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Multimodal Writing in the Digital Age

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<p style="text-align:center">A Statement on Teaching with Technology</p>

As a teacher I believe in the importance of exposing students to new environments and educating them in the skills of critical analysis when approaching topics that differ from their views or contain new ideas. Technology, when used effectively, is as transformative tool in the presentation of new ideas. Now, students can, in real time, talk to other students across the globe. Students can use Google Maps to transverse a specific space and map out the travels of a fictional character. They can hear the voices and see the film of people that look different from them but find commonalities. Through technology, students develop the pathways to become inquisitive, innovative, and compassionate global citizens.

In my various experiences as a student and an educator-in-training, I have had the opportunity to engage with a multitude of teaching practices. With the rise of technology literacy, which arguably exploded with the advent of the smart phone, I have also been exposed – at differing levels of success – to technological integration within the classroom. I believe that technology can be used as a means to "redesign our pedagogies to help students draw connections between the interrelated fields of composition, music, film, and design" if not many others (Palmeri 50). However, technology can easily move from being a tool to a hindrance. In order to have a successful integration of technology, a teacher must possessive strong classroom

management skills, purpose-filled use of technology, and the ability to be innovative with the tool.

I would categorize my experience with classroom technology integration as elementary. I had semi-limited if not full access to technology, however, the skills address with technology were proficient. The technology use included of software programs such as Type2Learn to learn typing in elementary school, PowerPoint and Prezi for presentations, and the many tools in Google Suite, particularly GoogleDocs and Google Drive. Furthermore, during my student-teaching experience at Oxford Middle School, I witness the ways too much technology can detrimentally impact student attention. Oxford Middle School was a one-to-one school, meaning that every student had their own school-designated laptop. All of the students took an information and communication technology (ICT) course in which they were exposed to a lot of multimodal projects. However, because the school purchased all of the technology, teachers often felt like they needed to utilize in every lesson, even if there was not a clear purpose. Moreover, students often tried to "multitask" between classwork and computer games, transforming the technology into a hindrance.

Having covered a few of the challenges posed by technology, I want to assert that I believe technology does more good than ill within the classroom. I have one main reason for this claim: creativity. When we as teachers incorporate effective and purposeful uses of technology within our classroom, we inherently allow for more student choice. Indeed, multimodal writing and projects exists around the importance of students being able to articulate their ideas in the way they can best express it. This is incredibly significant for the student who hates literary analysis alphabetic papers, but can easily demonstrate his or her understanding of deep analysis

through vlog on the topic. Take, for instance, the fandom around "The Lizzie Bennett Diaries."
The writers for "The Lizzie Bennett Diaries" transformed a British literary classic into an
accessible video blog. For some, this may have been the push to want to read Pride and
Prejudice, for others an accessible way to better understand class reading. Moreover, "The Lizzie
Bennett Diaries" offers an opportunity to approach Pride and Prejudice in completely different
light, which can lead to deeper analysis of both the alphabetical text and the visual/theatrical
choice of the video blog.

   In my classroom, I want to ensure that the technology is used purposefully in order to
expand upon the concepts and skills I want my students to develop. In order to do that, I think
teachers need to critically think through the reasons why they are incorporating technology in a
specific lesson, project, etc. and what outcomes they wish to observe that can be attribute to the
tool of technology.