Engaging the Senses in the Digital Classroom

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Multimodality and Sensory Experience

“There is reason to think our everyday perceptual experience is multimodal”

- Barry Smith, “The Nature of Sensory Experience: The Case of Taste and Tasting”

“it is imperative that we give more attention to the ways that the senses work together to persuade and affect”

- Steph Ceraso, “Sound Never Tasted So Good”
Metaphor and Multimodality

“truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions: worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses”


“we cannot detach metaphor from literal language and thereby control or limit its appearance only to appropriate places”

- James Seitz, “Composition’s Misunderstanding of Metaphor”
# Cheese Tasting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texture</th>
<th>Flavor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spreadable</td>
<td>Barnyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luscious</td>
<td>Citrusy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dense</td>
<td>Beefy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chewy</td>
<td>Grassy</td>
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<td>Sticky</td>
<td>Fruity</td>
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<td>Bold</td>
<td>Lemony</td>
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<td>Firm</td>
<td>Gamy</td>
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<td>Tangy</td>
<td>Mild</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supple</td>
<td>Earthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pliable</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spreadable</td>
<td>Herbaceous</td>
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<td>Thick</td>
<td>Tangy</td>
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<td>Supple</td>
<td>Straw/Hay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flaky</td>
<td>Buttery</td>
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<td>Grainty</td>
<td>Caramelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>Earthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creamy</td>
<td>Nutty</td>
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<td>Crumbly</td>
<td>Mushroomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Sharp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smoky</td>
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</tbody>
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[http://www.cheeselibrary.com/describing_cheese.html](http://www.cheeselibrary.com/describing_cheese.html)
Describing Cheese

“The Lindsay Lohan of the cheese world, this pecorino has a tan, leathery exterior that surrounds a delicate yellow paste. With hints of herbs and the aroma of hay, you can almost hear the bleating of Lindsay up in the Italian hills. Pair with nicotine, Red Bull, and an alcohol monitor.”
   - Bedford Cheese Shop

“Icelandic ponies. Japanese cats on the Internet. Yawning puppies. Toddlers who give each other hugs. Goats climbing all over everything. Pink and green macaroons. Red pandas. Sparkly nail polish. Do you get where I’m going? Cute things. This cheese is so perfect and cute and delicious you just want to marry it.”
   - Andante Dairy

Cheese Tasting

Get into your workshop groups, and assign one group member to take notes on the Tasting Notes worksheet. I will guide you through tasting each cheese. As you taste the cheese, discuss each item on the worksheet, and collaborate to complete the worksheet as thoroughly as you can. As you taste, feel free to take pictures of the cheese and of each other.

After you complete the worksheet, each individual group member will write a 50-100-word description of each cheese, building from the metaphor you drafted on your worksheet. Before next class, post your three descriptions as a comment on the Cheese Tasting blog post.

Our cheeses:
Saint Angel (cow, France); Humboldt Fog (goat, U.S.), Manchego (sheep, Spain)
The Digital Classroom

Physically separate

Mediated by a screen (whether synchronous or asynchronous)

Embodied interaction is unavailable; the time-bound, sensory, interpersonal experience of tasting may not be possible (Mondada)

*If we cannot replicate communal tasting, how can we introduce experiences that engage the multimodal nature of sensation?*
Embedding Sensation in Individual Contexts

Yoko Ono’s instructions

MAP PIECE

Draw an imaginary map.
Put a goal mark on the map where you want to go.
Go walking on an actual street according to your map.
If there is no street where it should be according to the map, make one by putting the obstacles aside.
When you reach the goal, ask the name of the city and give flowers to the first person you meet.
The map must be followed exactly, or the event has to be dropped altogether.

Ask your friends to write maps.
Give your friends maps.

1962 summer

Situationist détournement

Pauline Oliveros’s “Sonic Meditations”

Ephemeral, conceptual, instruction-based experiences that defamiliarize space and sensation

Inspiration for “distanced” sensation-cultivation

Enactment

Take five minutes to engage a sensory experience and write a metaphor about it.

Take descriptive notes on what you:
- see
- smell
- feel
- taste

Write a metaphor that captures at least one aspect of the sensory qualities of your food, beverage, or other sensory experience. If you’d like, share your metaphor in the chat.
Reflection and Discussion

What did you experience?

Was it difficult to describe your experience using a metaphor?

How did you attempt to convey sensation through language?

How might you incorporate “distance” sensory practice in your classroom?


