

Notes on Cynthia Selfe's "Toward New Media Texts"  
Jason W. Ellis

"By visual literacy, then, I will refer to the ability to read, understand, value, and learn from visual materials (still photographs, videos, films, animations, still images, pictures, drawings, graphics)—especially as these are combined to create a text—as well as the ability to create, combine, and use visual elements (e.g., colors, forms, lines, images) and messages for the purposes of communicating" (Selfe 69).

'the visual'

'visual compositions'

'composer/designer'

'design/compose'

'reader/viewer'

'reading/viewing'

alphabetic texts vs visual texts/high culture vs low culture/real work vs not-real work/'hero' vs 'sidekick'

"If our profession continues to focus solely on teaching alphabetic composition—either online or in print—we run the risk of making composition studies increasingly irrelevant to students engaging in contemporary practices of communicating" (72).

"By adding a focus on visual literacy to our existing focus on alphabetic literacy, we may not only learn to pay more serious attention to the ways in which students are now ordering and making sense of the world through the production and consumption of visual images, but we may also extend the usefulness of composition studies in a changing world" (72).

Example assignments—tailor for your specific needs.

More assignments, assessments, and suggested rubrics available in this collection: Self, Cynthia L. Ed. *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*. Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2007.