Being able to read open educational resources: exploring multiliteracies in support of equitable open knowledge

Jako Olivier
Faculty of Education

NWU® | Self-Directed Learning

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair on
Multimodal Learning and
Open Educational Resources

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Theme of the Open Access Week

- According to the 2018 Open Access Week Advisory Committee the theme for the 2018 International Open Access Week is "**designing equitable foundations for open knowledge**."

- They have some set assumptions:
  - Open is the "default" and
  - Open policies and practices are generally adapted.

- Yet, it is acknowledged that:
  - Open systems must be "inclusive, equitable, and truly serve the needs of a diverse global community".

(Shockey, 2018)

Aim

- The aim of this presentation is to determine how students will be able to **read** open content and specifically open educational resources.

- To this end exploring **multiliteracies** in support of equitable open knowledge is proposed.

Theme of the Open Access Week

- Two important prerequisites for open access are evident from the theme:
 - Design
  - Equitable foundations

Foundation

The foundation of a house is a somewhat invisible and sometimes ignored component of the building. It is increasingly evident, however, that attention to good foundation design and construction has significant benefits to the homeowner and the builder, and can avoid some serious future problems.

Carmody *et al.* (1991:1)
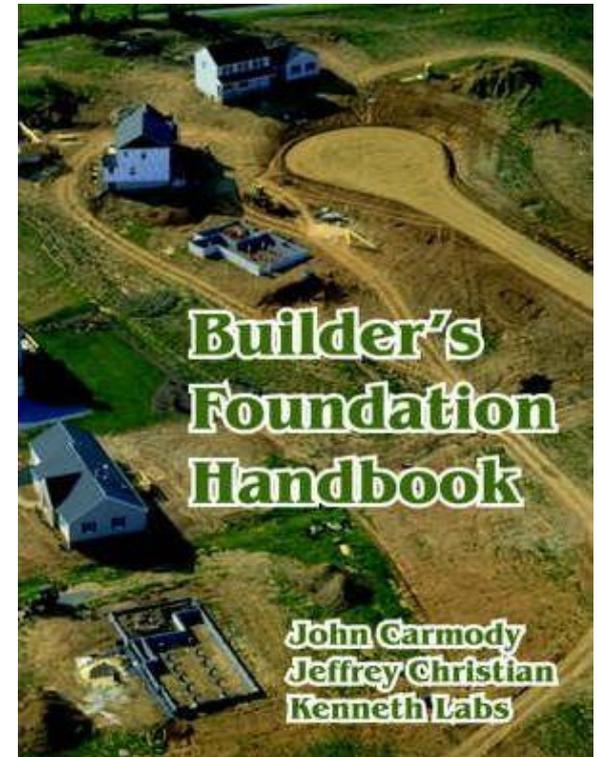
Foundations > Multiliteracies

- An important aspect of "equitable foundations" is multiliteracies.

- As such, there is clear inequality in terms of the multiliteracies among students.

https://pixabay.com/en/justice-silhouette-scales-law-147214/
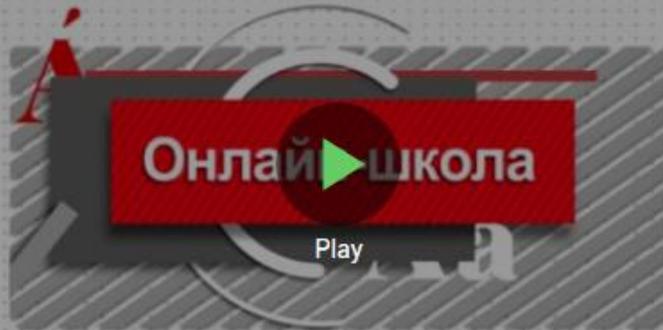
About the course

Курс предназначен для подготовки к написанию Тотального диктанта, поэтому он не претендует на всеохватность и ориентирован на минимальный набор необходимых правил.

Если курс пробудит в вас желание познакомиться с русским языком ближе, мы будем только рады!

Design > Multiliteracies

- In terms of design, the **multiliteracies** of students need to be taken into account.

- An **adaptive** and **personalised** approach is necessary.

- The diversity of students in terms of **language** and **technological abilities** must be accommodated.

(Open) access

- Morrow (2007:2) defines **formal access**, in an educational context, as "access to the institutions of learning, and it depends on factors such as admission rules, personal finances, and so on" while **epistemological access** "is access to knowledge" and that teaching "is the practice of enabling epistemological access".

(Open) access

- Morrow (2009:78) also states that epistemological access "is learning how to become a successful participant in an academic practice".

- To take charge of your own learning (Morrow, 2009:78) implies, therefore, to obtain epistemological access and requires a level of self-direction.

- Openness and open educational resources require that both formal and epistemological access must be ensured.

OPEN ACCESS

Levels of open access

Demiurgic access
(being able to contribute)

Epistemological access
(being empowered to use
open access sources)

Formal open access
(repositories)
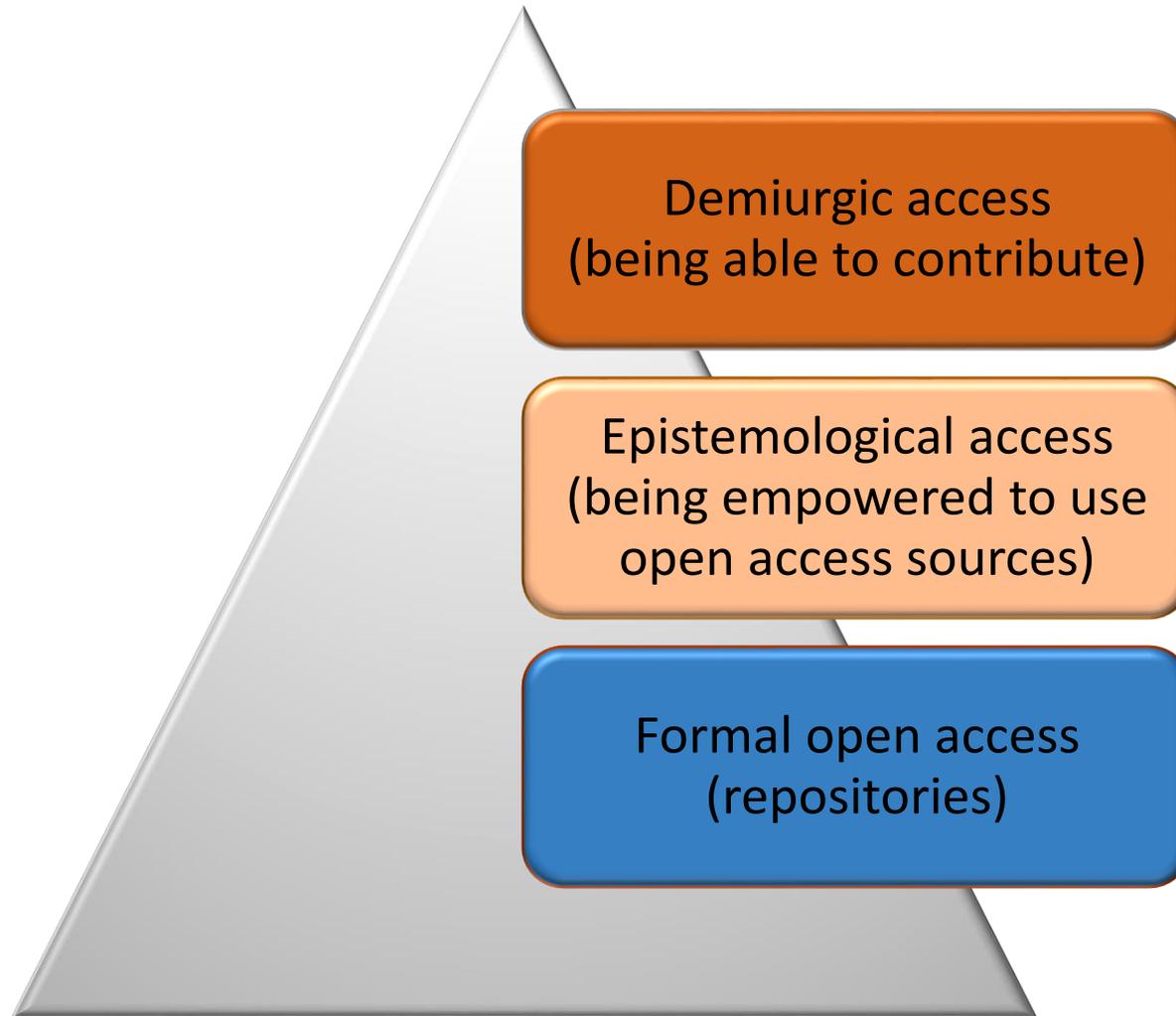
Demiurgic access

- From dēmiourgós: "worker for the common good/ people") > δήμιος (dḗmios) + ἔργον (érgon).

- Open access does not only imply the use of open sources but also a responsibility to produce open content.

Open access > OER

- Open access to information is described as "the free, immediate, online access to the results of scholarly research, and the right to use and re-use those results as you need" (Open Access Week, 2018).

RESEARCH
• Open access

+

LEARNING-TEACHING
• OER

=

Open Education

Open access > OER

- Peters et al. (2012:viii): **open education** refers to the openness of learning content, the means (such as software) through which content can be transmitted as well as implementation (through publication and licenses).

- Butcher (2015:6) states that despite the fact that **open educational resources (OER)** support **open learning** and **open education**, these concepts are not exactly the same.

- The focus with OER are on the resources themselves.

What are OER?

- **OER** according to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2018): "teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions".

- **Types of OER**: full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software and any other tools, materials or techniques in support of the access to knowledge (cf. Arinto et al., 2017:4-5; Butcher, 2015:5; DHET, 2017:363; Ehlers, 2013:83-84; ROER4D project, 2018).

However...

- An aim of OER, such as MOOCs, are to be instruments of **equitable access**, but this doesn't necessarily happen.

- As Rohs and Ganz (2015) found:
  - "MOOCs are mostly used by people with a higher level of education" (p. 1)
  - "MOOCs potentially reinforce inequality" (p. 3)
  - "People with higher socioeconomic status have better information literacy skills" (p. 4)

- The issue of the **reception gap** is also relevant as "people with higher socioeconomic status are able to derive a higher benefit from a wide variety of educational possibilities provided by digital media, specifically the internet" (Rohs & Ganz, 2015:6).

What are multiliteracies?

- Bateman *et al.* (2017:46) state that "a prerequisite of being literate in today's society is the ability to have a command of a **range** of **diverse** and **complex modes** of **expression** and their technologies, or in short, to be multi-literate".

- Cope and Kalantzis (2000:5) state that multiliteracies supplement the concept of traditional literacy that "engages with the **multiplicity** of **communications channels** and media" as well as "with the increasing salience of **cultural** and **linguistic diversity**".

Relevance to our context

- In a context where calls for **decolonizing** the curriculum are increasingly made – how would an OER from European/North American/Western context be relevant?

- Hence customization and localization of OER would be essential.

- In an era of "**Fake News**" care should be taken as typically reliable sources can also be labelled as being unreliable.

- Hence specific information literacies become relevant.

IFLA infographic based on FactCheck.org's 2016 article "How to Spot Fake News"
https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174

Relevance to our context

- The latest national statistics from Statistics South Africa (2016:146, 150) indicate that approximately **24,5%** of South African households have **computers** and about **28%** (15 618 303) South Africans have indicated that they have access to the **Internet**.

- According to the International Telecommunication Union (2018):
  - Per 100 inhabitants: mobile phone subscriptions 162, fixed broadband subscriptions 3.1, mobile broadband 70.
  - Households with computers 21.9%, households with internet access 60.7 and individuals using the internet 56.2%

- Most NWU students use English as an additional language:
  - According to the NWU's language audit of 2011 only 13% of NWU students use English as a mother-tongue.
  - In terms of honours students the number of NWU students using English as a mother-tongue was 9% in 2013 (Olivier, 2014:623).

Why multiliteracies?

- Concerns regarding **academic literacy** levels have been raised numerous times in South African context (Bharuthram, 2017:50; Chokwe, 2016:137; Scholtz, 2016:39, Weideman, 2013:12).

- Often this is due to differing levels of proficiency in **English** (Carstens, 2016:1).

- **Computer literacy** is a problem in terms of NWU students (Esterhuizen *et al.*, 2012:87; Olivier, 2016; Pool, 2014:200).

- Research shows that students have limited **information literacy skills** in South Africa (Chisango, 2012:2, 74; Esterhuizen, 2015:48; Noll, 2017:79; Williams, 2012: 52, 58) and specifically at the NWU (Esterhuizen, 2015:134).

Which literacies?

Foundational multliteracies	Technological multiliteracies	Content multiliteracies	OER-specific multiliteracies
Functional literacy	Computer literacy	Information literacy	Reproduction literacy
Communication literacy	Hyperacy	Media literacy	Multimodal literacy
Socio-emotional literacy	Web literacy	Critical literacy	Authentic literacy
		Critical media literacy	Emancipatory literacy
			Personal Information Management literacy

Recommendations

- Any literacy intervention needs to **embedded** in specific disciplines and should be approach **collaboratively** (cf. Williams, 2012:52, 71).

- **Self-direction** (cf. Knowles, 1975:18) should be fostered in terms of students:
  - taking initiative in using OER for learning,
  - identifying human and material resources,
  - formulating goals,
  - choosing and implementing appropriate strategies and
  - evaluating the process.

Recommendations

- **Translingual** support may be necessary as many OER are only available in English (Rohs & Ganz, 2015:9).

- **Module-specific support** and clear guidelines should be provided in terms of information literacy elements in assignments.

- Active support towards **demiurgic access** is necessary.

- More **research** is needed in terms of the state of multiliteracies for our contact and distance students.

Library

CTL

Academic literacy

Subject lecturers

UNESCO Chair

Integrated multi-literacy strategy

Formal open access

Demiurgic access

Epistemological access
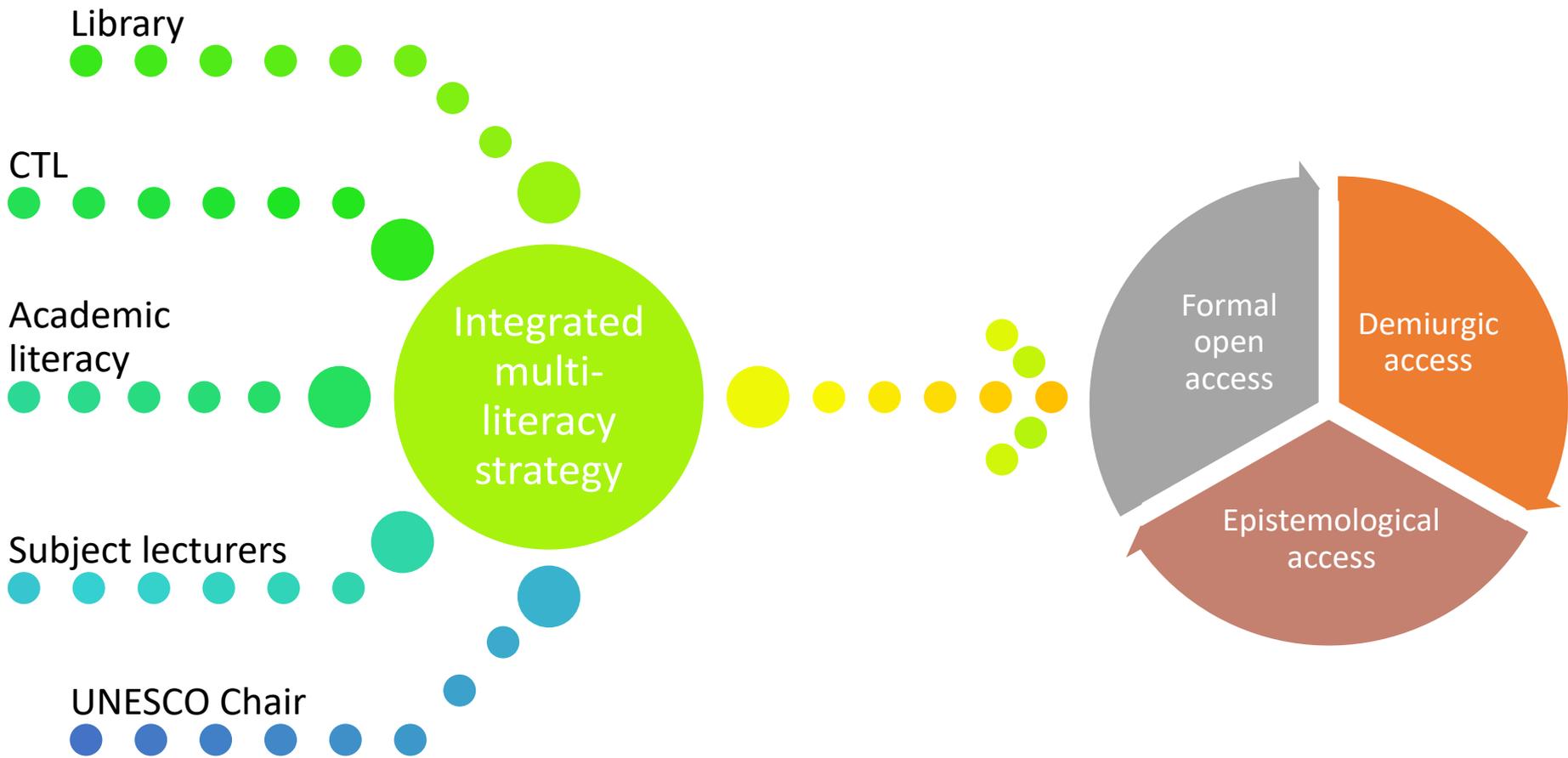
Ernst Meyer
A Roman street letter-writer reading a letter aloud to a young girl, 1829
https://thorvaldsensmuseum.dk/en/collections/work/B266

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Thank you – Ke a leboha - Dankie

Presentation available at: http://www.jako.nom.za/oaw1-2018.pdf

Jako Olivier
Faculty of Education

E-mail: Jako.Olivier@nwu.ac.za

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