

Chapter 10

Development of Literacies Through Multimodal Writing in L2 Classrooms: Challenges and Prospects for Teachers



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Abstract Drawing on sociocultural theories of literacy and empirical studies of multimodal media production (MMP), this chapter examines pedagogical issues related to employing multimodal writing pedagogy in L2 classrooms. Using authors' personal reflections as researchers in two different settings, this chapter investigates the impacts of multimodal composing on in-school and out-of-school literacies and potential tensions in implementing multimodal pedagogies in classrooms. Additionally, it proposes guidance teachers can find helpful in multimodal writing in L2 classrooms. This study contributes to educators' and teachers' understanding of pedagogical concerns, which they find helpful to execute multimodal pedagogy in L2 classrooms.

Keywords Second language (L2) · Multimodal media production (MMP) · Multimodal pedagogy · Critical media literacy · Literacy

10.1 Introduction

As the authors of this chapter, we present two case studies of multimodal texts composing in two different settings: a graduate course, which required Sultana (first author) to compose an MMP in her L2 at a large public university in the northeast United States; and an ethnographic doctoral study of Turner (second author) on MMP by urban middle school students in California. Reflecting on our experiences, this chapter delineates the potential to incorporate multimodal texts composing into L2 writing classrooms for the development of students' multiliteracies and the pedagogical challenges encountered by both teachers and students in enacting multimodal pedagogies. Using our personal reflections as teachers, students, and researchers, this

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D. Shin et al. (eds.), *Multimodal Composing in K-16 ESL and EFL Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0530-7_10

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chapter proposes some guidance teachers can find helpful in teaching and assessing multimodal writing.

10.2 Literature Review

Research shows the positive impact on learners' motivation and learning achievement of producing multimodal texts (Nair et al. 2013) in a second language (L2) classrooms (Black 2005; Thorne et al. 2009) because the process of new types of text production provides students with enormous opportunities to conceptualize, think in a different way, act, and reflect on texts (Cope and Kalantzis 2009a, 2009b; Kress, 2003, 2010; New London Group 1996). Multimodal texts include drawings, comics, picture e-/books, brochures, flyers, newspapers, storyboards, print advertisements, e-/posters, digital presentations, social media posts, multimodal media production (MMP) (Turner 2008), and the like. Multimodal pedagogy requires students to create and reflect on these types of text which develops their multiliteracies (New London Group 1996). It also establishes a pedagogy of hope, especially for English learners (ELs), in which they are free to compose landscapes where a different reality is a possibility and to produce multimedia texts documenting their efforts toward creating such spaces. In addition to language skills, ELs develop their multiliteracies throughout the process of creating multimodal texts (Sultana and Turner 2019).

Literacy and new media scholars have expressed the need to open up empowering avenues for youth to critique, produce, and distribute media (Hull and Shultz 2002; Mahiri 2004; Morrell and Duncan-Andrade 2004). Many after-school programs in the United States include language in their mission statements echoing calls for uses of media and digital technology in ways that will empower youth to express their voice (Campbell et al. 2001; DUSTY, n.d.; Youth Outlook, n.d.; Youth Radio, n.d.; Youth Sounds, n.d.). Sholle and Denski (1993) have identified this process of using media and technology to develop a voice within historically marginalized communities as a central component of critical media literacy.

According to Sultana and Turner (2019), critical media literacy "is the skill to identify, analyze, and produce multimodal texts aimed at addressing social inequality" (p. 4). Likewise, multimodal media production (MMP) has demonstrated its effectiveness as a tool to cultivate critical media literacy. Additionally, creating multimedia texts like MMP potentially helps students to represent social justice issues about communities that are suffering under oppressive conditions of poverty and human rights violations to express their voice, thereby shaming the oppressor into changing their actions.

In line with critical media literacy research, the significance of multimodal composing for ELs' language and literacy development emerges. Students around the world have been producing multimodal texts in schools and out-of-school contexts for nearly three decades now. However, over the past five years, Web 2.0 sites have made it convenient to upload and share user-generated multimodal media content, essentially revolutionizing how people communicate, represent, and organize themselves

(Yang 2007). Scholars studying new literacies have developed a body of research that justifies multimodal composing in L2 classrooms (Ajayi 2008; Belcher 2017; Cimasko and Shin 2017; Sultana and Turner 2019; Yi and Choi 2015; Yi et al. 2019); however, there is a need for more studies to investigate pedagogical issues concerning multimodal composition pedagogy in classrooms.

10.3 Research Questions

The case studies are guided by the following research questions:

- What are the impacts of composing multimodal texts on in-school and out-of-school literacies?
- What are the potential tensions in implementing multimodal pedagogies in classrooms?

10.4 Methodology

10.4.1 Case-1

K. C. Nat Turner conducted an ethnographic examination of a learning site as a part of his doctoral study that incorporates multimodal composing and its implications for the literacy development of urban middle school youth. This yearlong study took place for an academic year in one of Fanon middle school's (FMS) (Pseudonym) extended day programs named digital underground story telling for you(th) (DUSTY) in the San Francisco Bay Area. DUSTY is an MMP course created as a literacy intervention and developed through a university–community partnership founded by Professor Glynda Hull and Michael James which brings together undergraduate and graduate students with instructors from the community to work with academically low-achieving African American, Chicano/Latino, and Asian youth from the community (Hull 2003). The MMP course's mission was to improve literacy learning by giving students access to cutting-edge information and communication technologies (ICT) and “empowering uses of those technologies; and safe places to go for cultural enrichment after school” (DUSTY, n.d., para. 4). The lead instructor at DUSTY's FMS site was a 33-year-old African American, independent hip-hop artist, and had taught since 2002. He was teaching lyric writing and digital storytelling. Another teacher was a 19-year-old, African American, self-proclaimed gangster rapper, and had taught since 2005. He was hired by DUSTY to teach beat making to students. Most students in the DUSTY program were seventh graders who had self-selected the program, but some were recommended by administrative staff. A set of 22 Latino, European, and Asian undergraduates, enrolled in an education course at a nearby university, volunteered as tutors in the DUSTY program throughout the year helping

the middle school students with their homework, college prep program, writing, and multimodal media productions. This study explores the multimodal pedagogy and curriculum used by two teachers and 22 tutors, the literacy practices of seven multilingual focal students from sixth and seventh grades, and the multimodal media they produced using qualitative methods including participant observation, interviews, and the collection and analysis of artifacts (Turner 2008).

10.4.2 Case-2

Sabiha Sultana, the first author of this chapter, conducted a critical examination of a graduate class that incorporates multimodal texts composing to develop the course participants' critical media literacy. This semester-long study took place in a large public university in the northeast during Sultana's Master of Education program as an international student in the United States. The graduate course, titled "Researching New Literacies: Multimodal Media Production (MMP) and Social Justice," required the eight enrolled graduate students to showcase their multiliteracies by creating MMPs on social justice issues related to their lives. Guided by the pedagogy of multiliteracies (New London Group 1996), this study investigates the possibilities for literacy development through these students' production of multimodal texts for research purposes. Among the eight students, three, including Sultana, speak English as their L2. Each of them created their multimodal texts in English and gave presentations of their MMPs at a conference for scholarly feedback, and uploaded them onto YouTube for public use. For instance, Sultana's MMP can still be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Dh466e3Mps. Using participant observation in the graduate class and analyzing the media produced by the students, Sultana explores the pedagogy the instructor used to involve the graduate students in creating their MMPs and the critical literacy development of the participants through creating and researching their own media.

10.5 Results of the Studies

10.5.1 Findings from Case-1

The results show that the curricular content of the MMP course the DUSTY teachers and undergrad volunteer tutors enacted consisted of instruction in lyric writing, beat production, music theory, digital storytelling, public service announcements (PSAs) creation, discussions, research, college preparation, and writing, most of which involved substantial ICT skills. The teachers used a variety of pedagogical strategies to achieve their curricular goals and content including (1) computer-mediated discussions, (2) modeling of various software for students (using a projector, screen,

speakers, and neighboring computers), (3) group work, (4) listening to hip-hop music, (5) MMP, (6) discussions of important community issues, (7) conducting community research, (8) watching videos and deconstructing how media is magnified by combining modalities, (9) discussions of hip-hop lyrics, (10) writings about self, family, relationships, and community, (11) traditional lectures, (12) the Socratic method, and (13) kinesthetic beat making using hands and feet. Most of these pedagogical strategies were consistent with students' interests and motivations for joining the course. The results show that the traditional lecture method failed to motivate students. Thus, the teachers used a multimodal pedagogy to engage students in hands-on activities and literacy practices, which are similar to how students learn in out-of-school contexts. The teachers enacted these pedagogical strategies in order to lay the foundation for students' multiliteracies. For example, by having each student keep a composition notebook in which s/he regularly wrote on topics like self, family, relationships, and community, students began to observe and reflect with pen and paper, an important aspect of the writing process. Generally, these strategies engaged students and motivated them to participate in a variety of literacy practices.

The findings reveal that the course provided students ample opportunities to use the target language. For example, during the course of the year, students produced different genres of multimodal texts including digital stories, hip-hop music videos, and hip-hop songs for a variety of audiences. The various genres of texts that students produced required them to use different types of language. For instance, the language students used in their PSAs was different than what they used for their hip-hop music videos and songs.

One key finding in this study was that students today bring with them a host of digital literacies that are not accessed in the way schooling is currently done. However, literacy practices that students bring to school can be used to enhance school learning. For example, ICT literacies can be used to design, conduct, and report on research projects through the production of multimodal media. The process of text production afforded students the opportunity to practice a variety of literacies that prepared them for the flexibility and problem solving necessary for participation in future academic, civic, and social contexts. For instance, the focal students Turner observed improved their writing, ICT literacies, and mathematical literacy, according to the teachers as well as the students themselves. In addition to these literacies, there were other important skills that included the ability to work collaboratively, an attitude oriented toward attending college, greater self-confidence, and perseverance. With regard to writing, students learned to observe and reflect on their communities and translate their emotions and personal experience into text. This process involved selecting important themes and finding language to express them first on paper and then through the intertextual format of MMPs. ICT literacies provided a battery of skills to navigate through an increasingly hyper-mediated society. The teachers recognized that students would need these skills to function in both academic and work environments. ICT literacies also provided the motivation to engage students in other kinds of academic assignments. As a result, students were more adept at locating and collecting information, according to their teachers. Mathematical literacies included the ability to manipulate mathematical patterns

into musical notation using the beat-making software. This ability included many discrete mathematical skills like division and fractions. The beat-making project inspired students in part because it was a form of a social practice prevalent in their community. Collaborative learning allowed students to work as a social network on MMP. Disrupting traditional notions of authorship, these networks involved students in specific roles to complete PSAs, hip-hop music videos, and songs. Students gained self-confidence by producing their own MMPs which empowered them as authors and artists engaged in creative work while promoting a message of social change. From conception to completion, students persevered through project development as well as other assignments required of them. Students also had to overcome many obstacles to success such as malfunctioning computers by using their resourcefulness to maximize the potential of the program. MMP allowed students' assignments to be geared toward conveying their knowledge to an "authentic" audience of peers, teachers, family, and community. Having an authentic audience with which students identify and communicate their knowledge makes learning more relevant to their lives and to the lives of people in their community. Therefore, teachers and students used the MMP course to enhance students' ability to meet the demands of future educational frameworks, employment, and social transformation.

Other findings point to the transformative power of learning how to produce multimodal texts using the vast information available in cyberspace. For example, the teachers incorporated writing as a form of self-expression to give students an open-ended and emotionally invested curriculum that enabled the development of skills critical for academic and lifelong learning. In the lyric writing activity, the teacher asked students to freewrite, complete a community research project, and write about their lives after listening to hip-hop lyrics. While students' writing on a technical level needed much revision and correction with regard to grammar and style, what was impressive about their work was the quality of reflection they produced. The teacher was able to construct assignments that enabled them to make text-to-self connections and then later to make self-to-text connections when they wrote their own lyrics. Their produced multimodal texts and articulated the findings of their research on issues facing their communities in creative ways. The following is a sample of lyrics by a student:

I live in East Newton.
 There's a lot of different kind of people in my neighborhood.
 It is very dangerous cuz there's a lot of gang bangers & shoot people,
 sometimes me & my family get scared.

.....

Since having students engaged in ICT practices required teachers' ICT skills as well, Turner recommended hiring a full-time computer/technology teacher at each school who would be responsible for instructional technology and training all teachers and students. These teachers would be required to maintain specific technological standards at the lab and would have authority to make sure that computers could handle the latest math, video editing, web publishing, and similar programs.

Additionally, Turner found instability in the context and organization of the site where the MMP course operated, due to teacher abandonment, and severely limited time for planning and preparation. These issues affected the ability of the course to capitalize on how well positioned it was to engage students in literacy development. Teachers and students also found that the time they had for media production was limited by concerns for safety, preparation, for standardized tests, and a malfunctioning computer lab. For instance, although the program started at 3:46, the official homework time was even increased to a full hour to facilitate more time for standardized test preparation, leaving only about 40 minutes per day to work on their multimodal media production. Collectively, these constraints limited the power of the MMP course, the effectiveness of teachers, the MMPs students produced, and the learning outcomes of students.

10.5.2 Findings from Case-2

The findings reveal that the instructor engaged the students in multistep procedures to research social justice issues, create their MMPs, and reflect on their developed MMPs. They began the inquiry and consultations with the course instructor in the fall semester of 2016, analyzing the secondary literature, pictures, videos, and existing MMPs provided by the instructor, and following his guidelines for selecting topics from their lives that would have a long-term effect on society. The students chose their topics to portray with MMPs to raise awareness in their context. The participants also searched for resolutions of the issues they explored, which they depicted through their MMPs.

The findings show that there were a number of reading and writing exercises involved in the process of MMP that developed students' multiliteracies. In the beginning, they chose their topics (e.g., language discrimination among multilingual learners, social dispositions against women, juvenile justice, queer identities) through research of literature and societies, and then wrote think pieces explaining the rationale and process of producing media addressing the topics. They then wrote chronological storyboards to organize the order of the media. They had to carefully read documents and literature from primary and secondary sources, choose background music and moving and still images from Google, newspapers, databases, or magazines, or take the images themselves. Afterward, they wrote narrations that were used with their own voice over with the visuals in the production, and they wrote research papers analyzing their own media.

For the three students, who speak English as their L2, the process of writing storyboards, scripting the digital stories, and writing the research papers provided them with ample opportunities to develop their English writing skills. For instance, while identifying topics, collecting research data, analyzing those data, writing narrative stories, and visualizing those stories with multimodal texts, they were immersed in digital and print media texts written in English, which worked as linguistic data. They then had to decode and comprehend the data to make meanings in their own words.

They were exposed to linguistic input that accelerated their producing linguistic output in English. They needed to outline and write narrative stories in English using multimodal texts, which were natural tasks to achieve both linguistic and non-linguistic goals. Therefore, MMP helped to develop their English skills.

Analysis of the students' MMPs shows that the course developed students' technological skills through hands-on activities creating their own media using different software. For example, the instructor used to demonstrate how to use several software applications to compose videos, how to add subtitles and relevant background music with the visuals, and how to determine the right length of visuals to attract the audience. Technological showcasing in the class involved only WordPress and I-movie, but the participants created their MMPs using diverse software like Windows Movie Maker, Free Audio cutter for cutting voices and background music, Camtasia, Microsoft PowerPoint for screen recording, Atube catcher for audio/video editing and converting, Paint for image editing, digital cameras, and cell phones (Sultana and Turner 2019). Their produced media show how they were able to use out-of-school technical skills with in-school learned theories and research.

The findings show that the course developed students' critical media literacy throughout the process of analyzing existing texts and producing new texts for the MMPs. For instance, Sultana (2016) chose the topic "social dispositions toward Bangladeshi women and the resulting effects on their creative development" to display through her MMP. Drawing on the Freirean emancipatory model (Freire 1970) and critical literacy theory, Sultana read her world critically and understood her identity as a woman in Bangladesh throughout the process of creating her MMP. For example, Sultana's MMP depicts people's perceptions about women in Bangladesh and its consequences. She showed how society perceives women in Bangladesh, the consequences of this perception, and how it hinders their creative development using still images, subtitles, background music, and screenshots from online newspapers. Therefore, the findings of this study illuminate how multimodal text production in classrooms can be used as a strong pedagogical tool to develop students' critical media literacy.

10.6 Discussion

10.6.1 Impacts of Multimodal Composing on In- and Out-of-School Literacies

The findings of these two case studies highlight the uses of multimodal text production in classrooms as strong pedagogical tools that empower learners with language skills, content knowledge, and critical media literacy for social transformation. For instance, the studies show how learners develop their multiliteracies throughout the process of analyzing existing texts and creating new multimodal texts, and how

this process develops their skills to address social justice issues in their communities for civic consciousness. Additionally, they show how the process of writing storyboards and scripts for digital storytelling develops ELs' English writing skills in different genres (Sultana and Turner 2019; Turner 2008). MMP pedagogy follows the principles of task-based, project-based, problem-based, and inquiry-based learning. Drawing on learners' interests, these pedagogies engage them in real-world activities and meanings (Willis 2007) in which language works as a tool to complete non-linguistic tasks (Ellis 2009). For instance, MMP tasks require ELs to naturally immerse in English while investigating, analyzing, and producing texts. This immersion in plenty of linguistic input stimulates ELs' output in English because these processes promote natural language acquisition rather than learning. Thus, MMP pedagogy develops ELs' English skills naturally. Drawing on the impact of multimodal text production, we argue that multimodal composing is an effective pedagogy that can be used in L2 classrooms to develop learners' language and literacy skills across the K-16 context. Since ELs are engaged in multimodal and multilingual communications in diverse settings (Gee and Hayes 2011; Kim 2015; Lam and Warriner 2012; Yi 2010), these students develop their competencies to use different semiotic resources in making meanings of discourses and to present self-identities to the masses while communicating in English (Cimasko and Shin 2017; Nelson 2006; Sultana and Turner 2019; Yi et al. 2019).

Marginalized urban youth, including many multilingual students, today face the real problem of learning how to read and write their world (Freire and Macedo 1987). In the studies described here, we wanted to identify strategies educators, teachers, and parents could use to empower their students and children with the skills to not only survive, but also be citizens capable of challenging injustice in their communities. In both cases, representing themselves as artists and researchers in a "republic of minds" (Levy 1956/1998), students resisted epistemological racism, sexism, ageism, and classism by producing knowledge drawn explicitly from their unique lived experience (Delgado-Bernal 1998). The students' multimodal media artifacts and the meanings embedded in them gave a glimpse into how they see themselves in relation to the immense amount of information in cyberspace from which they drew their work. Our findings in the described studies show that multimodal media production is an efficient method for developing students' language and literacies at all ages because of the various literacy practices it employs. In other words, multimodal text production is an excellent vehicle for having students engage in "a range of...social practices, eliciting an enormous amount of reading, writing, research, analysis, and argumentation" (Squire 2006, p. 23). This form of instruction teaches students how to exhibit linguistic as well as critical thinking skills and work collaboratively on media projects with the explicit goal of solving issues in their own communities.

10.6.2 Pedagogical Issues Concerning Multimodal Composition

Despite the positive impact of multimodal literacy practices in L2 classrooms, researchers, teachers, and educators point out some challenges for integrating multimodal composing into classroom practices. For instance, traditional school contexts, class routine and duration constraints, fixed curricula, high-stakes standardized testing, teachers' and students' access to digital tools and technological readiness, and teachers' perceptions of language learning, text production, and literacy all serve as obstacles to carry out multimodal literacy practices in L2 classrooms (Yi and Angay-Crowder 2016; Yi et al. 2019). In the following section, we discuss pedagogical issues related to employing multimodal composition pedagogy in a classroom context.

10.6.2.1 Assessment of Multimodal Texts

The first case shows that students' preparation for standardized texts worked as a constraint for the DUSTY program. Enacting multimodal composing in L2 classrooms and preparing students for high-stakes tests at the same time was a dilemma for teachers. The difficult job for teachers is to align the required national (e.g., Common Core) and international (e.g., TESOL) curricular standards of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills with multimodal composition skills. Too often, teachers find assessing a new medium for language development a rigorous job. Creating rubrics can help teachers in this respect. For example, in the case of creating a rubric for students in grades 6-12 for assessing their written script for media production, a teacher can draw on the Common Core "Anchor Standards" for writing, including "Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers 2010, n. p.). Therefore, teachers need to be empowered to create and use rubrics for assessing multimodal projects aligning required standards that demonstrate learners' language and literacy skills.

Additionally, in both cases, the researchers show which activities developed what literacies of students throughout the process of multimodal text production. Assessing the impact of multimodal composing on L2 learners' language and literacy skills development is a complex issue since media composition is not an isolated text to be assessed. Assessing multimodal texts is different than assessing traditional reading and writing skills. Apart from writing and speaking skills, other skills like problem solving and critical thinking involved in media composition follow a gradual progression and need to be documented to understand learners' development. In this case, rather than using summative assessment to assess the multimodal test as a product, teachers and researchers should rely on formative assessments (Pandya 2012) to ascertain the effectiveness of student processes in creating multimedia texts that

reflect their' microlevel production skills such as the sense of audience, coherence, and cohesion in presenting ideas in the written script.

10.6.2.2 Perceptions of Multimodal Composing Instruction

The first case shows that the headteacher prioritized students' preparation for tests and homework, reducing the duration of multimodal text production for students. Most of the time, teachers' and educators' perceptions toward multimodal composing work as a barrier to incorporate it into L2 classrooms. The traditional idea of reading and writing practices can make teachers believe that learners' multimodal projects, which blend visuals, written language, and audio, "can offer a way to bypass the need to compose extended text in English" (Ware 2008, p. 47). However, this tension is legitimate. For instance, Paige Ware (2008) finds in her study that while ELs created PowerPoint presentations as multimodal literacy practices, they only displayed and summarized information rather than exhibiting analysis or synthesis skills in text production. ELs need English skills to "gain access into the social, academic, and workforce environments of the twenty-first century" (Kasper 2000, p. 106); however, multimodal composing may not be able to engage ELs in extensive writing, which is a challenge to developing linguistic competence in English. In this case, engaging students in writing extended narrative stories first and then having them make multimodal presentations of a small portion of the writing using storytelling or infographics can be used as a solution to this problem.

10.6.2.3 Managing Class Time for Production

In both cases, the teachers' pedagogical strategies combined multimodal text production time with reading exercises and discussions. While teachers are constantly striving to prepare lessons on multimodal composing by engaging students with semiotics, how much time is devoted to producing the multimodal texts by learners, especially for those who need more time for technological readiness? Based on the pedagogical framework in both cases, it is evident that multimodal text production requires a significant amount of time on top of allotted content learning time. Effective time management strategies are vital to successfully carry out media production in L2 classrooms because a lack of structure robs valuable instructional time. In a context where learners need to develop their technological readiness, learners' technical skills should be addressed first. In this case, teachers can combine similar themed topics and classes to assign one group project for a group of students. In the United States, where secondary teachers have the freedom to plan classes on their own, they can accommodate class time according to required tasks. When considering diverse learners' linguistic levels and technical readiness in L2 classrooms, composing tasks are most effective when learners are allowed to finish them at a comfortable pace and in ways that reflect learners' own cultures.

10.6.2.4 Students' Access to Digital Tools

Both cases show the importance of students' access to digital tools that let students produce their multimodal texts. For instance, in the first case, the researcher states that a malfunctioning lab worked as a barrier to students' MMP production. The tools of multimodal composition and understanding of the binary code making up the hyper-mediated world in which young people grow up today can be used to build new landscapes for their futures. Technological determinists like Postman (1992) use a language of moral panic and argue that technology is a "particularly dangerous enemy" (p.xii). Others look at digital technology as an educational, economic (U.S. Department of Education 2004), or democratizing (Sclove 1994) panacea. Buckingham (2003) takes a different approach and argues that students must be equipped with the ability to understand and be active participants in their technologically mediated world. Disparities in access to digital technology, advanced learning principles, and digital literacies between better resourced and under-resourced schools have existed since digital technology first began being integrated into schools (Zeni 1994) and continue to exist. Critical theorists and neo-Marxists have argued that the function of schools in society is to reproduce and legitimize inequality in the larger society (Bourdieu 1993; Bowles and Gintis 1976). However, public schools, after-school programs, and community technology centers have historically given students in low-income communities access to technologies as well as forms of social capital that are part of being associated with an institution they otherwise would not have had (Gordo 2004). Hence, "teachers often face challenges to accommodate these two distinctive groups of students when they try to integrate multimodal literacies into classrooms" (Yi 2014, p. 164). School administration, policymakers, teachers, and educators need to recognize the necessity of digital literacy first and they should ensure infrastructural support, such as providing both teachers and students with laptops, internet access, and other tools, to successfully incorporate multimodal composing into L2 classrooms. In the case of limited technological resources, teachers can assign multimodal group projects to at least ensure shared access to technological facilities for all students.

10.6.2.5 Teachers' Readiness for Multimodal Pedagogy

In both cases, the teachers prepared effective pedagogical frameworks combining technological pedagogical content knowledge (Mishra and Koehler 2006) that engaged students in multimodal text production through hands-on activities to develop their multiliteracies. Thus, another potential tension is teachers' readiness to conduct multimodal composing activities in L2 classrooms. However, teachers' professional development for their readiness can serve as a hindrance as well. Most of the time, the provided teacher training places too much emphasis on technological skill development and overlooks teachers' empowerment to introduce authentic literacy practices that incorporate those literacy skills. As a result, teacher training fails to enable teachers to support their students in developing literacies, integrating

content knowledge and technological skills (Lankshear and Knobel 2003; Miller 2008, 2010). Additionally, this situation may lead teachers to assess technological skills rather than language skills. To address this issue, teachers' professional development should focus on identifying what practices count as literacy practices and how to incorporate both digital literacy and linguistic skills through multimodal composing.

10.7 Conclusion

Multimodal pedagogy can be used as a tool to empower marginalized urban students including multilingual students to raise their voices against social oppression. Many after-school community programs that give youth access to equipment for MMP are criticized for being little more than babysitting and for neglecting to prepare students with the skills they will need in future careers (Hobbs 2004). Goodman (2003) recognizes the challenges of in-school versus out-of-school media education, particularly for low-income students of color, and suggests a method of media education that combines technology integration, media literacy, and community arts models. Goodman suggests that all three models be employed to liberate low-income students of color from racial and economic oppression. Like Goodman, our research speaks to educators and teachers wishing to understand how to combine curriculum and pedagogical strategies to form a praxis that moves away from production and performance exclusively, but in addition to the development of language and multiliteracies that will empower students and their communities (Freire 1970; New London Group 1996).

The use of various media and digital technologies has shifted from being peripheral learning devices to the central methods of acquiring and distributing information in the past couple of decades. Whether due to the demands of "new capitalism" (Gee et al. 1996), the availability of inexpensive technology, or the fundamental desire of all human beings to communicate and creatively express themselves, people make meaning increasingly multimodally using written-linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial patterns of meaning (Australian Association for the Teaching of English, n.d.). Communication historically has always been multimodal, from drumming, smoke signals, coats of armor, hairstyles, gesture, and speech, among many others (Finnegan 2002). The technology available today allows us to extend our virtual selves across the world in real time (McLuhan 1964; McLuhan and McLuhan 1988). Tangible multimodal texts produced for authentic audiences that can be watched, evaluated, and discussed (Blikstein 2008) and the variety of literacy practices that go into their production in the present study were all evidence of literacy development (Yi et al. 2020). Therefore, educators and teachers are encouraged to identify ways that engage students in multimodal text production ensuring their technological access and readiness.

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