NEW LITERACIES AND NEW KNOWLEDGE HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE EDUCATED PERSON IN XXI TECHNOLOGICAL ERA

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Annotation: *The article is exceptional among others for it explaining the meaning of the literate person in history and now. It contains scientific data about how American education passed out different literacy periods and how multimedia learning conjoined to form ideal education in today's world. Knowing how to use computer and being able to read media texts became simple part of a literate person. However, the article by counting out the features of educated person, it doesn't restrain with one specific norm, but expounds that literacy matters a lot and every person knows himself the ends of his literacy skill individually.*

Key words: *literacy, multimedia learning, periods, meaning-making, new communications, skills.*

For centuries, literacy was limited to learning to read and write and was based on a standard set of rules. And in the minds of the public, the term "literate" was synonymous with the term "educated." Today, due to the complication of forms and channels of communication, and changes in the cultural and linguistic diversity of the world, the concept of literacy has expanded. In other words, the elevation of literacy-associated knowledge over other forms of knowledge has long been a part of colonial projects (Piller, 2017).

According to Alexander and Fox (2004), American education has witnessed distinct periods each of which focused on specific literacy skills (see Table 1). As this theory suggests, the mid of twentieth century starts with Conditioned Learning when learning theory was largely based on the study of behavior. During Natural Learning, it was believed that students must learn "naturally" similarly to how spoken language is acquired by being exposed to language opportunities. Then, there was shift to cognitive learning in the era of Information Processing in which factors such as attention, thinking strategies, and knowledge organization were recognized as important to make meaning of what students learn. In the period of Socio-cultural Learning, the social and cultural aspects of learning became a focus. Finally, there is Engaged Learning period that is still in progress. In this period, we are now mostly focusing on the use of digital literacies (such as websites, audio, video, and other forms of technology-based communication) that is also considered as multimedia learning.

Table 1. Historical Perspective on Reading Research (Alexander and Fox, 2004)

Era	Duration	Focus
Conditioned Learning	1950-1965	Teaching and reinforcing of basic reading skills, such as word decoding

Natural Learning	1966-1975	Facilitating language experiences to help children make meaning
Information Processing	1976-1985	Using cognitive processes to make meaning
Socio-cultural Learning	1986-1995	Incorporating cultural factors to make meaning
Engaged Learning	1996-?	Integrating literacy across the lifespan and within multiple context

The advent of technology has enabled a shift from verbal learning to pictorial (i.e. multimedia learning) that includes visual ways of presenting information via videos, animations, graphs and so on. (Richard E. Mayer, 2009). As we are living in the era of communication technology, the above-mentioned shift in education has been inevitable since knowledge acquisition happens better and more effectively with visuals rather than words and thus, more attention is being paid to multimedia learning in this new era of learning suggested by Alexander and Fox.

Moreover, in recent decades, projects in the fields of scientific and technological literacy have been increasingly implemented (Smith, 2008), the reason for which has been the ubiquity of the ability to use information and use modern scientific and technological resources for communication. Here it would be very useful to mention the emergence of the term "media literacy", which, together with audiovisual literacy, implies the ability of a person to work with media products, which means that an individual must learn to read and evaluate media texts (Mayer, 2009). As for computer literacy, it means the ability of a person, firstly, to realize the need for information, and secondly, to have the skill of effective search, evaluation, and use following ethical standards.

And yet, what about literacy? Should it be considered almost a universal way to distinguish an educated person from a knowledgeable one? This is up to each individual. One thing is true: the role of literacy in a civilized society is very great. When a skilled specialist says ("The country needs competent engineers"), it is, of course, not primarily about spelling and punctuation literacy. It is not for nothing that the word literate has a rich synonymous range in almost all speech spheres: in the scientific field - qualified, competent; in art - virtuoso, skillful, artistic, knowledgeable; in professional - informed, experienced. And common literary synonyms - knowledgeable, skillful. You can also add that when we want to say about the good, the best, the right, and the excellent, we usually used the word literate. So, there is no need to prove the obvious: literacy matters a lot. Competently done work or a competent text can be compared with harmony in music, with harmony in architecture. Few people like unsteady walls of buildings. The choice, as always, is the person's, he or she can consider literacy as a private and

insignificant matter or can consider it as an important cultural component of personality.

"Literacy educators and students must see themselves as active participants in social change, as learners and students who can be active designers - makers – of social future." (The new London Group, 1996). Literacy nowadays is designed by the demands of generation, not what is required to be known to be considered as a literate person.

In the past literacy was considered as a singular term of a basic level of competency in reading and writing. The term widens in 90s when mass media and internet enters education, this is when inequalities in education started to grow and something needed to be done in literacy pedagogy to address it. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) The New London group had introduced two main arguments concerning the new meaning of literacy. The first relates to the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on. This is particularly important in the mass media, multimedia, and in an electronic hypermedia.

Second, as a teacher of English I am mainly interested in the term "multiliteracies" as a way to focus on the realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness. 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 using multiple languages, multiple English, and communication patterns that more frequently cross cultural, community, and national boundaries.

If talking about nowadays, new communications media are reshaping the way we use language. When technologies of meaning are changing so rapidly, there cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitute the ends of literacy learning, however taught (Mayer, 2009). Once I read a motivational article about talented people, at the end of the article there was a statement saying: "If you judge fish by it's ability to climb trees it will always remain dumb and unskillful". This closely relates to the understanding of literacy today.

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