Multimodality in EAP Contexts

Using multi-modal portfolios to promote deeper engagement and widening participation

Hayley Gewer
Academic Communication Centre
Centre for Languages and International Education
Institute of Education
h.gewer@ucl.ac.uk

Background

Global London – Contemporary Urban Education, Culture and Space

1st year BA Ed programme

3-week intensive module [Term 3]

Session No	Session Name
1	Defining a city/defining the urban
2	Space, place and scale
3	Globalisation, Global cities and Ordinary city
4	Everyday Life and Urban Consumption
5	Architecture and the city
6	Culture and the Creative City
7	Neighbourhood change and Gentrification
8	Transnational urbanism and multi-ethnic London
9	Community, inclusion and exclusion

- Uses London as springboard to explore ways contemporary cities are being theorized, experienced and understood

- Encourages students to reflect on their place in cities — as students and as urban citizens

- Builds understanding of relationship between university and the city through being students and urban citizens

Module assessment

globalisation   place   urban change   the urban everyday   global city   ordinary streets

iconic architecture   scale   creative city   transnational urbanism   inclusion/exclusion

ordinary city   everyday consumption   defining a city   the built environment

multi-cultural London   culture   community   gentrification   cultural production

space   studentification   urban development   identity

For your final portfolio…

1) **select 4 or 5 themes**
2) think about **interaction of** 4 or 5 **themes** to develop an **overarching theme/question**
3) use **multimodal information** drawn from seminars, portfolio work, literature, fieldtrips, moving around city to develop **a coherent and reflective journal of your experiences and what you have learnt**
4) develop a **multimodal text** (2,000 words and multimodal clips) that shows understanding of overall title and themes you have chosen

Multimodally, this could include
- how **you define** the different themes
- how the **literature defines** and **elaborates** on the different themes
- **appropriate examples** to illustrate each theme and the intersection of themes (both written and multimodal) and **justifications** of why this was selected and applied
- further **support from literature** to strengthen your examples
- any other way **multimodal way** you want to show your understanding of the theme

Rationale

- enables students to engage with complexities and multi-layered modalities of cities and everyday processes

- enables students to represent and reflect on understanding through modes they feel more confident in

- creates an opportunity for students to experiment with different modes of communication and meaning-making

- provides a creative, yet still academic form of literacy development that helps students understand the potentialities of academic communication and meaning making

- responds to and supports students having different learning and literacy needs and processes, critical considerations around building inclusion and belonging that are an imperative within HE institutions

Examples of daily portfolio work

Defining a city, defining the urban

As you leave class today and make your way home, think about the complexities in defining a city. Capture what we spoke about and read about through multimodal texts (e.g. images, videos, recordings, drawings). It is important that you can justify your choice of multimodal text making – so it is a considered process (not arbitrary).

Architecture

Think about an iconic building/structure from your city. You are going to write about it:

   a. Why is it iconic?
   b. How does it fit within Sklair's analysis of iconicity?
   c. How has it changed the economic, social, physical role of your city?

   Gon online and find two images of this structure and integrate it into your text.

As you make your way home think about how the built environment intercepts with your everyday processes and practices. Capture this this through a multi-modal text. Come prepared tomorrow to speak about this.

Urban Everyday

Yesterday you were asked to capture your urban everyday multi-modaly. In your pairs show each other what you captured. Why did you capture that? Now that we have read and spoken about theories of the everyday, do you think your multi-modal text is still relevant or would you change it? Why/why not?

Deeper sense of place

CASE STUDY: CANARY WHARF AND TOWER HAMLETS

GLOBALISATION HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH CREATING INEQUALITIES NOT ONLY ON A GLOBAL SCALE BUT ALSO WITHIN LOCAL CONTEXTS LIKE CANARY WHARF AND TOWER HAMLETS IN LONDON.
I VISITED BOTH AREAS OF LONDON TO EXPERIENCE THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO:

CANARY WHARF:

Figure 1: Canary Wharf

TOWER HAMLETS:

Figure 2: Tower Hamlets

VISITING TOWER HAMLETS

I went to visit Tower Hamlets and recorded things that I saw and experienced in order to compare the area with canary wharf:

Tower Hamlets is a very culturally diverse borough with a vibrant mix of different ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds.

There is a high community spirit with several youth clubs, parks, and recreational areas.

As seen in Figure 4 much of the infrastructure is council housing.

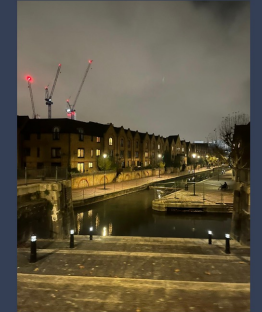Figure 4: Image of Cyprus Street Estate sign, Tower Hamlets

Figure 5: Image of Cyprus Street Estate, Tower Hamlets

CANARY WHARF

CANARY WHARF IS SEEN AS ONE OF THE MOST AFFLUENT AREAS OF LONDON, WITH IT BEING THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OF LONDON (GORDON 2001). CANARY WHARF CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY ITS ICONIC MODERN ARCHITECTURE, KNOWN FOR ITS TOWERING SKYSCRAPERS
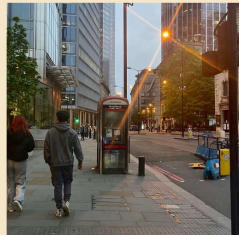
WHEN WALKING AROUND CANARY WHARF (SEE FIGURE 3) I COULD REALLY SENSE THE LIVELY ATMOSPHERE, AS I WAS SURROUNDED BY PROFESSIONALS IN SUITS AND GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES.
THERE WAS A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND PRODUCTIVITY IN REFLECTING THE DISTRICT'S STATUS AS A MAJOR FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS CENTRE (SEE VIDEO 1). THERE WERE SOUNDS OF THE CONSTANT FLOW OF TRAFFIC AND THE BUSTLE OF CITY LIFE AND URBAN BUZZ.

Figure 3: Image of me and a friend walking around Canary Wharf

Video 1: Video of Canary Wharf

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

EXCLUSION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Figure 6: View of Canary Wharf from Cyprus Street Estate, Tower Hamlets

As shown in Figure 6, the view of commercial life in Canary Wharf can be seen clearly from one of the many council estates in Tower Hamlets. This is something that I found to be highly ironic, as though in terms of distance, Canary Wharf is accessible to the residents of Tower Hamlets, in terms of employment, Canary Wharf offers very limited opportunities.

There has been a change in employment. Globalisation opens up markets and allows companies to expand their operations globally. As a result, companies can seek cheaper labour and production costs in other countries where wages may be lower. This can lead to the outsourcing or offshoring of jobs, leaving fewer employment opportunities for 'unskilled' workers in local communities.

The impact of the globalisation of the labour market thus reinforces cycles of poverty and class inequality.

EXCLUSION FROM EDUCATION

Figure 7 shows an advertisement for Queen Marys University on a council estate in Tower Hamlets. Again, this was something that seemed paradoxical with the environment, as for many of attending university is something that feels unachievable.

Due to the commercialisation of higher education, universities across the globe must compete for student funding. Globalisation has meant that universities can recruit students from across the world.
This opportunity has meant that many London universities offer spaces to international students in order to gain more funding and thus improve their services. This has led to increased competition between London students for university spaces.
Many news articles have criticized top universities for using international students as 'cash cows' as they pay higher fees than UK students, as one-fifth of all Russel group university spaces go to international pupils (Clark, 2022).
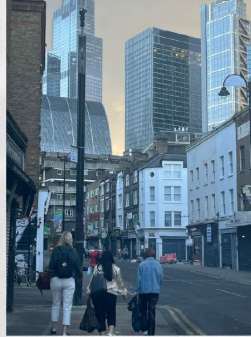

Figure 7: Image of street in Tower Hamlets

Deeper sense of place

URBAN SEGREGATION

For instance, a boundary exists between the Aldgate and Aldgate East underground station. Based on that, I can provide some general insights into class segregation and its potential impact on daily life.

daily life in Aldgate can be described in two words: diverse and segregated. First, the urban changes in East London have affected my daily experience as a resident in various ways. My development brings benefits and challenges with its new housing, commercial space, and cultural amenities. Since many students have chosen to rent in the student housing where I currently reside because of UCL's new campus in East London, the economic opportunities brought about by the influx of students have led to the upgrading and improvement of residential facilities.

ABOUT MY EVERDAY

MY STUDENT DROM

CLOSE TO THE GHERKIN
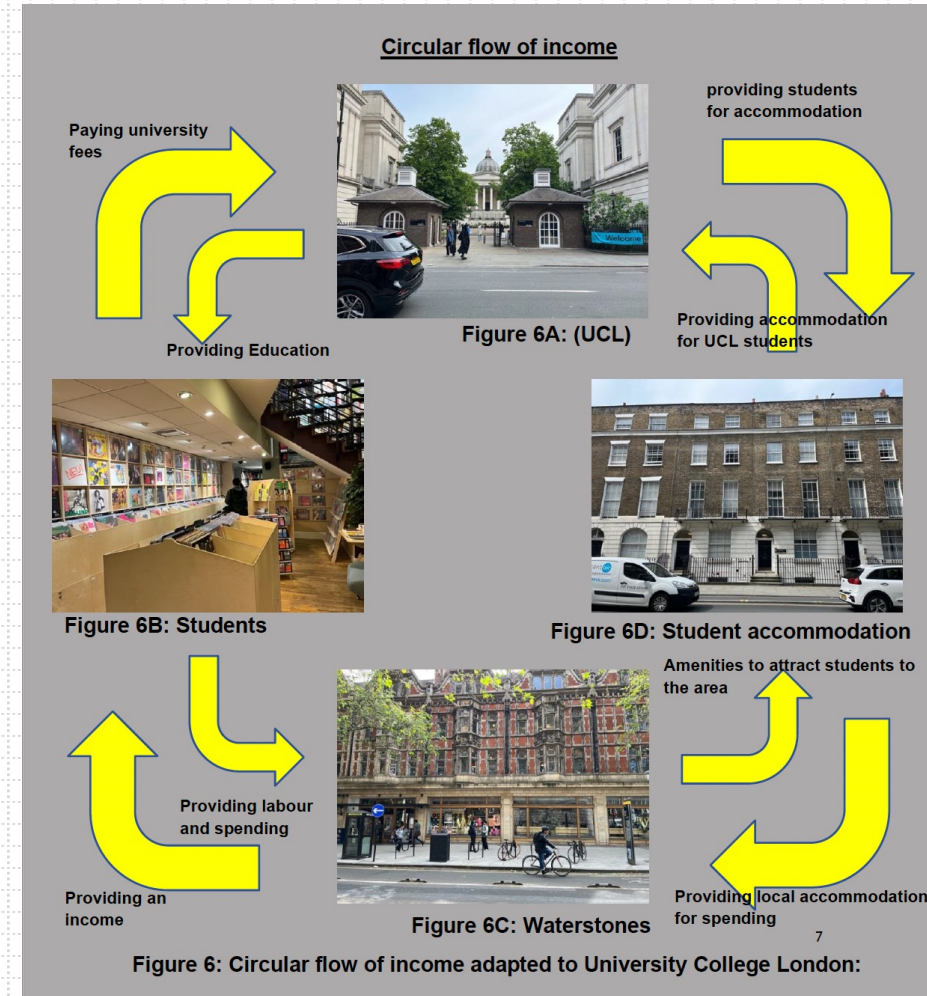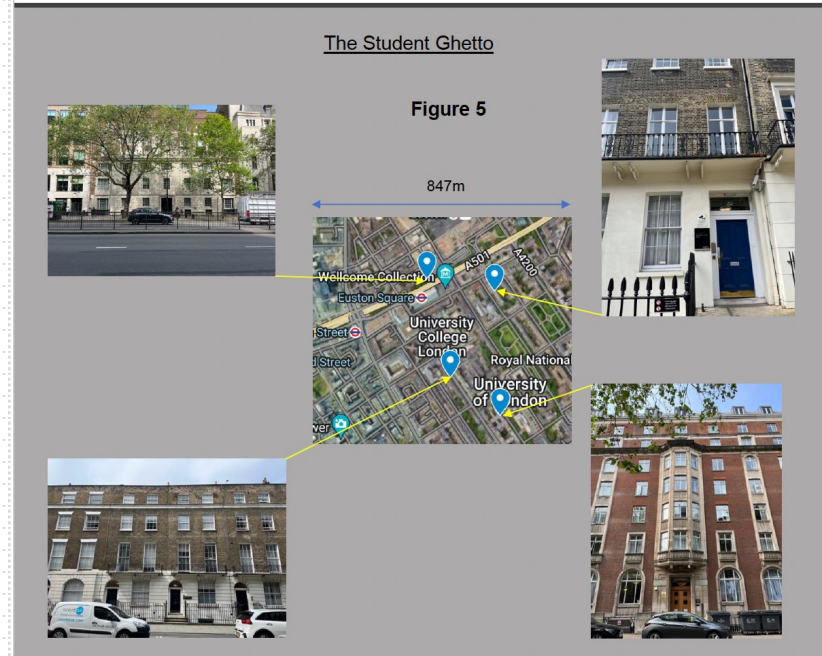
OUTSIDE VIEW
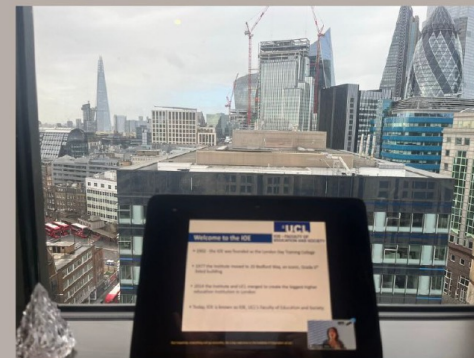
Aldgate

Deeper sense of agency

- **Everyday: As a University student**

  After discussing how to understand the global city through the lens of towering architecture, let us go back to the ground level and look at the city we live in through the lens of 'Everyday'. For a university student like me often encompasses the seemingly mundane things like waking up, going to school, eating and going home. A new day is a replica of yesterday, which may initially sound boring. However, if we understand 'Everyday' from the perspective of the theorist de Certeau, we can see that everyday life is, in fact, full of interest.

STUDENTIFICATION

The Student Ghetto

Figure 5

847m

Circular flow of income

Paying university fees

providing students for accommodation

Providing Education

Figure 6A: (UCL)

Providing accommodation for UCL students

Figure 6B: Students

Figure 6D: Student accommodation

Providing labour and spending

Amenities to attract students to the area

Providing an income

Figure 6C: Waterstones

Providing local accommodation for spending

Figure 6: Circular flow of income adapted to University College London:

7

Deeper sense of agency

Introduction

3

Students have been coined as the "invisible population" (Antonio Russo & Leo Van Den Berg., 2004). I argue against this notion, firstly because the "total number of HE (higher education) students stood at 2,751,865 in 2020/21, an increase of 9% from 2019/20" (HESA., 2023) and 679,970 in London alone (Admin., 2023), therefore, the student population is a significant community in London. Secondly, because I identify as a student, engage in student behaviour, and feel passionate about the role students play in shaping urban geography and the everyday. This will be discussed through interconnected subthemes, proposing students are essential for the preservation and continued development of London, supported by multimodal evidence.

The importance of community

As a hockey player, flat-mate, course-mate and a UCL student I am a part of a collection of sub-communities in a larger student community. Communities give students the power to morph and shape London against those who have greater economic and political power. This brings up the question who has the power: students, or larger organisations? Does a student community bring back the power away from top down, and influence distribution, allocation, exercise of power and conflicts? Urban geography can also explore the relationship between mass consumption and community, influencing power dynamics. The rise of consumer culture in cities has influenced social interactions and the formation of communities. The consumption and utilisation of goods and services, such as shopping, entertainment, and leisure activities, can foster a sense of belonging and shared experiences among students. Therefore, students as an economic agent must be explored, to investigate who has the power to shape the fabric of urban contexts through consumption and other behaviour.

COMMUNITY

Sports society

Arthur tattersall house flat

What communities am I a part of?
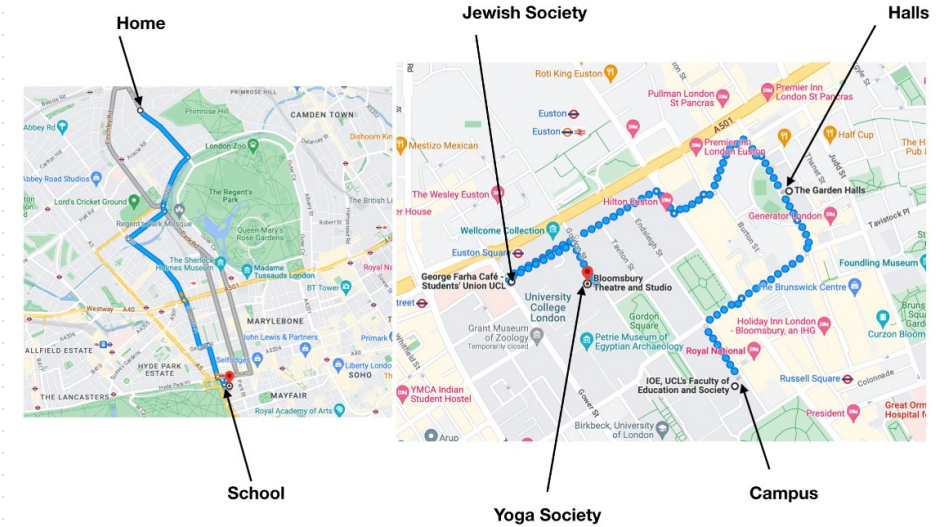

UCL community

Figure 10

Course community

12

Experimenting affordances of different modalities

The texture of a city through sound

(Press play)

309m

477m
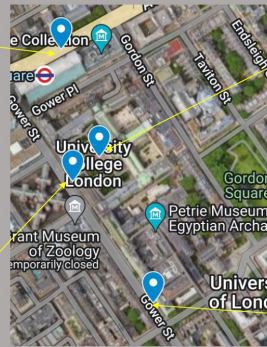
Figure 11: four sound locations around UCL

● **Global City**

Figure 1
**Top 10 in the 2022
Global Cities Index**

Source: Kearnev 2022 Global Cities Report(KERNEY, 2022)

City	2022 rank	2021 rank	Δ 2021–2022
New York	1	1	—
London	2	2	—
Paris	3	3	—
Tokyo	4	4	—
Beijing	5	6	+1
Los Angeles	6	5	–1
Chicago	7	8	+1
Melbourne	8	12	+4
Singapore	9	9	—
Hong Kong	10	7	–3

Home   Jewish Society   Halls

School   Yoga Society   Campus

16:57

London Overground	Part closure Reduced service +
Piccadilly	Part closure +
Waterloo & City	Planned closure +
Bakerloo	Good service
Central	Good service
Circle	Good service
District	Good service
Hammersmith & City	Good service
Jubilee	Good service
Metropolitan	Good service
Northern	Good service

🔒 tfl.gov.uk

Figure 7: under ground & overground disruption on May 27th & May 28th

Figure 6: my TfL history

14:40   Journey History

Today	
29 Bus Journey	£1.75
	Start balance £26.55
Yesterday	Spent £1.75
253 Bus Journey	£1.75
	Start balance –£1.70
Topped up	+ £30.00
	Start balance £0.05
17 May	Spent £1.75
29 Bus Journey	£1.75
	Start balance £0.05
16 May	Spent £1.75
29 Bus Journey	£1.75
	Start balance £1.80

Message from students at 109 Camden Road[1]

While you may have the right to submit a noise complaint between 23:00-03:00 on Friday and Saturday nights[2],

it does not mean that you have to!

We are all 1st year students in this hall – that means that the marks we attain this year contribute little or nothing to our overall grades at graduation. 1st year is meant to be enjoyed, and simply submitting a noise complaint because you have nothing to do in the weekends really disrupts this potential for enjoyment. Instead, consider the following:

- if you are studying during these hours, do so on campus or in a quieter part of the complex, or
- if you are thinking of sleeping, just go out and enjoy the night with your friends!

If, however, you are so tired that you must sleep at these times, try to ignore the noise – Camden Road is noisy enough as is, so what difference does it make if people are conversing or listening to music at a normal volume in halls?

Nonetheless, in case the noise does get too excessive and would cause severe disruption to your quality of life, then please do complain. We take no issue with such poor and unmoderated behaviour. However, if you wish to disrupt what most students would regard as a reasonable enjoyment of a night at 109 Camden Road, we are very sad to have our nights ruined, so please do bear this in mind.

These are simply recommendations from the body of students living here, and we highly advise for all our sakes that you take this into consideration.

THIS MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN ENDORSED OR APPROVED BY UCL OR THE 109 CAMDEN ROAD TEAM.

STFU we du what we want

[1] This message is not intended as vandalism or harassment against any student or group per Regulations 17 and 40 of the UCL Accommodation General Regulations (the "General Regulations"); it is simply a polite non-binding expression representing the opinions of many residents of 109 Camden Road. If this message in fact breaches any relevant contractual duties of students or breaches Regulation 27 of the UCL Accommodation, it may of course be removed by a person with authority to do so.
[2] You reserve this right in line with Regulation 27 of the General Regulations to ensure compliance with Regulation 17 of the Regulations.

Examples of Globalization

Globalization creates *a dialectic relationship* (Simonis, 2014) between local and global. On this page, Guangzhou and London are taken as examples to illustrate how globalization works between two countries in a specific city.

GUANGZHOU

1. International student → as an international student, globalization makes more students are able to study abroad. As far as I know, in BA Education Studies, there are 20 students from Guangzhou. On top of that, there are more than 200 students studying in London every year from my high school.
2. Cantonese cuisine → The most famous food culture in Guangzhou is Dimsum. As a Dimsum lover, I was very excited when I knew that there was a place to have some Dimsum in Chinatown. It makes me feel like home is not far from me.

United Kingdom

1. International brand → Before I came to the UK, I didn't know Jo Malone and Burberry were British brands. I have only seen these two brands in shopping malls in Guangzhou. When my friend and I were walking on Oxford Street, and my friend told me that Jo Malone and Burberry are the most famous local luxury brands. I realized that Jo Malone and Burberry were imported from the United Kingdom to Guangzhou.
2. English cuisine → Fish & chips is what I knew when I was studying England in primary school that it is the most famous dish in the UK. I had brunch in Guangzhou before, but I thought it was from other European countries. However, after I came to the UK, local friends explained to me that brunch originated in England.
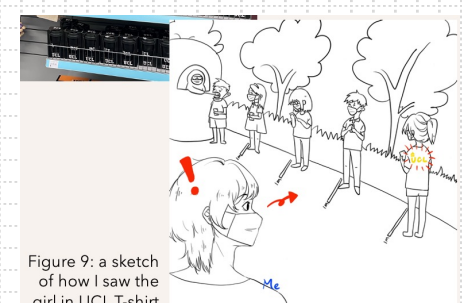
Figure 9: a sketch of how I saw the girl in UCL T-shirt

IOE, UCL's Fac Education and Society   15 min

13 min   7 min

FITZROVIA

Figure 11. The most efficient route

3 min   3 min

Figure 12. The route I usually choose

their civil rights. 'Strategies', on the other hand, are dominant frameworks used by dominant institutions to ensure efficiency and cost savings (Mark, 2005). I have found similar 'rebellious' behaviour in my own daily life. For example, during the week, when I wake up early to go to school, I am supposed to walk from the accommodation I live to University College London (UCL) following the path shown in Fig 11. Logically, since there are fewer vehicles and pedestrians on this route, the time it takes to cross the road should also be relatively short. It should be the most time-saving and efficient method. In practice, however, I usually choose the route in Fig 12 for most of the week (3-4 days). I do not want to follow the optimal path which Google Maps has planned for me. I prefer to watch the morning pedestrians on the road, the cars coming and going, and sometimes even stop to get a coffee before heading to school. These seemingly small changes are, in fact, a personal rebellion against the 'optimal choices' offered by the domina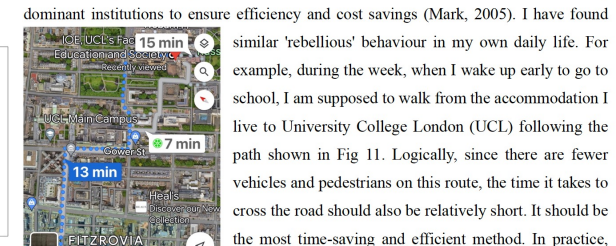nt institutions in my daily life. Through this example, we can see t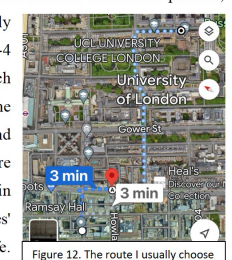hat while the architectural styles and landscapes of cities may be becoming increasingly homogeneous in the process of globalisation, the everyday life of each inhabitant is still full of individuality and resistance. From this perspective, each day in a global city remains unique and full of infinite possibilities.

Expression of uniqueness

DEFINING A CITY

Towering Skyscrapers. Diverse culture and art. Beautiful streets and interconnected transport systems. These are just some of the things which instantaneously evoke to mind when thinking about cities. However, the definition of cities goes far beyond this and is much more complex. In fact, it can be argued that the concept of 'cities' does not elude a precise definition due to its complexity and its varying nature (Hubbard, 2017).

Over the years, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between 'the urban' and 'the rural' (Amin & Thrift, 2002). A large reason for this includes the fact that all areas are interconnected whether it be through transport systems or broader transnational connections. Cities are not confined to strict spatial boundaries and may have associations and interactions which connect them across the world (Latham et al, 2009). The general conceptualisation of a city includes large populations, wide ranges of activity, different people coexisting, and levels of power and dominance displayed over surrounding countryside areas. On the other hand, traditionally within England, cities are classified upon the presence or absence of a cathedral within their geographical confines. Considering my own conceptualisation using my own city (as shown in Figure 1 and 2), a city is a fast-paced busy area filled with a variety of cultures, activities, and stories. Therefore, the definition of a city is very complex, differing from one individual to another.

Figure 1 – A view of London from Primrose hill

Figure 2 – A view of London taken from a rooftop.

Figure 3 – the front of the IOE department within UCL.

Many developed, large cities across the world tend to have universities with examples in the UK including London, Birmingham, and Manchester. Relationships between universities and cities is recognised as being very interconnected with both contributing and benefiting substantially towards the other (Brennan & Cochrane, 2019). The city can play an important role in attracting students to come and study there and this can be influenced by a range of factors including the cost of living, services provided and types of cultures and communities present. For example, recent attractions to study in countries such as China, Malaysia and India have been found to be related with the low costs and welcoming environments, which emphasises the importance of the local area/city on attracting students towards universities (Wit & Altbach, 2021). My choice to becoming a student at UCL was heavily influenced by its location due to the easy, interconnected transport system, the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of London which allowed me to feel included and the variety of recreational activities and services which accommodate towards student preferences. On the other hand, universities contribute significantly towards their cities. Economically, universities can have great benefits as they are among the largest landowners and employers within cities. Furthermore, they indirectly benefit public services and local businesses by attracting more individuals to the city, particularly students who are large consumers of cultural and recreational facilities (Van den Berg & Russo, 2017). Additionally, university produces the highly skilled and knowledgeable working class of the future who will go onto benefit the economy greatly. Universities are believed to be able to transform local populations through up-skilling and re-skilling (Brennan & Cochrane, 2019). Universities can even influence local politics as the research conducted can then feed into decision making and result in changes to local environment.

UCL is located within central London. Figure 3 shows the IOE department in which I attend most of my lectures and seminars. Various departments as such are scattered near the UCL main campus, making up the entirety of this prestigious, London University. UCL is widely recognised as a global university due to its strong international reputation. It has an incredibly diverse and multicultural campus taking in many international students every year (predominantly from countries such as China and India). Key factors which attract various international students towards UCL include the vibrancy of central London, the reputation as an educational institution and the greater credentials presented by the degrees. Additionally, UCL equally draws importance on attracting its home/local students. Central London's diversity and liveliness, alongside UCL's academic and global reputation attracted me to come and study here.

UCL: The Brand

The Concept of Global Branding

Global branding is a marketing tool to showcase the organisation's identity that purposefully targets the global consumers' desires.

LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

Follow us

Global Engagement (GE) facilitates and strengthens collaborations between people at UCL and diverse partners across the world. We are driven by the belief that with the right mix of minds, anything is possible.

Who we are
UCL is a diverse global community of world-class academics, students, industry links, external partners, and alumni. Our powerful collective of individuals and institutions work together to explore new possibilities.

UCL's vision and impact
Our distinctive approach to research, education and innovation seeks to further inspire our communities to transform how the world is understood, how global problems are solved.

Life at UCL, London
Our position in London brings unique benefits, providing all with access to a wealth of opportunities, and enabling us to contribute to everything that makes it one of the world's greatest cities. Come and discover UCL with our visits and tours.

What UCL has to offer
UCL is open across those engaging diversity to the field of English university to champion equality, diversity and open-mindedness, we have never been afraid to rethink the norms of education and research.

Strategic Plan 2022-25
Our new 5-year plan aims to build on the trajectory established by UCL 2034 and our ambition to be London's global university.

Study abroad
Information for students undertaking a study abroad placement as part of their degree. From application to returning to UCL.

Short-term global opportunities
Short-term global opportunities available outside of term-time, from summer schools to international volunteering.

Strategic Plan

Figure 1: University College London (2023)

City, what is a city?

It is hard to define what is and what is not a city. It can be see as a human settlement with a large population size, characterized by a high population density, an administrative system, economic and social infrastructure, which supports multiple activities and services (United Nation, 2019). Furthermore, Amin and Thrift defined cities in tree aspects: concentration of population, things, institution and architectural forms; the heterogeneity of life they juxtapose in close proximity; and their siting of various networks of communication and flow across and beyond the city (Amin & Thrift, 2002). In summary and my personal understanding, a city is a spatial existence that contains large concentration, high level of consumption, a place that people live in close proximity, a centre of innovation and creativity. Figure 3 shows an example of a global city – London, as you can see there are high density of buildings and some buildings are either in renovation or being built.

However, a few characteristics can be spotted from the figure, first is the lack of greens in the picture, second is the tight space in between buildings, displaying a crowdy atmosphere which may bring effects on people's mental health. The lack of greens is what inspired me to investigate into the topic of city and nature. I want to know about the influences of cities on the natural environment, and I also want to see the potential benefits of incorporating nature into the city, and the effects of the existing natural elements within the city.

Figure 3. City skyline of London

Defining the city

Exploring what makes a city unique

1- The idea of a city first came into my mind when I was little; there was a game called SimCity, where you get to be the mayor and develop your city with infrastructures essential for the lives of millions of citizens. The idea of the city is then simplified to me as "big skyscrapers" or "Countless apartment buildings" and ultimately "a place for everyone." Most cities indeed have "big sky scrappers"; however, the literature I've read did have other definitions for "city."

Literature review

Cities: Influences, Aspects, and Factors

2- Cited from Hubbard (2017), R. Davis (1973: 1) defines the city as 'concentrations of many people located close together for residential and productive purposes'; based on similar definitions of cities cited in different sources, Hubbard (2017) argued that we should not define a city solely based on the of the sheer sizes (infrastructure, scale, populations) or the habitat, as towns and villages may also have a large scale and a high concentration of populations. Therefore, another critical factor of a city is that its presence can be found everywhere, permeating various aspects of modern life, and it is also noted that cities possess "dense networks of interaction"(Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 2). The Urbanized world is interconnected through metropolitan areas and communication networks; as a result, although towns, villages, and the countryside may retain some distinction from the city, their boundaries are increasingly blurred. Therefore, a city's footprints will extend into these areas through city commuting, tourism, teleworking, and media consumption, allowing suburb towns to adopt an urbanized lifestyle. Furthermore, cited by Amin and Thrift (2002), Steve Pile (1999) identifies cities as the density of population, institutions, and architectural forms.

3- Following up on the argument, Amin and Thrift (2002) have given a clever example of how London possesses the characteristic of a global metropolis; they also mentioned it as the "signature of an empire," filled with crowded streets, art galleries, and people worldwide. In conclusion, from the literature reviews, a city like London could be measured and studied from its impact on architecture, history, the life of citizens, and culture; these aspects will be further explored and defined in later slides.

'The place called London, for example, has been fashioned and refashioned through commentaries, recollections, memories and erasures, and in a variety of media - monumental, official and vernacular, newspapers and magazines, guides and maps, photographs, films, newsreels and novels, street-level conversations and tales.'
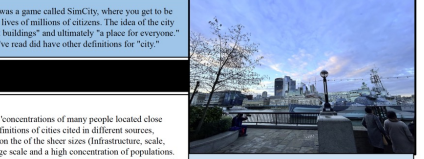- Amin and Thrift (2002)

Figure 1: Author, View of the City of London from The Queens Walk, 2023

GLOBALISATION AND THE WORLD CITIES

HEATHROW AIRPORT

HSBC HQ

Globalisation is the 'widening, deepening, and speeding up of global interconnectedness' (Falconbridge & Beaverstock, 2009, pp.331). Freidmann (1986) coined the World Cities Hypothesis, which is used to explain the new international division of labour. By his hypothesis, globalisation is viewed through the lenses of the economy. Globalisation plays a crucial to the transition of the role of London to be an international economic and finance centre. More than a fifth of the Fortune Global 500 companies had located in London (Bosetti & Brown, 2019). For example, the Royal Dutch Shell, HSBC and Amazon. This is because London fulfils the needs of a local-based and integrated location for the global economy (Robinson, 2008). It has a

favourable time zone for tradings between Tokyo and the United State, as well as having good transport networks with other countries. Therefore, globalisation enhances a local-global link for cities. London takes a leading role in the process of globalisation. They not only maintain and develop more global networks but also hold the power as a control hub (Sassen, 2005). For example, the London Stock Exchange now holds the most international exchanges in the world (London: Open to the world, 2021), as Heathrow airport is the largest airport in Europe and the seven busiest airports in the world. Nevertheless, these economic activities are not beneficial to all. Indeed London has benefited from being the

premier financial hub, but globalisation caused greater polarisation in society. I have noticed London has more homeless people compared to any of the cities I lived in before in the UK and China. In the evenings, they are sleeping in tents on the Tottenham Court road. Between 2019 and 2020, there are 10.72 thousand homeless people in London with 72% aged between 18 and 55, many of them are seeking jobs (Clark, 2022). Despite, people always say the great employment opportunities in London, these opportunities seem only open to the elites and exclude many of the people who originally live in London. Hence, one of the downsides of globalisation, it leads the world cities to become increasingly favourable to the world but left many

local citizens behind. Therefore, It is suggested that the world cities are experiencing a structural change (Freidmann, 1986). London reflects the change by developing the Canary Wharf area and becoming a focal point for international transport. Nonetheless, the world cities hypothesis heavily emphasises economic performance but undervalues other aspects of cities.

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

DEFINING A CITY?

- Before the idea of a 'global city' can be defined, we must first explain what a 'city' is.
- Taking a simple traditional working definition, Jary and Jary (1999) define a city in terms of an inhabited area, differentiated from a village or town by its "greater size" and "exercise of power" over surrounding regions.
- Defining cities based on size and inhabitants was what I first thought to be the most obvious and accurate way of distinguishing between 'cities and other settlements, however, upon reviewing THE literature this narrow lens of VIEW proves to not only be inaccurate, but also problematic.
- Firstly, size and scale are relative, as what may be considered a large settlement in one country may be considered small in another.
- Furthermore, the term 'city' is complex, and defining it simply by fixed geography is inaccurate, as it ignores the spatial, political, social, cultural, and economic aspects that are integral to the formation and classification of a 'city' (Hubbard, 2000).
- For example, Amin and Thrift (2002) forefront the importance of dense and diverse social and economic relationship that underpin urban life as central to defining a city (Amin & Thrift, 2002).
- Moreover, Latham et al. (2009) highlights the importance of critically examining power relations, inequalities, and social justice issues within urban contexts, as many of the working definitions of 'cities' operate from a eurocentric male-gaze that could perpetuate stereotypes and inequalities.

WHAT IS A GLOBAL CITY?

- THE IDEA OF 'GLOBAL CITIES' IS A TERM FIRST COINED BY SASKIA SASSEN (1996). IN HER VIEW, CITIES ARE KEY LOCI WITHIN GLOBAL NETWORKS, WHEREBY A GLOBAL CITY IS ONE WHICH SERVES AS A KEY NODE IN SAID GLOBAL ECONOMIC NETWORK. IT IS A CITY THAT PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL FLOWS OF CAPITAL, INFORMATION, PEOPLE, GOODS, AND IDEAS.
- GLOBAL CITIES ARE OFTEN CATEGORISED AS; BEING MAJOR HUBS FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND FINANCE, HAVING EXTENSIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE ALLOWING FOR CONNECTIVITY, BEING SITES OF PRODUCTION AND PROVIDING MARKETS FOR PRODUCTION TO BE BOUGHT AND SOLD, AS WELL AS OFTEN RENOWNED FOR THEIR CULTURAL DIVERSITY, CREATIVITY, AND INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL.

THE CONCEPT OF THE EVERYDAY

The concept of the everyday was one which I found particularly interesting, given that it is something we all experience in similar, yet vastly different ways. Everyday life refers to all that we do, all of the time (Jayne, 2005). This involves our daily routines we associate with city life (Jayne, 2005; Hubbard, 2006). This led me to think about the typical daily routine in the city, usually involving some form of commuting, which in my case involves the underground. 'Image 5' depicts a platform on which people are waiting for the tube at 8:40am, as shown on the clock, a time that is a part of 'rush hour' which large volumes of people commute into Central London. Transport at these times is therefore more chaotic and busier that it would be otherwise, as shown in 'Image 6' taken during peak time, with many people being forced to stand, as opposed to 'Image 7' taken outside of these hours depicting a near empty platform. According to Lefebvre (2004, as cited by Reid-Musson, 2018), this could be described as city rhythms, highlighting the routine aspect of city living as these peak times show a clear pattern and timetable of travel times. It is also valuable to note that despite there often being a general routine to one's daily life, these rhythms extend beyond this for example through unexpected factors and events to which we regularly adapt, which may shape, and alter our everyday (Hubbard, 2006). In the case of commuting, these may include delays and cancellations to which we would need to respond for example by finding alternative forms of transport.

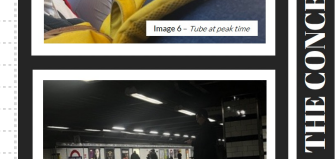Image 5 – Rush hour platform

Image 6 – Tube at peak time

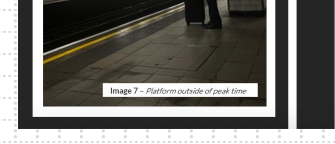Image 7 – Platform outside of peak time

DEFINING A CITY

The city is everywhere and everything (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p.1)

Highlights

1 The historical evolution of the definition of a city has resulted in an understanding of contemporary cities that is radically distinct from that of the past.

2 Trans-urban and transnational mobility, diversity, and complexity have become the defining characteristics of contemporary cities.

3 As a global metropolis, London possesses a number of distinctive benefits that support its position as a creative city

My home city Beijing

CITIES IN MY EYES

I think that cities are more densely populated than rural areas and towns. High-rise structures, subways, and airports are city identifiers. There are busy traffic and the flow of people. Cities are places where politics, economy, and culture are highly concentrated. Cities contain almost no natural landscape, and even parks are meticulously planned. Ultimately, cities are distinct from the countryside and towns.

The city London I live in now

CONTINUOUS EVOLUTIONS OF CITY DEFINITION

The world's earliest cities may have been 9,000 years old. However, in most capitalist countries, cities developed in the context of the high concentration of the means of production and workforce triggered by the Industrial Revolution. Since then, sociologists have tried to understand cities from a sociological perspective.

Post-colonial urbanism criticises the general understanding of cities and begins to rethink the meaning of urbanism and the role, function, and form of cities, emphasising the complexity and diversity of cities (Robinson, 2002). Despite the acknowledged difficulty and complexity of defining a city, as urbanists have noted that "The city is everywhere and everything" (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 1), efforts are still made to offer novel insights into comprehending urban environments.

HINT: Do you know?

Historical evolutions for the understanding of city definition

Figure 1: Author, UCL Portico During Freshers Week, 2022

Figure 2: Author, Interior view of UCL Portico, 2022

Figure 3: Giovanni Panini, Interior view with the Pantheon and other Monuments of Rome, 1757

Neoclassical Architecture

Figure 4: Author, The British Museum, 2022

Figure 5: Author, The National Gallery, 2023

Figure 6: Author, Bush House, 2023

1- I enjoy exploring posh areas like Oxford Street, Bond Street, Mayfair, and Marylebone in London, where I have encountered many Georgian-style buildings. See Figure 7; These buildings are known for their symmetrical and proportional design, simple yet sophisticated lines, and classical motifs inspired by ancient Greece and Rome, including columns, pediments, and flying buttresses.

3- See Figure 3, the work of Giovanni Panini. Neoclassical architecture prioritizes classical columns and ancient Roman norms over national traditions and regional characteristics. The layout, building plan and facade modeling focus on the relationship between primary and subordinate elements, emphasizing axis and symmetry. And see Figures 4 and 5. The semi-circular dome is commonly used as the center of the building, and horizontal and vertical three-section facade compositions are encouraged for their sense of order and stability. Proportional relationships are critical for architectural modeling, and the correct proportion between parts and the whole is essential for beauty. The Neoclassical shape seeks dignity and magnificence, compared to the Georgian's delicate design, the Neoclassical Architecture in London seeks grander, imitating mythical times of Greek and Rome, making it one of my favorite architectural styles (Not because of my school's portico).

I really have to stop turning into this into an art portfolio

2-Georgian's large windows allow for natural light and a connection to the outdoors, while decorative iron balconies and balustrades add to their charm. I appreciate the stucco facades' versatility and interior detailing, making Georgian-style buildings my second favorite type of architecture.

Figure 7: Author, Georgian Architecture at the Oxford Street, 2022

Figure 8: Author, Views of Georgian Architecture near KCL, 2022

Figure 9: Author, Bond Street, 2022

Figure 10: Author, The Interior of British Museum, 2022

Balance Between Neoclassical and Modernism

Figure 11: Author, Interior view of the UCL Student Centre, 2023

understanding of research methodologies and empirical data

Like Hall, I analysed a local street that in my opinion best demonstrates transnational urbanism:

The transnational economy of Green Street is rooted in its ability to cater to the needs of various diaspora communities. Hall's concept of "ordinary streets" emphasises the role of such spaces in enabling migrants to create a sense of home and belonging within the city. On Green Street, businesses owned by entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds actively engage with the transnational flows of people, goods, and ideas. Through the provision of goods, services, and cultural experiences that resonate with their customers' origins, these businesses contribute to the economic vitality of the street.

Figure 5 – Bridal shop on Green Street

Figure 4 – Mural 'Nirala' in front of Upton Park Station

South Asian Fashion

Figure 3 – East Shopping Centre. Green Street, Upton Park

The street is home to a plethora of South Asian fashion shops. These South Asian fashion shops on Green Street are more than just retail spaces; they serve as a cultural hotspot that celebrates the rich sartorial heritage of South Asia. These shops showcase a vast range of traditional and fusion garments that reflect the diverse fashion of the South Asian diaspora. These establishments cater to the cultural and religious needs of the South Asian community, allowing customers to find garments that reflect their cultural roots. Beyond the offerings on display, South Asian fashion shops on Green Street provide a sense of community and cultural connection. They act as gathering spaces where individuals from the South Asian community can come together and engage in conversations about culture and traditions. These shops often host events, fashion shows, and trunk shows, further fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride.
The impact is so great, the street has held the title of 'Little India' by locals and the community.

Green Street

Like Hall, I analysed a local street that in my opinion best demonstrates transnational urbanism: Green Street, Upton Park. Originally a street symbolised by football hooliganism due to being the previous historic home of West Ham United F.C, as seen in the eponymous 2005 film 'Green Street', over time the street transformed into one of the best examples of transnational economy.

The transnational economy of Green Street is rooted in its ability to cater to the needs of various diaspora communities. Hall's concept of "ordinary streets" emphasises the role of such spaces in enabling migrants to create a sense of home and belonging within the city. On Green Street, businesses owned by entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds actively engage with the transnational flows of people, goods, and ideas. Through the provision of goods, services, and cultural experiences that resonate with their customers' origins, these businesses contribute to the economic vitality of the street.

Queen's Market Upton Park

Figure 1 – Queen's Market

As seen in *Figures 1* and *2*, Queen's Market stands as a remarkable example of a shared transnational space that brings together the Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities. Queen's Market stands as a remarkable example of a shared transnational space that brings together the Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities. The market serves as a hub where these two cultural groups intersect, collaborate, and contribute to the dynamic transnational economy of the area, with Afro-Caribbean beauty shops and supermarkets and halal butchers and fresh produce vendors.

Figure 2 – Queen's Market taken from Google Maps (2023)
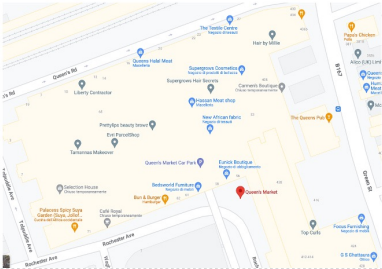
South Asian Fashion

Figure 3 – East Shopping Centre. Green Street, Upton Park

Figure 4 – Mural 'Nirala' in front of Upton Park Station

Figure 5 – Bridal shop on Green Street

The street is home to a plethora of South Asian fashion shops. These South Asian fashion shops on Green Street are more than just retail spaces; they serve as a cultural hotspot that celebrates the rich sartorial heritage of South Asia. These shops showcase a vast range of traditional and fusion garments that reflect the diverse fashion of the South Asian diaspora. These establishments cater to the cultural and religious needs of the South Asian community, allowing customers to find garments that reflect their cultural roots. Beyond the offerings on display, South Asian fashion shops on Green Street provide a sense of community and cultural connection. They act as gathering spaces where individuals from the South Asian community can come together and engage in conversations about culture and traditions. These shops often host events, fashion shows, and trunk shows, further fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride.

The impact is so great, the street has held the title of 'Little India' by locals and the community.

Deeper engagement

- process highlights... **student's active engagement with semiotic resources available to them at a particular moment in a specific socio-cultural context** (Kress 2010)

- **'design' and 'principles of composition' become foregrounded** (Bezemer and Kress, 2008)

- how and why students choose to represent from a range of options points to notion of design: **the process of giving shape to the interests of the sign-maker for an assumed audience using the available semiotic resources** (Bezemer and Kress 2008: 174)

- **choices are always expressions of ideology and power** – what choices were made and for what purposes?

- place a **strong emphasis on student 'interest' and agency.... "learners as agentive, resourceful and creative meaning-makers" (Stein and Newfield 2006: 8, in Archer, 2012: 115)**

Widening participation

Multimodal portfolios:

- expand boundaries of academic literacies making them more inclusive
- help students to develop their 'voice' through composition and design
- enable students to realise power and agency in creating their own meaning
- allow students to experiment with more 'non-traditional' academic genres
- harness students' representational and reflective skills and resources
- not simply receivers of knowledge, active in making and production of meaning (Archer, 2012)
- recognise students' experiences outside university — identities, histories, languages, cultures
- prepare students better for navigating, understanding and critically evaluating the diverse multimodal world surrounding them that they constantly engage with

How can impact be more meaningful?

Have more **space and time to engage with the theories and language around multimodality**, so that students are able to develop a vocabulary and a language and a deeper understanding its potentialities

Co-creating module — assessment, criteria and daily portfolio tasks — to deepen this language and insight but also to engage in the meta-potentials of these methodologies

One type of assessment that opens a crack for experimentation and empowerment — to 'widen the crack' **more 'non-traditional'/multimodal projects/assessments** should be considered

Reflecting on process and task after submission – allowing students to reflect on: agency, positionality, assumptions, values, how they are transformed by the research (in module, in institution, in the city)

How to support different students' response to tasks and coursework — some more comfortable, some less confident, out of comfort zone, some find it scary to move away from written mode

Academic literacies' in the twenty first century entails being able to navigate multiplicity, to critique representations in multiple modes, media and genres, and use a range of technologies in composing multimodal texts (Archer 2012: 420).

References

Archer, A. (2014) Designing multimodal classrooms for social justice, *Classroom Discourse*, 5:1, 106-116.

Archer, A. (2012) Writing as design: Enabling access to academic discourse in a multimodal environment. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *26*(3), pp.411-421.

Bezemer, J. and Kress, G. (2008) Writing in multimodal texts: A social semiotic account of designs for learning. *Written communication*, *25*(2), pp.166-195.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: a social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London; New York: Routledge.