

# Multimedia Text Sets: Changing the Shape of Engagement and Learning

Janice J. Strop, Ph.D., Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI  
Holly Dionne & Richard Kuhnen, Verona Area High School, Verona, WI  
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## Metaphor: Scarborough (2001)

Learning experiences require that we utilize our knowledge of language. Reading across texts provides more opportunities to use language to practice literacy skills and strategies, as well as content knowledge and processes. Instructional planning that combines multimedia text sets and language tools weaves a strong, connective path (Scarborough, 2001) that fuels engagement while supporting students' use of strategies and content.

## Media Literacy Vocabulary

- **Mass Media:** The methods of communication used to reach large numbers of people at the same time.
- **Popular Culture:** The arts, artifacts, entertainment, fads, beliefs, and values.
- **Status Quo:** The existing condition or state of affairs.
- **Media Text:** Any form of reproduced communication, from a book, or CD, to an ad, a toy, or a t-shirt.
- **Deconstruct:** To take apart, analyze, or break down a media text into its component parts in order to understand how and why it was created.
- **Codes and Conventions:** The familiar and predictable forms and techniques used by the media to communicate certain ideas or to convey a desired impression.
- **Genres:** A category or form of film in which the subject matter theme and techniques are similar to other films of the same type.
- **Ideology:** The set of beliefs we use to define happiness, success, and morality.
- **Preferred Reading:** The interpretation of a media messages that agrees with the dominant view.
- **Oppositional Reading:** The interpretation of a media message that disagrees with the dominant view.
- **Cultural Homogenization:** The implied fear of all news, TV shows, and movies beginning to look the same.
- **Target Audience:** The phrase used by the media to describe the specific consumers of the messages sent.

## The Media Triangle Checklist

The Media Triangle checklist below provides you with a set of questions for deconstructing media texts. The triangulation of questions starts from the assumption that each media text is produced in a particular way, for a particular audience.

### TEXT

1. In what ways does this text tell a story? Does it connect to a larger story?
2. What type or category of story is it? Does it follow a formula?
3. What codes and conventions are used?
4. What are the people like? Are they realistic? Are they stereotypes?

### PRODUCTION

1. Where does this text come from? Who created it? Who owns it?
2. How is this text distributed or sold to the public? Who profits?
3. How was the text made? What production techniques were used?

### AUDIENCE

1. How does this text appeal to me? What things do I like and dislike?
2. Who is the intended target audience?
3. How and why does this text appeal to its audience?
4. In what different ways do people use or consume this text?

Adapted From: Dick, E. (1989). *The Strategies for Media Literacy Inc. Quarterly*, Summer 1989.

## Essential Questions:

What is the American Dream?  
Is it still possible to attain it?  
How has it changed?  
What media engage adolescents in this conversation?

## Deconstructing and Analyzing a Photograph or Drawing

Adapted from the U.S. National Archives & Records Administration  
[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/lessons/analysis\\_worksheets/photo.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/analysis_worksheets/photo.html)

### Step 1. Observation

- A. Study the photograph or drawing for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression and then examine the individual items. Next, divide the visual into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.
- B. Use the table below to list people, objects, activities, and symbols and codes (technical and symbolic) in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities	Symbols & Codes

### Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list 3 things that you might infer from this visual:

### Step 3. Questions

- A. What questions does this visual raise in your mind?
- B. Where could you find answers to them?
- C. Who would publish or use this? For what purpose?
- D. How might different audiences use or react to this?

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