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Twenty-First Century Perspectives on Adolescent Literacy and Instruction

Elizabeth C. Lewis
Dickinson College

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10. Twenty-First Century Perspectives on Adolescent Literacy and Instruction

Elizabeth C. Lewis

Abstract

Using a framework that includes the theories of multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996), new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011), and multimodality (Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2010), this chapter draws upon findings from qualitative research to provide 1) an examination of literacy skills and practices commonly associated with adolescence, as well as 2) approaches to effective literacy instruction for diverse learners at the middle and high school levels. In addition, this chapter explores the complex nature of defining the term *literacy*, particularly as it relates to teaching adolescents essential 21st century skills (e.g., collaborative problem-solving, multimodal composition) across content areas. Readers will consider how identifying and valuing the range of literacy practices in which adolescents engage—both within and outside of school—can optimize their personal literacy development and academic achievement. Examples provided throughout this chapter model and invite analysis of the benefits and limitations of incorporating these theories into pedagogy.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, readers will be able to

1. describe the theories of multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality as they relate to adolescent literacy;
2. identify the range of diverse literacy skills and practices of adolescent students;
3. discuss the benefits of and drawbacks to incorporating multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality into literacy instruction for diverse populations of adolescents;
4. design learning activities that support and enhance the development of adolescent students' literacy skills through multiple modes and genres.

Introduction

We live in a multimodal world—one in which individuals must have the skills to identify, interpret, analyze, and communicate through a range of modes, media, and symbols. The ways individuals communicate at home, in school, at work, as well as other public and private places require them to possess “skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully use and adapt to the rapidly changing information and communication technologies and contexts that continuously emerge in our world and influence all areas of our personal and professional lives” (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004, p. 1572). In light of these rapid, constant advancements that require us to adapt our existing skills or adopt new communicative skills, *literacy* as the ability to read and write traditional, print-based texts needs to be redefined (see [Chapter 1](#) in this textbook). Street (1995) proposed expanding the term “literacy” from singular to plural: *literacies*. This change signifies that literacy is more extensive because the socially constructed systems of communication found in different cultures are broader than mere printed language.

Adolescents exhibit a broad and diverse range of abilities, exceptionalities, backgrounds and experiences. Increasingly, they are immersed in layered, multimodal experiences through which they make sense of their lives and the world around them. They negotiate information and forms of communication—many of which are Internet-based (e.g., newsfeeds, online social networks)—that will continue to grow in variety and number. These youth engage a repertoire of new literacy practices to represent identity (e.g., post personal photos on Instagram), develop social connections (e.g., text message with friends), achieve status with others (e.g., accumulate numerous “friends” on Facebook), and consider their future personal and professional goals (e.g., follow businesses and other organizations on Twitter). Adolescents are learning, exercising, and strengthening these skills mostly on their own or with peers, and not necessarily in school. This suggests they experiment with technology more on their own than learn about technology from the expertise of others, since adolescents are not necessarily provided with opportunities to engage in these new literacy practices or demonstrate their levels of proficiency with them in academic settings.

The ways adolescents use digital tools (e.g., smartphones, computers) are examples of how more multimodal, out-of-school literacies differ from the more dominant, academic literacies that students use in school. Moreover, the variety of multimedia sources (the technological forms that deliver information or entertainment such as film, video, and music) that many students engage with outside of school may have significant effects on how and what they learn while *in* school. Research exploring how youths’ out-of-school literacies coexist with more traditional academic literacies (i.e., print-based reading and writing activities) has been on the rise (Compton-Lilly, 2012; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Moje & Tysvaer, 2010). Findings suggest that integrating adolescents’ new literacy practices into instruction may align their in- and out-of-school literacies. Doing so would also enhance teachers’ abilities to better 1) address diverse learning needs and styles, and 2) prepare adolescents for social, academic and professional success.

Three theories in particular are helpful to the process of integrating secondary students’ in- and out-of-school literacy practices into instruction. They include *multiliteracies*, *new literacies*, and *multimodality*. In the sections following this introduction, these theories are defined. Examples drawn from qualitative research studies examining how the theories can be used to design instruction that supports and enhances literacy development are provided.

Multiliteracies Theory

The term *multiliteracies* was devised by The New London Group (1996), an international group of scholars from various English-speaking countries who met in New London, New Hampshire in 1994 to discuss the state of literacy teaching. Their ground-breaking work continues to challenge educators to broaden their perspectives on literacy. Members of this group argued that more traditional approaches to literacy instruction (those grounded in teaching students to read and write using print-based texts) do not accommodate the ever-growing cultural and linguistic diversity that exists world-wide.

The New London Group asserted it is necessary to develop *multiple literacies*; individuals must be able to make meaning from and through the variety of modes (defined by the Group as forms of communication) that continuously appear and shape every aspect of their lives, every day. Multiple literacies, a cornerstone of multiliteracies theory, include the ability to communicate through specific forms outlined as visual, aural, gestural, spatial, linguistic, and numerical (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Various national learning standards and guidelines include goals that reflect multiliteracies theory, for example the [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards](#) (2014); [National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association](#) (2012); [Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#) ([CCSS]; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010), and [Center of Applied Special Technology, Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](#) (2011).

New Literacies Theory

As stated previously, the continued emergence of powerful digital technologies and new media has led to fundamental shifts in how people read, write, and communicate. New media often relate to information communication technologies (ICTs). Some examples of new media include web-based applications for designing presentations such as Prezi and Haiku Deck, interactive video games like Minecraft, and online social platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Each new ICT requires new literacy skills for its effective use. The Internet, for example, requires an increasing skill set related to reading information found on websites, writing email messages, and posting to blogs (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Many adolescents spend considerable time in online social spaces and using multimedia applications on digital devices. These activities generate an expanding number of new literacies, such as creating and sharing personal videos using applications like Vine and Vimeo.

Other definitions of new literacies are even broader and involve reading, interpreting, and creating a variety of print and non-print texts, including modes often associated with the arts (Albers & Harste, 2007). Examples of these include photo essays, graphic novels, and spoken word poetry (see [Chapter 7](#) of this textbook for additional examples). After-school and community-based programs are growing in popularity and provide students with opportunities to develop new literacies related to this broader definition (Chappell, 2009; Lewis, 2013; Vasudevan, Kerr, Hibbert, Fernandez & Park, 2014). Students who participate in such programs

may publish neighborhood newsletters, create sidewalk art, or write for and perform in a local theater group for youth.

Multimodality Theory

Multimodality theory is informed by social semiotics—the field of study related to understanding how people construct meaning from signs and symbols in ways that reflect socially- and culturally-ascribed meanings and practices (Halliday, 1978). Examples of different modes include photography, dance, computer-based communications, painting, and written language. Multimodality specifies that communicating the meaning of an idea so that others will understand it clearly may not be possible through a single mode alone (Jewitt & Kress, 2003).

A simple example of constructing meaning from a multimodal text is a television commercial. For a person to understand what a company is promoting about its product through this medium, he or she must be able to “read” the multiple modes comprising it. These modes may include written and spoken language, gestures made by actors, music, the spatial design of the setting and/or graphics included in the commercial. It is the interplay between the modes and how one processes their meanings that helps him or her understand the commercial’s sales pitch.

Consider another example from the academic realm: even a hard-bound textbook, a more traditional form of printed text, may be multimodal if it contains visuals such as photographs, drawings, or other forms of illustrations. This same textbook may likely have been printed to meet certain standards of page layout, adding to the visual quality of the text. Thus, even a textbook can demonstrate the significance of multimodality as it pertains to communicating information.

Why These Theories Matter in the Design of Adolescent Literacy Instruction

New technologies and forms of communication promote multimodality; adolescents’ out-of-school literacy practices are increasingly varied, digitally-based, and multimodal. In light of this reality, “important changes will be needed in schooling, in teachers, and, especially, in educational beliefs about the status/design of non-print modes as ways of understanding knowledge and representing meaning” (Miller, Thompson, Lauricella, Boyd & McVee, 2012, p. 116). This statement implies that in the formal school setting, students are often restricted to engaging in literacy practices centered on traditional print-based texts rather than a variety that would fortify their multiple literacies. Yet, the dominance of the book as the central medium of communication is becoming replaced by the governance of the screen in schools and beyond (Kress, 2010). Educators cannot discount this shift in modality. Instead, the theories discussed in this chapter provide a way for teachers to consider how new technologies and multimodal texts may be included in adolescents’ academic learning experiences in ways to meet their diverse learning needs, styles, and abilities effectively.

Implementing Multiliteracies, New Literacies, and Multimodality in Adolescent Literacy Instruction

In this section, you will learn how the theories of multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality can be incorporated into designing instruction that supports and enhances the literacy skills and practices of secondary students. Examples from a variety of subject areas are provided in order to show the multi- and inter-disciplinary possibilities of this approach.

As a way of framing each case included in this chapter, here is a list of general considerations teachers should keep in mind prior to and while planning lessons:

- Outline content and skills students will learn.
- Identify curricular goals and learning objectives to be addressed and assessed.
- Accommodate students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and ability-related competencies—as well as their learning needs—when choosing resources and designing activities/assignments.
- Collect information about students' out-of-school literacy practices and integrate them into learning activities, assignments, and assessments.
- Consider which resources and materials are available (e.g., technology, art supplies) for use and which might be necessary to borrow or purchase.

Using Popular Culture as a Lens for Multiliteracies, New Literacies, and Multimodality

Alvermann (2012) asserts that the line between “high culture” (e.g., reading canonical works like Shakespearean plays, attending an opera) and “low culture”—a term representing “popular culture” (e.g., reading comic books, listening to pop music on the radio) has blurred (p. 214). She proposes reconsidering the idea that a clear-cut division between formal and informal learning exists. As such, research findings suggest that out-of- and in-school literacy practices co-exist within classroom settings ([Sefton-Green, 2013](#)). Instruction that connects academic content to multimodal forms of popular culture—those in which students are likely familiar—has the potential to increase their content knowledge learning. In turn, this instructional alignment with learning standards enhances students' college and career readiness by supporting their ability to acquire and share knowledge across varied forms of communication necessary to succeed in both the classroom and workplace (NGA & CCSSO, 2010).

An approach to supporting adolescents' development of literacy skills while attending to their learning needs can take many forms. One is to integrate video excerpts (e.g., television shows,

documentaries) into instruction as a way of tapping into students' prior knowledge when introducing new concepts. A second is to have students make connections between academic content and popular music by having them listen to songs and analyze how song lyrics relate to what they are learning. A third is for students to learn concepts or skills through multiple modes such as visual arts, performance, or poetry. Yet another is to have students view and analyze the distinctive style of a [TED Talk](#), the presentation format used by individuals affiliated with the organization Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED; www.ted.com). The following examples of secondary educators' classroom experiences illustrate these methods (all teachers' names are pseudonyms).

English language arts

This first example comes from an eleventh grade English language arts class taught by a teacher named Alicia Dowling. Part of Alicia's curriculum for this class is an instructional unit on memoir and oral storytelling. To introduce this unit to her students, Alicia first discusses elements of the personal narrative genre with them. Then, in addition to reading and analyzing written pieces by authors Sherman Alexie, Maya Angelou, and Elie Wiesel, students study the genre of oral storytelling. The aim of this two-fold approach is to provide students with the opportunity to share their own personal narratives in both written and spoken form. To provide structure for helping them accomplish the latter, Alicia uses videos found on [YouTube.com](#) to show a variety of oral storytelling methods individuals employ to share personal narratives. While watching each video, students independently complete a worksheet designed to help them evaluate the degree to which the clip reflects elements of the personal narrative genre (e.g., focuses on a significant event, includes vivid description). They then participate in a whole-class discussion about all of the clips viewed and their assessments of them.

In the next phase of this unit, students compose their own personal narratives to be shared in both written and oral form. Several drafts of each student's work undergo both peer- and teacher-review. While they complete their final, type-written drafts, Alicia prepares students for the oral storytelling of their narrative in two ways. First, for one class period students participate in improvisational exercises co-led by Alicia's colleague who teaches drama classes at the school. This instructional strategy draws upon multiliteracies theory in that it helps students develop critical gestural, spatial, viewing, speaking and listening skills. Second, students video record themselves reading their personal narratives, review the recording, and complete a formal written self-assessment of their performance. To fulfill this requirement, students can use their own devices (e.g., smartphone, computer) or borrow a digital camera provided by the school. They transfer the video recording to a flash drive or DVD—both are provided to students if needed—and submit it along with their self-assessment.

Once Alicia provides students with feedback on their recording and self-evaluation, the instructional unit concludes with students performing their personal narratives in class through oral storytelling. In the spirit of using methods traditional to this form, Alicia encourages them to memorize their work so they can focus on elements of performance, but memorization is not a requirement; students are permitted to use note cards or read from a printed copy of their story. This consideration is grounded in Alicia's recognition that her students' levels of ability and comfort with speaking publicly, particularly about their personal experiences, vary widely.

From Alicia's perspective, incorporating multimedia texts into her unit on memoir and storytelling is essential to enhancing her ability to teach these concepts to students, as well as their ability to learn them. The use of video clips from YouTube.com provides students with the opportunity to view, assess, and discuss elements of personal narrative *and* oral storytelling in ways that reading print-based examples alone may not provide. Moreover, using visual texts like these supports the literacy skill development of diverse students, such as students who are resistant but otherwise able readers, and those identified as having an educational disability (e.g., learning disability).

In addition, requiring students to video record themselves reading their personal narratives, and then evaluate their recordings, is critical to their development of literacy skills in two key ways. First, students must engage in new literacy practices using digital tools. Whether they are familiar with these kinds of technology or not, possessing skills related to them is (and will increasingly be) necessary for personal, academic, and professional purposes. Second, in consideration of all three theories underpinning this chapter, having students analyze a visual text of their own creation serves to enhance literacy skills related to reading, viewing, listening, speaking, and spatiality.

Art

This second curricular example is from a seventh grade art class taught by David Pelham. David teaches an eight-week instructional unit centered on the essential question: *How can we represent who we are through art?* Essential questions “aim to stimulate thought, to provoke inquiry, and to spark more questions” and therefore promote the development of evaluative and critical thought (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 106). David firmly asserts that providing opportunities for students to make connections between their lives and art helps them acquire content knowledge in his and other subject areas to greater depth and breadth. Over the course of the eight weeks his students learn about key elements of art and design (i.e., color, shape, texture) while producing what he calls an “identity collage” which serves as a final project. The goal of the identity collage is for students to create a visual text that represents who they are to those who view it.

Traditionally, collage is an art form derived from the French verb *coller* meaning *to paste or glue*. Collages are created by fastening any variety of different materials onto a canvas in a free-form artistic expression of a theme, idea, person, and/or experience. Because the process of designing a collage does not have a formal, rigid set of rules to which one must adhere, it thereby “lends itself to a freeing sense of experimentation and play” (Hafeli, 2015, p. 148). David's choice of this form for the project stems from the rich opportunity to experiment with the artistic elements it provides his students. As such, they choose from a wide assortment of supplies to create their identity collages using poster board as the canvas. Materials include words and images cut or torn out from magazines, newspapers, and brochures; pictures downloaded and printed from websites; stickers; photographs; self-created sketches, paintings, and/or drawings; fabric; and glitter and sequins.

In the first phase of the unit, David has students write informal, short-length responses to a series of prompts aimed at helping them brainstorm specific aspects of their identity. They write about

their personality traits, memorable experiences, cultural background, family history, likes/dislikes, talents, hopes, dreams, fears, values, and beliefs. Though it may seem unconventional to introduce the genre of personal writing into art instruction, David views this series of responses as a blueprint to help students design their collages; these written responses guide the process of choosing which aspects of their identity they wish to represent, as well as the materials they feel will do so most effectively.

In his next phase of instruction, David shows students segments of Internet videos that highlight collage art and artists. For example, David provides an overview of this art form by having students watch a brief introductory video entitled [Amazing Collage Art by Derek Gores](#). In the video, artist Derek Gores describes to viewers the basic approach he takes to create collages and demonstrates techniques that others can use in their own design processes. At the video's conclusion, David asks his students to summarize verbally the main ideas related to collage as an art form presented by Gores. David then shows excerpts of other online videos ([Start to Finish: Collage Art Journal Page Process Video](#), [Art Journal Page: Collage with Magazine Cutouts](#), and [Collage Perspectives at Swarthmore College](#)) that model the freedom in and variety of creating pieces in this art form.

To help students decide on the different techniques they will use to create their collages, David facilitates a [shared inquiry](#) activity based on the series of videos they viewed. The method of shared inquiry promotes interpretive and critical thinking skills through the posing of three distinct types of questions about a text: factual, interpretive, and evaluative. Following this model of instruction's basic framework, David first asks questions requiring students to recall the attributes of *collage* that they learned about (factual). Next, he poses questions that invite students to infer the meaning behind what the artists state about the art form in general as well as their own artistic creations, specifically (interpretive). Finally, David asks his students higher-level, probing questions that require them to assess artists' points comparatively through their own beliefs and perspectives (evaluative).

As his students move into the hands-on phase of the unit, David engages them in small group and whole class discussions about how characteristics of different materials convey a variety of ideas, experiences, moods, and feelings. For instance, David asks his class to share points of view about what the color "blue" in all its different shades might be used to communicate or symbolize. Contributions nearly always include "the sky," "the ocean," "sadness," and feeling "peaceful." This kind of collaborative learning experience provides students with the opportunity to develop and exercise key decision-making strategies related to the design process like choosing materials based on colors, textures, and images.

When the identity collages are complete, students share their work with each other through a variation of the cooperative learning strategy known as a [gallery walk](#). Students take turns presenting their artwork to small groups of their classmates who travel around the classroom to view and talk about their pieces with each other. David explains that this approach fosters students' development of several essential literacy skills including the ability to interpret, analyze, and discuss a variety of texts. Furthermore, his focus on providing students with opportunities to develop explicit literacy skills is complemented by his attention to ensuring they meet [national core arts standards](#). Accordingly, David expects his students will be able to

“synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experience to make art” ([National Coalition for Core Arts Standards](#), 2014, p. 13) by the end of the instructional unit on collage.

Social Studies

The next examples are from an eighth grade U.S. History class. Social studies educator Marie Simon finds that it can be difficult for students to comprehensively understand the importance of historical events and the individuals involved in them. She attributes this to the feelings of detachment often exhibited by students who perceive the content information to be static and disconnected from their lives. To enhance her students’ learning, Marie often includes multimodal resources such as video “vignettes” and songs in her lessons. In one case, to help her students understand the impact that several noteworthy figures had on the Industrial Period in the United States, she shows them several short excerpts from the History Channel’s series, [The Men Who Built America](#). Marie notes that her students gain a clearer understanding of the influences people like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Henry Ford had on the United States’ emergence as a global manufacturing giant from watching the series. By comparing summative assessment results (e.g., end-of-unit tests), she concludes that learning content through a variety of multimodal, multimedia texts and strategies optimizes students’ enduring understanding more than traditional textbook-based learning alone.

In another example, Marie implements two key strategies to enhance her students’ literacy skills and content knowledge acquisition while learning about Westward Expansion in the U.S. in the 1800s. First, students participate in a simulation pertaining to the Transcontinental Railroad. Dividing her class into two teams, Marie has students “build” the railroad themselves using paper, scissors, tape and other materials. Each team starts from opposite ends of the expansive hallway outside of the classroom to lay “tracks” across the floor in order to achieve the objective of joining its half of the railway with that of the other team. To experience how difficult it was to engineer the construction of the Railroad across such an expanse of land given the severely limited means of communication at that time in history, students are only permitted to speak to those on their own team; they are not allowed to communicate or work with members of the opposite team. Marie explains that this activity requires students to employ essential skills related to reading, speaking, listening, problem-solving, and collaboration consistent with multiliteracies.

Marie’s second instructional strategy facilitates students’ development of *critical literacy* (McLaren, 1994). Briefly, critical literacy relates to one’s ability to analyze texts from varied perspectives in order to recognize whose experiences and points-of-view are included within them, whose are *excluded*, and what the social, historical, and political implications of such inclusions *and* exclusions are. To illustrate, in order to complement what they have learned about the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, students listen to the American folk song, [I’ve Been Working on the Railroad](#). Next, they read its lyrics and analyze how the song illuminates both positive and controversial aspects of this historical time period in the U.S. Specifically, students analyze how the lyrics 1) represent the day-to-day exhausting work that comprised the experience of building the extensive railway system but also 2) signify racism toward African American laborers working to construct it.

Marie's attention to students' multiple literacies and incorporation of multimodal texts into her teaching further demonstrates how doing so can support adolescents' development of literacy skills essential to their learning. Infusing video excerpts, simulations, and songs into instruction can enhance students' content knowledge acquisition more deeply than using only traditional, print-based texts and materials (e.g., textbooks, worksheets). In turn, this approach serves to augment literacy skill development of students for whom learning through traditional texts and materials presents significant difficulties like, for example, English language learners or individuals with a sensory impairment (e.g., low vision or blindness).

Science

Evan Roberts, a high school physics teacher, often begins his lessons with a short one- to two-minute excerpt from popular television series such as the Discovery Channel's [Myth Busters](#) and the History Channel's [Top Gear](#). In his perspective, having students view a physics-related concept in a real world situation like those demonstrated in episodes from these and similar series provides them with the opportunity to develop literacy skills critical to their learning. Evan chooses excerpts that illustrate concepts such as mechanical energy and Newton's Laws of Motion. After watching these excerpts, Evan's students participate in a range of learning activities related to the content presented in the video clips.

For example, to introduce the concept of velocity Evan uses a *Myth Busters* excerpt that presents a scenario addressing the question: *Which will drop faster, a bullet fired or a bullet dropped?* Students complete a [Think-Pair-Share](#) activity immediately after watching the video excerpt. Initially, students individually *think* of answers to a short set of questions prompting them to describe what they viewed. Then, in *pairs*, students use their answers and knowledge of physics to brainstorm hypotheses about the scenario presented in the clip. Finally, a whole class discussion in which each pair *shares* its hypothesis provides students with the opportunity to hone essential skills related to listening, speaking, and thinking analytically while considering the plausibility of each.

Evan capitalizes on his students' interests in popular television shows by incorporating them into his teaching. He finds that students are more highly engaged when concepts are introduced through a short video segment and that the visual representation itself also provides an important scaffold for what is usually the next phase of his lessons: a hands-on experiment conducted by the students. Working in small groups, Evan's students design and carry out an experiment to investigate the hypotheses devised during the Think-Pair-Share activity. Groups use materials including construction paper, duct tape, markers, and yardsticks to create ramps down which ball bearings can be rolled and their speed/distance measured. Utilizing technology provided by the school, students record and analyze their experiments with GoPro digital cameras. In the final stage of this lesson, Evan and his class debrief about the experiment and its results.

This example demonstrates how incorporating multimedia texts can support the development of literacy skills critical to adolescents' learning processes. Specifically, consider how having students 1) view a video excerpt of a real world example of a physics concept, 2) collaborate with classmates to devise hypotheses about it, 3) evaluate the hypotheses collectively, then 4) design experiments and debrief on the tested hypotheses provides a chance to apply content

knowledge authentically, demonstrate higher engagement, and synthesize ideas arguably more significantly than textbook-based instruction alone.

Final Considerations

The instructional decisions and inclusions that Alicia, David, Marie, and Evan made while designing their lessons exemplify how the theories of multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality can support the literacy skill development of adolescents who have a diverse range of learning needs, styles, and abilities. In addition, it is important to note that teachers should consider several factors if they plan on implementing this framework in their own instructional design processes. Some are discussed below.

First, it is critical to have knowledge of the degree to which students have access to digital tools and technology outside of school. A common false assumption is that *all* students in classes have access to computers at home or own smart devices (e.g., cell phones, electronic tablets). Closely related to the first consideration, teachers must also understand their students' levels of access to, as well as familiarity and competence with, the kinds of technology they wish to incorporate into their pedagogy. In the English language arts example, Alicia made sure that all of her students were capable of using the device of their choice to record themselves reading their personal narratives. In addition, she ensured all students knew the process they needed to follow in order to transfer the recording to flash drive or DVD; those who were unsure met with her after school or during a free class period so she could teach them how to do so. Also, it is essential that educators provide uniform access to technological tools and resources—and, therefore, the means with which to gain experience and skills using them—to *all* students. These opportunities are all the more critical for students who have limited or no access to such resources, and the school setting may be the *only* place they gain such exposure and experience.

Another consideration essential for teachers is to consider their own levels of comfort and competence with digital tools and technology. All four teachers described in this chapter were familiar with and felt confident using a variety of technology including computers, digital cameras, and web-based resources. Not all educators may feel as self-assured or capable with these kinds of multimodal/media resources; however, instead of excluding instructional strategies, activities, and assignments that require related skills and materials, deciding to incorporate them can provide a valuable opportunity to connect with students through their out-of-school literacy practices. Inviting students to share their knowledge of and expertise with new and digital technologies provides them with a chance to share the authoritative role in the classroom and cultivates an authentic community of learners.

With regard to resources available through schools, addressing multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality in instructional design need not require abundant and the most up-to-date technological advancements. In Evan's case, his school district was able to provide GoPro cameras, an example of state-of-the-art technology, for classroom use; however, in David's case, though he used video excerpts of artists discussing and demonstrating *collage* to model this art form for his students, their final projects were nearly exclusively comprised of art-based materials. These examples emphasize that when educators incorporate these theoretical

constructs into their instruction using a variety of strategies and materials—including those that require *no* technology—the potential to enhance literacy instruction for adolescents is significant. Teaching and learning objectives should drive educators’ decisions about which materials and resources are most appropriate to implement. Additional examples of modifications illustrating how these three theories can be incorporated into instruction are included in Table 1.

Summary

This chapter explored adolescent literacy and literacy instruction from a 21st century perspective. The three theories of multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality underpinned the information and analyses presented. The point that nearly all aspects of life—personal, social, academic and professional—will be increasingly influenced by new technologies and literacy skills related to them is clear, and therefore, educators must consider instructional practices that will best prepare students for present and future success.

In combination, the three theories described in this chapter are a useful framework with which to design effective literacy instruction for adolescents. Multiliteracies theory offers the perspective that as new technologies and literacy practices emerge, they require a growing variety of skills—many of which have yet to be considered. The theory of new literacies provides a complementary lens through which students’ out-of-school literacy practices—particularly ones related to forms of popular culture—should be examined. Consequently, educators should find relevant ways to include them in the teaching and learning that occurs in their classrooms. Multimodality theory provides a context that represents day-to-day life as an on-going process of comprehending and communicating through the countless, prevalent modes we encounter. Finally, teachers should consider the range of strategies and resources available to them to incorporate into their literacy instruction.

Table 1. Example Instructional Modifications Incorporating Multimodality, New Literacies, and Multiliteracies

Discipline/Subject Area & Grade Level	Learning Standard Addressed (with link to source)	Instructional Unit & Specific Learning Task (e.g., activity, assignment)	Suggested Materials/Supplies
Family & Consumer Sciences, High School (gr. 9-12)	FSDN1.c.18.h: Students will be able to critique the selection of foods to promote a healthy lifestyle. Wisconsin Standards for Family & Consumer Sciences	<i>Health & Wellness:</i> As a whole class or small group project, students create a wiki webpage or website to inform others about how to select healthy foods and use	Wiki and webpage creation resources (free): ^a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBworks • Weebly • Wikispaces • Wix

Table 1. Example Instructional Modifications Incorporating Multimodality, New Literacies, and Multiliteracies

Discipline/Subject Area & Grade Level	Learning Standard Addressed (with link to source)	Instructional Unit & Specific Learning Task (e.g., activity, assignment)	Suggested Materials/Supplies
Physical Education, High School (gr. 9-12)	Standard 3 (Overview): Demonstrate knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity. 3.7 (Specific): Students will be able to explain how to select and modify physical activities to allow for participation of children, the elderly, and individuals with special needs. California Standards for Physical Education	<p>them in daily meal preparation. Students could also include articles they have written, links to other online resources, and recipes.</p> <p><i>Dance:</i> Students choose a dance form from a variety learned in class (e.g., ballet, folk, hip hop, jazz) and create a short instructional video demonstrating two to three simple patterns of movement attributed to the form. Students submit a formal written summary describing one modification for each of the following individuals: a child in kindergarten, an elderly person, and a young adult with a physical or sensory disability.</p>	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing and accessories appropriate for the dance form (e.g., tap shoes, sneakers) • digital camera • computer • teacher-selected print-based & digital resources to inform students' understanding of how to modify physical activities to allow for participation of individuals with diverse attributes/needs.

Table 1. Example Instructional Modifications Incorporating Multimodality, New Literacies, and Multiliteracies

Discipline/Subject Area & Grade Level	Learning Standard Addressed (with link to source)	Instructional Unit & Specific Learning Task (e.g., activity, assignment)	Suggested Materials/Supplies
Mathematics, Middle School (gr. 6-8)	CCSS.Math. Content.7.G.A.2: Draw (freehand, with ruler and protractor, and with technology) geometric shapes with given conditions. Focus on constructing triangles from three measures of angles or sides, noticing when the conditions determine a unique triangle, more than one triangle, or no triangle. Common Core State Standards for Mathematical Practice, Grade 7	<i>Geometry:</i> To demonstrate their understanding of the geometric characteristics of triangles, students create an interactive notebook (e.g., accordion fold book, tri-fold book) to include definitions, diagrams, and images of three different types of triangles. Students list and describe the triangle types on the left side of each accordion section, while on the right side, they add diagrams, hand-drawn and/or digitally-created examples. Additional examples could be cut from magazines, newspapers, and brochures and pasted into the book.	Art-based resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction paper • markers, colored pencils • stapler, tape • drawing paper • rulers • protractors • pencils, pens • newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers

Note. The learning standards listed for each example have specific title indicators that range in complexity of what they signify. The standard for physical education is the simplest in that it is stated as “Standard 3” and “3.7,” respectively. The standard for family and consumer sciences (FSDN1.c.18.h) is more complex and designates the following information: FS = the discipline

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addressed (i.e., Foundation Standard), DN = the content area (i.e., Diagnostic Services), 1 = the specific standard indicating the knowledge or skill students are expected to acquire, c = a restatement of the specific standard in terminology more applicable to instructional planning, 1 = performance indicator to measure the degree the standard has been met, and h = the grade band (high school).

^a School district policies on students’ use of Internet-based instructional resources and digital platforms (like those listed here) should be consulted during the process of choosing one for this kind of project.

Questions and Activities

1. Create a personal inventory of (a) your learning needs/styles, and (b) the multimodality and new literacies you encounter in your daily life. Over the course of a day, keep a list of what you read, write, view, say, hear, and do that can be categorized as multimodal as you understand the term after reading this chapter. Examples could include websites you visit, advertisements you read, and even meetings you attend. After you have completed the list, read it and do the following:
 - Identify patterns of multimodality across texts, actions, words, images, etc.
 - Analyze the literacy skills and practices you employed in order to understand and communicate information across contexts (e.g., social, academic, professional).
 - Reflect on where you learned the skills and practices you enacted related to the previous bullet point. Was it in school, at home, in the workplace? In addition, from whom or what did you learn them—family members, friends, teachers, popular culture (e.g., movies, celebrities, music videos)?
 - Finally, which of your literacy skills and practices would you categorize to be your strongest and/or those you engage in most frequently over the course of a day (and weakest/engage in least)? Which ones would be privileged—and which discounted—in the traditional school setting? For any or all of your answers here, is this fair practice? Why or why not?
2. Conduct an interview with an adolescent to learn about his or her (a) learning needs/styles, and (b) in- and out-of-school literacy practices/skills. This could be a friend, relative in your family, or even a student in a school setting in which you work or study. Devise six to eight questions that you believe will generate discussion about the reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing he or she does in daily life. If appropriate, try having him or her use some of the analyzing and categorizing strategies outlined in the previous activity. Write up a summary of the interview, and then compare what you have learned about adolescent literacy skills/practices to the personal inventory you created.

3. Choose a concept from your content area to plan a lesson you could implement in a middle or high school level class. Use the two criteria below to incorporate elements of multiliteracies, new literacies, and multimodality into the instructional design:
 - Choose one to two multimodal texts that could support/enhance students' content knowledge acquisition and development of literacy skills while considering a diverse range of abilities, exceptionalities, and backgrounds. Consider videos, songs, Internet-based resources, and artwork.
 - Design a learning activity that draws upon students' out-of-school literacy practices in ways that will enhance their understanding of content information and increase their levels of engagement, motivation, and participation (e.g., translating an excerpt from a classic piece of literature into text message form or a Facebook post).
 - Create an assignment that requires students to employ multiple literacy skills to complete it, such as reading an article about a topic, conducting an Internet search to find and write up supplemental information about it, and create an artistic representation of what he or she learned to be shared with the class.

Web Resources

- Curriculum and instruction resources
<http://web.archive.org/web/20150624064057/http://www.21stcenturyschools.com:80/Curriculum.htm>
- Digital Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/view/>
- Literacies for the Digital Age <http://www.schrockguide.net/literacy-in-the-digital-age.html>
- National Center on Universal Design for Learning Resource Library
http://www.udlcenter.org/resource_library
- *New learning: Transformational designs for pedagogy and assessment.*
<http://newlearningonline.com/multiliteracies>
- Study Guides from The *History Channel* website
<http://www.history.com/shows/classroom/articles/study-guides-2>
- Technology integration <http://www.edutopia.org/technology-integration>

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