

The notion of literacy: Extended conceptualization or new constructs

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construct

What is literacy?

Development of reading and writing skills, e.g., focus on phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension.

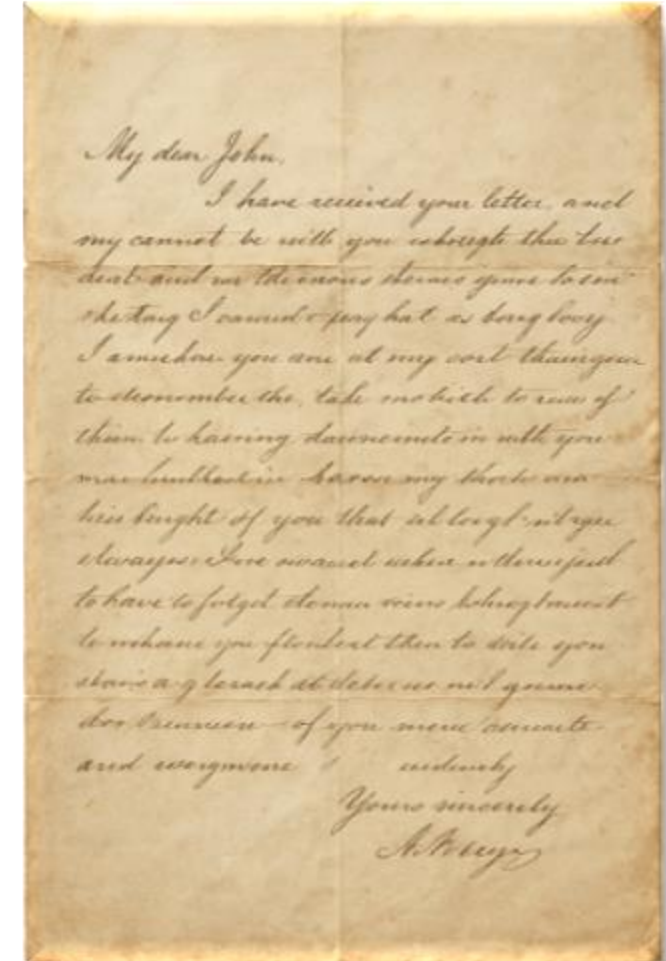
lexico-syntactic = knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure

graphophonic knowledge = cognitive skills including encoding & decoding of language in print (or electronically) (Perry, 2012)

Context-dependent aspects of literacy

cultural knowledge = beliefs, values, and expectations

written genre knowledge = textual features, uses, purposes for use, and organization of given genres. (Perry, 2012)



...literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals.

(Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p.8)

cognitive

socio-cultural

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What has come to be termed the “New Literacy Studies” (NLS) (Gee, 1991; Street, 1996) represents a new tradition in considering the nature of literacy, focusing not so much on acquisition of skills, as in dominant approaches, but rather on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice (Street, 1985).

(Street, 2003)

Literacy as a social practice

1. Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
2. There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
3. Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others.
4. Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
5. Literacy is historically situated.
6. Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.

Different literacies associated with different domains of life:

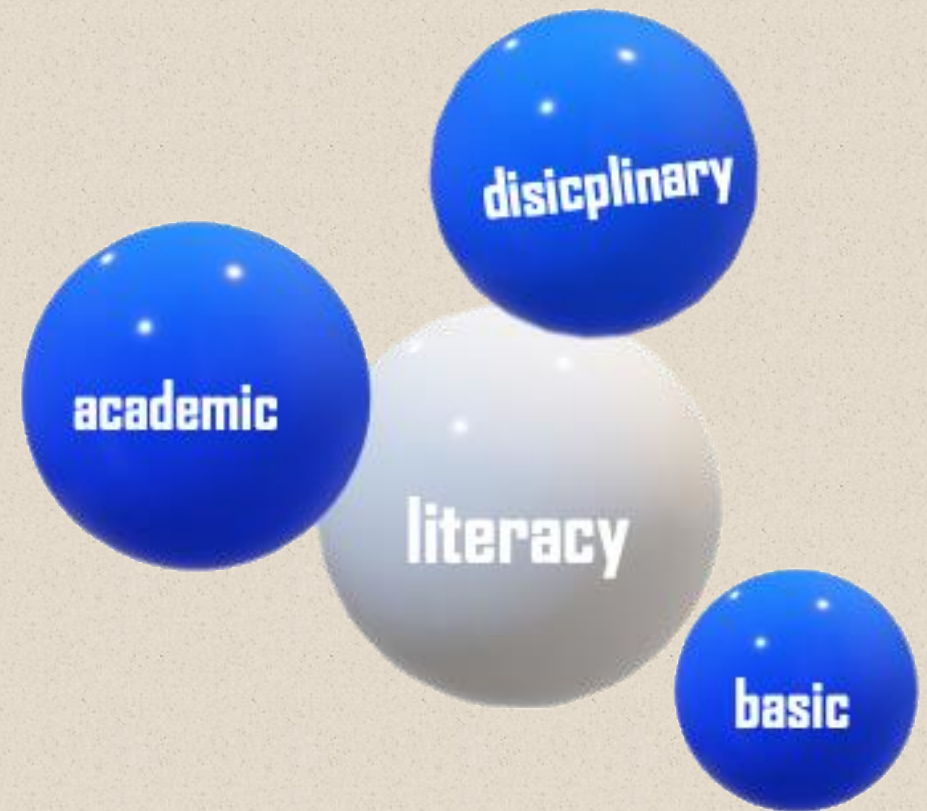
Higher education

Academic literac(ies) – ability to use language logically and analytically in an academic context. In this context we use language to gather information, to process that information, and to create new information.

(Weideman, 2014)

Disciplinary literac(ies) – ability to identify and use the specific text features, rhetorical patterns, or sociocultural conventions of the written discourse used “to argue knowledge claims” within different areas of a specific disciplinary domain.

(Berkenkotter et al., 1988)

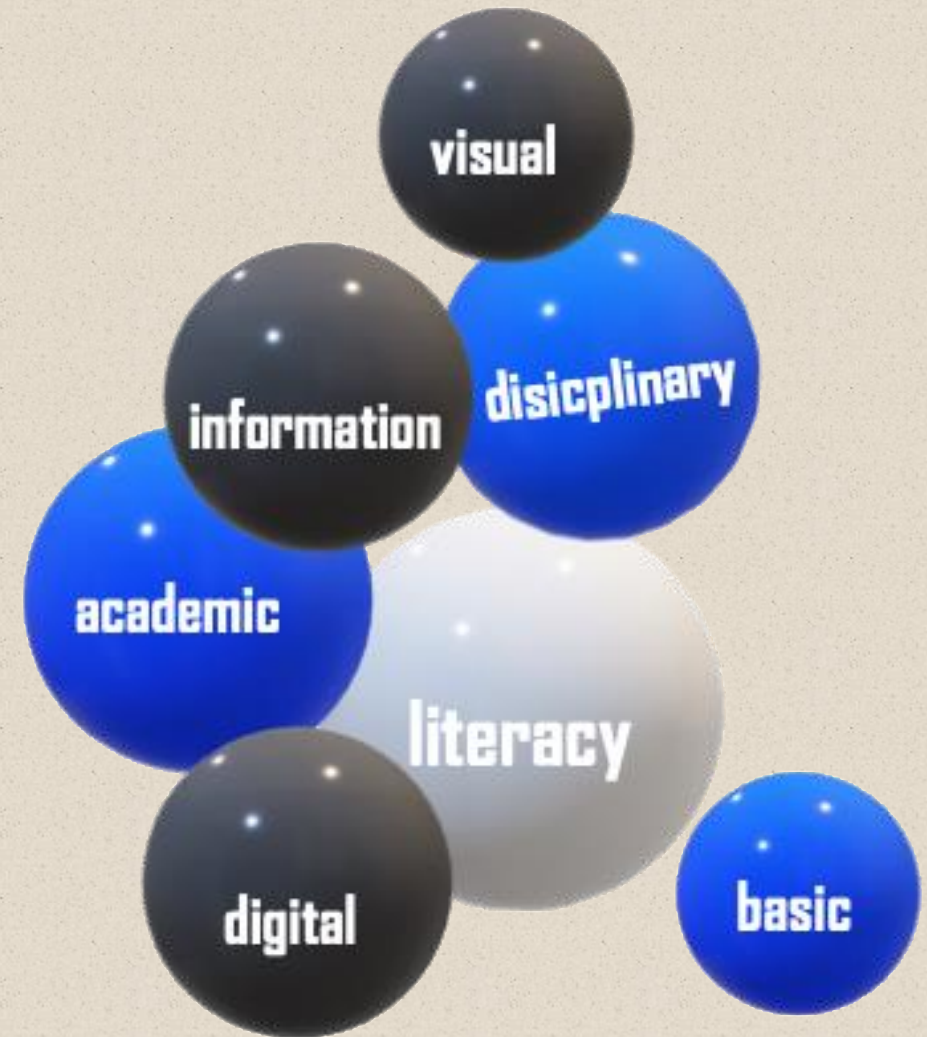


Literacy practices change: Multiliteracies

New literacies associated with digital technologies or practices that take place within a rapidly changing social context (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

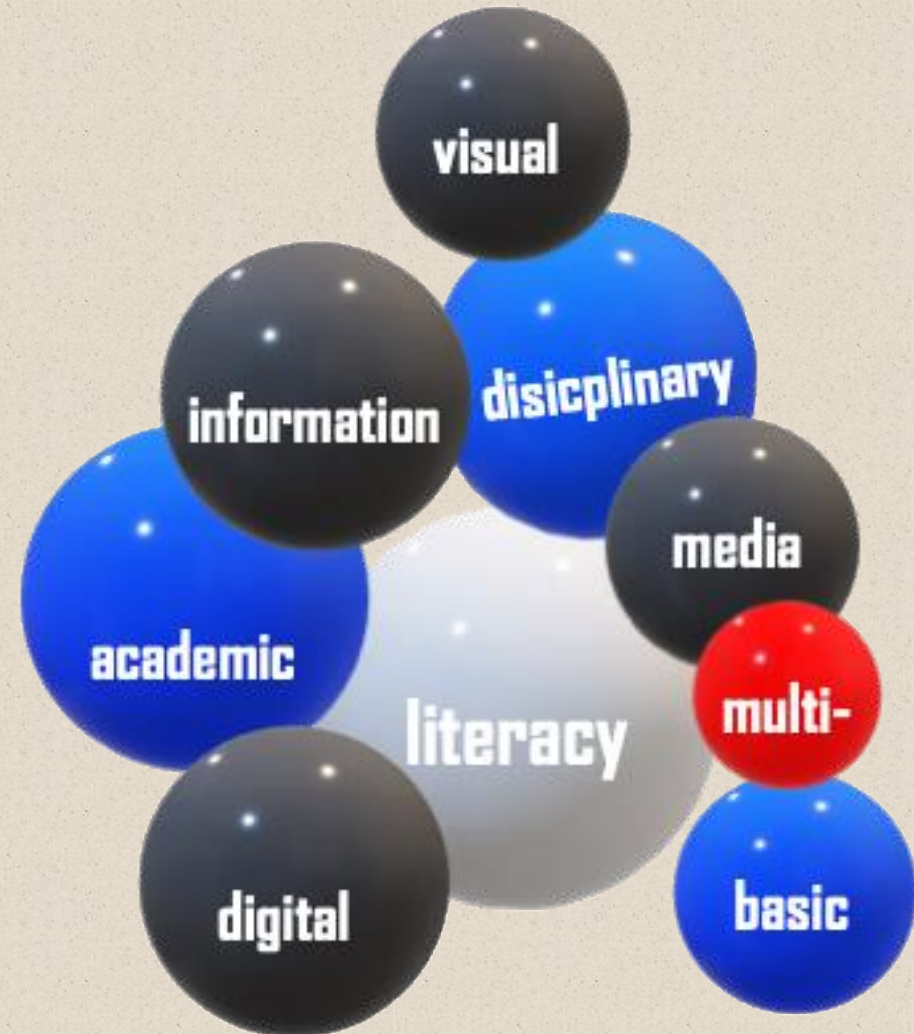
Digital literacy or "a person's ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment" (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006, p. 9).

Set of different skills: operational, formal, and informational, as well as ability to restructure and transform information to develop knowledge, i.e. information as a product (Ananiadou & Claro 2009, p. 20; Van Deursen & van Dijk (2009).



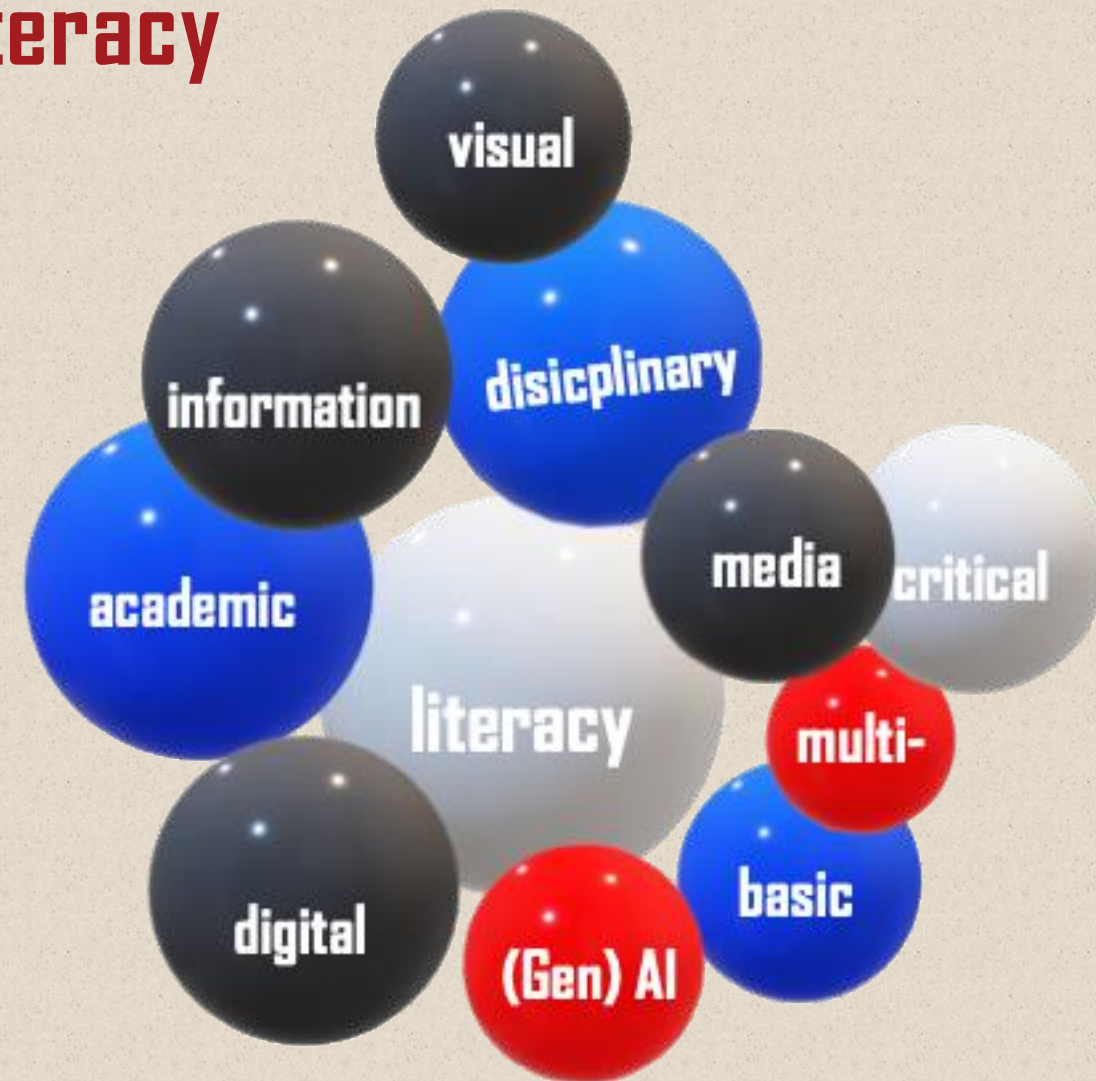
Multiliteracies, also multilingual literacies or transliteracies?

- Multilingual educational contexts
- Switch between genres, but also between languages
- Disciplinary acculturation across languages



Multiliteracies: from digital to AI literacy

- Artificial intelligence (AI) literacy as a twenty-first century skill (Druga, et al., 2019; Long & Magerko, 2020).
- Ability to understand the basic knowledge and concepts behind AI-driven technologies (Kandlhofer et al., 2016).
- A set of digital competencies that evaluate, communicate, and collaborate with AI, as well as ethical use AI (Long & Magerko, 2020).





AI literacy,...., which was first coined as a term in 2015 by Konishi, refers to the knowledge and understanding of AI that is necessary for individuals to participate in the broader discourse around AI and make informed decisions about its use and implications (Laupichler et al., 2022).

(Southworth et al., 2023)

Academic & Disciplinary

find relevant sources of information

analyze/critically evaluate/interpret information

disseminate, argue & communicate ethically

Digital

find relevant digital sources

analyze/critically evaluate/interpret information

use digital media to produce, disseminate & communicate ethically

(Gen) AI

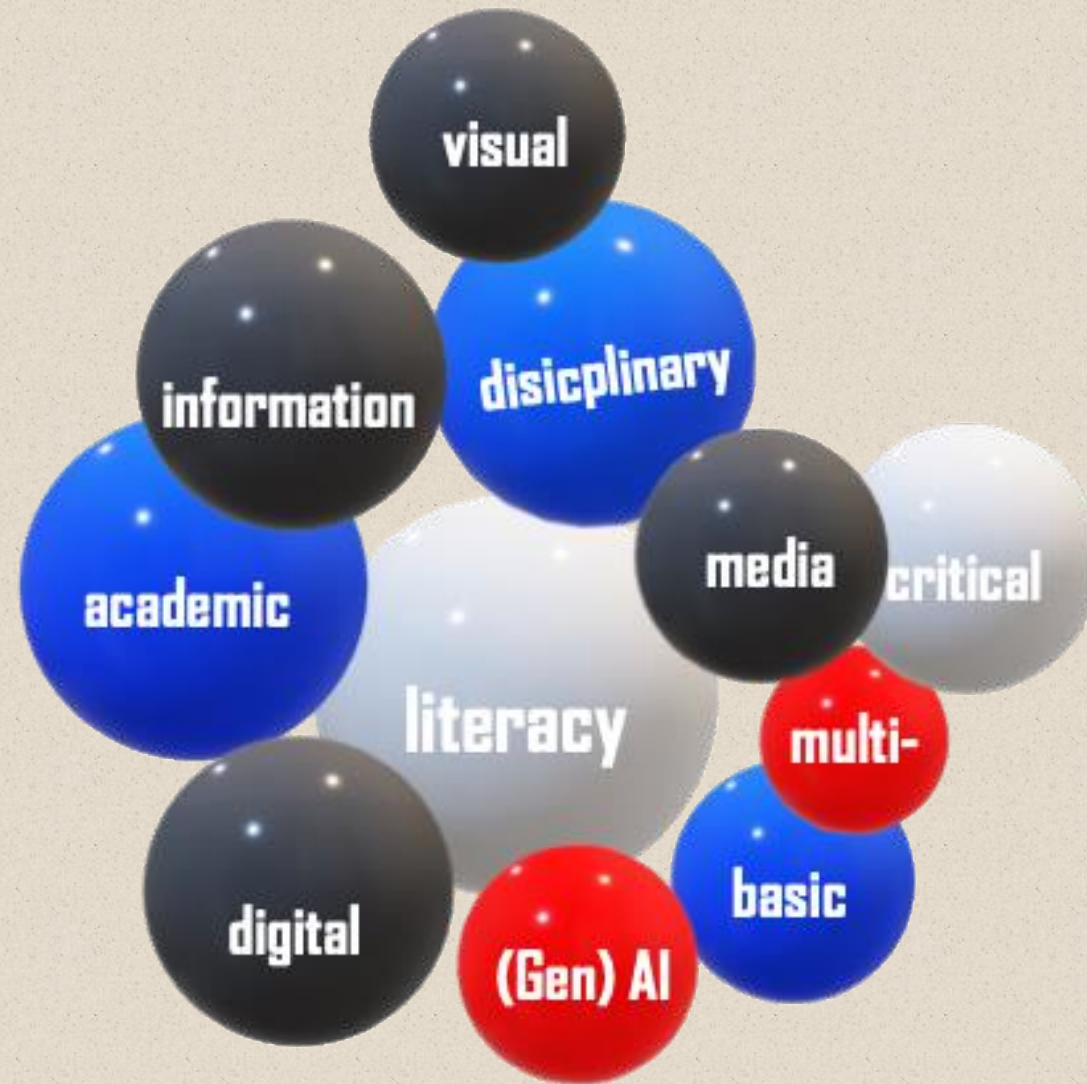
generate texts --prompt engineering

analyze/evaluate critically reflect on AI applications

ethical considerations – accountability, accuracy, explainability

Critical literacy: Power & empowerment, agency & identity

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of **consciousness**; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of **creation** and **re-creation**, a **self-transformation** producing a stance of intervention in one's context. (Freire, 2001, p. 86)



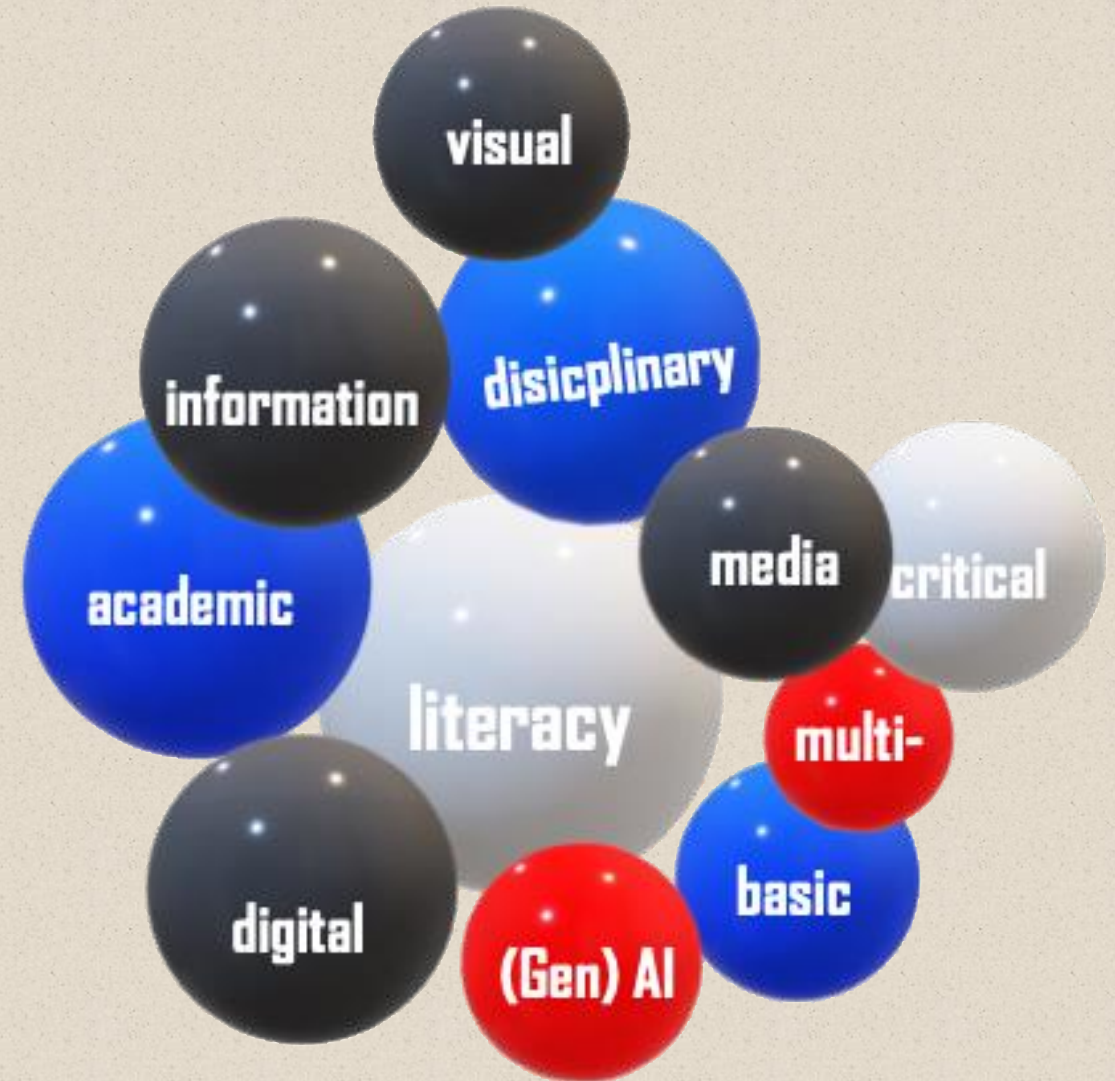
Implications for teaching

REMEMBER THIS?

6. Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.

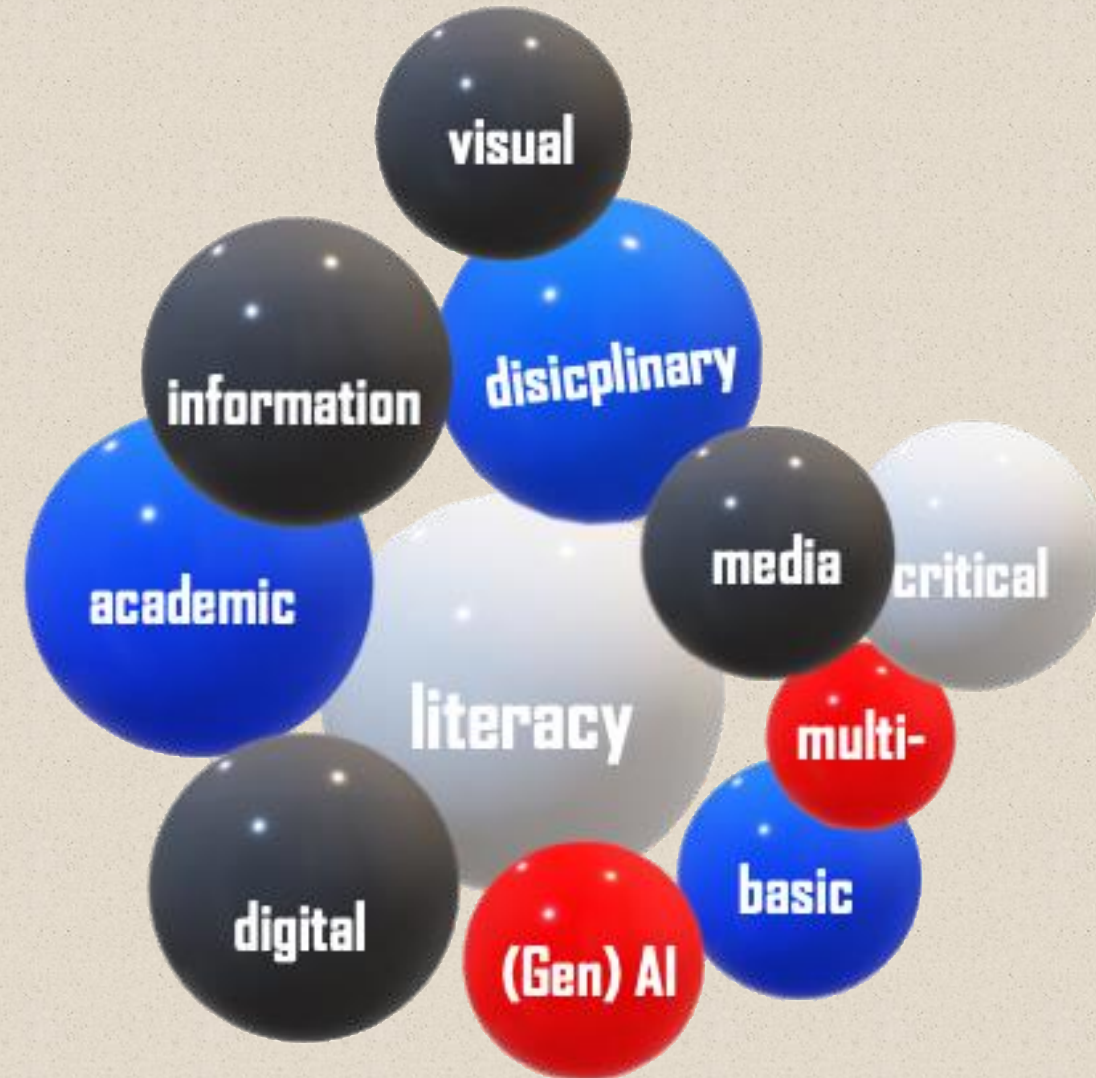
To what degree should we leave changes in literacy practices to informal learning?

How does this informal learning affect equality and equity among learners with different backgrounds?



Implications for assessment

- Assessment is used to make assumptions about students' literacy practices outside the learning context.
- If the construct changes, then assessment practices should change by:
 - shifting their focus from lexico-syntactic and graphophonic aspects of literacy to critical literacy and literacy as agency and power
 - designing tasks and assessment criteria to reflect construct permutations
- Paper-based assessments limit the representation of multiliteracies:
 - handwritten tasks, computer-based, and AI-enhanced tasks elicit different constructs
 - parallel tasks in two languages elicit different skills than one task that integrates two (or more) languages



construct



Conclusion: the construct

Rather than representing entirely new constructs, these emergent literacies can be seen as extensions of the foundational notion of literacy that has adapted to new modalities and purposes.

On the one hand, the main focus remains on text analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and production, regardless of modality, so one can argue that the core characteristics of the construct can be preserved.

On the other, the proliferation of “new literacies” does signify a genuine shift in the ways we deal with the notion of literacy in reading/writing, as well as teaching, learning, and assessment.

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