

**INVITED REVIEW****Review of Literacies in Language Education (Paesani and Menke)****Karin Maxey** 

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By Kate Paesani and Mandy Menke, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2023. pp. 210. \$39.95 (paperback). ISBN: 9781647123338.

Kate Paesani and Mandy Menke advance the discourse on multiliteracies in language education with this practical volume for educators. They address teachers of all languages and levels, who may have varying levels of interest in shifting to a multiliteracies approach. Intended as a guidebook, the volume's two parts address the theory and practice of implementing this approach in language pedagogy and the practical aspects of integrating it with frameworks teachers may already know and use, like communicative language teaching. The companion website offers supplemental materials such as sample lesson plans and structured templates that teachers can use to plan their own units and lessons. It is easy to imagine this book being used as part of a reading group for language educators (perhaps facilitated by a language or teaching center) or as part of a course on second language pedagogy for newer instructors.

The book is divided into two parts, which address the theory and the practice of adopting a multiliteracies approach. Part I summarizes previous research on multiliteracies in backward design (Chapter 2), discusses how to set clear and achievable learning objectives and how to communicate them to students (Chapter 3), provides practical ideas for selecting and designing activities around texts, defined broadly (Chapter 4), and establishes principles and practices for designing literacies-based assessments (Chapter 5).

Part II presents the four processes of multiliteracies, which are loosely based on Bloom's original taxonomy: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying. Paesani and Menke provide activity types for each of the processes. This section also addresses the real concerns that teachers might hold with regard to designing and implementing multiliteracies pedagogy. Instructors may worry about the challenge of designing multiliteracies lessons for novice-level learners, the extra time required to find texts, planning lessons that carry students through all four multiliteracies processes, and the possibility that teachers' courses may exist within a sequence where not every course takes the same approach, especially in higher education, but in K-12 settings as well.

In the five chapters of Part II, the authors present practical strategies for aligning curriculum and teaching practices with objectives and assessments and for using backward design within a multiliteracies framework. Chapter 6 dives more deeply into the four knowledge processes central to multiliteracies—experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying—and shows how they fit into

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the seven stages of a lesson. The goals of employing these processes are twofold: (1) to ensure that students understand texts and broader genre conventions and (2) to make sure that they can create context- and audience-appropriate texts themselves. Each following chapter addresses one of the four knowledge processes, defining the term and explaining its role in multiliteracies, and then offering activity types that engage students in that process. The authors also address teacher concerns around adopting each knowledge process, such as extended planning time and modifying textbook activities to situate them within a multiliteracies framework. Activity development takes time; and when instructors work in a context where students are required to buy a textbook and they are required to use it, the skill of adapting existing materials to fit with the desired approach to learning saves teachers from developing activities from scratch. Such a strategy may also be useful as teachers transition from another approach to a multiliteracies one.

This volume could serve several useful purposes for teachers in a range of settings and with varied levels of teaching experience. Those who are just beginning to learn about multiliteracies could use it to design one unit in their course or implement facets of the approach into several units. Instructors already familiar with this framework may find new and fresh ideas here, particularly regarding activity types and assessment strategies. To my knowledge, not much research exists on the effectiveness of multiliteracies yet, compared to other pedagogies such as Communicative Language Teaching. Much of the research cited in this volume is from the authors and their previous co-authors, so it may also provide educators with a more research-oriented mindset and an impetus to learn more about multiliteracies' effectiveness. The field of multiliteracies research is still small but is also growing as volumes like this one draw attention to its practical implementation and make multiliteracies as a teaching practice less nebulous, more approachable, and more feasible to implement. Furthermore, the accompanying online resources could be helpful to teachers at all levels for designing lessons or planning curricula. The major flaw in this book is its failure to address the ways that multiliteracies can also reach minoritized and underserved populations of students in the language classroom. While the authors nod briefly to language-specific projects that address decolonizing language-specific curricula, there is no other discussion of the ways that a multiliteracies framework could foster a more inclusive language classroom. Overall, the book is a practical addition to any language educator's or teacher trainer's library and one that makes a multiliteracies approach feel practical and possible.

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**How to cite this article:** Maxey, K. (2024). Literacies in language education: A guide for teachers and teacher educators. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tger.12276>

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**Karin Maxey** (PhD, University of Texas at Austin) taught German, writing, and language pedagogy at Vassar College and Northeastern University for 6 years and then worked at the University of Chicago Language Center. In her current role at the Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning, she develops and leads programming on a range of teaching-related topics for faculty from all disciplines but remains involved in the language teaching community.