

Literacies and Transversal Competencies

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Literacies and Transversal Competencies

Theo Hug

*As a rule, pictures are difficult to read,
except at home.*
Gunther Kress, 2007

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Overview

- Points of Departure
- From Literacy to Literacies:
A Manifold of Conceptualizations
- For Example:
Visual Literacy and/or Visual Competence and more
- Towards Conceptualizations Beyond Literacies –
Transversal Competencies
- Conclusion

*literacy, media literacy
and/or multiliteracies,
transliteracies,
visual competence
and/or ...*



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Perspectives for describing today's societal dynamics in terms of ...

- “scapes” (Appadurai 1996)
- “hyphenated” descriptions of society
- forms of capital(ism)
- ...

... and different epistemological horizons of reflection

- pictorial turn(s)
- cultural turn(s)
- mediatic turn(s)
- ...

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A Manifold of Literacies and Conceptualizations of Literacy




Enhancements from the “ability to read and write” to

- different key understandings in various disciplines
- a variety of compound versions from numerical, visual and musical to family and environmental to emotional and sexual literacies
- referring to a wide range of phenomena such as abilities, competencies, crafts, mind-sets, resources, technologies, affordances, cultures, agency, participation, identity, etc.
- 'multiliteracies' (The New London Group 2000), 'new literacies' (Jenkins et al. 2006, Hobbs 2008) or 'transliteracies' (Thomas et al. 2007)

Metaphorical enhancements as part of the problem and/or solution?

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Aspects of visual literacy and/or competence

- Advance of visuals/visuality in human communication: qualitative and quantitative changes
- New dominances of the image the medium of the screen: “These two together are producing a revolution in the uses and effects of literacy and of associated means for representing and communicating at every level and in every domain.” (Kress 2003, p. 1)
- Moreover, new forms of the realization of imaginary images are being developed
 - Possibility of “the creation of living images” → “a new form of empire” (W. J. T. Mitchell 2005)
 - Biocybernetics

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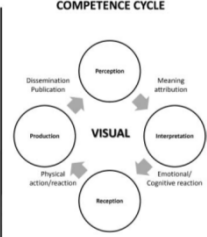
Visual literacy/competence

- “Visuelle Kompetenz” and “Bildkompetenz” (sensu Doelker 2002)
 - Image-semantic layer model
 - Skills necessary for exploring the tectonics of meanings and qualities of visuals
 - German “Literalität”: literality vs. literacy
 - Broad definition of “reading” vs. narrow “literacy approach”
- Visual competence cycle (cf. Müller 2008)
- „Competencies of Images“ (cf. Ratsch et al.)

CONTEXT LEVELS

- I Personal/individual level; Dispositional influence
- II Situational level; Influences of the specific situation
- III Systemic level; Social, cultural, political context

COMPETENCE CYCLE



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„Reading“ pictures – examples (1/4)




„Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols“ (1651), by David Bailly
(<http://www.cab.u-szeged.hu/cgfa/b/p-bailly1.htm>)

„Reading“ pictures – examples (2/4)

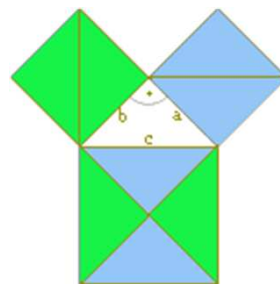



„Reading“ pictures – examples (3a/4)



by tanakawho, creative commons licensed, 
(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/28481088@N00/2205496095/>)




„Reading“ pictures – examples (3b/4)



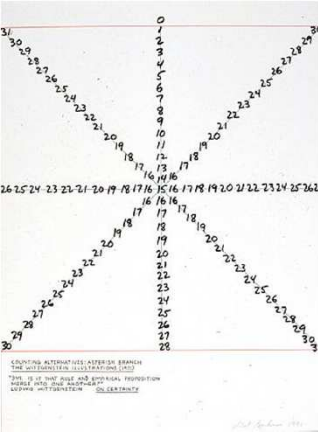
by tanakawho, creative commons licensed, 
(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/28481088@N00/2205496095/>)

by Thomas Weth
(http://www.didmath.ewf.uni-erlangen.de/Verschie/Gut_Ref/Pythago/P2.html)

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„Reading“ pictures – examples (4/4)






COUNTING ALTERNATIVES: AFTER BENSON
THE WITTGENSTEIN ILLUSTRATIONS (2012)
2012. IT IS NOT NEAR AND NEAR ENOUGH. PROPOSITION
WELLES INTO THE WORLD AS A WHOLE
WELLES UNTERSTREICHUNG. GÖTTENBERG

309. Is it that rule and empirical proposition merge into one another?
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 1969

Counting Alternatives
(The Wittgenstein Illustrations, Mel Bochner, 1991)

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Discussion - Beyond Literacies?

- metaphorical expansion as problem
- re-evaluation of a picture theory of reason (cf. Lüdeking 1990, Nyíri 2001)
- Need of new naming practices
 1. words that name resources for representing and their potential – speech, writing, image, gesture;
 2. words that name the use of the resources in the production of the message – literacy, oracy, signing, numeracy, (aspects of) 'computer literacy' and of 'media literacy', 'internet-literacy'; and
 3. words that name the involvement of the resources for the dissemination of meanings as message – internet publishing, as one instance." (Kress 2003, p. 23)
- Moreover, there is a need of
 - the reappraisal of epistemic aspects related to pictures/images, language/speech, music/sound and numbers/mathematical symbols
 - clarification of characteristics of literacy, oracy, picturacy, listening competence ("audacy") and numeracy/mathemacy as well as their relations, prospects and limitations

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Transversal competencies – A preliminary conclusion

- various strategies for clarification (cf. Street/Lefstein 2007, p. 46-47)
- One option of dealing with 'transmedial network cultures' (cf. Böhme 2006) and 'multimodal ensembles' (Kress 2010) consists in the conceptualization and cultivation of transversal competencies such as
 - related to context-sensitive and polylogical approaches (cf. Wimmer 2002)
 - framing competencies and abilities of moving in and between different life-worlds
 - metaphorical competencies (cf. Niedermair 2000)
 - reflecting and designing viable modes of binding and abilities of dealing with affect-logical dynamics (sensu Ciampi)
 - related to the creation, analysis and reflection of the aesthetics of networked forms
 - ability to deal with various modes of referencing and to orientate oneself between the priorities of concrete and abstract, specific and general, particular and holistic claims
- Question the "[orientation of] the internal differentiation of a knowledge system [...] on the individual media and their apparatuses" (Leschke 2010)

Consequences for media education (Medienbildung)

- designing concepts of education as concepts of media education
- "education as bricolage" as tertium datur between "certain" long term knowledge and harmonious ideals vs. technology driven "digital fluency" and "Flickering Minds" (Oppenheimer 2003)
- education as (self-)reflective processes of
 - coming to know, reflect, orientate and act in plural constellations,
 - overcoming discursive constraints,
 - orchestrating learning and competence development as well as development of literacies, numeracies, picturacies
- overcoming schools as a "monomedial provinces" and "literal countercultures" (Böhme 2006)
- overcoming the (now obsolete) opposition between technophobic humanities and techno-euphoric natural/engineering sciences



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