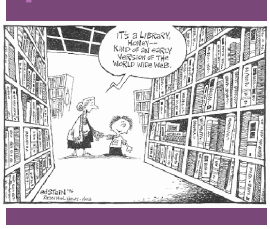


(Re)considering information literacy through a critical literacy lens

Dr Susan Sandretto, University of Otago

Overview

- Changing literacy landscape
- Challenges for information literacy
- Integrating critical literacy
- Future directions

http://anethicalisland.wordpress.com

In what ways are you preparing young people to participate in the literacies of the future?

Information literacy in the information age

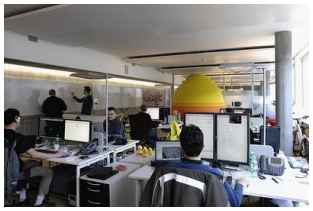
Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information.

http://www.ala.org/acrl/

Changing literacy landscape…

Industrial-age, assembly-line heritage

'new times'

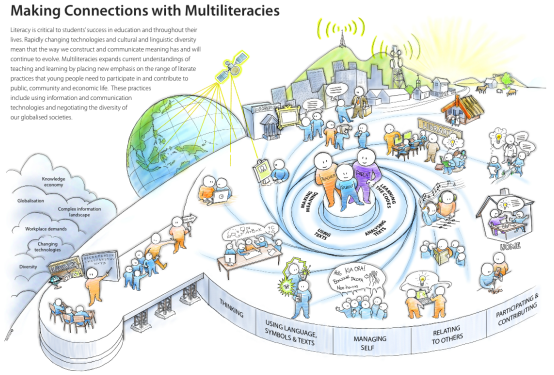


Literacy in the 21st century

- "a repertoire of changing practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts. Knowledge and literacy practices are primarily seen as constructions of particular social groups, rather than attributed to individual cognition alone." (p. 247)

Mills, K. A. (2010). A review of the" digital turn" in the New Literacy Studies. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(2), 246-271.

Making Connections with Multiliteracies



Four Resources Model
(Source: Bull & Anstey, 2010, pp. 10, 19)

1. Code breaking Essentially, how do I crack the code of this text?	**Semiotic systems** **Linguistic-** oral and written language **Visual-** still and moving images **Gestural-** facial expressions and body language **Audio-** music and sound effects **Spatial-** layout and organisation of objects and space
2. Meaning making Essentially, what does this text mean to me?	
3. Text user Essentially, what do I do to use this text purposefully?	
4. Text analyst Essentially, how might I be shaped through engagement with this text?	

Bull, G., & Anstey, M. (2010). *Evolving pedagogies: Reading and writing in a multimodal world*. Carlton, Vic: Curriculum Press.

Old basics

- Reading and Writing
- Phonics
- Correct spelling and grammar
- 'Standard' English

Kalantzis, M., & Cope, B. (2012). *Literacies.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Texts

- From the Latin *textus* meaning tissue and *texere* meaning weave. (p. 8)

Bull, G., & Anstey, M. (2010). *Evolving pedagogies: Reading and writing in a multimodal world*. Carlton, Vic: Curriculum Press.

- Traditional- Live or paper
- New- Digital/electronic
- "A text is a vehicle through which individuals communicate with one another, using the codes and conventions of society" (p. 3).

Robinson, E, & Robinson, S. (2003). *What does it mean? Discourse, Text, Culture: An Introduction.* Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

New Basics

- Multiple literacies for multimodal communications
- People who can innovate, take risks, negotiate diversity and navigate uncertainty
- Ability to engage with a wide range of texts

(Kalanztis & Cope, 2012, p. 5)

Thinking about texts & systems

- Most texts are multimodal
- "A mode is a system of signs created within or across various cultures to represent and express meanings" (p. 153)
- How many modes does a novel draw upon?

Serafini, F. (2012). Expanding the four resources model: Reading visual and multi-modal texts. *Pedagogies: An International Journal, 7*(2), 150-164.

Information literate people

- **Critically evaluate** information and its sources

Bundy, A. (Ed.). (2004). Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework. Adelaide: Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy.

Shifts in practice

Consumption (reading) → Construction (writing)

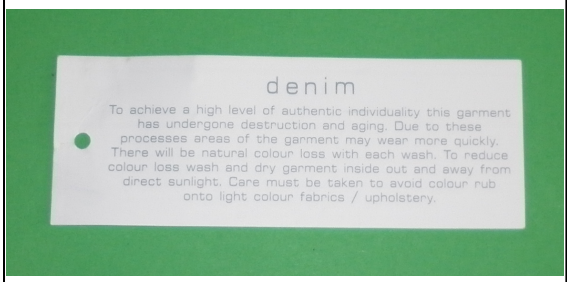
http://www.youmedia.org/

Critical Literacy (Sandretto with Klenner, 2011, p. 3)

We believe that critical literacy involves supporting students to become aware that:

- texts are social constructions;
- texts are not neutral;
- authors draw upon particular discourses (often majority discourses) and assume that readers will be able to draw upon them as well;
- authors make certain conscious and unconscious choices when constructing texts;
- which means that all texts have gaps, or silences, and particular representations within them; and,
- that texts then have consequences for how we make sense of ourselves, others and the world.

Neutral text?

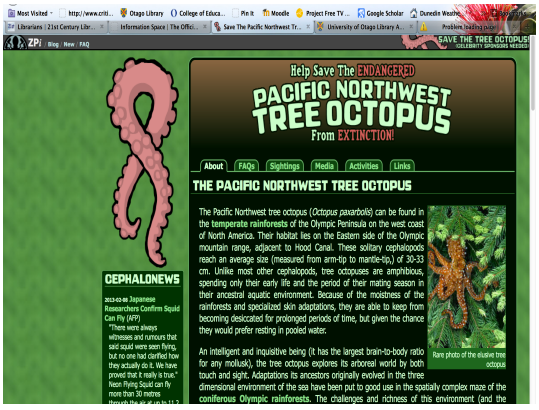


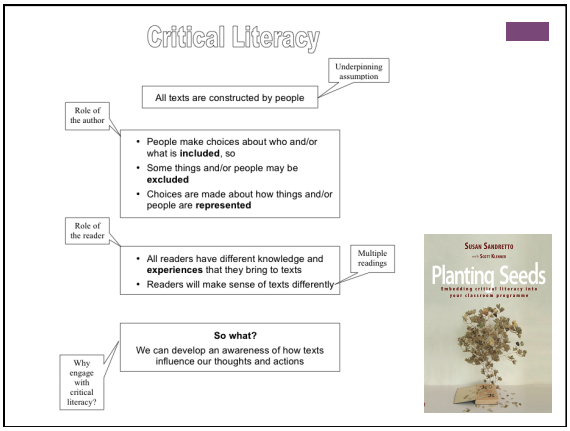
"Discourses are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society" (p. 132)

Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Falmer Press.

"A good deal of what we do with language… is create and act out different 'types of people'"

(Gee, 1996, p. viii)





What could it look like?

- Which aspect of the poster could you select to focus the analysis?
- Which questions could you ask of this text?

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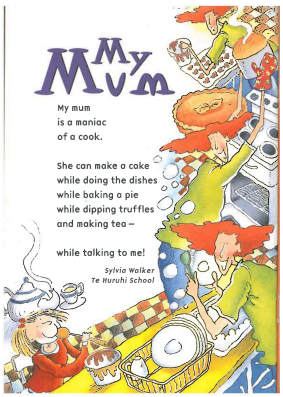
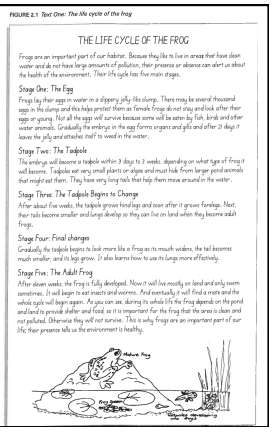
- Which questions could you ask of this text?





"knowledge of more than one discourse and the recognition that meaning is plural allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual, and even where choice is not available, resistance is possible" (p.102).

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

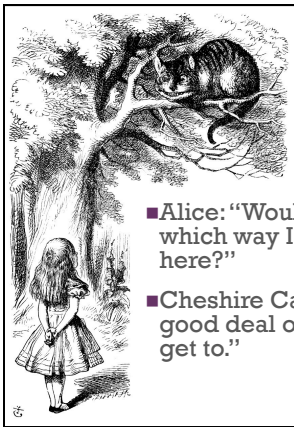
Reflection and a challenge

- How can I best support students to critically analyse a wide range of texts?
- What am I going to do on day 1 of Term 3?

Why do this work?

"To provide students with a knowledge only of language, and not a meta-level understanding of how language works, is to only give them part of the picture" (p. 10).

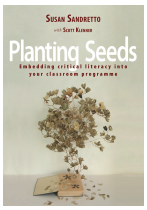
Knobel, M., & Healy, A. (1998). *Critical literacies in the primary classroom.* Newtown, N.S.W: Primary English Teaching Association.



- Alice: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"
- Cheshire Cat: "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

(Carroll, 1865, p. 41)

+ Resources



NZCER Press- http://www.nzcer.org.nz/nzcerpress/planting-seeds-embedding-critical-literacy-your-classroom-programme

Wiki- http://plantingseedswithcriticalliteracy.wikispaces.com/

Facebook- Critical multiliteracies

Sandretto, S. (2012). Planting seeds with critical literacy. *English in Aotearoa, October* (78), 42-49.