designing with Data that supplies its own rhetorical power for use in navigating their Institutions.

Data can make you lonely. It tends to stare back at you or tell stories you have a hard time believing. In our AIC work we introduce faculty to playful, fresh and synergistic approaches to using data. We focus on naming and intersecting a wide variety of data sets—quantitative and qualitative. We help AIC faculty to see themselves as data collectors, to feel comfortable about collecting data both close to their everyday and data they might not have considered relevant to them. We share examples of colleges
using interesting combinations of data to understand and transform their approach to learning in accelerated settings.

Our approach in workshops and in mentoring offers participants a bigger palate of data sources to consider, as well as examples and hands on practice making meaning with data. One explicit goal in this kind of data analysis is to mine a deeper understanding of student learning that leads to making improvements in teaching and classroom learning environments. A central feature of our AIC work is to frontload assessment strategies and protocols in our initiatives. And yet, the assessment cycle is often difficult for faculty to complete because they can’t find a narrative arc to their analysis or they don’t have enough texture and varied inputs to help them bring their data off the page and into their experience. So an important part of our work is to offer examples of using multiple measures and multiple definitions of success to try to get inside both the curriculum and the student’s actual real time learning experience of that curriculum.

We are seeing in AIC that institutional effectiveness—that is gauged by an evidence-based approach—can best be achieved by intersecting data from a broad variety of sources: student voices, success and equity measures, cross-curricular correlations, case studies, e-portfolios, video recordings, classroom assignments, and so on. (This approach also embeds effectively into basic institutional processes like program review and unit planning.) From our experience with many college teams across California, most institutions struggle to engage their faculty in transformative meaning making experiences with data. Often, it seems to be because there is not enough playfulness and creativity built into the push to be an evidence-based culture. Once faculty have positive experiences using data, experiences that ring true to them, they begin to take to the whole “culture of evidence” thing at their college. We have both nurtured this experience and watched it unfold in ways that we share from a micro and macro perspective.
Concepts suggested by your First Kisses. Use one (or more?) of these lenses to further design your project:

I was told I was good at it
It was an embodied experience
I left with fewer burdens
"Laws" were broken
I was seen, praised, loved
I was challenged, and rose to the occasion
I was shown who I was
I was trusted to learn
I was honored as an equal
I felt empowered
I was encouraged to "step into the breach"
I was learning from others

Below are some of the Design principles that the Designers in our movie Objectified say guide them in doing their work. We invite you to use one (or more?) of these principles to guide your choices as you Design your Acceleration "products."

- Remove, remove, remove
- Prioritize: what is most important?
- Create a calm, considered solution
- Design with an eye towards Maximum unity
- Create something that has "little rituals"
- You know what students want better than they do, but that when they make choices inside your Design that they are "asserting themselves"
- Contextualize your Design inside some "larger setting"
- Be motivated by emotion: anger or dissatisfaction or ______
- Let your "stuff on the table" guide your design
- Think of your Design as akin to "creating Music"
- Design with an eye to the future