Chapter 8
Practical and Case–Based Methods in Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter (re)introduces practical learning methods to the reader. Focusing on multimodality, authenticity, engagement, and environmental adaptability, this chapter breaks down practicality in a rapidly changing learning environment and provides a brief overview of three practical approaches. Combining industry-developed knowledge of agile strategies with experiential knowledge of frontline, metric-driven innovations in teaching, learning, and eLearning, this chapter also showcases blueprints for establishing a sustainable foundation for the growing architecture of eLearning in the US and internationally. The chapter is designed to model the chapter's content for the reader, actively involving readers across modalities in the processes of refining an understanding of practical methods and approaches, including (1) case-based learning, (2) active learning, and (3) communicative learning (as a corollary to communicative language teaching).

INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICAL METHODS

Engaging and Authentic Education Practices: Lessons from A Time of Change, explores the potential for pandemic-responsive innovations in education to create a "new normal," capitalizing on the benefits of multimodal learning for engaging and authentic experiences. In Chapter 5, Practical Methods by Case, practicality is deconstructed, and multimodal methods are examined case-by-case to propose a series of what this chapter identifies as **Practical Methods**. Chapter 5 contributes to these methods three approaches: (1) Case-Based Teaching and Learning, (2) Active Learning, and (3) Communicative Teaching and Learning (as a corollary of Communicative Language Teaching). The rise of associated teaching and learning methods in recent years marks trends in learning and disciplinary development seeking to engage with students in an authentic, adaptable, and multimodal manner.

Practical Methods by Case, starting with and through Case-Based Teaching and Learning, also provides a **practical structure** for reimagining the shared digital and physical spaces of learning alongside opportunities for the reorganization and integration of knowledge into readers' functional repertoire of learning methodologies.

The explicit conditions of practicality in this chapter are established such that:

1. Practical Methods are (neuro)adaptable; practical methods and approaches are supported by cognitive learning theories and can be put into practice in a variety of contexts, including small, large, hybrid, and online learning environments. These methods are, therefore, easily adaptable to eLearning environments and responsive to current and prospective teaching and learning conditions.
2. Practical Methods are demonstrably "authentic" and "engaging." To establish metrics/assessments for authenticity and engagement, this chapter pulls from consulting research, publications, and peer-reviewed cases.
3. Practical Methods are deployed and operate multimodally.

As the last condition suggests, the methods focal to this chapter develop from a more inclusive critical frame for multimodality, largely by (de)constructing the relation of eLearning and Education 3.0 to the original frame and operational definitions of multimodality.

MULTIMODALITY

Multimodality is a term widely used across academic fields. Since its initial surge in the 1990s, multimodality has risen to the fore of several disciplines, and the concept recently (post-2016) experienced a particularly remarkable resurgence in academic literature and common use. While each chapter in Education 3.0 may offer insight into different facets of this tradition, Chapter 5 seeks to deconstruct some understandings of multimodality to explore its rich relationship with innovative learning methods.

As Jewitt, Bezemer, and O'Halloran immediately preface their *Introduction to Multimodality*, which heralded a reconsideration of interdisciplinary approaches to (multi)modality: "Exactly how the concept [of multimodality] is articulated and 'operationalized' varies widely, both across and within the different disciplines in which the term is now commonly used. Therefore, it is very difficult and potentially problematic to talk about multimodality without making explicit one's theoretical and methodological stance" (2016, p. 1).

Questioning the operative definitions of multimodality is not only *useful* but also *necessary*. By registering and *internalizing* a critical approach to multimodality, Chapter 5 offers alternative readings of multimodal learning in a contemporary context and invites the reader-as-learning-practitioner to participate in the key tenets — as this chapter will explore — of both multimodal study and active learning, maintaining a metacognitive mindset.

Briefly consider multimodality as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*; that is:

Multimodality

(*adj.* **multimodal**)

The use of more than one semiotic mode in meaning-making, communication, and representation generally or in a specific situation. Such modes include all forms of verbal, nonverbal, and contextual

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