



# The Language of Literacy

2005 International SIM Conference



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Lined writing area for notes on 'The Language of Literacy'.



# Advance Organizer

## \* Outcome

Define and discuss a number of terms currently used in literacy.

## \* Rationale

To have important conversations about the literacy abilities of adolescents we need to be speaking the same language. We need a common ground for establishing shared meaning.



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# The Language of Magic

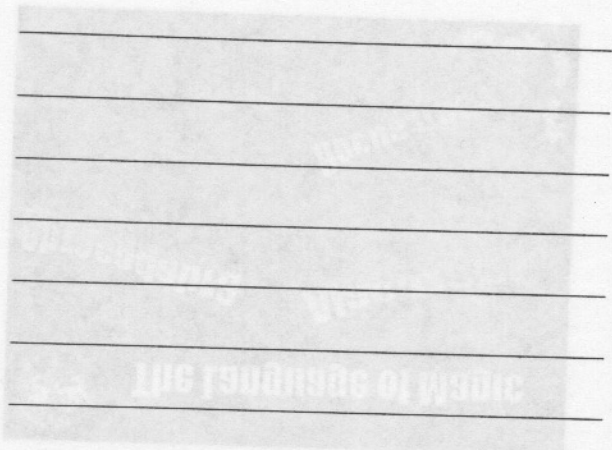
Abacadabra

Alacazam

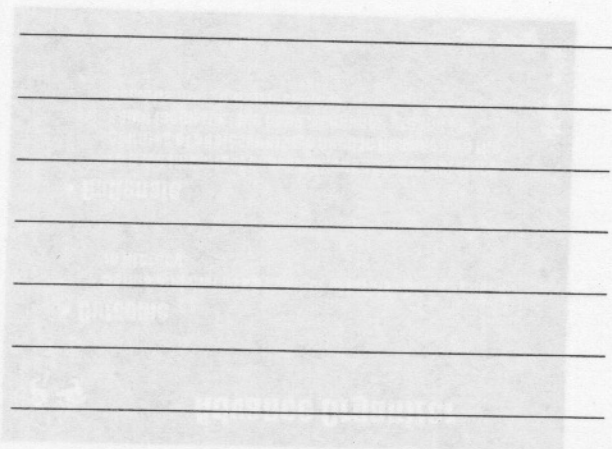

Hocus.pocus



Lined writing area for notes on 'The Language of Magic'.

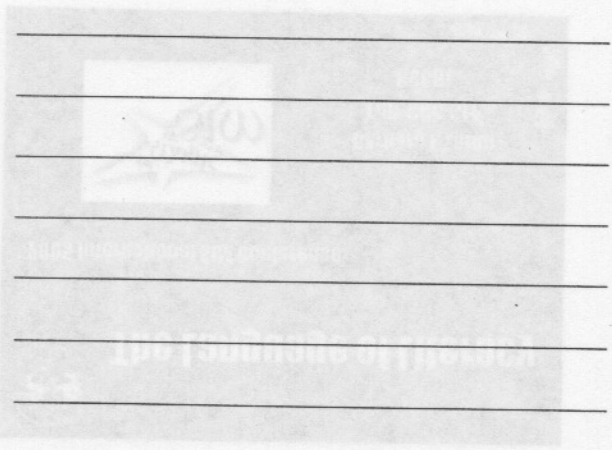



**Center for Research on Learning**  
**The University of Kansas**  
**Center for Research on Learning Disabilities**  
**The University of Kansas**




**Why is this a big deal?**  
**Linguistic Influence on Thought:**  
The structure and lexicon of one's language influences how one perceives and conceptualizes the world, and they do so in a systematic way.


**Linguistic Relativity Principle**  
**The Whorfian Hypothesis**  
Language shapes thought




**The Magic of Language**  
Finding the Right Words

**Alacazam!**





**Training  
Trainer**  
Professional Development  
Professional Developer




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**LITERACY**




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Are we using language that helps us conceptualize literacy in a way that is helpful to us as professional developers and researchers?

Are we using language that helps others to think about our work in ways that are consistent with our goals?

Are we using language that helps us get the job done; i.e. promoting literacy achievement, especially for adolescents who struggle?




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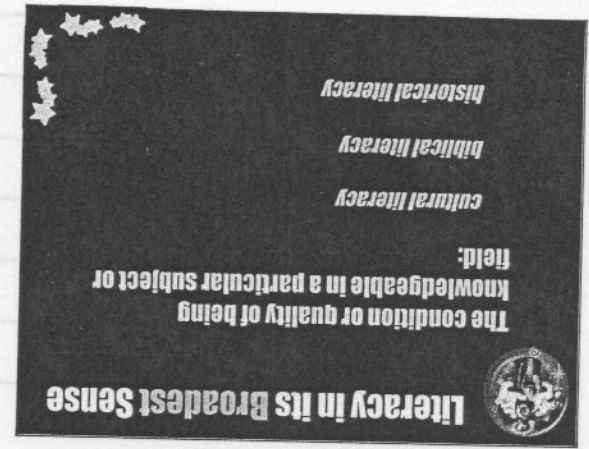
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**Literacy in its Broadest Sense**

The condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field:

- cultural literacy*
- biblical literacy*
- historical literacy*



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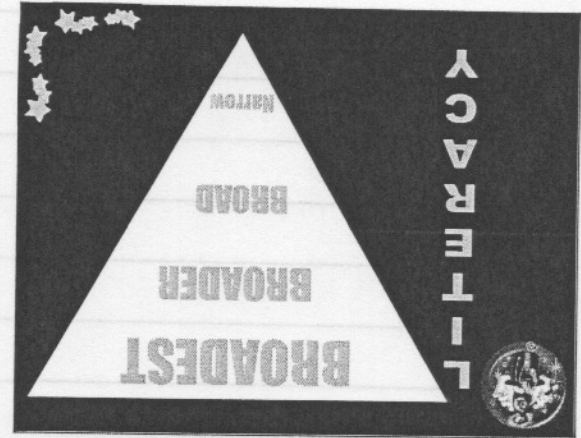
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**LITERACY**

**BROADEST**  
**BROADER**  
**BROAD**  
**NARROW**



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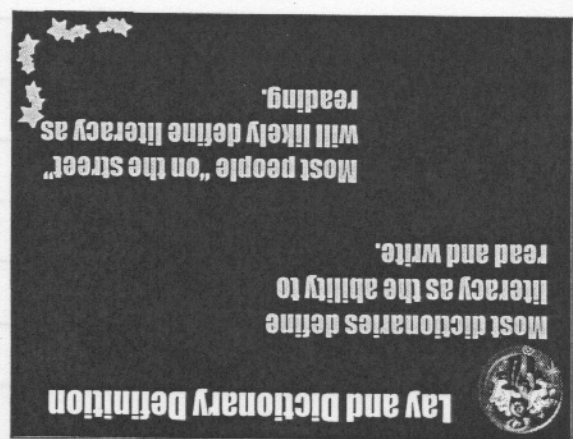
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**Lay and Dictionary Definition**

Most dictionaries define literacy as the ability to read and write.

Most people "on the street" will likely define literacy as reading.







### Literacy in a Broader Sense

The ability to understand and use symbolic information (text, formulas, codes, statistics, etc.) to function successfully in the world.

- ★ Listening, speaking, reading, writing
- ★ numerical and mathematical skills (sometimes called numeracy)
- ★ computer skills
- ★ other technology-related skills

The World View

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### Literacy in a Broad Sense

Ability to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information using a wide range of resources including text, visual, audio, and video sources.

- Listening
- Viewing
- Speaking
- Reading
- Presenting
- Writing

Basic Learning Competencies

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### Literacy in a Narrow Context

Literacy: "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."

Includes ability to locate and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction, as well as locate and use information contained in job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs.

1992 and 2003 National Assessments of Adult Literacy (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins & Kolstad, 2002, p. 2)

The National View

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**The National View**

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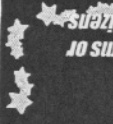
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**Basic Learning Competencies**

The major world conference held in Jomtien in 2000 broadened the world view of literacy to include:

- \* reading, writing and arithmetic
- +  
\* knowledge, problem-solving and life skills.

*BLCs are meant to support independent functioning and coping with practical problems or choices of adults as parents, workers, and citizens.*

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**The World View**



### The National View

National Literacy Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-73, 1991) defines literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." (Section 3).



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### The School View

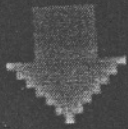


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### Secondary Reading Content Area Reading

Processes and skills necessary to read and write in the content areas - specific strategies to assist students in successfully using content area texts.



### Adolescent Literacy



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**Cultural Influence Shaping Literacy**

- \* Global economic competitions
- \* Public policy initiatives
- \* Relationship between literacy and technology

Leu & Kinzer, 2000



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**Learner**

**Text**


**Context**



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**Adolescent Literacy**

- Move to a broad generative view of literacy with the adolescent at the center (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000)
- Multiple literacies (beyond textbooks! Multi-mediated text Role of literacies in identity development Need to sanction such literacies in school settings (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps & Wall, 1998)
- Complex issues around adolescents' access to and alienation from social institutions (Luke & Ekins, 2000)





### Adolescents must be able to:

- ★ read longer works of fiction and be able to discuss plots and themes.
- ★ understand and use specialized vocabulary and symbols in order to read content-area materials in history, science, and mathematics
- ★ find, comprehend, interpret, and assess the validity of information found in the media, on the Internet, and in print sources.



Specialist Text Literacy

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### What Is Unique about Adolescent Literacy?

"Middle and high school students encounter academic discourses and disciplinary concepts in such fields as science, mathematics, and the social sciences that require different reading approaches from those used with more familiar forms such as literary and personal narratives. These new forms, purposes, and processing demands require that teachers show, demonstrate, and make visible to students how literacy operates within the academic disciplines."

Alvermann, 2001




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### High Literacy (Langer, 1999)

Includes not only basic reading and writing skills but also the ability to use language, content, and reasoning in ways that are appropriate for particular situations and disciplines. In essence, high literacy involves students' abilities to engage in thoughtful reading, writing, and discussion about content in the classroom.




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**engage 21st Century Skills** 

Skill clusters considered within the context of rigorous academic standards, intended to provide the public, business and industry, and educators with a common understanding of—and language for discussing—what is needed by students, citizens, and workers in the Digital Age.

- Digital-Age Literacy
- Inventive Thinking
- Effective Communication
- High Productivity

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**SCIENCE texts are difficult to comprehend at a deep level. Needed are coherent explanations for:** 

- \* generating inferences
- \* solving problems
- \* making decisions
- \* integrating ideas
- \* synthesizing new ideas
- \* decomposing ideas in subparts
- \* forecasting future occurrences in a system
- \* apply knowledge to practical situations

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**Specific Text Genre Literacy** 

Science

\* Loaded with technical terms.

- \* Complex mechanism with multiple components, attributes of components, relations between components, and dynamic processes that flow throughout the system.
- \* Use of a mathematical language difficult to ground in everyday experience.
- \* Impossible to form mental images of some of the mechanisms without distorting the integrity of the system.
- \* Not enough cues to create coherent representations



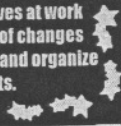


## Digital Age Literacy

• **BASIC LITERACY:** Language proficiency (in English) and numeracy at levels necessary to function on the job and in society to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential in this Digital Age.

• **SCIENTIFIC LITERACY:** Knowledge and understanding of the scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity.

• **ECONOMIC LITERACY:** The ability to identify economic problems, alternatives, costs, and benefits; analyze the incentives at work in economic situations; examine the consequences of changes in economic conditions and public policies; collect and organize economic evidence; and weigh costs against benefits.



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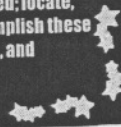


## Digital Age Literacy

• **TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY:** Knowledge about what technology is, how it works, what purposes it can serve, and how it can be used efficiently and effectively to achieve specific goals.

• **VISUAL LITERACY:** The ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision making, communication, and learning.

• **INFORMATION LITERACY:** The ability to evaluate information across a range of media; recognize when information is needed; locate, synthesize, and use information effectively; and accomplish these functions using technology, communication networks, and electronic resources.



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## Digital Age Literacy

• **MULTICULTURAL LITERACY:** The ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one's own culture and the cultures of others.

• **GLOBAL AWARENESS:** The recognition and understanding of interrelationships among international organizations, nation-states, public and private economic entities, sociocultural groups, and individuals across the globe.



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**Technological Literacy**

The ability to responsibly use appropriate technology to communicate, solve problems, and access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information to improve learning in all subject areas and to acquire lifelong knowledge and skills in the 21st century.

The long-term goal of technology literacy is for students to use the tools of their society with skill, in an ethical, accurate, and insightful manner to meet the demands of the 21st Century workplace.

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) The Technology Literacy Assessment (TLA) Work Group also identified criteria for measuring technology literacy.

**Basic Literacy**

In Relation to Information and Technological Literacy

Meet standards for the following areas in the context of traditional and media-based prose, documents, and communication venues encountered in everyday living:

- Recognizing when information is needed
- Locating information
- Evaluating all forms of information
- Synthesizing and using information effectively

Prose includes (but is not limited to) literature, editorials, newspaper articles, poems, and stories

Documents include print and media-based artifacts, such as job applications, bus schedules, maps, checks, tax forms, and tables.

**Basic Literacy**

Students Who Have Basic Literacy Skills:

In Relation to Language Proficiency

Meet standards for the following areas in the context of traditional and media-based prose, documents, and communication venues encountered in everyday living:

- Reading - Writing
- Listening - Speaking

In Relation to Numeracy (Quantitative Literacy)

Meet standards for the following areas in the context of traditional and media-based prose, documents, and communication venues encountered in everyday living:

- Arithmetic computing
- Mathematical reasoning and problem solving





## Information Literacy

Within the context of lifelong learning and the broad information continuum which ranges from data to knowledge to wisdom, information literacy competency focuses on five broad abilities:

- ★ to recognize the need for information
- ★ to understand how to evaluate information
- ★ to know how to synthesize information
- ★ to be able to communicate information

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## Information Literate Person

★ recognizes that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision making.

- ★ recognizes the need for information.
- ★ formulates questions based on information needs.
- ★ identifies potential sources of information.
- ★ develops successful search strategies.
- ★ accesses sources of information including computer-based and other technologies.

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## Information Literate Person

- ★ evaluates information.
- ★ organizes information for practical application.
- ★ integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge.
- ★ uses information in critical thinking and problem solving.

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A circular logo featuring a globe with a computer monitor and a person, surrounded by the text "International Society for Technology in Education".

\* Literacy cannot be defined as primarily the mastery of technical skills.  
\* The panel concluded that the concept should be broadened to include general literacy skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving (ETS, 2002).  
\* The ISTE National Education Technology Standards (NETS) for Students are inclusive of addressing literacy, critical thinking and problem solving.

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A circular logo featuring a globe with a computer monitor and a person, surrounded by the text "International Society for Technology in Education".

**Information & Communication Technologies Literacy**  
+  
**Information Literacy**  
=  
**Technology Literacy**

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Panel, convened by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) 2002

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A circular logo featuring a globe with a computer monitor and a person, surrounded by the text "International Society for Technology in Education".

**Students Who Are Information Literate:**

*Before Accessing Information*

- \* Determine what is known and what is needed for problem solving.
- \* Identify different sources of information, including text, people, video, audio, and databases.
- \* Prioritize sources based on credibility and relevance.

*When Accessing Information*

- \* Identify and retrieve relevant information from sources;
- \* Use technology to enhance searching.
- \* Revise information-gathering strategies that prove to be ineffective.

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**New Words**

**3 Rs**      **4 Es**




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**The 4 Es of Literacy**  
Armstrong & Warlick (2004)

**EXP**OSE KNOWLEDGE by finding relevant sources electronically and evaluating them within their context.

**EMP**LOY INFORMATION to process numbers and media electronically.

**EXP**RESS IDEAS COMPELLINGLY as the explosion of technology bombards us with many competing messages.

**ETH**ICS to evaluate the reliability of electronic sources and respect other's electronic property.




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**More New Words**

**Secondary and Tertiary Illiteracy**  
The complete or partial loss of previously existing reading and writing skills due to lack of practice.




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**YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**

**You want  
me to do  
what?**

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**Content Literacy**

The listening, speaking,  
reading and writing skills and  
strategies necessary to learn  
in each of the academic  
disciplines.



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**Maczani**

**The Magic of Language**  
Finding the Right Words





# Content Literacy

is the door to  
content acquisition.



Considerations in  
Conceptualizing Literacy

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## Who cares?



Considerations in  
Conceptualizing Literacy

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## Think Multiple Literacies



What We Need

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### What We Need

- \* Language to shape our thinking as professional developers and researchers
- \* Language to shape the way others think about our work
- \* Language to help us get the job done
- \* Marketing to adolescents
- \* Marketing to teachers

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### Considerations in Conceptualizing Literacy

- \* Although discipline specific texts share some similarities, they can differ in substantive ways. Adolescents need to be taught to manipulate the variety of texts that occur across disciplines.
- \* The language processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrally and reciprocally related and need to be addressed in relation to each other.

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### Considerations in Conceptualizing Literacy

- \* Young people deal with an array of texts including textbooks, digital texts and hypertexts.
- \* Young people find their own reasons for becoming literate that go beyond the reading of academic texts.
- \* Students need opportunities to engage with more complicated text along with support in how to use background knowledge and text structure to determine relationships among ideas and draw conclusions.



## The Magic Words

are the ones that will open the door for adolescents who struggle with literacy.

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Abstracts of presentations at the International SIM Conference, 2005, April 1-5, 2005, Philadelphia, PA. The following abstracts are from the sessions on April 2, 2005.

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