

Visual Language, Visual Literacy: Education a la Modes

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I am writing about visual literacy and visual texts, and in doing so, I will share with you examples of children's 'picturebooks' where alphabetic print is no longer the primary carrier of meaning and where images and print often are symbiotic. Like Sipe and Pantaleo (2008), Arizpe and Styles (2003, p. 38), or Nikolajeva and Scott (2000), among others, I use the compound word *picturebook* to indicate my focus on how linguistic and image-based texts seamlessly integrate words and pictures. These books have various modes that carry meaning, and they may inspire children to use additional modes along with the picturebook to enhance meaning or even create new meaning. Examples of modes include speech, image, music, movement, facial expressions, colour, size, texture, and so forth. Bezemer and Kress (2008) define *mode* as a 'socially and culturally shaped resource for meaning making' (p. 171), and Serafini (2014) defines it as a 'system of visual and verbal entities within or across various cultures to represent or express meaning' (p. 12). These are just two definitions, but each implies in its own way that a mode operates within social and cultural understandings of possible ways to make sense. In other words, whatever the mode is (image, typography, colour), and whatever that mode signals or references, it is interpreted through socio-cultural lenses.