

New Roles of the Readers (Multimodal Texts)
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Perspectives on Comprehension

Focus on Written Text

Cognitive Perspectives: The “Big 7” Reading Strategies
Literary Theories: Archetypal, Psychoanalytical, Feminist
Textual Analysis: Systemic Functional Linguistics

Focus on Image-Multimodal Texts

Art & Media Studies: Psychology of Perception, Iconography
Semiotic Theories: Visual Grammar and Structural Analysis
Picturebook Theories: Design, Formats & Postmodernism

Scholarship on Multimodal Texts

Art, Media & Visual Culture
Semiotics & Visual Grammar
Picturebook Theory

Art, Media & Visual Culture

Arnheim & Dondis - Perception, Basic Elements of Design
Gombrich, Berger, & Panofsky - Art History, Iconology, Iconography
Messaris, Williamson, & Buckingham - Media Studies and Advertisement
Barnard, Elkins, Mitchell - Visual Culture and Visual Literacies

Semiotics & Visual Grammar

Saussure & Pierce - Semiotic Theories
Kress & Van Leeuwen - Grammars of Visual Design
Roland Barthes - Denotation & Connotation
Bryson, Bal & Chanda - Semiotics

Picturebook Theory

Nodelman & Lewis - How Picturebooks Work
Sipe & Pantaleo - Postmodern Influences in Design & Format
Styles & Arizpe - Children’s Responses to Art in Picturebooks
Valleau - Incorporating Art in Picturebooks
Genette - Paratextual Resources
Nikolajeva & Scott - Interplay of Text & Image
Doonan & Kiefer - Fonts, Borders, Orientation

Defining Visual Literacy

A set of acquired competencies for producing, designing and interpreting visual images and messages.

The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms.

Concerned with more than the image itself: it includes the contexts in which images are viewed, and the reception, production and distribution of multimodal texts.

Defining Multimodality

Multimodal texts present information across a variety of modes including visual images, design elements, written language, and other semiotic resources.

Different modes (semiotic resources) do different things

Multimodal Texts combine more than one mode for communicating ideas.

Multimodal texts and printed texts are not mutually exclusive. Printed texts include visual components, for example font and design elements, and multimodal texts often include written language.

Shifting Modalities

Readers are confronted with visual images in their everyday lives with greater frequency than written texts without accompanying visual images and design
A Shift from the Printed Word to Images and Multimodal Texts has been ongoing.
Written text is governed by the logic of time or temporal sequence, whereas, visual image is governed by the logic of spatiality, composition, and simultaneity.
Printed text is often subordinate to visual images as the primary mode that readers draw upon to construct meaning.

The blending of visual design elements, images and printed language into multimodal texts presents readers with new challenges, and requires a new set of competencies and skills.

4 Roles (Resources) Model

Allan Luke & Peter Freebody (1992)

Reader as Decoder

Reader as Meaning Maker

Reader as Text User

Reader as Text Analyst

Roles of the Multimodal Reader

Reader as Navigator

Reader as Interpreter

Reader as Designer

Reader as Critical Analyst

Reader as Navigator

Decoding and Directionality
Navigate Structures and Design
Hypertext Structures
Navigate Images
Multimodal Structures

Reader as Interpreter

Focus on Constructing Meaning
Meaning does NOT reside IN text.
Multiple Perspectives and Interpretations
Tolerate Ambiguity
A Community of Interpreters
Suspend Closure

Reader as Designer

Form follows Function
The Medium is the Message
Understand Basic Elements of Design
Font, Borders, Color, Orientations etc...
How are ideas and information presented
Visual Grammar - Multimodal Design

Reader as Critical Analyst

Multiple Perspectives and Meanings
Not only what is written BUT who is doing the writing
How do texts position readers?
How do texts marginalize readers?
Whose purpose does this text serve?

Expanding One's Interpretive Repertoire

Analytical Perspectives

Perceptual - Noticing, Navigating, Naming Elements of Multimodal Texts
Interpretational - Constructing Meanings from Images, Text and Design
Ideological - Analysis of an Image, Text and Context, Meaning Systems

Analytical Perspectives

Each of the perspectives is "nested" within the others and affects the other perspectives
Our Perceptions are influenced by our Knowledge - "The Innocent Eye is Blind"
Our Interpretations are influenced by our Socio-Cultural Contexts and Experiences

Perceptual Focus

Focus on what is there, what is presented in the image itself - Noticing
Perception - Perceived through the Sense of Sight
Inventory of Contents - Classification
Navigating the Spatial Composition
Naming Visual Elements
Basic Elements of Design - line, shape etc.
Denotation

Interpretational Focus

Response to what was Perceived
Interpreting what has been Noticed
Connotation - Interpretation
Use Experience to Understand Image
Analysis of Structures and Designs
Symbols and Recurring Patterns (Motifs)
Looking for Meanings, Themes, Messages

Ideological Focus

Considering the Context, Culture and History of an Image
Social Meanings of the actors and events portrayed
Text and Image as Social Artifacts
What are the Implications of the Image?
Cultural Symbols and Messages
Who is included, excluded?
Stereotypes and Portrayals