

Chapter 1. What is Literacy? Multiple Perspectives on Literacy

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“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” – Frederick Douglass



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Keywords: literacy, digital literacy, critical literacy, community-based literacies

Definitions of literacy from multiple perspectives

Literacy is the cornerstone of education by any definition. Literacy refers to the ability of people to read and write (UNESCO, 2017). Reading and writing in turn are about encoding and decoding information between written symbols and sound (Resnick, 1983; Tyner, 1998). More specifically, literacy is the ability to understand the relationship between sounds and written words such that one may read, say, and understand them (UNESCO, 2004; Vlieghe, 2015). About 67 percent of children nationwide, and more than 80 percent of those from families with low incomes, are not proficient readers by the end of third grade (The Nation Assessment for Educational Progress; NAEP 2022). Children who are not reading on grade level by third grade are 4 times more likely to drop out of school than their peers who are reading on grade level. A large body of research clearly demonstrates that Americans with fewer years of education have poorer health and shorter lives. In fact, since the 1990s, life expectancy has fallen for people without a high school education. Completing more years of education creates better

access to health insurance, medical care, and the resources for living a healthier life (Saha, 2006). Americans with less education face higher rates of illness, higher rates of disability, and shorter life expectancies. In the U.S., 25-year-olds without a high school diploma can expect to die 9 years sooner than college graduates. For example, by 2011, the prevalence of diabetes had reached 15% for adults without a high -school education, compared with 7% for college graduates (Zimmerman et al., 2018).

Thus, literacy is a goal of utmost importance to society. But what does it mean to be literate, or to be able to read? What counts as literacy?

Learning Objectives

- Describe two or more definitions of literacy and the differences between them.
- Define digital and critical literacy.
- Distinguish between digital literacy, critical literacy, and community-based literacies.
- Explain multiple perspectives on literacy.

Here are some definitions to consider:

“Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.” – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

“The ability to understand, use, and respond appropriately to written texts.” – National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), citing the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

“An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.” – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 203

“The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.”

– Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), as cited by the American Library Association’s Committee on Literacy

“Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.” – Kutner, Greenberg, Jin, Boyle, Hsu, & Dunleavy (2007). *Literacy in Everyday Life: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy* (NCES 2007-480)

Reflection Questions

Which one of these above definitions resonates with you? Why?

New literacy practices as meaning-making practices

In the 21st century, literacy increasingly includes understanding the roles of digital media and technology in literacy. In 1996, the New London Group coined the term “multiliteracies” or “new literacies” to describe a modern view of literacy that reflected multiple communication forms and contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity within a globalized society. They defined multiliteracies as a combination of multiple ways of communicating and making meaning, including such modes as visual, audio, spatial, behavioral, and gestural (New London Group, 1996). Most of the text’s students come across today are digital (like this textbook!). Instead of books and magazines, students are reading blogs and text messages.

For a short video on the importance of digital literacy, watch [The New Media Literacies](#).

The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE, 2019) makes it clear that our definitions of literacy must continue to evolve and grow ([NCTE definition of digital literacy](#)).

“Literacy has always been a collection of communicative and sociocultural practices shared among communities. As society and technology change, so does literacy. The world demands that a literate person possess and intentionally apply a wide range of skills, competencies, and dispositions. These literacies are interconnected, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with histories, narratives,

life possibilities, and social trajectories of all individuals and groups. Active, successful participants in a global society must be able to:

- participate effectively and critically in a networked world.
- explore and engage critically and thoughtfully across a wide variety of inclusive texts and tools/modalities.
- consume, curate, and create actively across contexts.
- advocate for equitable access to and accessibility of texts, tools, and information.
- build and sustain intentional global and cross-cultural connections and relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought.
- promote culturally sustaining communication and recognize the bias and privilege present in the interactions.
- examine the rights, responsibilities, and ethical implications of the use and creation of information.
- determine how and to what extent texts and tools amplify one's own and others' narratives as well as counterproductive narratives.
- recognize and honor the multilingual literacy identities and culture experiences individuals bring to learning environments, and provide opportunities to promote, amplify, and encourage these variations of language (e.g., dialect, jargon, and register).”

Socio-cultural context refers to the idea that language does not exist in isolation and is closely linked to the culture and society in which it is used and taught. Activities that can raise awareness of socio-cultural context include using stories from different countries, analyzing newspaper headlines, and looking at slang and idiomatic language.

Learning Activities



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In other words, literacy is not just the ability to read and write. It is also being able to effectively use digital technology to find and analyze information. Students who are digitally literate know how to do research, find reliable sources, and make judgments about what they read online and in print. Next, we will learn more about digital literacy.

Important terms

- **Malleable:** can be changed.
- **Culturally sustaining:** the pedagogical preservation of the cultural and linguistic competence of young people pertaining to their communities of origin while simultaneously affording dominant-culture competence.
- **Bias:** a tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others, usually resulting in unfair treatment.
- **Privilege:** a right or benefit that is given to some people and not to others.
- **Unproductive narrative:** negative commonly held beliefs such as “all students from low-income backgrounds will struggle in school.” (Narratives are phrases or ideas that are repeated over and over and become “shared narratives.” You can spot them in common expressions and stories that almost everyone knows and holds as ingrained values or beliefs.)

Literacy in the digital age

The Iowa Core recognizes that today, literacy includes technology. The goal for students who graduate from the public education system in Iowa is:

“Each Iowa student will be empowered with the technological knowledge and skills to learn effectively and live productively. This vision, developed by the Iowa Core 21st Century Skills Committee, reflects the fact that Iowans in the 21st century live in a global environment marked by a high use of technology, giving citizens and workers the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions as never before. Iowa’s students live in a media-suffused environment, marked by access to an abundance of information and rapidly changing technological tools useful for critical thinking and problem-solving processes. Therefore, technological literacy supports preparation of students as global citizens capable of self-directed learning in preparation for an ever-changing world” (Iowa Core Standards 21st Century Skills, n.d.).

NOTE: The essential concepts and skills of technology literacy are taken from the International Society for Technology in Education’s National Educational Technology Standards for Students: [Grades K-2 | Technology Literacy Standards](#)

The following section is an adaptation of [Digital Literacies and the Skills of the Digital Age](#) by Cathy L. Green, used under a [CC BY 4.0. license](#).

Literacy in any context is defined as the ability “ to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge society” (ICT Literacy Panel, 2002). “ When we teach only for facts (specifics)... rather than for how to go beyond facts, we teach students how to get out of date ” (Sternberg, 2008). This statement is particularly significant when applied to technology literacy. The Iowa essential concepts for technology literacy reflect broad, universal processes and skills.

Unlike the previous generations, learning in the digital age is marked using rapidly evolving technology, a deluge of information, and a highly networked global community (Dede, 2010). In such a dynamic environment, learners need skills beyond the basic cognitive ability to consume and process language. To understand the characteristics of the digital age, and what this means for how people learn in this new and changing landscape, one may turn to the

evolving discussion of literacy or, as one might say now, of digital literacy. The history of literacy contextualizes digital literacy and illustrates changes in literacy over time. By looking at literacy as an evolving historical phenomenon, we can glean the fundamental characteristics of the digital age. These characteristics in turn illuminate the skills needed to take advantage of digital environments. The following discussion is an overview of digital literacy, its essential components, and why it is important for learning in the digital age.

Literacy is often considered a skill or competency. Children and adults alike can spend years developing the appropriate skills for encoding and decoding information. Over the course of thousands of years, literacy has become much more common and widespread, with a global literacy rate ranging from 81% to 90% depending on age and gender (UNESCO, 2016). From a time when literacy was the domain of an elite few, it has grown to include huge swaths of the global population. There are several reasons for this, not the least of which are some of the advantages the written word can provide. Kaestle (1985) tells us that “literacy makes it possible to preserve information as a snapshot in time, allows for recording, tracking and remembering information, and sharing information more easily across distances among others” (p. 16). In short, literacy led “to the replacement of myth by history and the replacement of magic by skepticism and science.”

If literacy involves the skills of reading and writing, digital literacy requires the ability to extend those skills to effectively take advantage of the digital world (American Library Association [ALA], 2013). More general definitions express digital literacy as the ability to read and understand information from digital sources as well as to create information in various digital formats (Bawden, 2008; Gilster, 1997; Tyner, 1998; UNESCO, 2004). Developing digital skills allows digital learners to manage a vast array of rapidly changing information and is key to both learning and working in the evolving digital landscape (Dede, 2010; Koltay, 2011; Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015). As such, it is important for people to develop certain competencies specifically for handling digital content.

ALA Digital Literacy Framework

To fully understand the many digital literacies, we will look at the American Library Association (ALA) framework. The ALA framework is laid out in terms of basic functions with enough specificity to make it easy to understand and remember but broad enough to cover a wide range of skills. The ALA framework includes the following areas:

- finding,
- understanding,
- evaluating,
- creating, and
- communicating (American Library Association, 2013).

Finding

Finding information in a digital environment represents a significant departure from the way human beings have searched for information for centuries. The learner must abandon older linear or sequential approaches to finding information such as reading a book, using a card catalog, index, or table of contents, and instead use more horizontal approaches like natural language searches, hypermedia text, keywords, search engines, online databases and so on (Dede, 2010; Eshet, 2002). The shift involves developing the ability to create meaningful search limits (SCONUL, 2016). Previously, finding the information would have meant simply looking up page numbers based on an index or sorting through a card catalog. Although finding information may depend to some degree on the search tool being used (library, internet search engine, online database, etc.) the search results also depend on how well a person is able to generate appropriate keywords and construct useful Boolean searches. Failure in these two areas could easily return too many results to be helpful, vague, or generic results, or potentially no useful results at all (Hangen, 2015).

Part of the challenge of finding information is the ability to manage the results. Because there is so much data, changing so quickly, in so many different formats, it can be challenging to organize and store them in such a way as to be useful. SCONUL (2016) talks about this as the ability to organize, store, manage, and cite digital resources, while the Educational Testing Service also specifically mentions the skills of accessing and managing information. Some ways to accomplish these tasks is using social bookmarking tools such as Diigo, clipping and organizing software such as Evernote and OneNote, and bibliographic software. Many sites, such as YouTube, allow individuals with an account to bookmark videos, as well as create channels or collections of videos for specific topics or uses. Other websites have similar features.

Understanding

Understanding in the context of digital literacy perhaps most closely resembles traditional

literacy because it is the ability to read and interpret text (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006). In the digital age, however, the ability to read and understand extends much further than text alone. For example, searches may return results with any combination of text, video, sound, and audio, as well as still and moving pictures. As the internet has evolved, a whole host of visual languages have also evolved, such as moving images, emoticons, icons, data visualizations, videos, and combinations of all the above. Lankshear & Knoble (2008) refer to these modes of communication as “post typographic textual practice.” Understanding the variety of modes of digital material may also be referred to as multimedia literacy (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006), visual literacy (Tyner, 1998), or digital literacy (Buckingham, 2006).

Evaluating

Evaluating digital media requires competencies ranging from assessing the importance of a piece of information to determining its accuracy and source. Evaluating information is not new to the digital age, but the nature of digital information can make it more difficult to understand who the source of information is and whether it can be trusted (Jenkins, 2018). When there are abundant and rapidly changing data across heavily populated networks, anyone with access can generate information online. This results in the learner needing to make decisions about its authenticity, trustworthiness, relevance, and significance. Learning evaluative digital skills means learning to ask questions about who is writing the information, why they are writing it, and who the intended audience is (Buckingham, 2006). Developing critical thinking skills is part of the literacy of evaluating and assessing the suitability for use of a specific piece of information (SCONUL, 2016).

Creating

Creating in the digital world makes the production of knowledge and ideas in digital formats explicit. While writing is a critical component of traditional literacy, it is not the only creative tool in the digital toolbox. Other tools are available and include creative activities such as podcasting, making audio-visual presentations, building data visualizations, 3D printing, and writing blogs. Tools that haven’t been thought of before are constantly appearing. In short, a digitally literate individual will want to be able to use all formats in which digital information may be conveyed in the creation of a product. A key component of creating with digital tools is understanding what constitutes fair use and what is considered plagiarism. While this is not

new to the digital age, it may be more challenging these days to find the line between copying and extending someone else's work.

In part, the reason for the increased difficulty in discerning between plagiarism and new work is the “cut and paste culture” of the Internet, referred to as “reproduction literacy” (Eshet 2002, p.4), or appropriation in Jenkins' *New Media Literacies* (Jenkins, 2018). The question is, what kind and how much change is required to avoid the accusation of plagiarism? This skill requires the ability to think critically, evaluate a work, and make appropriate decisions. There are tools and information to help understand and find those answers, such as the Creative Commons. Learning about such resources and how to use them is part of digital literacy.

Communicating

Communicating is the final category of digital skills in the ALA digital framework. The capacity to connect with individuals all over the world creates unique opportunities for learning and sharing information, for which developing digital communication skills is vital. Some of the skills required for communicating in the digital environment include digital citizenship, collaboration, and cultural awareness. This is not to say that one does not need to develop communication skills outside of the digital environment, but that the skills required for digital communication go beyond what is required in a non-digital environment. Most of us are adept at personal, face-to-face communication, but digital communication needs the ability to engage in asynchronous environments such as email, online forums, blogs, social media, and learning platforms where what is written may not be deleted and may be misinterpreted. Add that to an environment where people number in the millions and the opportunities for misunderstanding and cultural miscues are likely.

The communication category of digital literacies covers an extensive array of skills above and beyond what one might need for face-to-face interactions. It is comprised of competencies around ethical and moral behavior, responsible communication for engagement in social and civic activities (Adam Becker et al., 2017), an awareness of audience, and an ability to evaluate the potential impact of one's online actions. It also includes skills for handling privacy and security in online environments. These activities fall into two main categories: digital citizenship and collaboration.

Digital citizenship refers to one's ability to interact effectively in the digital world. Part of this skill is good manners, often referred to as “netiquette.” There is a level of context which is often

missing in digital communication due to physical distance, lack of personal familiarity with the people online, and the sheer volume of the people who may encounter our words. People who know us well may understand exactly what we mean when we say something sarcastic or ironic, but people online do not know us, and vocal and facial cues are missing in most digital communication, making it more likely we will be misunderstood. Furthermore, we are more likely to misunderstand or be misunderstood if we are unaware of cultural differences. So, digital citizenship includes an awareness of who we are, what we intend to say, and how it might be perceived by other people we do not know (Buckingham, 2006). It is also a process of learning to communicate clearly in ways that help others understand what we mean.

Another key digital skill is collaboration, and it is essential for effective participation in digital projects via the Internet. The Internet allows people to engage with others they may never see in person and work towards common goals, be they social, civic, or business oriented. Creating a community and working together requires a degree of trust and familiarity that can be difficult to build when there is physical distance between the participants. Greater effort must be made to be inclusive, and to overcome perceived or actual distance and disconnectedness. So, while the potential of digital technology for connecting people is impressive, it is not automatic or effortless, and it requires new skills.

Learning Activities

Literacy narratives are stories about reading or composing a message in any form or context. They often include poignant memories that involve a personal experience with literacy. Digital literacy narratives can sometimes be categorized as ones that focus on how the writer came to understand the importance of technology in their life or pedagogy. More often, they are simply narratives that use a medium beyond the print-based essay to tell the story:

Create your own literacy narrative that tells of a significant experience you had with digital literacy. Use a multi-modal tool that includes audio and images or video. Share it with your classmates and discuss the most important ideas you notice in each other's narratives.

Critical literacy

Literacy scholars recognize that although literacy is a cognitive skill, it is also a set of practices

that communities and people participate in. Next, we turn to another perspective on literacy – critical literacy. “Critical” here is not meant as having a negative point of view, but rather using an analytic lens that detects power, privilege, and representation to understand different ways of looking at texts. For example, when groups or individuals stage a protest, do the media refer to them as “protesters” or “rioters?” What is the reason for choosing the label they do, and what are the consequences?

Learning Activities



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Critical literacy does not have a set definition or typical history of use, but the following key tenets have been described in the literature, which will vary in their application based on the individual social context (Vasquez, 2019). Table 1 presents some key aspects of critical literacy, but this area of literacy research is growing and evolving rapidly, so this is not an exhaustive list.

Table 1. Key Aspects of Critical Literacy

Key aspect	Example
Reading includes the everyday texts students encounter in their lives, not just books assigned at school.	Students write down the messages that they see in public, take photographs of graffiti or signs, or collect candy wrappers to bring to class.
Diverse students' knowledge (coming from the classroom and the children's homes) (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2006) and multilingual/modal practices (Lau, 2012) should be used to enhance the curriculum.	Invite children to bring and share meaningful objects, stories, and language from home.
Students learn best when learning is authentic and connected to their lives.	Provide a wide variety of texts in the classroom to represent children from many different backgrounds.
Texts are never neutral but reflect the author's social perspective. On the flip side, the way we read texts is not neutral either.	Maps are based on selections of what to include and exclude. Putting north at the top and Europe at the center implies that those regions are more important.
Critical literacy work focuses on social issues, including inequities of race, class, gender, and disability, and the ways in which we use language to form our understanding of these issues.	O'Brien (2001) asked children to analyze a catalogue promoting Mother's Day. They discovered that the mothers in the photographs were all youthful (age), White (race), well-dressed (class), and able-bodied (disability).
Literacy practices should be transformative: Students should be empowered to investigate issues that impact them and then to engage in civic actions to solve problems.	Students take photographs of trash in their local park. They interview people in the neighborhood about the park conditions, and then they create a slideshow to present at a city-council meeting.

An important component of critical literacy is the adoption of culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy. One definition comes from Dr. Django Paris (2012), who stated that Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) education recognizes that cultural differences (including racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, sexuality, and ability ones) should be treated as *assets* for teaching and learning. Culturally sustaining pedagogy requires teachers to support multilingualism and multiculturalism in their practice. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literary, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling.

For more, see the [Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework](#). The framework helps educators to think about how to create student-centered learning environments that uphold racial, linguistic, and cultural identities. It prepares students for rigorous independent learning,

develops their abilities to connect across lines of difference, elevates historically marginalized voices, and empowers them as agents of social change. CR-S education explores the relationships between historical and contemporary conditions of inequality and the ideas that shape access, participation, and outcomes for learners.

Reflection Questions

1. What can you do to learn more about your students' cultures?
2. How can you build and sustain relationships with your students?
3. How do the instructional materials you use affirm your students' identities?

Community-based literacies

You may have noticed that communities are a big part of critical literacy – we understand that our environment and culture impact what we read and how we understand the world. Now think about the possible differences among three Iowa communities: a neighborhood in the middle of Des Moines, the rural community of New Hartford, and Coralville, a suburb of Iowa City:



“4th Street Downtown Des Moines” photo is by [Dmspence](#), [CC BY SA 3.0](#).



“New Hartford Iowa Library” photo is by [Jazzlisp](#), [CC BY SA 4.0](#).



“City Center Squire” photo is by [American007](#), [CC BY SA 3.0](#).

Reflection Questions

What kind of signs might you see? How easy would it be to find and visit a library? Where can children access books? Is there a bookstore? Do the schools have large libraries?

You may not have thought about how living in a certain community might contribute to or take away from a child's ability to learn to read. Dr. Susan Neuman (2001) did. She and her team investigated the differences between two neighborhoods regarding how much access to books and other reading materials children in those neighborhoods had. One middle-to-upper class neighborhood in Philadelphia had large bookstores, toy stores with educational materials, and well-resourced libraries. The other, a low-income neighborhood, had no bookstores or toy stores. There was a library, but it had fewer resources and served a larger number of patrons. In fact, the team found that even the signs on the businesses were harder to read, and there was less environmental printed word. Their findings showed that **each** child in the middle-class neighborhood had **13** books on average, while in the lower-class neighborhood there was **one book per 300 children**.

Dr. Neuman and her team (2019) recently revisited this question. This time, they looked at low-income neighborhoods – those where 60% or more of the people are living in poverty . They compared these to borderline neighborhoods – those with 20-40% in poverty – in three cities, Washington, D.C., Detroit, and Los Angeles. Again, they found significantly fewer books in the very low-income areas. The chart represents the preschool books available for sale in each neighborhood. Note that in the lower-income neighborhood of Washington D.C., there were no books for young children to be found at all!

Now watch this video from Campaign for Grade Level Reading. Access to books is one way that children can have new experiences, but it is not the only way!



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Learning Activities

What is the “summer slide,” and how does it contribute to the differences in children’s reading abilities?



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<https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/teachingearlyliteracy/?p=195#h5p-33>

The importance of being literate and how to get there

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope” – Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General.



Kofi Annan, Special Envoy from the Joint United Nations, and Arab League to Syria, speaks to the press about the mission in Syria (July 11, 2012, photo by [Jean-Marc Ferré, CC BY NC ND 2.0](#)).

Our economy is enhanced when citizens have higher literacy levels. Effective literacy skills open the doors to more educational and employment opportunities so that people can lift themselves out of poverty and chronic underemployment. In our increasingly complex and rapidly changing technological world, it is essential that individuals continuously expand their knowledge and learn new skills to keep up with the pace of change. The goal of our public school system in the United States is to “ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live.” This is the basis of the Common Core Standards, developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center). These groups felt that education was too inconsistent across the different states, and today’s students are preparing to enter a world in which colleges and businesses are demanding more than ever before. To ensure that all students are ready for success after high school, the Common Core State Standards established clear universal guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade: “The Common Core State Standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers figure out the knowledge and skills their students should have” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

Explore the Core!

Go to iowacore.gov and click on Literacy Standards. Spend some time looking at the K-3 standards. Notice how consistent they are across the grade levels. Each has specific requirements within the categories:

- Reading Standards for Literature
- Reading Standards for Informational Text
- Reading Standards for Foundational Skills
- Writing Standards
- Speaking and Listening Standards
- Language Standards

Some states follow the Common Core as written, and some states (like Iowa) have their own version. See more at www.corestandards.org

Learning Activities

Download the [Iowa Core K-12 Literacy Manual](#). You will use it as a reference when you are creating lessons.

Next, explore the Subject Area pages and resources. What tools does the state provide to teachers to support their use of the Core?

Describe a resource you found on the website. How will you use this when you are a teacher?

Video Examples

Watch this video about the Iowa Literacy Core Standards:



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/teachingearlyliteracy/?p=195#oembed-3>

Key Takeaways

- Literacy is typically defined as the ability to ingest, understand, and communicate information.
- Literacy has multiple definitions, each with a different point of focus.
- “New literacies,” or multiliteracies, are a combination of multiple ways of communicating and making meaning, including visual, audio, spatial, behavioral, and gestural communication.
- As online communication has become more prevalent, digital literacy has become more important for learners to engage with the wealth of information available online.
- Critical literacy develops learners’ critical thinking by asking them to use an analytic lens that detects power, privilege, and representation to understand different ways of looking at information.
- The Common Core State Standards were established to set clear, universal guidelines for what every student should know after completing high school.

Resources for teacher educators

- [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework \[PDF\]](#)
- [Common Core State Standards](#)
- [Iowa Core Instructional Resources in Literacy](#)

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