Multimodal texts decentralize the written word; print is no longer the central mode of communication. Patrick Carman’s popular Skeleton Creek (2009) series can also be considered multimodal as one character, Ryan, is depicted predominantly in print, while another character, Sarah, is depicted solely through digital video (which can only be accessed by reader via Internet). Readers must engage two very different modes of communication to “read” the two characters and fully realize the story. Carman has said he wrote the Skeleton Creek books to mimic the technological multitasking he sees today's teens engaged in (Groenke & Maples, 2010; Groenke, Bell, Allen, & Maples, 2011). Carman’s latest series, Trackers (First book published in 2010), is another multiplatform narrative where the printed text and a related website create the narrative.

Yet another multimodal text experience could include the Harry Potter franchise (Rowling, 1997-2007), which has gone well beyond the written words on the page (perhaps challenging the very definition of multimodality that we offer here). It is now possible to read the original seven books in the Harry Potter series. It is now possible to watch all eight film adaptations. It is now possible to travel in the real world to London and take Harry Potter tours to sites that were used in the film or that inspired Rowling’s writings. It is now possible to travel in the real world to Orlando, Florida, and experience “The Wizarding World of Harry Potter” at Universal Studios, drinking a butterbeer as you walk through Hogsmeade. It is now possible to purchase the merchandise (official and unofficial) artifacts, memorabilia, clothes, etc. from the Harry Potter world—wands, scarves, patches, robes, magnets, mugs, rememberalls. It is now possible to be Harry Potter in many games, including a LEGO version of Harry Potter. It is now possible to log onto the Web and explore the virtual worlds of Harry Potter through fan fiction sites such as http://Mugglenet.com, Universal Studio’s online Wizarding World of Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling’s “personal” website, and, as of this writing, the imminent Pottermore, the latest online incarnation of the world of Harry Potter.

Rowling has said Pottermore is “something unique—an online reading experience unlike any other,” that will “continue the story of the young boy wizard” (Rowling, 2011). Also available on the website will be the seven Potter novels as e-books and audiobooks in several different languages. The website will also reveal background details on characters and settings Rowling says she’s been “hoarding for years” (Cooke, 2011). Burbules (1998) explains that the practice of reading always takes place “within contexts and social relations . . . [and] significant differences in those contexts and relations alter the practice” (p. 102). Certain, new economic and social contexts mark the rise of the “convergence culture” that surrounds the Harry Potter franchise expansion. Henry Jenkins (2008), a popular culture theorist, defines “convergence culture” as a 21st-century phenomenon in which content flows across multiple media platforms, multiple media industries (e.g., music, film) cooperate with each other, and media consumers “will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (p. 2).

Unlike the traditional multimodal experience of moving among print, text, and other elements within the same physically bounded artifact, the Harry Potter franchise extends the reading experience across space and time (Jenkins calls this “transmediation”). Jenkins explains that in a convergent media culture, participation across multiple platforms becomes a way of broadening and deepening the reading experience beyond the confines of the print-bound text. Through the physically real opportunities of Universal Studios or London, through the
written fan fiction expansions of characters and stories, and through the online back stories and insights of J. K. Rowling's websites, the Harry Potter story is told across multiple platforms—page, film, theme parks, locations, Internet, video games, and merchandise. The variety of offerings allows for further nonlinear experiences that combine to enrich and further the original story.

Rowling has created a multimodal word, if you will, where Potterphiles can practice this "interactive narration" and access the world of Harry Potter whenever and however they want. These nonlinear experiences certainly allow for a new characteristic of multimodal reading—"interactive narration," where readers (not authors) choose how to engage with certain aspects of the text. (Hassett & Curwood, 2009). Rowling has created a multimodal world, if you will, where Potterphiles can practice this "interactive narration" and access the world of Harry Potter whenever and however they want. We feel fairly confident that Potter fans—as engaged, sophisticated readers—can and will navigate the multiple modalities of the Harry Potter franchise and make connections among them.

But we know, too, that some students who sit in our classrooms need help from teachers to navigate increasingly complicated textual worlds. Most recently, Susan talked about Deborah Wiles's popular Countdown (2010) with 8th-grade students at a local middle school. Countdown is another multimodal novel (the first in a planned 1960s trilogy) that intersperses traditional narrative with biography and black-and-white documentary footage from the 1960s. The book’s narrative print mode, portrayed on white, grey-bordered pages, relays the story of Franny Chapman, an 11-year-old girl who is feuding with her best friend and trying to get the attention of the cute boy across the street. Interspersed with Franny's narrative are evocative black-and-white, archival images that include well-known photographs (e.g., the bombing of the Freedom Riders bus), newspaper advertisements, public safety communications (e.g., fallout shelter signs), newspaper articles, song lyrics, quotes from prominent people (e.g., politicians, popular athletes), and movie posters. In addition, yet another mode of meaning includes four grey-colored, multipage biographical vignettes on President Harry Truman, the Kennedy family, Pete Seeger, and Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer.

Countdown allows readers to "weave in and out," as the juxtaposition among the narrative images, and biographical elements continually move us from the personally lived experiences of Franny, to the extended, expanded experience of life in the 1960s. Indeed, reading the text feels like "weaving in and out," as the juxtaposition among the narrative images, and biographical elements continually moves us from the personally lived experience of Franny, to the extended, expanded experience of life in the 1960s. But Susan’s 8th graders ignored the pictures and the biographies, and instead focused solely on the narrative. Susan felt the students might have done so because they were more comfortable with the narrative element. Students remarked that the images were "disturbing" and "confusing." In essence, the students didn't know what to do with the pictures, so they ignored them.

What Do We Do with These Multimodal Texts?

Susan’s experience is instructive for us, as we consider what multimodal reading instruction requires. As Hassett and Curwood (2009) explain, multimodal aspects of texts set forth new roles for readers, but they set forth new roles for teachers as well. It would seem, as Susan’s students’ experience with Countdown suggests, that students need help decentralizing the written word in multimodal texts. Are adolescents so used to traditional print-centric, linear narratives in school (we're reminded again of Freytag’s pyramid), that it’s difficult for them to imagine reading in different ways? That texts can operate differently? Are adolescents savvy multi-modal readers outside of school, but so aware of the “game of school” that they struggle in school with texts that don’t fit the dominant textual mode? This would account for their focus on the written narrative of Countdown (a school-valued mode) and their rejection of the rest, unless directed there by a teacher.

Multimodal aspects of texts set forth new roles for readers, but they set forth new roles for teachers as well. We think these questions need attention by literacy researchers and teachers. We also think that if today’s adolescents are so grown as multimodal readers, they need opportunities in secondary English/language arts classrooms to discuss and reflect upon how texts are changing and becoming more multimodal—and thus, reading itself is changing. Students also need opportunities to consider how pictures, images, graphics, sound—nonwritten modes of communication—express meaning, and they need opportunities to consider how such nonprint modes extend and expand upon meanings gleaned from written modes. How do multiple modes move together? Why are multiple modes used? What do different modes afford? What difference do different modes make?

Like Myers’s Monster, Carman’s Skeleton series, and Wiles’s Countdown, Rowling’s Harry Potter series and the forthcoming Pottermore extend what multimodal looks, sounds, and feels like; one can envision many opportunities for students and teachers to explore the multiple layers upon layers upon layers of narrative, insight, and experience through interactive readings. Whether reading about the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the nuclear threat in the 1960s or Professor MacGonagall’s back story, students and teachers interact not with only the written text, but the multiple modes of these texts to create a richer, deeper understanding and reading experience.

As Leu (2000) has suggested, when students engage in multimodal experiences in the classroom, they become critically oriented to ever-evolving digital media and multimodal forms. From Susan’s initial experience, the small amount of research and theory available, and the growing opportunities with multimodal, multiplatform narratives, we do believe that teachers need to begin their multimodal textual explorations—their guiding, supporting, and collaborating—with their students in these new environments. Only then can students begin to acquire the conceptual bases needed to interpret complex text/image/design relationships. And only then will the students begin to acquire a 21st century literacy skill that expands and furthers their understanding of the changing way we read texts, especially multimodal ones.

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References


**Multimodal Texts Cited in the Text**


Popular media and new technologies can provide a basis for ELLs to develop valuable print literacy as well as other 21st-century skills. In terms of basic print literacy, it is worth noting that through their fan-related activities, all three focal participants were able to practice and improve their English-language and composition skills.

Other Digital Age forms of literacy include the ability to read visual and multimodal texts, as well as technological and information literacy (NCREL, 2003). In terms of basic print literacy, it is worth noting that through their fan-related activities, all three focal participants were able to practice and improve their English-language and composition skills. Broad Horizons: The Role of Multimodal Literacy in 21st Century Library Instruction. Meeting: Sean Cordes Assistant Professor Western Illinois University Macomb, Illinois, USA. This type of assignment moves students from identification and description of multimodal texts and literacies, to the creation and application of information objects. Interestingly, student reflections regarding the assignment provide a range of evidentiary commentary that highlight the impact of literacies on the design and evaluation process, as well as reflecting the cultural, cognitive, physical, and affective aspects of literacy engagement during the information design process.

Thoughts on Multimodal Literacy Instruction The assignment examples demonstrate a number of things. Developing multimodal literacy in students is about developing in them the ability to view multimodal texts critically and for them to represent their ideas through the production of effective multimodal texts. This article describes an instructional approach developed to teach multimodal texts and describes the trial of the approach in a secondary school in Singapore. The approach is informed by Systemic Functional Theory and is aligned to the Learning by Design Framework widely used in multiliteracies. The systemic functional approach provides scaffolds for students to access the meanings ma Posts about multimodal texts written by ResourceLink Brisbane Catholic Education. Icon Design Web Design Logo Design Graphic Design Resume Design Royalty Free Icons Small Study Sketch Notes Instructional Design. Jennifer Asha, literacy educator, explores some more complex texts for investigating persuasive techniques. Information Literacy Learning Courses Principles Of Design Blended Learning Instructional Design Digital Text Presentation Design Educational Technology Lesson Plans. C.A.R.P. in Design. From Texting to Teaching: Grammar Instruction in a Digital Age. 1st Edition Published on May 5, 2017 by Routledge Don't blame technology for poor student grammar; instead, use technology intentionally to reach students and.