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ENHANCING WRITING SKILLS THROUGH MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

Abstract: This study investigates the impact of multimodal composition on the development of writing skills among university students. Using a mixed-methods approach, we examined how creating multimodal texts (combining written language with visual, audio, and interactive elements) affects students' writing fluency, rhetorical awareness, and critical thinking. Preliminary results suggest that multimodal composition can significantly enhance students' engagement with the writing process and contribute to overall improvement in their writing abilities. The study underscores the potential of multimodal approaches in modern literacy education.

Keywords: writing, multimodal composition, multimodal texts, mixed-methods approach;

Introduction. The ability to communicate effectively through writing is a cornerstone of academic and professional success. However, traditional approaches to writing instruction, which often focus solely on alphabetic text, may not adequately prepare students for the complex communication landscapes of the 21st century (Kress, 2003). Multimodal composition, which involves the strategic integration of various modes of communication (e.g., written language, visuals, audio, and interactive elements), offers a promising alternative (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). This study explores how the incorporation of multimodal composition can enhance writing skills among university students.

The theoretical underpinnings of this research lie in social semiotics, which emphasizes that meaning is constructed through the interplay of diverse semiotic resources (Halliday, 1978). Multimodal theory posits that each mode of communication has its own affordances and limitations, and effective communication relies on the skillful selection and integration of modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). By engaging in multimodal composition, students not only learn to manipulate different modes of expression, but also develop a more nuanced understanding of how different audiences are persuaded and how texts operate rhetorically (Bateman, 2011). Therefore, this research seeks to understand how these theoretical frameworks can be translated into practical gains in student writing.

Methods. The study involved 20 undergraduate students enrolled in second-year writing course at Samarkand state institute of foreign languages during the second academic year. Participants were selected from a diverse range of disciplines and had varying levels of prior experience with technology. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study.

A mixed-methods approach was utilized, combining quantitative and qualitative data. Students were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The control group received

traditional writing instruction, focusing primarily on textual composition, while the experimental group received instruction that integrated multimodal composition.

The experimental group participated in a series of activities involving the creation of multimodal texts, such as digital presentations, short videos, and interactive websites. These tasks were designed to align with the learning outcomes of the writing curriculum. Students in both groups completed pre- and post-tests that assessed their writing fluency (measured by length and complexity of writing), rhetorical awareness (measured by their understanding of audience and purpose), and critical thinking (measured by their ability to evaluate and synthesize information). In addition, qualitative data was collected through student journals, focus group interviews, and analyses of student work samples.

Quantitative data was analyzed using paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-test scores within and between groups. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the impact of multimodal composition on students' learning experiences.

Results. Preliminary analysis of quantitative data revealed that the experimental group showed statistically significant improvement in writing fluency, rhetorical awareness, and critical thinking compared to the control group. Specifically, the experimental group's post-test scores for writing fluency had an average increase of 15% compared to the control group. The qualitative data analysis indicated that students in the experimental group reported increased engagement with the writing process, a greater sense of audience awareness, and a better understanding of how different modes of communication work together to create meaning. Students also expressed greater confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in diverse formats. Specific examples of these findings will be detailed in the full report.

Discussion. The findings of this study suggest that multimodal composition can be a valuable pedagogical tool for enhancing writing skills among university students. By engaging in the creation of texts that integrate multiple modes of communication, students not only learn how to manipulate various expressive resources but also develop a deeper understanding of the rhetorical and communicative potential of writing. The results align with existing literature suggesting that learning through multiple modes facilitates greater engagement with the writing process and can lead to improvements in writing fluency, rhetorical awareness, and critical thinking (Jewitt, 2008). This study reinforces the argument that writing instruction in the 21st century should move beyond a purely textual focus to embrace the diverse and dynamic communicative resources available to us.

This study was conducted within a specific context and with a particular group of students. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of multimodal composition across different disciplines, learning contexts, and age groups. Future studies could also explore the long-term impact of multimodal learning on students' writing development and their professional success. The limitations of our methodologies and a discussion of possible future research directions will be addressed in a more extensive version of the article.

Conclusion. Multimodal composition provides a promising pathway to develop essential writing and communication skills for a rapidly changing, multimodal world. By encouraging learners to become creators of rich multimedia content, we are nurturing their ability to express themselves effectively and thoughtfully. This research indicates that the integration of multimodal approaches is not only valuable but essential for modern literacy education.

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