

Title: Multimodal Posters: An alternative form of assessment that university students appreciate?

Abstract: In my teaching I am constantly looking for alternative ways of teaching and assessing students, i.e. ways that are both engaging and academically rigorous. An idea that I have tried with my undergraduate Applied Linguistics class has been to ask students to produce a multimodal poster as one of their 'written' assignments. There have been two variants of this poster assignment. The first requires students to create an informational poster to explain a concept covered on the course, and the second requires students to produce a hyperlinked e-poster to reflect on and consolidate the key learning points across the entire course.

My design of the assignment was motivated by two main considerations: Firstly, my students belong to what Miller and McVee (2012) describe as a "millennial generation ... [that] thinks of messages and meanings multimodally, rarely in terms of printed words alone" (p. 2), and thus I wanted to offer them an opportunity to display their learning through ways of meaning-making that they were accustomed to outside the classroom. Secondly, because my university specialises in teacher education, my students are all future English teachers themselves, who need to think about what it means to prepare pupils to be 'literate' in today's society. The experience of producing a multimodal composition for academic purposes, I felt, would encourage them to consider whether something similar might feature in their future teaching.

In this presentation, I share some of the unexpected problems that I initially encountered and the refinements I made as a result. I also share findings from a survey done with my students to find out whether the assignment resonated with them, what they thought the highlights and downsides of the task were, and whether the experience made them more or less inclined to employ multimodal composing in their own teaching in future.

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