Reading is a constructive process: Both the text and its meaning are constructed by the reader. That means that at any point in time there are two or more texts during reading: the published text and the reader’s text. In the transactions, both the reader and the text are changed. The reader’s knowledge and schemata are changed and the text is changed as the reader constructs it to fit expectations and world knowledge...This view of reading is compatible with an emerging view of writing. The writer constructs a text in transaction with one in the writer’s mind. In this written text the writer only makes explicit what is not inferable by the reader.

Goodman 1992

I define reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practised. My definition states that within the directional constraints of the printer’s code, language and visual perception responses are purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues in a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author’s message.

Clay 1991

Literacy is not a set of unchanging and universal ‘skills’ or knowledge. What counts as literacy varies according to factors such as place, institution, purpose, period in history, culture, economic circumstance, and power relations...To say that literacy is socially constructed is to recognize we use a multiplicity of literacies to get things done in our lives.

Comber & Cormack 1997

...literacy will not be measured simply by our ability to comprehend, analyze and communicate; instead, we expect literacy will be increasingly defined around our ability to adapt to the changing technologies of information and communication and our ability to envision new ways to use these technologies for important purposes.

Leu & Kinzer 2000

Skillful reading is not a unitary skill. It is a whole complex system of skills and knowledge. Within this system, the knowledge and activities involved in visually recognizing individual printed words are useless in and of themselves. They are valuable, and in a strong sense, possible only as they are guided and received by complementary knowledge and activities of language comprehension. On the other hand, unless the processes involved in individual word recognition operate properly, nothing else in the system can either.

Adams 1991

At the core of the theory I have developed is the view that language processes must be studied in the context of their use. If they are dissected, stopped or unnaturally constrained, then the relative significance of constituents to wholes is altered. Similarly, long complete texts have characteristics that short texts, partial texts, or specially contrived texts can't have.

Goodman 1979

Researchers agree that reading and writing are both complex acts of critical thinking... Underlying these mental activities are powerful cognitive strategies that are fundamental to the construction of meaning. This is the core of the reading/writing connection. Experienced readers and writers select and implement appropriate strategies and monitor and regulate their use in order to construct and refine meaning.

Olson 2003
Reading, like speaking and listening, can be considered as a language process. It is not only a matter of sequentially pairing visual forms with auditory forms which are then interpreted like speech, but rather, it is a constructive, active process in which the reader uses his cognitive and linguistic knowledge to reproduce a probable utterance from a careful sampling of cues and then matches that prediction for appropriateness.

Ryan & Semel 1969

During the execution of a complex skill, it is necessary to coordinate many component processes within a very short period of time. If each component process requires attention, performance of the complex skill will be impossible, because the capacity of attention will be exceeded. But if enough of the components and the coordinations can be processed automatically, then the load on attention will be within tolerable limits and the skill can be successfully performed. Therefore, one of the prime issues in the study of a complex skill such as reading is to determine how the processing of component subskills becomes automatic.

Laberge & Samuels 1974

Work both with teachers and pupils has convinced me that there are two models of literacy on offer in our schools: a utilitarian one aimed at giving people the ability to write little more than their name and address and to fill in forms, and a supercharged model which allows its possessors to choose and control all that they read and write. This powerful literacy includes the ability, the habit even, of being critical, that is, of making judgements, especially about the writing of others. My belief is that, until most, indeed all, children in school have access to, and are empowered by, critical literacy, including the understanding that reading and writing are more than simply useful, then we are failing to educate the next generation properly.

Meek 1991

The panel determined that effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness), teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters that can be blended together to form words (phonics), having them practice what they’ve learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading), and teaching them to apply strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension.


My argument is that a change of metaphor is required for thinking about language. I shall propose that our perceptions of literacy are narrowed if not distorted by the pervasive tendency, in education as well as in language theory and research, to regard language solely as the means by which information is shunted from one person to another...My alternative is that the primary, fundamental, and continual activity of the brain is nothing less than the creation of worlds. Thought in its broadest sense is the construction of worlds, both "real" and imaginary, learning is their elaboration and modification, and language—especially written language—is particularly efficacious but by no means unique medium by which these worlds can be manifested, manipulated, and sometimes shared. My metaphor pictures the brain as an artist, as a creator of experience for itself and for others, rather than as a dealer in information.

Smith 1983
Literacy as defined and codified in the high-stakes tests that are being implemented is often interpreted as basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. I am very concerned about a conception of literacy that defines it only as basic skills. Although it is essential that all students acquire basic skills in literacy, basics skills are necessary but not sufficient in our diverse and troubled world. Literate citizens in a diverse democratic society should be reflective, moral, and active. They should have the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to act to change the world to make it more just and democratic. The world's greatest problems do not result from people being unable to read and write. They result from people in the world—from different cultures, races, religions and nations—being unable to get along and to work together to solve the world's intractable problems such as global warming, the AIDS epidemic, poverty, racism, sexism, and war.

Banks 2003

The humanities are all those subjects that make us more human, and we cannot be fully human unless our vision includes the breadth of human culture...the difference between the haves and have nots in this country is not so much a matter of race, ethnic background, or even of economics, but a difference in access to the humanities—what I like to think of as true literacy.

Paterson 2003

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