Panel contribution to “Challenges and Necessary Explorations in Social Semiotics and Multimodality”

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I’m sharing with you two examples of data that I find inspirational in thinking about the fruitfulness of combining and leveraging various semiotic modes in elementary education.

The first data example is my photograph from a school in North East England I visited (Gillen et al., 2016). A ten-year-old girl is sharing her work during a literacy lesson with me. The classroom teacher has expanded and complexified a mandated curriculum task of narrative construction through supplementing it, simultaneously, with the authoring of a comic strip, using an app. The student is responding with great enthusiasm to both aspects of the task. She explains to me the different constraints of each task and places the comic strip into the school virtual album. This is not a dead repository but a much-visited resource; she shows me around including pointing to the work of a younger sibling.

The second data example is from our project ‘Peer to Peer Deaf Multiliteracies: towards a sustainable approach to education’ (Zeshan, Panda, Papen, & Gillen, in production). It is an extract from a teacher’s report by Nirav Pal, a deaf tutor of deaf children in a small residential school in a remote village in India run by our deaf Indian co-investigator, Sibaji Panda. Nirav has noticed that although the very young children have developed some ability to name numbers, in Indian Sign Language, their L1, they have not really developed an understanding of what they mean. Here are some activities he devised:
I suggest that such examples speak to the potential power of developing an orientation towards Critical Multimodal Narrative Analysis (McVee, in preparation).
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References:

