Creating multimodal texts in language education – negotiations at the boundary.

# Details

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## Sample

Seven student groups and their teachers in four different classes in three upper-secondary schools in southern Sweden.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

How students negotiate what to include, and exclude, in multimodal texts is, in this article, explored in order to find out how, and to what extent, creating multimodal texts in language education can be regarded as a literacy practice at the boundary. When students create multimodal texts in classrooms they may incorporate contextual references from domains outside of education, such as popular culture, in the multimodal texts. By incorporating contextual references from activities outside of education, the multimodal texts become boundary objects which potentially connect educational and everyday practices. Boundary objects have different meanings in different activity systems but may connect, as well as divide, the activity systems involved. By analyzing student interactions this article aims to illuminate to what extent the students relate to multimodal texts as boundary objects. The ambiguous nature of boundaries accommodates for variations which are discernible in how the students relate to, and incorporate contextual references from several literacy practices in their multimodal texts. The students sometimes utilize the multimodal text as a boundary object which connects the activity systems involved, but by excluding certain contextual references the division between the activity systems is also enacted by the students.

# Outcome

In this article, excerpts from three groups of students show that when students create multimodal texts in a classroom they connect what they do in the classroom to everyday literacy practices. The students thereby cross boundaries of different domains and use ideas and experiences from activities relating to everyday literacy practices when engaging in activities in an educational setting (Engeström et al., 1995). However, the manner in which they do so, as well as the extent, varies. The multimodal text is, to some extent, utilized as a boundary object bridging the different literacy practices in which it is recognizable (Star Griesemer, 1989). However, the students also enact the division between different activity systems by actively omitting some references which traditionally are not part of literacy practices in a language classroom. The development of the multimodal text is hence characterized by tensions between, and negotiations about, what to include in the multimodal text and what to exclude. Through their actions the students elucidated a boundary between what is possible to include in a literacy object in an educational setting and what is not. In so doing, the students are acting as bridges between literacy practices but they simultaneously represent the division between these related practices...." (Authors, 184-185)