Multimodal Approaches to Non-Fiction Reading

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Abstract

More than a decade into the 21st century, education still approaches the incorporation of technology in the non-fiction curriculum as a tack-on, positioning print-based text hierarchically as the most valid learning tool. In situations of time-constraint, the lessons that get cut are generally multimodal, whereas print-based reading, as the reified medium, remains. Methodologies that privilege print-based reading and learning no longer meet the needs of 21st century students. This paper examines theories of reading that both pre-date the internet as well as theories that emerged once technology changed information-gathering experiences. This paper also examines a 21st century middle school lesson plan on the Lascaux Caves which uses as its text the virtual tour of this paleolithic site created by the French government.

By highlighting the differences in pedagogy between the transmission model and the adaptive 21st century model, our question becomes: if we take what we know about theories of how students have historically developed a sense of non-fiction, and merge that understanding with an interactive relationship with technology, what does it mean for ways that students read non-fiction today?

References