

Teaching Visual Literacy Using Hypertextual Books
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1. Words Express Meaning through Typesetting: The Visual-Text

- 📖 *Meanwhile* (Feiffer, 1997)
- 📖 *Froggy Gets Dressed* (London, 1994)
- 📖 *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* (Raschka, 1992)
- 📖 *Sweet Corn Poems* (Stevenson, 1995)
- 📖 *Arnie the Doughnut* (Keller, 2003)

2. Interactive Narration: The Reader/Writer

- 📖 *The Stinky Cheese Man* (Scieszka, 2002) [dedication page]
- 📖 *A Street Called Home* (Robinson, 1997)
- 📖 *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Willems, 2003)
- 📖 *What James Likes Best* (Schwartz, 2003)
- 📖 *Follow the Line through the House* (Ljungkvist, 2007)

3. Images Expand Meaning: Meaning Construction via Synergy of Images and Words

- 📖 *Casey at Bat* (Bing, 2000)
- 📖 *Chester* (Watt, 2007)
- 📖 *Starry Messenger* (Sís, 1996)
- 📖 *Flicker Flash* (Graham, 1999)
- 📖 *Meow Ruff* (Sidman, 2006)

4. Multiple Perspectives: The Sociocultural Context and Semiotic Scaffolds

- 📖 *Black & White* (Macaulay, 1990)
- 📖 *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof* (Beeler, 1998)
- 📖 *The Stinky Cheese Man* (Scieszka, 2002) [The Very Ugly Duckling]
- 📖 *Loki & Alex* (Smith, 2001)
- 📖 *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998)

Research Questions

The overall purpose of our research is to examine the ways in which children's engagement with visual-text relations can shape their early literacy learning. Additional objectives are to:

1. Explore the similarities and differences between traditional, print-based literacy practices and visual literacies in order to update early literacy instruction.
2. Document the learning contexts that facilitate literacy education in a visual age, including:
 - a. The physical environment of the classroom and how it is mediated
 - b. The learning tools and activities used
 - c. The involvement of peer learners in shaping new meaning
 - d. The role of the teacher in scaffolding meaning construction of visual-texts

Social Semiotics and Sociocultural Theories

In order to update the traditional model of reading, we can begin by thinking of "text" as involving more than the printed word, as many sociocultural theorists already have (e.g., Gee, 1991; Pérez, 1998). The texts children encounter today embody cues for reading that extend beyond the letters and words on the page, requiring readers to (inter)actively focus on textual elements beyond the decoding of print. To further understand the textual elements that extend, yet often embrace, printed text, I offer semiotic and sociocultural definitions of *mode*, *multimodal*, and *visual-texts* to help us remix our model of reading comprehension.

Mode: Bezemer & Kress (2008) define a mode as a "socially and culturally shaped resource for meaning making" (p. 171). Beyond the printed word, there are numerous other socially and culturally shaped modes of communication and representation that can be counted as a part of the "text" to be "read," including, but not limited to, images, talk, directional lines, gestures, or icons. This definition "mode" helps us educationally to note that children have numerous resources to draw upon as they engage in literacy learning.

Multimodal: The use of computerized type design and photomechanical printing technologies create multimodal texts with various levels of meaning, as evidenced in some children's literature (Hammerberg [Hassett], 2001; Hassett & Schieble, 2007). Rather than having simple, static images paired with standardized alphabetic print, multimodal texts take on dynamically interactive elements. Thus, being able to navigate the internet, use digital media, or even read a children's book involves being able to decode and comprehend alphabetic print in conjunction with other socially and culturally shaped forms of representation, that is, in conjunction with multiple modes.

Visual-text: I use the term "visual-text" to refer to the network of semiotic systems available within texts that contain and combine images and print. In semiotic terms, print itself can take on multiple modes of meaning through visual design and synergy with images (Dresang, 1999; Hammerberg [Hassett], 2001; Hassett, 2006; Sipe, 1998). Unless the print is literally "pushed off the page" (Kress, 1998, p. 57), font itself can be a mode, because the way the word looks and "feels" on the page contains more meaning than the word itself.