

For a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Reconciling Communicative and Text-Centered Instruction in the Elementary and Intermediate Foreign Language Classroom

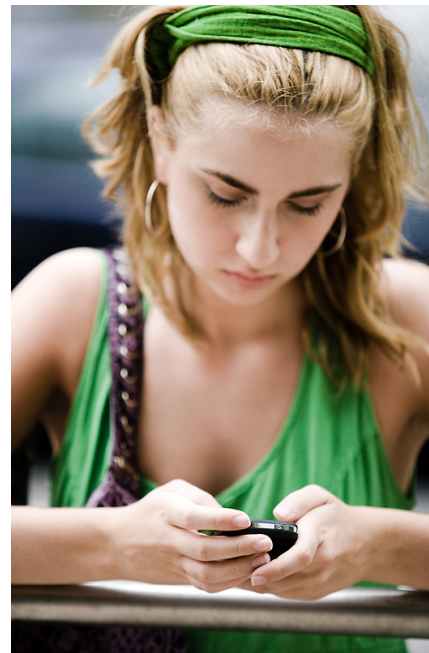
Day 1

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Introductions

- Teaching context (language, level, type of institution)
- Courses you teach
- Approach(es) that inform your teaching
- Experience / interest in multiliteracies-based language teaching: in other words, what gaps do you see in the current approach you are using and how might they be addressed by multiliteracies approach?

Introductory questions

1. What are your associations with the word LITERACY? Write down the first three things that come to mind.
2. What does being *literate* in a given language mean for you?

Overview of the workshop

- Defining literacy & what it means to be literate in a language
- Comparing multiliteracies and communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches
- Understanding key concepts of a multiliteracies approach
- Putting a multiliteracies approach into practice
- Instructional examples

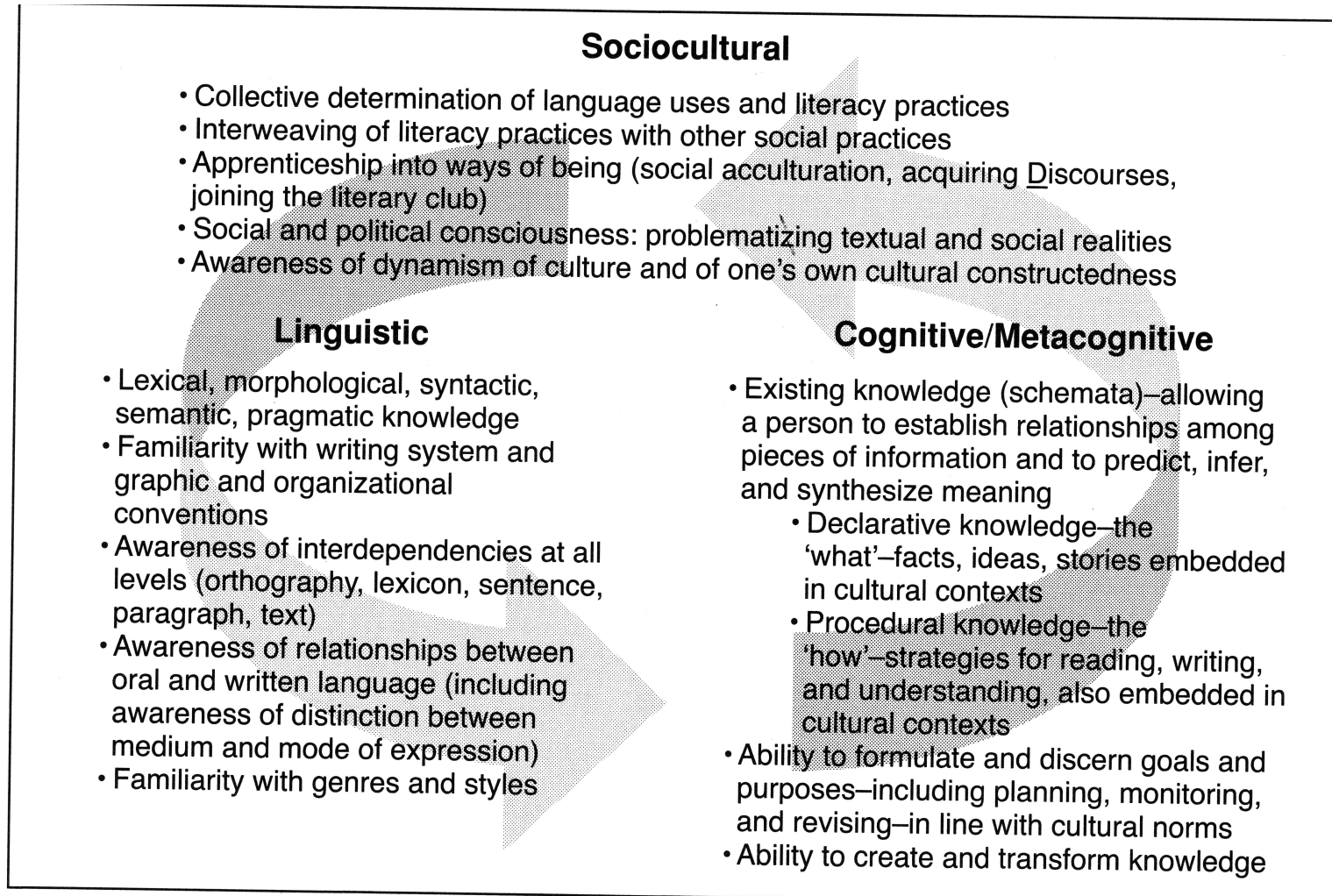
Defining what we mean by literacy

■ What is literacy?

*“[T]he use of socially-, historically-, and culturally-situated practices of **creating and interpreting meaning through texts**. It entails at least a tacit awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use and, ideally, the ability to reflect critically on those relationships. ... literacy is **dynamic** – not static – and **variable across and within discourse communities and cultures**. It draws on a wide range of **cognitive abilities**, on **knowledge of written and spoken language**, on **knowledge of genres**, and on **cultural knowledge**”*

(Kern, 2000, p. 16)

Dimensions of literacy



Why multiliteracies?

“Dealing with linguistic differences and cultural differences has now become central to the pragmatics of our working, civic, and private lives. Effective citizenship and productive work now require that we interact effectively **in multiple languages, multiple Englishes, and communication patterns that more frequently cross cultural, community, and national boundaries...** When the proximity of cultural and linguistic diversity is one of the key facts of our time, the very nature of language learning has changed” (New London Group, 1996, p. 64)

What does it mean to be literate?

Literacy is anchored by time and context

i **googled** it

posted it on my **blog**

and then i **IM'd**

my friends

(Kern, 2006)

What does it mean to be literate?

**Literacy is tied to sociocultural uses of language
in a given society**

- Républicain
- Libéral
- La France qui se lève tôt
- Les people /pipole

What does it mean to be literate?

10

The ability to make meaning from a text depends on understanding much more than the words on the pages or the images



Rationale for a multiliteracies approach

“In the context of globalization and in the post-9/11 environment, the usefulness of studying languages other than English is no longer contested. **The goals and means of language study, however, continue to be hotly debated** ... Institutional missions and teaching approaches typically reflect either the instrumentalist or the constitutive view of language. Freestanding language schools and some campus language-resource centers often embrace an **instrumentalist** focus to support the needs of students they serve, whereas university and college foreign language departments tend to emphasize the **constitutive** aspect of language and its relation to cultural and literary traditions, cognitive structures, and historical knowledge.”

(MLA Report, 2007)

Breaking down literacy: 7 principles (Kern, 2000)

- Interpretation
- Collaboration
- Conventions
- Cultural knowledge
- Problem solving
- Reflection & self-reflection
- Language use

Now, your turn

- In your opinion , what do each of these principles involve?
 - **Interpretation** involves...
 - **Collaboration** involves...
 - **Conventions** involve...
 - **Cultural knowledge** involves...
 - **Problem solving** involves...
 - **Reflection & self-reflection** involve...
 - **Language use** involves...

Collaboration

Audience impacts what writers decide to say or not say, readers bring motivation and experience to make writers' texts meaningful.

Interpretation

Writers and readers engage in a double act of interpretation.

Conventions

The way we write and read texts is not universal, cultural conventions play a huge role in how we carry out both activities.

Cultural knowledge

Writing and reading function with specific cultural systems. For those operating outside a given cultural system, misunderstanding and being misunderstood by those operating within the given system is highly likely.

Problem-solving

Writing and reading involve figuring out relationships between word, between larger units of meaning, between texts and worlds.

Reflection and Self-reflection

Writers and readers think about language and its relation to the world and themselves.

Language use

Literacy is more than knowledge of writing systems, vocabulary & grammar. It requires knowing how to use language both in written and spoken contexts to create discourse.

Now, your turn

- Choose a chapter in your textbook and look for activities that require students to focus on ...
- For each principle below, summarize its relative emphasis: none, some, a lot
 - **Interpretation**
 - **Collaboration**
 - **Conventions**
 - **Cultural knowledge**
 - **Problem solving**
 - **Reflection & self-reflection**
 - **Language use**

CLT vs. multiliteracies approaches

“Communicative teaching programs have largely succeeded in their goal of promoting learners’ interactive speaking abilities. They have tended to be somewhat less successful, however, in developing learners’ extended discourse competence and written communication skills—areas of academic ability that are extraordinarily important in academic settings” (Kern, 2000, p. 19)

“It is not so much a difference of authenticity of communication ... Rather it is **a difference in the ways that teachers and students make use of texts—their own and others’—to expand their awareness of a new language and culture**” (Kern, 2000, p. 15)

Critique of CLT

“Communicative approaches generally emphasize the use of **appropriate comprehensible input; meaning is perceived as more important than form** ... Considerable instructional time is devoted to so-called **skill-using activities** performed in small groups of learners ... Communicative approaches do not specify a content ... Are communicative approaches and goals the most appropriate, sufficient, and effective in terms of learning outcomes in the general education language study sequence? I take the stance that communicative competence is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education FL requirement ... unrealistic because neither time nor instructional context is sufficient or appropriate to develop a meaningful and lasting level of proficiency. It is insufficient because **short-lived communicative survival skills are taught without intellectually challenging content** ...” (Schulz, 2006, p. 254)

Comparison of CLT & multiliteracies approaches

	CLT	Multiliteracies approach
Emphasis	Doing Language functions Expressing personal experiences	Doing & reflecting on doing Form/function relations Personal readings of texts
Role of reading & writing	Language practice Separate skills (R v. P) Focus process in writing	Design of meaning Integrated commun. acts Focus on genre in writing
Models for teachers & learners	Native speakers	Discourse analysts Intercultural explorers
Predominant learner role	Active participation--Using language in face-to-face interaction	Active engagement-- Using language, reflecting on language use and revising

Two metaphors for communication: Conduit vs. design of meaning

■ **CLT / Conduit:**

- Communication = information transmission
 - Language as a conduit for transferring information
- Mastery of code -> unambiguous communication
 - Understanding the words -> understanding ideas

■ **Multiliteracies / Design:**

- Communication = meaning design
 - Language as a resource or tool for communication
- Meanings / messages are shifting, situational

“Communication occurs at the intersection between language and context and relies on the perception of linguistic, cognitive, and social relationships” (Kern, 2000, p. 45)

Key concepts for literacy-based teaching: Design (of meaning)

“We propose to treat any semiotic activity, including using language to produce or consume texts, as a matter of **Design** involving three elements: **Available Designs**, **Designing**, and **The Redesigned**” (New London Group, 1996, pp. 73-74)

- Unpacking the definition: 3 interrelated concepts

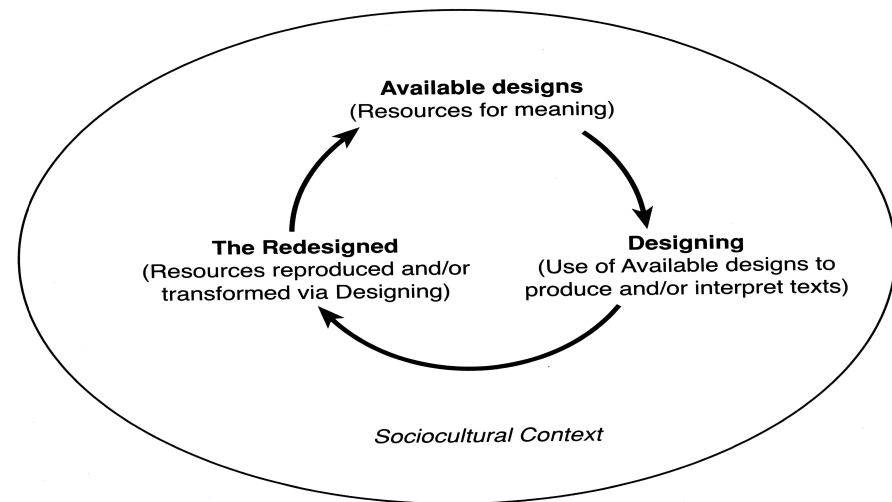


Figure 2.1: Design of meaning (based on New London Group, 1996)

Available designs

- Involve learners' existing knowledge and resources that are drawn on, consciously or unconsciously, in understanding & making meaning from texts:

- Linguistic
- Schematic
- Visual
- Audio
- Gestural
- Spatial

LINGUISTIC

writing system

vocabulary

syntax

cohesion / coherence

SCHEMATIC

formal schemata

genre / style

content schemata

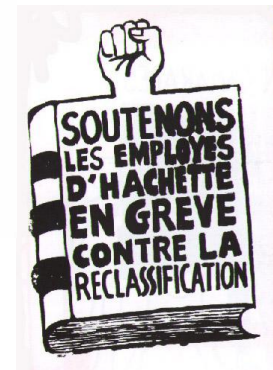
stories

Available designs

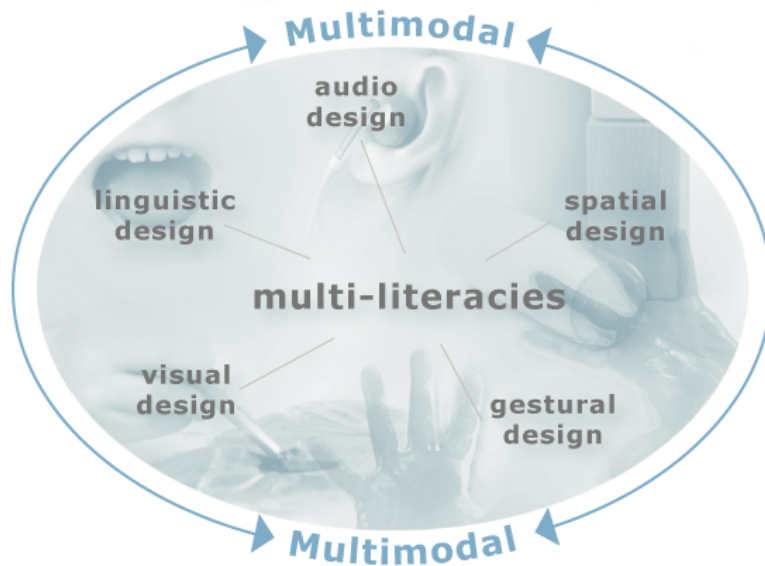


- Vocabulary and syntax
- Typographical conventions
- Style
- Stories
- Content schemata

**HALTE
A
L'EXPULSION
DE NOS
CAMARADES
ETRANGERS**



Designing and the redesigned



■ Designing

■ Forms of Designing:

- Listening/viewing and speaking
- Reading and writing

■ The Redesigned

- In the Designing process, the resources the learner possesses and has acquired (Available Designs) are redesigned

Designing & the redesigned: The role of genre

- In a multiliteracies approach, a focus on specific textual **genres** and their associated **conventions** facilitates the acquisition of new available designs, which function as resources for redesigning meaning
- Genre: “an oral or written rhetorical practice that structures culturally embedded communicative situations in a highly predictable pattern, thereby creating horizons of expectations for its community of users” (Swaffar & Arens, 2005, p. 99).
- As Kern (2000) explains, “If we do not have practical knowledge of the conventions relevant to a particular situation, we may seem or feel communicatively inept” (p. 183).

Now, your turn

- What conventions do you associate with the textual genre of TV advertisement for a food product?
- In your own culture, what associations do you have with yogurt?
- Let's watch:
 - Focus on the images
 - [Activia](#)
 - [Taillefine](#)
 - Focus on the message



START A MOVEMENT WITHIN YOU



Activia yogurt is the only yogurt with B.L. Regularis which aids in regulating your digestive system...naturally.

Visit Activia.ca for more information and to start your movement today.



It's your turn

- What types of textual genres do your students engage in reading?
- How do you structure reading activities? What role(s) do you play and what role(s) do your students play?
- What textual genres do your students write?
- How do you structure writing activities? What role(s) do you play and what role(s) do your students play?

Reading as meaning design

- Reading = a dynamic communicative act that is both individual and social; creating discourse from texts

“Reading and writing are always socially-imbedded activities involving relationships, shared assumptions, and conventions as well as individual, personal acts involving imagination, creativity, and emotions” (Kern, 2000, p. 111)

- Readers as representatives of a given interpretive community

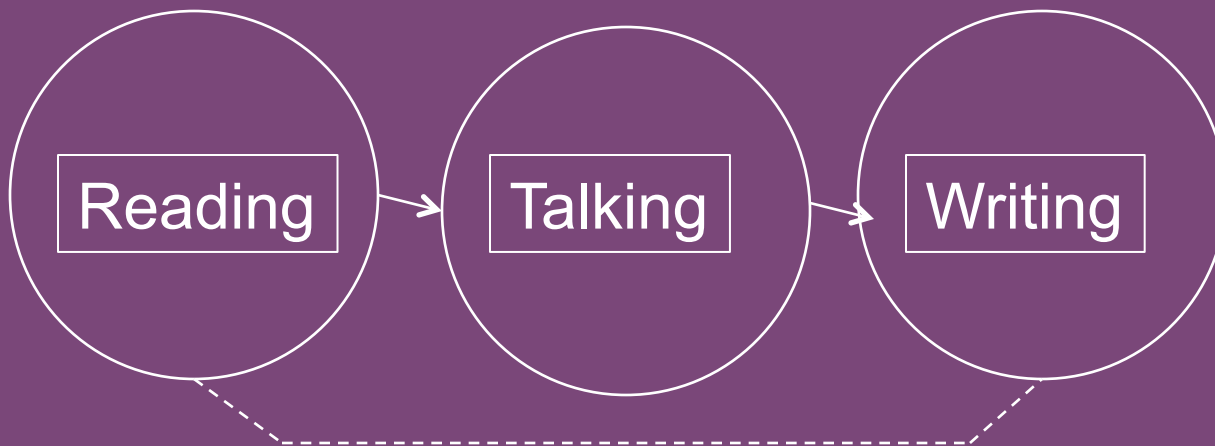
We are socialized to read in certain ways for particular purposes in particular settings and to hold certain beliefs about texts ... We abide by certain **interpretive conventions** established within the **discourse communities** to which we belong and we gain entry into new discourse communities by learning their conventions through **apprenticeship**” (Kern, 2000, p. 117)

Writing as meaning design

- Writing = a dynamic process of designing meaning through texts; a process both individual and creative as well as socially constrained
- Key aspects of writing in a FL:
 - Allows manipulating and “trying out” new forms so they can consider the effects of such manipulation on meaning
 - Allows time for learners to process and create meaning
 - Allows learners' language use to go beyond purely functional communication and opens the possibility "to create imagined worlds of their own design" (Kern, 2000, p. 172)

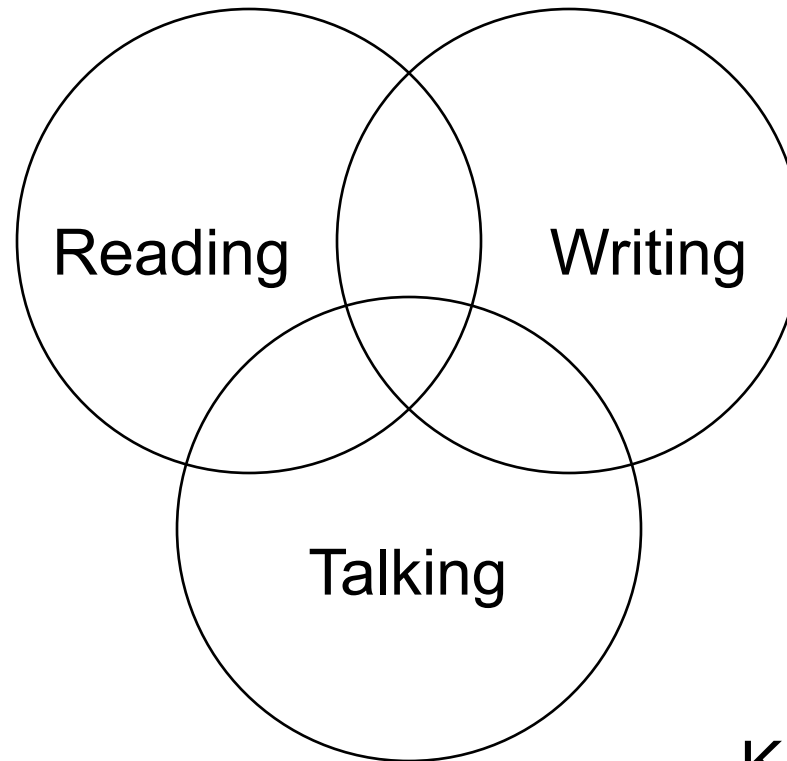
Now, your turn

- What is the traditional sequence of instruction regarding reading, talking, and writing?



Kern, 2000, p. 131

Relationship between reading writing and talking in a multiliteracies-based approach

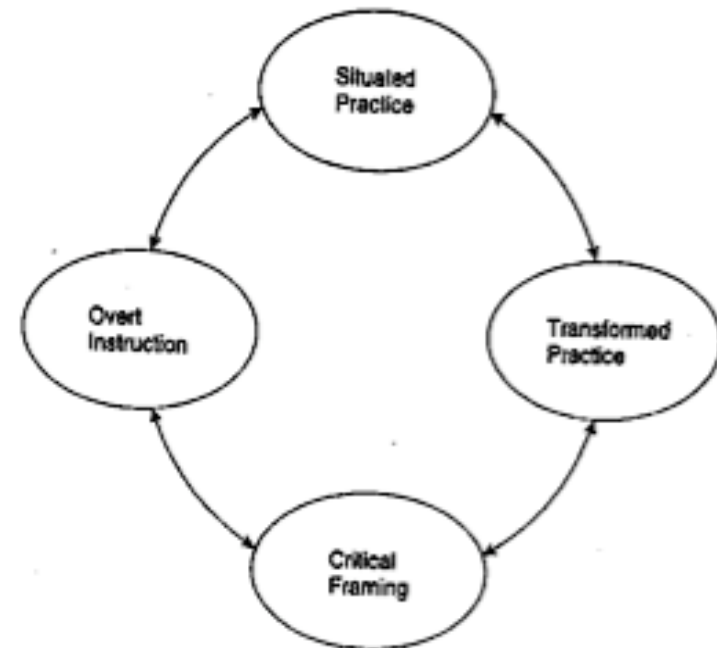


Kern, 2000, p. 132

A multiliteracies-based framework for teaching

- **Four curricular components** (The New London Group, 1996) -> a means of translating Design into a meaningful pedagogy:

“[P]edagogy is a complex integration of four factors: **Situated Practice** based on the world of learners’ Designed & Designing experiences; **Overt Instruction** through which students shape for themselves an explicit metalanguage of Design; **Critical Framing** which relates meanings to their social contexts & purposes; and **Transformed Practice** in which students transfer & re-create Designs of meaning from one context to another” (New London Group, 1996, p. 83)



The four curricular components: Situated practice & overt instruction

See pp. 3-4 & 6 handout

■ Situated practice

- Immersion in language use
- Focus on learners expression thoughts, opinions and feelings
- Does not involve conscious reflection or meta-language
- Involvement in legitimate communicative activities using the FL
- **Examples:** wiki/blog writing, reading journal, information gap activity, digital voice recording, paired oral interview

■ Overt instruction

- Involves learners in developing an explicit meta-language of Design to identify, discuss, learn those linguistic & schematic elements that contribute to meaning making
- Entails participation in scaffolded learning opportunities rather than drills
- Allows students to step back and talk about the meaning-making process in order to gain skills and knowledge needed for competent participation in FL communication
- Role of grammar: Requires intentional focus, viewed as a tool for meaning making rather than an end in and of itself
- **Examples:** text mapping, revising/editing, analyzing word/syntax relationships

The four curricular components: Critical framing & transformed practice

See pp. 3-4 & 6 handout

■ Critical framing

- Involves stepping back and trying to understand the social, cultural, historical, and ideological contexts of communication and texts
- Entails developing a critical awareness of language use and how the meanings / rules related to communication are tied to context in complex ways
- Can involve cross-cultural or intercultural comparisons
- **Examples:** research/presentation activity, reflective journaling, comparison reading/analysis activity

■ Transformed practice

- Involves learners in recreating designs of meaning by transferring them from one context to another by creating new texts on the basis of existing ones or reshaping texts for a different context
- Allows learner to take the lead and use what they know to create something original and personal
- **Examples:** story retelling, stylistic/genre reformulation of a (written) text, oral presentation / debate / panel

Example 1: Literacy-based instruction - elementary level

Mange ta soupe...

JEAN COCTEAU

Mange ta soupe. Tiens-toi droit. Mange lentement. Ne mange pas si vite. Bois en mangeant. Coupe ta viande en petits morceaux. Tu ne fais que tordre et avaler. Ne joue pas avec ton couteau. Ce n'est pas comme ça qu'on tient sa fourchette. On ne chante pas à table. Vide ton assiette. Ne te balance pas sur ta chaise. Finis ton pain. Pousse ton pain. Mâche. Ne parle pas la bouche pleine. Ne mets pas tes coudes sur la table. Ramasse ta serviette. Ne fais pas de bruit en mangeant. Tu sortiras de table quand on aura fini. Essuie ta bouche avant de m'embrasser.

Cette petite liste réveille une foule de souvenirs, ceux de l'enfance... C'est très longtemps après qu'on arrive à comprendre qu'un dîner peut être un véritable chef-d'œuvre.

Example 1: Instructional sequence - elementary level



critical framing	activity comparing US v. France table manners or parent/child communication
situated practice	reading matrix: table wherein learners focus on text's themes, who is speaking, who is addressed
overt instruction	inductive grammatical activity wherein learners' attention is drawn to repeated use of imperative tense; learners categorize verbs based on -er, -ir, -re ending
transformed practice	rewrite the story as a dialogue or rewrite the story based on your own experiences; in either case, utilize the imperative tense

Example 2: Instructional sequence – intermediate level

tous les jours 121
Cuisine

Michèle, 58 ans, retraitée : "Je fais de l'art avec la cuisine."

Carole, 30 ans, responsable communication : "Je n'ai jamais raté cette recette."

Ma recette qui en jette !

Example 2: Instructional sequence – intermediate level

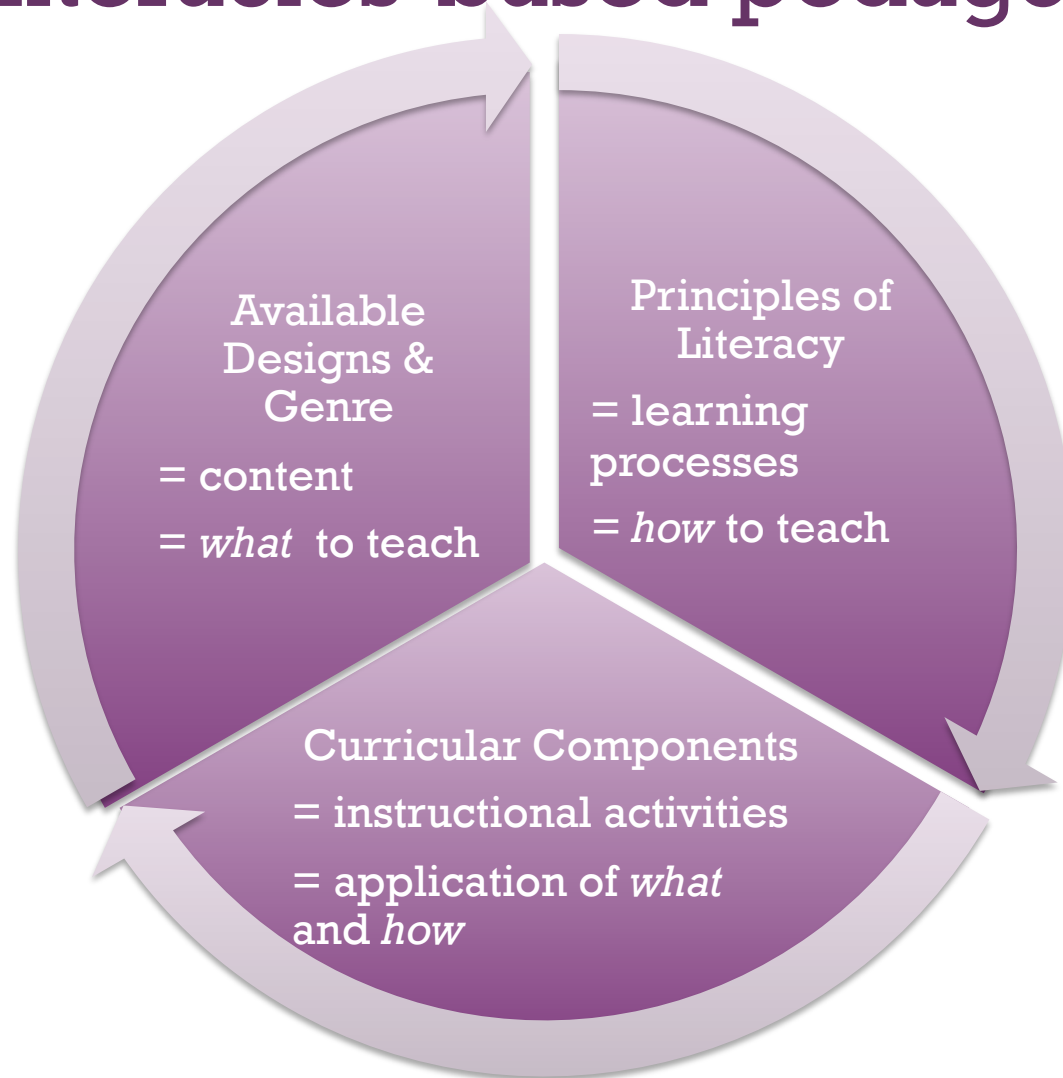


critical framing	peer survey on what you cook to impress guests (writing → speaking)
overt instruction	-brainstorming the elements of a written recipe (conventions/schematic resources) -scanning p. 3 of text to confirm/disconfirm ideas
situated practice	-comprehension of major textual details -reading matrix: raising awareness of form – meaning relationships (p. 3)
transformed practice	- create your own magazine article including a handwritten recipe, a photo sequence w/ recipe instructions and a commentary

Now, your turn

- Which of the four curricular components do you think have traditionally been the focus of language programs and instructional materials? Which have been de-emphasized?
- What consequences does this lead to for learners if certain components are not included in classroom activities and assessment?
- Write a list of key elements of a multiliteracies oriented instruction that you want to explore further. Do you envision any constraints to incorporating these in your language program? If yes, how do you envision negotiating those constraints?

Putting the pieces together: Multiliteracies-based pedagogy



Sources

■ Selected References

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- Kern, R. (2000). *Literacy and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swaffar, J. K., & Arens, K. (2005). *Remapping the foreign language curriculum: An approach through multiple literacies*. New York: Modern Language Association of America
- The New London Group. (1996). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66 (1): 60-92

Your homework

- Select a chapter
- Reread through the chapter reflecting on its activities and materials in light of what we discussed today
- How well do the materials and activities in this chapter align with a multiliteracies approach

Thank you!