

**Digital Literacy and Multimodal Practices of Young Children:
Engaging with emergent research
1st DigiLitEY Training School, 2016**

Abstracts for keynotes

A brief excursion into the contemporary landscape of meaning and meaning-making

Gunther Kress, Institute of Education, University of London, UK

https://www.ioe.ac.uk/staff/LCCN_51.html

Two large factors are shaping the contemporary semiotic landscape. One is profound social change; the other is the far-reaching impact of digital technologies. Together they have remade and are continuing to remake *what* meanings are and *can* be made, and *how* meaning is made. Social change is the engine for both. It is leading to a change in the means for making meaning: changing our attention from a landscape conceived for a very long time in monomodal terms, with writing as dominant - to attention to the very many means through which we make meaning, writing being just one. The technological changes both amplify and in their turn change the *what* and the *how*, adding the big question of *who*, that is, the question of 'agency'.

In the talk I will focus on exploring the characteristics and the significance of the more directly social factors: the *what* and the *who*, with only marginal attention to the *how*.

Young Children's Digital Literacy Practices in Homes, Kindergarten and Primary Schools

Jackie Marsh, University of Sheffield, UK

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In this presentation, I will draw from a number of research studies in which I have examined the digital literacy practices of young children in the UK as they take place across homes, kindergartens and primary schools. The presentation will consider various theoretical traditions that inform an understanding of digital literacy before moving on to examine the ways in which many children are engaged in the use of new technologies from birth. The key characteristics of young children's uses of these technologies in the home will be identified, and then the ways in which a number of kindergartens and schools have embedded these key characteristics into their curriculum and pedagogical approaches will be shared. It will be

argued that kindergartens and schools need to ensure greater continuity between informal and formal digital literacy practices if children are to develop effectively the skills and knowledge required of them as digital citizens in the twenty-first century.

Videogames and the multimodal literacy

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<http://www.degois.pt/visualizador/curriculum.jsp?key=8296435616162162>

Video games are known for being highly demanding in cognitive terms, namely because of the multiplicity of different media supported, relying upon from text to image, passing through moving image and sound, any of which may be accessed via interaction systems expanding its semantic and therefore cognitive demand. In this sense it is of particular importance to understand how videogames manage all these needs in terms of literacies. Under these assumptions we will present different ways in which video game design take into account cognitive complexities involved in the construction of meaning by players, with a special focus on the early years.

Transforming pedagogy for the early years in digital learning contexts (why we have to play with toy cars before we can get a driving license)

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The aim of this conference is to give an overview of how pedagogy and teaching approaches have been (mis)used in the early stages of learning – pre and primary school children – in formal and informal digital learning contexts. I aim to and examine ways of transforming these into adaptive/productive strategies that foster motivation, creativity and digital skills development in learning, while adopting selected digital tools that are not perceived as intrusive and/or displaced from the contexts of childhood education, with a view to foster and set the foundations for the development of digital literacies from an early age.

Issues that have to do with advocating or rejecting digital tools appropriation by children will therefore be addressed, based on recent research findings. This discussion allows for the emergence of voices that are in favour or against the introduction of ICT in the early years of schooling, thus providing us with the means to equate a balanced view of the pros and cons

of such introduction, be it in the form of social and economic aspects, cognitive development, parental involvement, teachers' attitudes, institutional policies, and so forth.

A few principles will be equated towards the use of the right tools for the right task at the right time.