

**Review: Sindoni, Maria Grazia, & Moschini, Ilaria (Eds.) (2022).
Multimodal literacies across digital learning contexts. Routledge.**

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Book review

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ABSTRACT

EN This review looks at *Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts*, edited by Maria Grazia Sindoni and Ilaria Moschini with a focus on how it might be useful for language educators working in digital classrooms. The review takes the volume as a starting point for thinking through teaching practices, especially how educators might make better use of digital tools and multimodal approaches. This review highlights ideas that can help teachers reflect on their roles not just as instructors, but as people who shape learning experiences that value students' voices, agency, and different ways of making meaning. The volume offers examples of how multimodal thinking plays out in real educational settings from early childhood to university, touching on topics like digital storytelling, translanguaging, and assessment with multiple modes in mind. This review highlights how the book can support language teachers, teacher trainers, and curriculum designers in rethinking what counts as learning and how to support it in more inclusive and creative ways. In doing so, it underscores the volume's value not only as a contribution to multimodality research but also as a resource for reimagining language learning environments.

Keywords: MULTIMODALITY, PEDAGOGY, DIGITAL LEARNING, LEARNING DESIGN, TEACHING.

ES Esta reseña analiza el volumen *Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts*, editado por Maria Grazia Sindoni e Ilaria Moschini, centrándose en su posible utilidad para el profesorado de lenguas que trabaja en aulas digitales. La reseña toma el volumen como punto de partida para reflexionar sobre las prácticas docentes, en particular sobre cómo el profesorado puede aprovechar mejor las herramientas digitales y los enfoques multimodales. Se destacan ideas que pueden ayudar al profesorado a reflexionar sobre su papel como instructores y como personas que promueven experiencias de aprendizaje que valoran las voces, la autonomía y las diversas formas de construcción de significado de los estudiantes. El volumen presenta ejemplos de cómo el pensamiento multimodal se manifiesta en contextos reales de todos los niveles educativos abordando temas como la narración digital, el *translanguaging* y la evaluación, teniendo en cuenta múltiples modos de expresión. Esta reseña destaca cómo el libro puede apoyar a quienes enseñan lenguas, forman al profesorado o diseñan currículos a la hora de repensar qué se entiende por aprendizaje y cómo promoverlo de manera más inclusiva y creativa. De este modo, se subraya el valor del volumen como recurso para reimaginar los entornos de aprendizaje de lenguas y para la investigación sobre multimodalidad.

Palabras clave: MULTIMODALIDAD, PEDAGOGÍA, APRENDIZAJE DIGITAL, DISEÑO DE APRENDIZAJE, ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS.

IT Questa recensione esplora il volume *Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts*, a cura di Maria Grazia Sindoni e Ilaria Moschini, con attenzione alla sua possibile utilità per docenti di lingue che operano nelle aule digitali. La recensione prende spunto dal volume per riflettere sulle pratiche didattiche, in particolare su come chi insegna possa fare un utilizzo migliore di strumenti digitali e approcci multimodali. Si evidenziano idee che invitano i docenti a riflettere sul proprio ruolo come veicolatori di conoscenze e come soggetti che promuovono esperienze di apprendimento aperte alla pluralità di voci, autonomie e modalità espressive di chi apprende. Il volume offre esempi di come il pensiero multimodale si manifesti in contesti reali, dall'infanzia all'università, affrontando temi quali la narrazione digitale, il *translanguaging* e la valutazione attraverso diversi modi comunicativi. La recensione evidenzia come il libro possa supportare chi insegna le lingue, forma i docenti o progetta i curricula nel ripensare che cosa si intende per apprendimento e come promuoverlo in modo più inclusivo e creativo. In tal modo, si sottolinea il valore del volume come contributo per reimmaginare gli ambienti di apprendimento linguistico e per la ricerca sulla multimodalità.

Parole chiave: MULTIMODALITÀ, PEDAGOGIA, APPRENDIMENTO DIGITALE, PROGETTAZIONE DIDATTICA, INSEGNAMENTO

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Published by Routledge in 2022 as part of the Routledge Studies in Multimodality series, *Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts* is an edited collection that brings together voices from across the field of multimodality, digital communication, and education. The volume is edited by Maria Grazia Sindoni, Professor of English Linguistics and Translation at the University of Messina, and Ilaria Moschini, Assistant Professor of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Florence. It gathers fourteen chapters organized into three sections: early childhood education, secondary and higher education, and teacher-focused pedagogical practices.

As a reviewer coming from a background in applied linguistics and language teaching, I read this book with an eye toward what it might offer educators not just in terms of theoretical framing, but in the way it can inform daily teaching practices, shape how learning environments are designed, and support teachers in rethinking the materials they create. I'm especially interested in how this volume might help teachers integrate multimodal perspectives in meaningful, grounded, and practical ways without needing to reinvent their practices from scratch or adopt digital tools that don't serve clear instructional purposes. The review that follows is written as a reflective walkthrough of the volume for teachers and teacher educators wondering, "How can this book deepen my understanding of multimodality in the context of using digital tools and practices more creatively and effectively in today's classrooms?"

The editors open the volume with an important reminder that, although digital texts are often described as multimodal, the ways we teach with and about them rarely reflect the full complexity of how meaning actually works across visual, aural, spatial, and linguistic resources. They highlight the fact that multimodality isn't something new introduced by technology, but part of every human communicative act. Framing education through that lens pushes us to think beyond tools and toward practices, and prompts us to consider how we can design learning experiences that make room for students' full communicative repertoires.

The first two chapters following the editors' introduction offer distinct theoretical perspectives. In Chapter 1, "A Sensational Theory of Designed Experience: Replacement Parts for a Theory of Multimodality", Qing Archer Zhang and James Paul Gee reconceptualize multimodality through a theory of embodied learning and lived sensation. Their approach is theoretical, grounded in conceptual reflection. Chapter 2, "Pedagogies for Digital Learning: From Transpositional Grammar to the Literacies of Education", by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, introduces five principles of "reflexive pedagogy" using design-based research developed through the CGScholar platform.

For educators, these opening chapters are a kind of gentle provocation. They don't demand total reinvention, but they do raise questions about what we're doing when we ask students to create or engage with digital texts. Are we asking them to express meaning using all the resources available to them? Are we scaffolding reflection and choice-making? Are we recognizing the multimodal literacies they already bring with them? The early sections of this book offer a space to pause and reflect on these everyday practices with care and intentionality.

Part I turns attention to young learners and their early encounters with digital media. Chapter 3, "Stars, Scores and Cheers. A Social Semiotic Critique of "Fun" Learning in Commercial Educational Software for Children" by Gunhild Kvåle, uses critical multimodal discourse analysis to examine "fun" educational apps that often reinforce ideas of conformity and correctness under the guise of entertainment. Chapter 4, "Storytelling with Children in Informal Contexts: Learning to Narrate Across the Offline/Online Boundaries", by Maria Bortoluzzi, Elisa Bertoldi, and Ivana Marenzi, presents a qualitative case study from an Italian teacher training program, using observation and ELAN annotation to explore how storytelling across physical and digital spaces can empower children to construct their own narratives. Chapter 5, "Multilingual Children's Expressions of Participation in Preschools Using Digital Tablets" by Petra Petersen, draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Swedish preschools to explore how digital tablets support language development and social participation among children from minority language backgrounds. Chapter 6, "Watching the Sound: Sign-Making in Musical Expressiveness of Children with Motor-Related Disabilities Made Through Eye Tracking Software" by Zaira Bomfante Dos Santos, Clarice Lage Gualberto, and Sônia Maria Oliveira Pimenta, uses classroom observation and interviews to examine the role of assistive tools in supporting diverse learners. Chapter 7, "Popularizing Scientific Knowledge for Children: A Multimodal Perspective" by Giuliana Diani, employs multimodal textual analysis of a children's climate change website to examine how verbal and visual modes work together to support understanding. These chapters encourage teachers of young learners to rethink what counts as literacy, and how we might expand our materials and methods. Imagine a teacher working with multilingual children reframing digital storytelling not as a polished "product," but as a process in which children combine image, voice, gesture, and language to express themselves and make sense of their experiences. In another

classroom, a student with dyslexia might use a visual mind-mapping tool to plan ideas for a class project, organizing thoughts through icons, color-coded connections, and short voice notes, highlighting their understanding in ways that don't rely on extended written text.

Part II focuses on learners in secondary and higher education. Chapter 8, "Exploring Multimodality in Video Podcasting to Enhance Intercultural Awareness in the East Asian Context" by Martin Parsons, Mikel Garant, and Larry Walker, uses classroom-based action research and student-produced video podcast data from university courses in Japan and China. Chapter 9, "Recognition of Student Resources in Digital Environments" by Arlene Archer, is based on meta-analysis and classroom case studies in South Africa to rethink assessment as recognition of learner diversity. Chapter 10, "Theory and Practice of the Common Framework of Reference for Intercultural Digital Literacies (CFRIDiL)" by Maria Grazia Sindoni, Elisabetta Adami, Styliani Karatza, Ilaria Moschini, and Sandra Petroni, details the development of a flexible assessment framework based on a multi-country pilot study involving students' digital productions and teacher feedback. These chapters connect with the increasing push in education to move away from teacher-led instruction and toward classrooms where students' lived literacies are welcomed and built upon. Rather than framing learners as blank slates, these chapters position them as creators who are already participating in multimodal meaning-making outside of school, and more than capable of bringing those abilities into academic work. A language teacher reading these chapters might find themselves rethinking familiar assignments. Instead of only analyzing a media text, why not ask students to create one, using video, images, and their voices to explore a topic they care about? This isn't about using tech for its own sake, but rather about recognizing students' fluency in multimodal expression and offering space for that in classrooms.

Part III shifts the focus to teachers themselves. Chapter 11, "Preparing for Teaching Digital Literacies in the Curriculum Disciplines: Meta-Semiotic Knowledge and Pedagogy" by Pauline Jones, Annette Turney, Wendy Nielsen, and Helen Georgiou, draws on reflective practitioner narratives and professional development data to explore how teachers build multimodal awareness. Chapter 12, "Analyzing Attitudinal Stance in OpenCourseWare Lectures: An Experimental Mixed-Method Approach" by Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli, uses corpus-assisted multimodal discourse analysis to investigate the interpersonal tone of academic lectures available on OpenCourseWare platforms. Chapter 13, "Making Science Easier to Access: Investigating Academic Social Networks as 'Composites of Connotations'" by Flavia Cavaliere, uses critical discourse analysis to examine how scholars construct their identities on academic platforms like ResearchGate. Chapter 14, "Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Multimodal Digital Academic Numeracy Practices" by Robert Prince, draws on classroom-based qualitative data to propose new ways of teaching numeracy through visual and multimodal strategies.

For those who train future teachers or lead professional development, these chapters offer concrete examples of how we can shift conversations from "what tech do I use?" to "how do I make learning experiences that are meaningful, inclusive, and attuned to the full range of how a group of students might communicate?" For teachers themselves, the chapters offer thoughtful models and a chance to reflect on how we are preparing ourselves (and not just our students) for this kind of learning.

Outside of the language education sphere, this book holds important insights for professionals and researchers working in multimodality, digital media studies, educational technology, literacy studies, and curriculum theory. Anyone interested in how communication, learning, and design intersect in digital contexts, especially through a social semiotic lens, will find this volume a valuable resource for expanding perspectives on meaning-making in contemporary education.

In bringing together such a wide range of perspectives, the volume cannot possibly cover every aspect of multimodal literacies in equal depth. Certain areas, such as assessment practices and informal learning contexts, are touched on only briefly, and the geographical coverage, while diverse, is not global. Far from diminishing its contribution, this selectivity underscores how expansive the field has become and points to directions for future inquiry. At the same time, because digital tools evolve so quickly, the studies included here serve as an important benchmark, offering insights that will continue to inspire new investigations as technologies and classroom practices continue to develop.

Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts doesn't hand readers a step-by-step guide or a definitive framework. Instead, it offers something more expansive: an open-ended invitation to rethink how we understand learning and how we create the conditions for it. The digital tools and practices this book explores aren't presented as magic solutions, but in the hands of thoughtful educators, they can become meaningful ways to recognize learners' voices, support their agency, and create more responsive classrooms

in context. It invites educators to see their classrooms as spaces of multimodal design, their students as active meaning-makers, and their materials as dynamic, layered texts.

References

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