

REVIEW OF *MULTIMODAL COMPOSING: STRATEGIES FOR TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY WRITING CONSULTATIONS*, EDITED BY LINDSAY A. SABATINO AND BRIAN FALLON

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**Sabatino, Lindsay A., and Brian Fallon, Editors. *Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations*. Utah State UP, 2019. ISBN 978-1-60732-845-2. \$28.95.**

The edited collection by Lindsay A. Sabatino and Brian Fallon, *Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations*, consists of an introduction and fourteen distinct chapters, featuring twenty-two contributors, including Sabatino and Fallon. The project *Multimodal Composing* seeks to tackle is nothing short of herculean. Sabatino and Fallon's preface outlines the project in three elements:

- (1) build on and evolve tutoring practices and strategies for multimodal texts, (2) introduce consultants to important features and practices in a variety of multimodal texts, and (3) start a conversation about the relationship between rhetorical choices, design thinking, and technological awareness in the writing center. (x)

The goal of creating such a guide for writing center consultants was born out of a mutual need Sabatino and Fallon experienced in their work as Writing Center Directors as they created a resource detailing multimodal consulting strategies. It is also inspired by the work of their mutual friend and mentor, Ben Rafoth, who created an extensive guidebook for conventional tutoring genres called *A Tutor's Guide*. The fourteen multimodal projects covered in *Multimodal Composing* work to provide an updated consulting resource, and include Storyboarding, Artist and Design Statements, Brochures, Academic Research Posters, Prezis and Powerpoints, Infographics, ePortfolios, Web-Design, Podcasts, Multimodal Video Projects, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), Professional Identity and Social Media, and Copyright and Citations for Multimodal Projects.

Each of the fourteen chapters follows a distinct structure. After an outline of major points in a chapter overview, each chapter gives an "Illustrative Example" of a student bringing a project into the Writing/Multimodal Center, which serves to illustrate how consultants can approach such a consultation. The third section of the chapter describes the "Background

Information" a consultant should know about the multimodal genre. This is closely followed by "Consultation Strategies" for working with the specified multimodal project, as well as an "Activity" consultants can do to simulate the experience of working through a multimodal project. The chapter ends with a "Conclusion" that discusses the implications of understanding the specified multimodal project, before additional "Resources," "Key Search Terms," and "References" for further research are listed. These chapters' structured style helps each chapter to serve as a "How To" guide for consultants. It is also clear from the layout of each chapter that it is only meant to serve as a beginner's guide into each multimodal project. There are even key terms and further resources provided at the end of each chapter to encourage deeper research into each multimodal project.

Although each chapter follows the same basic structure, there are distinct differences amongst them. The section that perhaps stands out the most is Lindsay A. Sabatino's introduction titled "Design Theory and Multimodal Consulting." Sabatino's introduction is meant to serve as a reference that covers the major design principles that apply to most, if not all, of the multimodal projects discussed throughout the book. Her comprehensive introduction also explores design theory and the logic behind it. Sabatino's introduction is often referenced by other contributors in their chapters when they want to refer back to the principles she discusses in full.

Regardless of whether the other thirteen sections of the book follow a consistent format, they still contain distinctions in their explanations, approaches, and methods for understanding myriad multimodal projects. No two chapters prove this more clearly than Sohui Lee and Jarret Krone's chapter on Brochures and Patrick Anderson and Florence Davies' chapter on Multimodal Video Projects. In their chapter on Brochures and "Helping Students Make Good Design Decisions," Lee and Krone spend a majority of the chapter building off of commonly held knowledge about the brochure format, as well as working against

common misconceptions about the brochure genre (51). In this chapter's "Illustrative Example," Lee and Krone discuss the importance of not viewing the brochure as a "plug and play" genre, or "just finding the template to fill in with ready-made information" (52). They state that brochure consultations can "provide. . . opportunit[ies] to think more carefully about brochure types and. . . visual layout in terms of its persuasive impact on the viewer" (52). The moves Lee and Krone make throughout the chapter make it clear that, in order to successfully coach consultants on providing constructive guidance in the brochure genre, they must first point out the common misconceptions and assumptions that could prove counterproductive to consultants and students alike.

Patrick Anderson and Florence Davies take on another approach entirely in their chapter "Multimodal Video Projects: Video-Doing by Example." Clearly expecting a far less universal understanding of video concepts than that expressed by Lee and Krone about brochures, Anderson and Davies use their chapter as an extensive guide to video that multimodal consultants will need to understand in order to guide any students with multimodal video projects. They discuss concepts such as realism and formalism, the three basic stages of production (preproduction, production, and postproduction), as well as staging, lighting, framing, camera angles, the rule of thirds, the 180-degree rule, camera movement, lens movement, shot duration, editing (including cuts and montage editing), and diegetic and nondiegetic sound (156-159). While Anderson and Davies' provide such an extensive description of technical video principles, the chapter stays firmly focused on understanding these concepts as a way for consultants to better help students determine whether certain techniques are appropriate for the specific audiences, contexts, and purposes for which these projects have been created.

Although each chapter provides a marked approach to a unique multimodal genre, it is clear that each is working toward the same general goal: that of "put[ting] together an edited collection that w[ill] cover a number of frequently seen multimodal projects in the writing center" (Sabatino and Fallon *viv*). Perhaps the only negative aspect of such a comprehensive guide is that it is asking for an equally extensive amount of work from writing center consultants, especially within a thirty-minute-to-one-hour consultation. In order to enact the suggestions within *Multimodal Composing*, writing center consultants would often have to take on the job of first educating students about the genre in which they're attempting to work and then to provide them with feedback based upon the new knowledge

the student has only just learned. Will students be able to retain so much new information given to them in such a short period of time? They can obviously attend more than one session to help them structure their projects, but even in the span of multiple sessions, it could be difficult for consultants to provide such extensive genre instruction and critique.

However, *Multimodal Composing* succeeds in providing an extensive guide on different multimodal projects, tips for consulting with students on such projects, and ways of furthering discussion about multimodal texts. The easy-to-follow structure of each chapter, along with thoughtful activities that consultants can engage in regardless of the size of their writing center and budget, creates an invaluable resource to consultants and writing centers everywhere. The text acknowledges the prominence of technological projects and their ever-evolving nature, which provides a foundation for consultants that can be updated and revised accordingly.

*Multimodal Composing* is truly a text that fulfills its rhetorical purpose and acknowledges the exigence for which it was initially created. It is a text that is meant to withstand the constant evolution of technology and its ever-changing implications for writing-intensive projects. It provides the foundational knowledge one needs to delve into the world of multimodal composing, and how to build upon that knowledge as they see fit.

#### Works Cited

- Sabatino, Lindsay A. and Brian Fallon, Editors.  
*Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First  
Writing Consultations*. Utah State UP, 2019.