Chapter 5

Poetry in Motion: Students as Text Makers

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the researcher presents a study where young students apply kinetic typography principles by capturing the movement of text. Each learner designs a poem that includes the use of images, moving text, narration, and words that combine into a video production. The analysis of data captures the ways students use form to impact meaning and the intended perceptions of the text maker. Additionally, a glimpse into how students enact social relations within the process is featured. This chapter clearly brings critical attention to the notion that literacy cannot be defined in language terms alone. Instead, there must be spaces for students to utilize a variety of multimodal semiotic resources in order to communicate within a global world.

A small group of eight- and nine-year olds are huddled around a table using Chromebooks for poetry writing. They are accessing their documents and images through Google Drive. Student chatter invades the space as the group works through technology issues. Rosalina asks, “Where my poem? I do not see it.” Rabby responds by standing up, moving closer to Rosalina’s computer, and clicking keys to locate the correct file. This allows Rosalina to continue designing her poem, “Haunted Ghost House”. She finishes typing her sentence, “A ghost always scares you and she laughs hard.” She highlights this line and changes from black to red. Then, Rosalina thinks carefully about background color. She says to the group, “Which color is scary?” A couple
of her peers yell out colors and Rosalina smiles. She responds, “I get it. I use black. Black is scary. Like Halloween. That part will be scary. I will add happy face picture for funny. This way no one will be too scared.”

Chapter 5 features students adapting static poetry into moving, digital videos. During this project students read numerous poems, learned new technology skills, and eventually designed their own kinetic typography videos. The students share their productions publically using YouTube as a platform. Links to student work are provided as a means for teachers to utilize as examples to inspire their own students’ multimodal compositions and to stimulate other ways to use these digital tools in classrooms.

**KINETIC TYPOGRAPHY AND MULTIMODAL LEARNING**

Animated text, kinetic typography, gives learners the power to change the connotations of words and phrases to illustrate their experience as a reader and writer of the poetic texts (Malik, Aitken, & Waalen, 2009). Traditional literacy practices (e.g., taking a quiz) seem to privilege certain modes while practices like kinetic typography offer additional avenues to showcase understanding of complex texts and concepts (Brown, 2013; Caughlan, 2008). Both the material and semiotic affordances available are shaped by

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