

Understanding Multiliteracies and Assessing Multimodal Texts in the English Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The shift in multimodality and multiliteracies in the English curriculum has become more a need than a choice. With the advent of ‘new’ media and advancing technology, learning scopes have broadened significantly. Methodologies and pedagogies will have to be redefined and re-established to accommodate the over-flowing sources of accessible knowledge. The main issue is that schools and universities, as Hull and Nelson (2005) argued, are still “staunchly logocentric, book centered, and essay driven” (p.225). More than a decade after this assertion, these new forms of literacies appear to have some impact on teaching and learning. However, the inclusion of multimodal text analyses in school-based assessment seems to be lagging. This paper discusses the shift towards multimodality and multiliteracies and their possible impact and implications on the English curriculum. It proposes the alignment of a re-conceptualized English curriculum which infuses the teaching and learning of visuals and technology and the assessment of multimodal texts.

KEYWORDS: multiliteracies, multimodality, English Language teaching, assessment

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Introduction

The traditional mode of defining text as merely print is no longer tenable in the 21st century with the introduction of new literacies (Luke, Freebody & Land, 2000; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). New literacies require engagement with new forms of texts comprising more complex and varied semiotic systems. While knowledge of the print text with its single linguistic semiotic system continues to be important, it will no longer suffice in an age of technological innovation where new forms of visual texts such as films, videos, games and the increasing visual content in magazines and books are abundant and becoming more commonplace (Farr, Price & Jewitt, 2012; Snyder & Beavis, 2004). Thus the visual arts and technology have now been infused in almost all aspects of modern life and society (Jewitt, Price, & Brown, 2013; Luke, 1997). The issue really is that schools and universities, as Hull and Nelson (2005) argued more than a decade ago, are still “staunchly logocentric, book centered, and essay driven” (p.225). More than a decade later, these new forms of literacies appear to have some impact on teaching and learning. However, the inclusion of multimodal text analyses in school-based assessment seems to be lagging. This paper discusses the shift towards multimodality and multiliteracies and their possible impact and implications on the English curriculum. It proposes the alignment of a re-conceptualized English curriculum that infuses the teaching and learning of visuals and technology and the assessment of multimodal texts.

Multimodality and multiliteracies

The shift into multimodality and multiliteracies in the English curriculum is more a need than a choice. With the advent of ‘new’ media and advancing technology, learning scopes have broadened significantly. Methodologies and pedagogies will have to be redefined and re-established to accommodate the over-flowing sources of accessible knowledge. The following will assess literature so as to better understand the reasons for the shift into multimodality and multiliteracies, the relationship between them and possible implications on the English curriculum.

Moving towards multimodality and multiliteracies

The symbiotic relationship between multimodality and multiliteracies is highlighted by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Anstey (2002) and de Silva Joyce and Gaudin (2007) who advocated that one must have the knowledge to read the modes and interpret them as “dynamic representational resources” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p.5) that connect. This knowledge is imbued in multiliteracies (Mills, 2009). The move into a multimodal curriculum can be reasoned to a changed and changing context (Rowan, 2006; Urry, 2003). Visibly, according to Meredith and Hoppough (2007), we no longer function in a world of simple economics. The world today has progressed into a knowledge-economy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). Stiglitz (2002) and Suter (2006) stated that the economies of scale have transgressed into one of innovation and service. In the past, fixed knowledge is sufficed to ensure the progress of a stable and “fixed society” – one that is productive based on its reproductive mechanisms (Kress, 2000, p.136). But today, Kress (2000) argues that the “changing frames of a society are being transformed willy-nilly from a conception of a homogeneously monocultural society to a decisively pluricultural one,” and calls for an “education for instability” (p.138). The term, ‘instability’ refers to a constantly evolving world functioning on a globalized rather than localized level, and one that needs creativity and innovation. Kress (2000) and Unsworth (2001) thus emphasize that the current curriculum that many schools run by, are rooted on structure, fixed knowledge and the “replication of learning” (Kress, 2000, p.140). This is further supported by Anstey and Bull (2004) and Janks (2014) who state that the current

monomodal curriculums are becoming ineffective and inadequate in engaging learners in a holistic way.

Understanding multimodality and multiliteracies

Multimodality

Multimodality can be defined as the use of modes that are employed in a meaning-making process for the development of deep understanding. Anstey and Bull (2006), and Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) stated that these modes could include visual, verbal, written, and gestural, spatial and musical resources. As multimodality, like multiliteracies, emerged in response to the changing social and semiotic landscape (Halliday & Hasan, 1989), the record for multimodal text has been an “evolving inventory” (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246) consisting of “semiotic modal resources”, “materiality of the resources of sound” (such as pitch, volume and tone) (van Leeuwen, 1999 as cited in Martin-Jones, De Mejia & Hornberger, 2008, p. 359) and movement, gesture and writing (Martinec, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). This evolving nature is crucial to multimodality as “resources come to display regularities” (Jewitt 2012, p. 242) when used. Simultaneously, resources are refined and recognized through their social practice. Overtime, according to Fairclough (2007) and Flewitt (2006) as the modes are used by a larger spectrum of individuals, they transform. In addition, Anstey and Bull (2010) and Kress (2003) stated that modes are interactive and integrative. They contribute to the construction of differing meanings and perspectives as they slowly evolve. This is significant as the recognition of modes and their alterable nature have implications for pedagogy, curriculum, and learning in classrooms.

Multiliteracies

Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) can be understood as a post-structuralist phenomenon as any cultural setting can bring to surface multiple readings and differing perspectives when a person views, reads, or hears. According to Unsworth (1993), one can identify literacy through “utterance” (p.28) that resonate social identification and social perception (p.24). This focuses on the interactions between different communicative modes, how these modes complement and work together to add meaning (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Unsworth & Thomas, 2014). The concept of multiliteracies is not formulaic and involves “a different set of perceptual systems of reading, where separate communicative modes are employed and separate literacies are enacted” (Duncum 2004, p.253; Noad & Unsworth, 2007). In addition, when putting multiliteracies into practice, one must reexamine current constructs of what the word ‘literate’ means. The need is to look beyond the basic ability to read and comprehend text (Luke, Freebody & Land, 2000; Martin, 2007). This changes the notion of ‘being’ literate to one ‘becoming’ literate (Unsworth, 2001). Thus the “notion of literacy needs to be reconceived as a plurality of literacies and being literate must be seen as anachronistic” (Unsworth 2001, p.8) as technological emergences (Castells, 2004; Unsworth, 2006) influence how these multiple literacies are (socially) constructed. Overtime, being literate becomes a collective identity of being multiliterate.

Implications for the English curriculum

Given the evolutionary and interactive nature of multimodality and multiliteracies, the approach to crafting an English curriculum would require a paradigm shift. This includes the way pedagogy is conceptualized and designed, the incorporation of technology and possible impact on the teaching and learning.

Conceptualisation, re-design and infusion of technology

According to Kress (2000), design should be both a premise and a practice. Here the term, 'design' refers to both a multimodal curriculum and a multimodal text. Also, as described by Walsh (2009), each lesson that is designed should demonstrate "how teachers planned units of work that drew on the potentials of multimodal texts or digital technology in innovative ways" (p.56). Stein (2004) and Zammit and Downes (2002) emphasized that teachers should combine experiential learning with various learning tools, and printed and digital texts to invoke and cradle multiliteracies. In addition, the chosen text is opened to interpretation and susceptible to being reshaped and remade (Anstey & Bull, 2010). Thus, the multimodal curriculum is not subject to predefinition and predication, instead allows for multiple interpretations and discussions. Simultaneously, it engages at a critical level that brings together differing modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Unsworth, 2010) and enables learners to interpret systems of signs and shared meaning (O'Rourke, 2001; van Leeuwen, 1999). Theoretically, the design process can be further understood at two levels: framing and social semiotics.

Ware (2004) and Willows and Houghton (1987) stated that the concept of framing reveals how individuals build perspectives of a reality that they view or they are in. It takes into account "interpretations, representations, simplifications and perceptions" (Goffman 1974, p. 13) that occur in frame. For the reader/viewer, these prescriptions define and explain events that unfold. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) and Unsworth (2007) reinforce that a frame functions as a starting point for people to view, adhere to and make sense of various scenarios and situations. These are formed by people's daily existence through a process of social construction (Christie, 1999) and based on their "schema of interpretation" (Goffman 1974, p.24). These interpretations can be 'colored' by personal experiences and biological and cultural influences (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Hasan, 2004). Thus, a text which is presented in relation to a learner's culture, social experiences and environment has a better chance of engagement, if it falls into his frame (Canagarajah, 2001; Jewitt, 2012). However, this does not mean that the opposite is futile.

de Silva Joyce and Gaudin (2011) and Lankshear (1997) stated that to close this knowledge gap, the modes of a multimodal text can be understood via a study of signs and symbols. As theorized by de Saussure (1959), this takes into consideration the relationship between sign, signifier and signified. Here, the 'sign' is referred to as the object, the 'signifier' as the one that attributes meaning and the 'signified' as the processed meaning attributed to the 'sign'. While de Saussure's theory is scientific and insightful in expressing the meaning making process as ideas and codes based on patterns and functions, it does not explain the origin and development of such codes. Functionally, as highlighted by Hasan (1989) and Lemke (2002), semiotics illustrates relationships through gestures, objects and speech in a broad and simplified way, but does not take into consideration context or social setting. This poses a problem to understanding multimodal text as the analysis does make space for "subject interpretations" and "affective domains" (Hayward 1996, p.352).

Clearly, the asocial prospect of semiotics limits linguistic comprehension. Halliday stated that language found and used within social and cultural perimeters should not be considered as mere grammar rules, instead it should be "a resource for making meanings" (1978, p.192). Thus, social semiotics views meaning making as a social process and expands its linguistic capability (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). As people affirm, apply and behave based on their social positions, they ascertain and display behaviours that are recognized and classified as befitting to them (van Leeuwen, 2004). Thus communication, mannerisms and behaviours

formed are attributed to specific social environments. The impact of the social semiotics viewing glass (Hasan, 1984) is extensive on learners. One can no longer view language in just a grammatical sense. In fact, language is visual (with layout, colour and typography) and has “semiotic potential” (van Leeuwen 2005, p.4) as its functions and meanings are socially constructed and determined. Overtime, the deconstruction of ‘established’ meanings results in the emergence of new cultural identities and understandings (Christie & Unsworth, 2005; Kress 2010).

In an era of technology, the implications, effects and repercussions are apparent for the shift to multimodality and multiliteracies in the English curriculum. Technology has made teaching and learning exploratory and unrestricted (Snyder, 2002). With online accessibility to information, the viewing capability of a text is drastically altered, a monomodal text can now be read as a bimodal text or a multimodal one. This feeds the reader/viewer with more issues to consider, thus reshaping their views of characters, contexts and other visual components (Chan & Chia, 2014; Jewitt, 2002) via enlarging viewing and reading opportunities (Unsworth, 2006). However, this convenience of technological tools does not fully aid the development of multiliteracies. It is crucial to teach learners “technological literacy” (Benson 2009, p. 641) and not simply look at technical skills or aim to derive a standardized set of methods to teach multiliteracies (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Cumming & Wyatt-Smith, 2001). The idea is to help learners understand the “nature of interactions between people in their interpersonal, virtual, digital and textual spaces” (Beavis & O’Mara, 2010, p.63; Castells, 2004).

Multimodality and multiliteracies are interlinked and yet, independent concepts. While modes are the methods and the explicit resources, literacies deal with the reader, viewer and decoder and are imbued with the complexity of the social. This bi-directional relationship demands that the English curriculum assume a more facilitative and all-encompassing persona. And, it is only with such paradigm shifts in relation to planning, teaching and learning that assessment of multimodal texts can come into play.

Assessing multimodal texts

With schools slowly coming to terms with the need to include multimodal texts in their English curricula, including multimodal text analyses in school-based assessment is essential because it signals the alignment between teaching/learning and assessment. The following framework builds on and fleshes out initial work done by Chan and Choo (2010). This framework for assessment of multimodal texts aligns itself with the planning, teaching and learning processes before assessment. The progression of skills and abilities provided in Bloom’s taxonomy is also included in this framework. The first level of the proposed assessment framework deals with knowledge and comprehension of knowledge. Learners will be asked to show their understanding of “the main ideas, events and themes of the print or media text, as well as to interpret the subtleties and ambiguities in these texts” (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.4). The second requires a critical analysis of the text. Learners will be asked to analyze the communicative intent in multimodal texts and to compare/contrast how some of the issues presented appear in different forms. In addition, higher order critical thinking skills are demanded and learners are required to examine the message for its bias and gauge its effectiveness. Thirdly, learners will be asked to synthesize and evaluate, i.e., they will be required to relate some of the issues raised in the previous two levels of analyses with the political and socio-cultural contexts in which these multimodal texts are situated. The intention is for learners to expand on their analyses by examining them from different perspectives.

Essentially, the proposed framework assesses learners of their understanding of the text, author and context. It is depicted diagrammatically as follows:

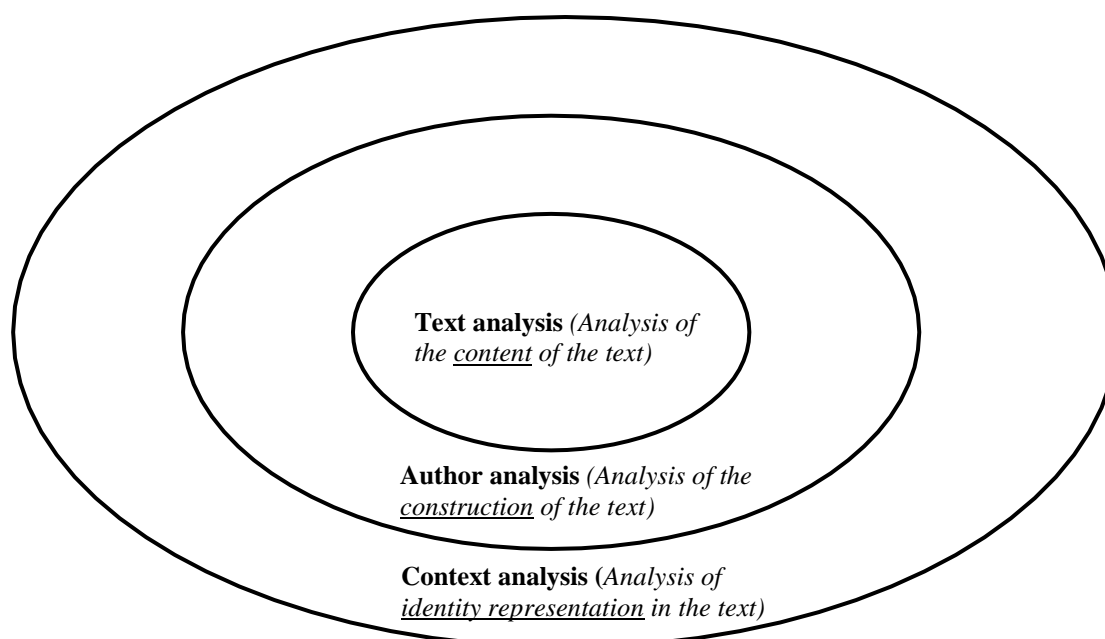


Figure 1. Framework for assessing multimodal texts

Underpinning this proposed assessment framework, Chan and Choo (2010) argue, is the notion that texts are never in isolation. The author, political and socio-cultural factors contribute to the overall construction of the text.

The following section proposes a sample of a school-based assessment that makes use of a multimodal text. It also demonstrates the systematic application of the three components – text, author and context – proposed by Chan and Choo (2010) in their preliminary work on multimodal text analysis.

Text analysis

Multimodal text: Nike anti-ad Poster

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/jqt8mxf>

Text Analysis

Focuses on the structure of the text

1.	Description/ Definition	<i>Theme/ Subject</i> – Questions about the theme and/or subject are attempts to get at learners' basic understanding of the subject matter at hand. The answers are usually found in the text (Chan & Choo, 2010).
1.1	Sample Question	What is the main product advertised?
1.2	Possible response	Nike products
2.	Description/ Definition	<i>Obvious content</i> – Questions in this category require learners to perform a close reading as it “goes beyond a general understanding

		of the text. As learners are only “required to identify one or two keywords”, these questions are considered lower-order (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.4)
2.1	Sample Question	According to the text, who is the target ‘buyer’ of Nike sneakers?
2.2	Possible response	Empowered and career-oriented women
3.	Description/ Definition	<i>Inferred content</i> – Questions about inferred content require learners to think about the “connotative meaning of particular words or phrases in the text”. These questions often require learners “to infer the reasons and intention behind a particular statement made by a character in the text or by the author” (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.4).
3.1	Sample Question	Why does the author associate the product with terms, like “work”, “factory” and “disappear”?
3.2	Possible response	The author is using the ‘aesthetics’ and specific terms/words depicted in the Nike ad (which is about empowering women) to enable the visualization as well as to highlight the plight of the underpaid women working in extreme conditions in sweat shops/factories found in less developed nations.
4.	Description/ Definition	<i>Connected content</i> – Questions in this category require learners to find information from different parts of the text. Sometimes, more than one piece of evidence is needed to support a point that is made. Learners “must not only understand what is being asked but must also locate ideas associated with the question keyword from various parts of the text.” The task gets more challenging when texts are longer (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.5).
4.1	Sample Question	The author warns, “... think globally before you decide it’s cool to wear...” Highlight two other phrases that are associated with this idea.
4.2	Possible response	‘work sixty hours a week’ and ‘disappear when they ask for a raise’
5.	Description/ Definition	<i>Connected-inferred content</i> – the difference between this category of questions and the previous is that learners are required to not only find the evidence but more importantly, interpret evidence by suggesting the reasons or intention implied beneath the different evidence observed.
5.1.	Sample Question	Examine the verbal and linguistic signs in the text. Do you see a duality of the messages being depicted in the advertisement? Explain..
5.2	Possible response	On one hand, Nike focuses on projecting itself as a company that supports the empowerment and liberation of women amongst first world nations. However, on the other, Nike appears to be making use of ‘cheap’ labour consisting of usually, uneducated or lowly educated women to manufacture its products in impoverished or developing nations.

*Author analysis***Author Analysis**

Focuses on the author's intention and purpose

6.	Description/ Definition	Identification of explicit claim – this category of questions deal with learners' "ability to identify the explicit claim that the author is making through the text." While the answers tend to be more obvious, "answering these questions, learners become more conscious of the author's intention" (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.5).
6.1.	Sample Question	What is the advertisement claiming about the product?
6.2.	Possible response	Nike supports and promotes the women's liberation, empowerment and rights etc.
7.	Description/ Definition	Identification of implicit claim – this category of questions get at the author's claims/implications. These may manifest themselves "in more subtle ways, such as through the layout, visuals, colour, setting, and word associations in the text" (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.5).
7.1.	Sample Question	By analysing the language and design of the text, say what the author via the advertisement is suggesting/highlighting about the product.
7.2.	Possible response	In the process of proclaiming high ideals, Nike as a company must not forget the Nike factory worker and her struggles to survive.
8.	Description/ Definition	Analysis of arguments – the analysis of claims can occur at the following levels: (i) Assumptions and speculations – this happens "when points are made with insufficient supporting evidence" (ii) Generalisation – this takes place "when people or situations are classified or stereotyped into general categories without any in-depth exploration into the specificity of their circumstances and make-up." (iii) Logical fallacy - this follows "when there is an absence of a logical link between the evidence given and the point made" (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.5).
8.1.	Sample Question	State two reasons why you think this claims might be problematic? For each reason, give an explanation.
8.2.	Possible response	The author assumes that successful and empowered women are career women and that they identify and associate themselves with wearing Nike products. He/she generalises the point and reinforces stereotypes that all developing nations are impoverished and under-developed and the labour-force is lowly educated and 'made-used of'. He/she even goes on to suggest that people 'disappear' (are removed or murdered etc.) from these sweat shops and factories, if they are not obedient and did not toe the line. There is no evidence provided and not too logical as it implies a lack of law and order in these developing nations. If that is the case, it does not make business-sense for Nike to set-up factories in these countries.

Context analysis

Context analysis

Focuses on representation, i.e., how particular groups and communities have been represented in the text and what values are surfaced as a result (Chan & Choo, 2010).

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| 9. | Description/
Definition | <p><i>Analysis of audience representation</i> – it is based on the principle that no text is ever neutral. This implies that all texts are biased, i.e., written for someone, from a particular viewpoint, for a specific purpose. Learners examine representation in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Focus – “what and who is our attention directed to?” (ii) Exclusion – “what and who has been excluded from the text?” (iii) Voice – “who had written the text and what are the key values implicit in it?” (Chan & Choo, 2010, p5). |
| 9.1. | Sample
Question | <p>“What ideals do the author associate with the target audience in the text and which group has been excluded from participation in these ideals?” (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.5).</p> |
| 9.2 | Possible
response | <p>The text is current and most probably, targeted at educated, wealthy and empowered women in first world nations. That is, one has to be relatively well educated to read/ understand the literal message as well as the meta –message depicted in the visual and text of the ad. In addition, Nike is a well-known brand, the ability to purchase Nike products imply that the target audience would come from an above-average SES. Moreover, the text is emotive/ persuasive, as it aims to have women empathise with their own kind in less desirable and able conditions. These values, e.g., wealth, position, power and educational level are subtly put to question and the ad appears to be striving to highlight the more impoverished class within the social and world structure which may value other ideals like righteousness/ justice, honesty and hard work/diligence.</p> |
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| 10. | Description/
Definition | <p><i>Analysis of thematic representation</i> – it focuses on the exploration of themes depicted in the texts. Learners could examine thematic representation in these three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Product association – “what values, habit, skill or lifestyle is this product associated with?” (ii) Possible effects of the product – “what are some of the positive as well as harmful effects this product may have on consumers who over-use it?” (iii) Alternative perspective – “how can this text be given a more balanced perspective providing both the pros and cons of the product? What other information has been excluded and what information should therefore be included?” (Chan & Choo, 2010, pp.5-6). <p>In contrast to the other categories, questions in this category require learners “to apply the knowledge learnt about the text, author, audience representation, and then synthesize this knowledge in the creation of their own text”. Assessment could then be based on the content, “creativity of their presentation” and/or the “depth of analytical thought involved in conceptualising</p> |
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10.1	Sample Question part 1	their original text” (Chan & Choo, 2010, p.6). Design an anti-ad which is targeted at parents and their children with a message that eating too much fast food might just lead to obesity, heart diseases etc. Your advertisement must include: (i) A slogan (ii) A brief persuasive description of the product (iii) A sketch of the layout and brand name (iv) The product logo and brand name
10.2	Sample Question part 2	Write a one paragraph reflection on this advertisement. Focus on the techniques which you employed and their effectiveness (Chan & Choo, 2010).

Alignment between assessment framework and bloom’s taxonomy of questions

The proposed multimodal assessment framework ensures that learners are assessed across a range of question types (based on Bloom’s taxonomy). The alignment between the proposed multimodal assessment framework and the type and level of questions set in the sample assessment paper provided above (based on Bloom’s taxonomy) is depicted below.

Proposed Multimodal Assessment Framework	Type/Level of Questions (based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Questions)
1. <u>Text Analysis</u> Question 1- Theme / Subject	<u>Type of Question</u> Knowledge (Level 1 on the typology of questions) – process of recognizing different contexts, situations and people
2. <u>Text Analysis</u> Question 2- Obvious content	<u>Type of Question</u> Knowledge (Level 1 on the typology of questions) – process of identifying different contexts, situations and people
3. <u>Text Analysis</u> Question 3- Inferred content	<u>Type of Question</u> Comprehension (Level 2 on the typology of questions) – process of interpreting and translating information from the text
4. <u>Text Analysis</u> Question 4- Connected content	<u>Type of Question</u> Comprehension (Level 2 on the typology of questions) – process of locating, selecting and organizing information from the text
5. <u>Text Analysis</u> Question 5- Connected-inferred content	<u>Type(s) of Question</u> Application/Analysis (Level 3 and Level 4 on the typology of questions) – process of relating ‘X’ and ‘Y’, e.g., How is ‘X’ related to ‘Y’? What is the significance? i.e. surfacing ideas and intentions
6. <u>Author Analysis</u> Question 6 – Identification of explicit claims	<u>Type(s) of Question</u> Knowledge/Analysis (Level 1 and Level 4 on the typology of questions) – process of identifying (observable) ‘clues’ from the text to surface authorial intention
7. <u>Author Analysis</u> Question 7 – Identification of implicit claims	<u>Type(s) of Question</u> Knowledge/Analysis (Level 1 and Level 4 on the typology of questions) – process of ‘unearthing’ underlying ‘clues’ (found in visuals, colour, setting, layout etc.)(in comparison to Question 6), so it is more about examining and inferring (depicting understanding)

8.	<u>Author Analysis</u> Question 8 – Analysis of arguments	meaning from the text to surface authorial intention <u>Type(s) of Question</u> Analysis/Evaluation (Level 4 and Level 6 on the typology of questions) – process of agreeing/disagreeing, making valued judgments, examining perspectives based on the text
9.	<u>Context Analysis</u> Question 9 – Analysis of audience	<u>Type(s) of Question</u> Analysis/Evaluation (Level 4 and Level 6 on the typology of questions) – process of agreeing/disagreeing, making valued judgments, examining perspectives with a focus on the audience (i.e., author’s beliefs and thoughts/assumption held regarding his target audience)
10.	<u>Context Analysis</u> Question 10 – Analysis of thematic representation	<u>Type(s) of Question</u> Analysis/Synthesis/Evaluation (Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 on the typology of questions) – process of agreeing/disagreeing, making valued judgments, examining perspectives, combining thoughts and ideas and forming new ideas/products

The proposed multimodal assessment framework develops learners’ critical literacy skills at all stages – curriculum redesign, teaching and learning, and assessment. To enable this to happen, the type of passages selected for both teaching and assessment would intentionally include a wider range of texts – i.e., from information reports to print advertisements, billboards, fashion magazines, music covers and movie posters – which do not conform to any particular or fixed text-type. This would ensure that learners get constant exposure to authentic multimodal texts. Next, the alignment between the assessment framework and Bloom’s Taxonomy of Questions makes certain that questions posed to learners move beyond literal understanding and deal with a broader range of issues pertaining to the text and important to critical literacy like examining stylistic techniques employed in text construction, addressing issues of audience representation, dealing with multiple perspectives, etc.. Finally, in answering the questions, learners would also have to make use of their knowledge of both verbal and visual signs and codes. This would bring about a more heightened sense of awareness about how complex the communication process is. The success of the proposed assessment process and framework is contingent on careful and deliberate curriculum conceptualization and redesign and its impactful enactment in the classroom.

In conclusion, the inclusion of a multimodal framework for assessment allows learners to grasp the meta-language of texts and to think about the effects of language and visual signs in the English classroom. The result is that learners will become more informed readers and gain a deeper understanding of the text’s meaning, style, structure and effects. The key challenge is that such a framework for assessment involves a paradigm shift in the mindset of educators who may be comfortable in the teaching of ‘templates’ revolving around rigid text forms and may be accustomed to designing questions which adhere to conventional questions in the knowledge and comprehension domains. However, when educators become more open to multimodal forms of assessment and the necessary redesign and teaching and learning processes attached to them, they may find that their learners will be better able to connect and utilize what they have been taught and learnt from the classroom and able to think, critically read and develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of a multiplicity of texts in the real world.

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