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Informational Design and the Promotion of Multiliteracy at School: Multimodal Resources in Portuguese 2nd Cycle Textbooks

Fábio Luna

Student PhD, Design, University Porto - Fine Arts Faculty, Porto, Portugal **Rui Vitorino Santos**

Assistant Professor, Design, University of Porto - Fine Arts Faculty, Porto, Portugal **Emília Dias da Costa**

Assistant Professor, Design, University of Porto - Fine Arts Faculty, Porto, Portugal









Background

Informational Design Multimodality Multiliteracy Infographic

School Textbooks





Design Principles & Practices

Study object

- In databases and scientific repositories, one can see that most of the studies on textbooks in Portugal are in pedagogy. The main focus of these researches are on evaluations of syllabus contents and their conceptual approaches.
- In the field of design, investigations are related to historical aspects, visual memory, graphic production and structural layouts of textbooks.
- There is a gap of studies related to the Information Design of multimodal schematic resources and promotion of multiliteracy in textbooks, the focus of this study.





Textbooks in Portugal

- 2018: MEGA Platform (IGeFE/ME);
- 2020:
 950.864 students enrolled in basic education
 (FFMS/PORDATA, 2021)
- 2019/2020: **47,3 M€** 1st and 2nd Cycles

(Court of Auditors, Report 15, 2019);

• 2020/2021:



(Court of Auditors, Report 6, 2021).



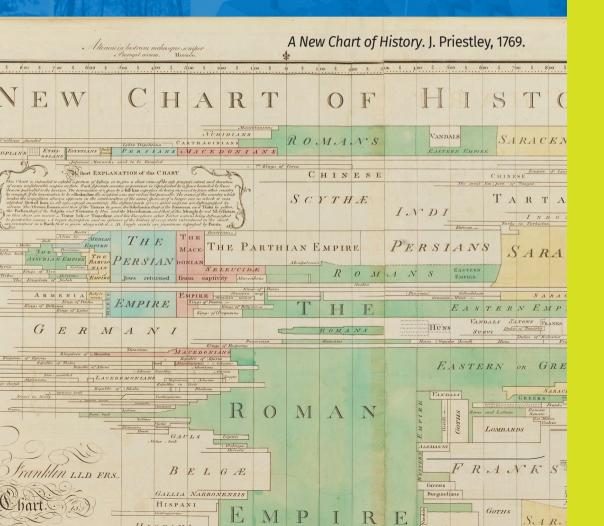
Objectives

- To contribute to the promotion of multiliteracy in educational artifacts from the perspective of information design;
- To verify the incidence of graphic language symbolization modes in textbooks of 2nd Cycle of Basic Education in Portugal;
- Identify the most present multimodal resource and the corresponding discipline;
- Through examples from the sample, point out which features contribute to the development of multiliteracy in children.





Information Design



A REFE

Information Design is the art and science of configuring information so that it can be used by humans with greater ease, with the primary goal of serving as a tool to guide the action of users or readers (Horn, 2000).

One of the fundamentals of information design pointed out by Tufte (1990) is the **removal of clutter**. For efficient information reading, noise must be eliminated to avoid confusing communication. In the case of complex data, the designer must find strategies to separate and order it (Tufte, 2001).

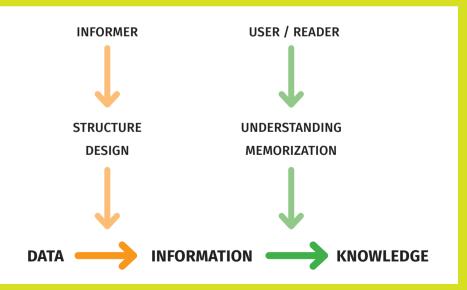


Information Design process





Cairo (2008, p. 27) relates *design* with *structure* and states that "the work of the information designer is, precisely, to give form to what by nature seems chaotic and incomprehensible due to its great complexity". In this process, *data* is transformed into *information*, which can be understood by the user, who in turn memorizes and transforms it into *knowledge* that will influence future behaviors.



Schematic of the Information Design process (Cairo, 2008).



Information Design for Education

For Horn (1999) the visual language, like other languages, must have a communal character to enable the interpretation of the same signs in the same way by the users. In this sense, the school environment is immersed in visual information that, several times, are not planned graphically and, consequently, poorly decoded by the students.



The study of graphic language is directly related to the mediation between Information Design and Education for significant benefit of the quality of education in schools. Identifying problems, analyzing, evaluating, proposing solutions and optimizing informational systems in educational artifacts are within the "systematic, organizational and prospective vision of the Information Design activity" (Coutinho, 2006, p. 49). to moderno o de 2010]

1000 a 2000>

Study of Graphic Language (Twyman, 1979)

moderno (modelo de 2012)

		Pure Linear	Linear Interrupted	List	Linear branching	Matrix	directed	Non-linear most options open
MODE OF SYMBOLIZATION	Verbal Numeric	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Pictorial & Verbal Numeric	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Pictorial	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Schematic	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

METHOD OF CONFIGURATION



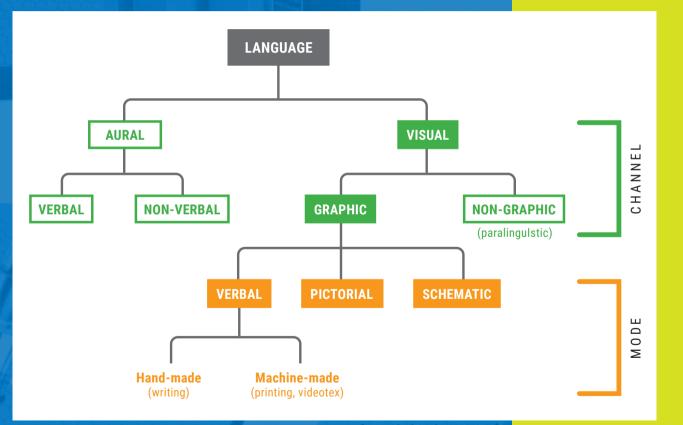
In 1979, Twyman presents a matrix-like scheme that is intended to present the various possibilities for representing graphic language. The two axes of the matrix, vertical and horizontal, describe, respectively, the modes of symbolization and the methods of configuration. The main objective is to orient the thought to a given visual communication situation and to question the best way to organize information in graphic language.

Twyman's (1979) model for studying Graphic Language.

to moderno o de 2010]

Graphic Language Classification (Twyman, 1982)

. moderno modelo de 2012)



Twyman (1982) mentions that in the linguistics approach, language is divided into spoken and written. In the graphic design view, it is

broken down into verbal and pictorial. To contemplate both conceptions, Twyman proposes a classification that presents a distinction between language communication mode and channel. The channels are: **aural** and **visual**.

In this model, visual language is broken down into graphic and non-graphic. Graphic Visual Language has the modes: **verbal**, **pictorial and schematic**.

Twyman's (1982) model for understanding the structure of Graphic Language

e golfinno.

Kress & Van Leeuwen's Social Semiology

Social Semiotics encompasses "social meanings constructed through the full range of semiotic forms, through semiotic texts and semiotic practices, in all kinds of human society at all periods of human history" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p.261). From a **multimodal perspective**, Social Semiotics refers to the process of signification as part of the **social construction of language**. It considers that the circulation of meanings with origins, social functions, contexts and effects are defined by culture, history and ideologies (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Design Principles & Practices

Perceiving literacy only as the ability to read and write does not cover all other ways of representing knowledge existing in our society. Currently, a **literate person needs to be able to assign meanings to messages from multiple language sources** (Dionísio, 2006). e golfinho.

Kress & Van Leeuwen's Social Semiology and Visual Grammar

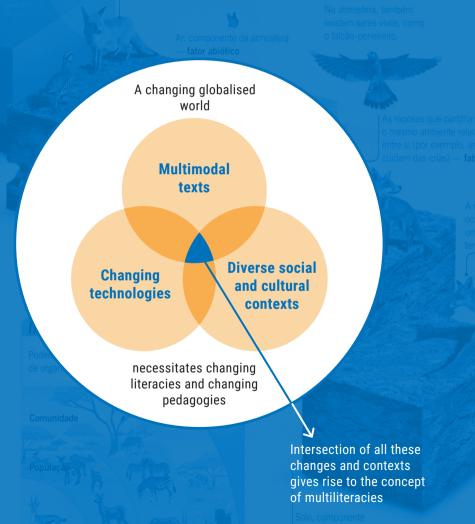
Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) state that, in order to meet the constant changes in contemporary society, the school environment and teaching materials need to **teach 21st century students to read and produce multimodal texts**, which are increasingly present in their daily lives.

Design Principles & Practices

Multimodality and its implications for society is one of the goals of Social Semiotics. On the pages of school manuals, the **presentation of various semiotic resources** (verbal texts, photographs, illustrations, maps, tables, graphs and spaces) contribute to the ability of multiliteracies. **do meio** (fatores abióticos)

ls seres vivos que partilham o mesmo habitat relacionam-se entre i (por exemplo, alguns animais alimentam-se de plantas e as ilantas produzem oxigénio, utilizado pelos animais na respiração) — fatores bióticos

Multiliteracy and multimodality by Anstey & Bull



Design Principles & Practices

The concept of **continuous change**, characteristic of 21st century globalized societies, and its **impacts on education**, are directly related to multiliteracy (Anstey & Bull, 2018).

> "Multiliteracies enable capacities to cope with change and effectively participate and contribute to all aspects of society: workplace, leisure, social, cultural and civic environments" (Anstey & Bull, 2018, p. 17).

A visual concept of the origins of the term multiliteracies. Anstey & Bull (2018) **do meio** (fatores abióticos)

s seres vivos que partilham o mesmo habitat relacionam-se entre (por exemplo, alguns animais alimentam-se de plantas e as lantas produzem oxigénio, utilizado pelos animais na respiração) - fatores hióticos

Multiliteracy and multimodality by Anstey & Bull

Essentially interconnected with the social and political reality of the students, "literacy is practiced in many different ways, in many different contexts, for many different purposes" (Anstey & Bull, 2018, p. 129).

a hidrosfera — fator abiótico.

Info 🔂

Podem considerar-se diferentes níveis de organização dos seres vivos.

Comunidade

dade Ecossistema

Solo, componente da litosfera — **fator abiótico**. Anstey & Bull's (2018) proposed five semiotic systems for multiliteracy:

Design Principles & Practices

- Linguistic written language;
- Visual still and moving images;
- Auditory music and sound effects;
- Gestural facial expression and body language;
- **Spatial** arrangement and organization of elements in space.

These systems are fundamental for reading and writing increasingly dynamic and complex texts, considering the various resources and support channels, analogue or digital (Anstey & Bull, 2018).



Methodology

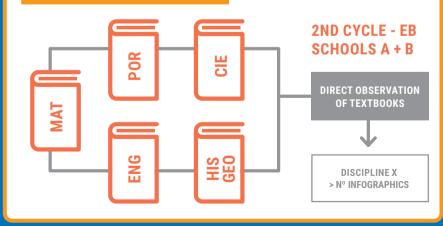
In a first moment, the methodological path of this research focuses on the survey and reflection of theories about Information Design, Graphic Language, Multimodality and Multiliteracy.

To meet the objectives, an **exploratory documentary research** is also carried out, with a quantitative and descriptive-qualitative approach, on the textbooks adopted in two school groupings in the city of Porto, Portugal. In this stage, we seek

 a) Through direct observation of the pages, quantify the incidence of the graphic languages present in the textbooks of the five main subjects of 2nd Cycle of Basic Education.

- b) Identify the schematic/mixed symbolization mode most present in the pages of the sample;
- c) Identify the **subject** with the largest number of multimodal resources;
- d) Describe the **multimodal features** in eight double-page **infographics** that assist in promoting student multiliteracy.

DIRECT OBSERVATION



Textbooks adopted for the 2nd cycle of basic education in 2022/2023 in the school groups Pêro Vaz de Caminha and António Nobre, in the municipality of Porto.

These textbooks are adopted by several public and private schools in Portugal, as they are part of the DGE's official list*.

* Information System for Textbooks (SIME). Direção-Geral da Educação, from the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science (DGE). https://area.dge.mec.pt/Sime/ consulta/manuais/disponiveis-adocao



Incidence of graphic languages (LG Symbolic Modes)

For research purposes in school manuals, the data collection tool considers the Schematic symbolization mode equivalent to the Mixed one. This includes graphic representations with simultaneous use of texts, numbers, images and purely schematic elements.

The **Methodological Instrument** adopted was adapted from Silva & Coutinho (2010), based on the studies of Twyman (1979, 1982).

	Symbolization modes (Graphic Languages)		Subjects / Year / Basic Education / School					Incidence		
			Portuguese	Mathematics	English	History and Geography	Natural Sciences	Subtotal	Total	%
	DAL	Words/Letters								
WEDDAL	VER	Numerals/Digits								
		Photography								
		Drawing/Illustration/Pictogram								
	IAL	Painting								
		Engraving								
Ē	Σ	Cutting/collage/assembling								
		Comics*								
		Other (Geometric Figures)								
_										
		Diagram								
******		Table								
100	/ WI	Frame/Grid								
A T I V		Мар								
		Infographic								
	n	Games and Crucigrams (Crossword/Puzzle/Trail game)								
	Analyzed pages:									

Methodological Instrument from Silva & Coutinho (2010), based on Twyman (1979, 1982).

Results

Prior to the contemporary concept of multiliteracy, Twyman already warned that children can be taught to draw **maps, schematics, diagrams, or other graphic forms** in a non-linear way... "on the whole, however, it is true to say that children are not taught to read the wide variety of graphic language that they will confront in their later life" (Twyman, 1979, p.138).

Symbolization modes		Subjects /	Subjects / 5th year / Basic Education / Escola Básica da Areosa					Incidence:		
	(Graphic Languages)		Mathematics	English	History and Geography	Natural Sciences	Subtotal	Total	%	
BAL	Words/Letters	232	148 + 104 = 252	138	216	230	1.068	2 112	56,29%	
VERBAL	Numerals/Digits	226	147 + 104 = 251	137	216	214	1.044	2.112		
			503	275	432	444	2.112			
	Photography	33	13 + 12 = 25	79	124	107	368		31,21%	
	Drawing/Illustration/Pictogram	165	37 + 48 = 85	114	67	150	581			
IAL	Painting	1	1 + 0 = 1	0	50	4	56	1.171		
PICTORIAL	Engraving	1	1 + 0 = 1	0	38	0	40			
Ā	Cutting/collage/assembling	0	0 + 0 = 0	0	0	1	1			
	Comics*	2	0 + 0 = 0	2	0	0	4			
	Other (Geometric Figures)	1	84 + 33 = 117	2	1	0	125			
		203	229	197	280	262	1.171			
	Diagram	5	2 + 0 = 2	9	11	2	29		10 500/	
(ED**	Table	12	4 +13 = 17	14	4	1	48			
(IM)	Frame/Grid	16	8 + 6 = 14	3	14	38	85	100		
MATIC	Мар	2	0 + 0 = 0	5	64	12	83	469	12,50%	
SCHEMATIC/MIXED**	Infographic	6	3 + 18 = 21	1	43	137	208			
0,	Games and Crucigrams (Crossword/Puzzle/Trail game)	5	0 + 0 = 0	11	0	0	16			
		46	54	43	136	190	469			
Analyzed pages:		9 a 240 = 232	6 a 153 (V1) + 4 a 107 (V2) = 252	7 a 144 = 138	8 a 223 = 216	8 a 240 = 233	In	cidence: 3.752		

Quantitative result of the modes of graphic language in the 5th grade textbooks of School B.

Results

Even noticing, in the last two decades, a greater use of graphic schemes in children's textbooks, the results of this research point out that the non-linear schematic/mixed mode of reading is still low (on average 13%), compared to the purely verbal resources (on average 56%) of graphic language.

	Symbolization modes (Graphic Languages)		Subjects / 6th year / Basic Education / / Escola Básica da Areosa						Incidence		
			Mathematics	English	History and Geography	Natural Sciences	Subtotal	Total	%		
BAL	Words/Letters	240	144 + 104 = 248	154	219	98 + 110 = 208	1.068	2 445	55,98%		
VERBAL	Numerals/Digits	234	144 + 104 = 248	154	212	96 + 102 = 198	1.045	2.115			
		474	496	308	431	406	2.115				
	Photography	27	31 + 14 = 45	113	150	46 + 72 = 118	453				
	Drawing/Illustration/Pictogram	182	18 + 24 = 42	114	32	57 + 63 = 120	490		30,94%		
RIAL	Painting	4	1 + 0 = 1	3	34	0 + 2 = 2	44	1.169			
PICTORIAL	Engraving	0	1 + 0 = 1	0	29	0 + 1 = 1	31				
F	Cutting/collage/assembling	1	0 + 0 = 0	1	0	5 + 0 = 5	7				
	Comics*	0	0 + 0 = 0	6	0	0 + 0 = 0	6				
	Other (Geometric Figures)	1	82 + 55 = 137	0	0	0 + 0 = 0	138				
		215	226	237	245	246	1.169				
	Diagram	14	1 + 2 = 3	0	13	15 + 12 = 27	57	-	13,08%		
**Q:	Table	13	18 + 20 = 38	18	8	10 + 3 = 13	90				
'MIXE	Frame/Grid	30	9 + 10 = 19	25	17	3 + 3 = 6	97				
ATIC/	Мар	1	5 + 0 = 5	1	47	0 + 0 = 0	54	494			
SCHEMATIC/MIXED**	Infographic	7	8 + 17 = 25	1	34	61 + 60 = 121	188				
sc	Games and Crucigrams (Crossword/Puzzle/Trail game)	1	0 + 0 = 0	7	0	0 + 0 = 0	8				
		66	90	52	119	167	494				
	Analyzed pages:	9 a 248 = 240	6 a 149 (V1) + 4 a 107 (V2) = 248	7 a 160 = 154	6 a 224 = 219	8 a 105 (v1) + 4 a 113 (v2) = 208	In	cidence: 3.778			

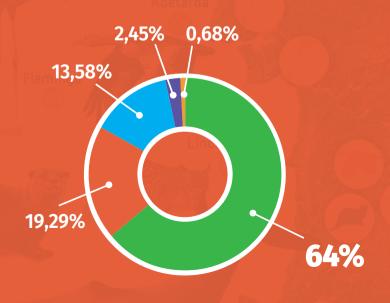
Quantitative result of the modes of graphic language in the 6th grade textbooks of School B.

Results

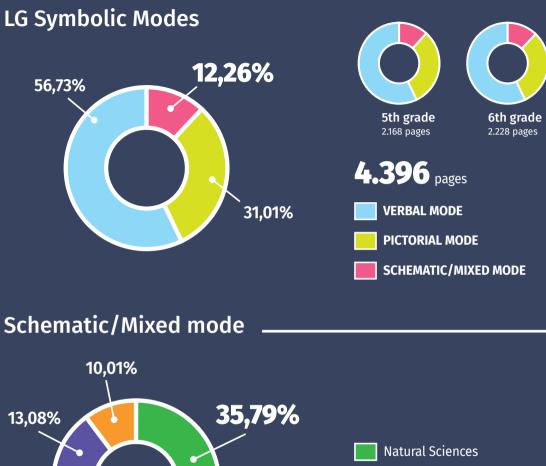
Natural Sciences was the subject with the most infographics: **64% of total**.

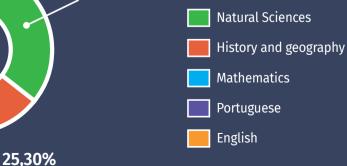
The qualitative value of infographics for education lies in the fact that it is a **hybrid system of communication**, which allows for detailed information that is not adequate with alphabetic text alone (Rajamanickan, 2005).

Infographics in subjects



15,82%



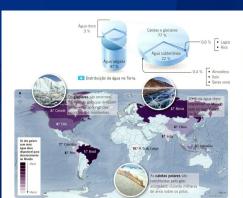


Multimodal characteristics

The description of multimodal features was concentrated in the **Natural Sciences** textbooks, which presented **64%** of the infographics.

As a schematic/mixed or multimodal resource, the infographics contained in the textbooks were diverse in scale and typologies, among them: descriptive, spatial, process, cyclical, explanatory, quantitative, and chronological (timelines).

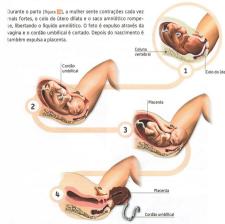




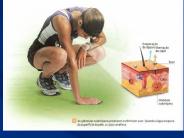
5 77 % da água doce encontra-se solidificada nos glaciares e nas calotas polares.



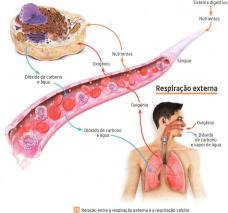
IBIG El A produção de alimentos nas plantas implica a presença de dioxido de carbono, agua é energia luminosa. Quando, nas células das folhas, coexistem este fatores, ocorre a fotossíntese. A glicose e o oxigénio são os produtos deste processo.



10 Sequência das fases do parto (vista lateral)



Respiração celular



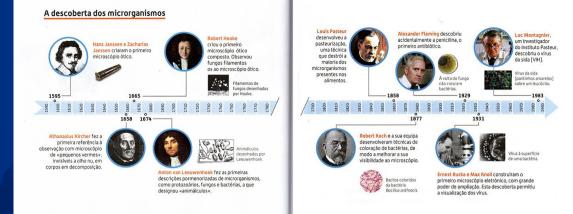


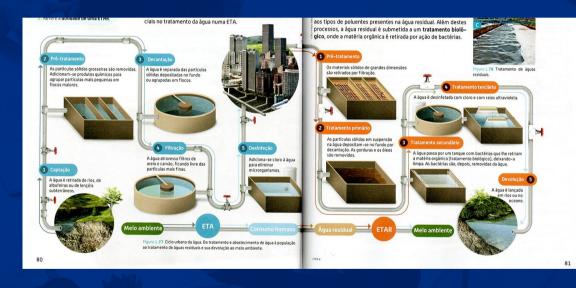
Beura 1.41 Distribuição de algumas rochas em Portugal

In this step, eight double-page infographics were selected from the 4 Natural Sciences textbooks. The variety of information types and the diverse semiotic modes were the selection criteria adopted to point out the multimodal characteristics that can favor children's multiliteracy.









When working with static infographics, this step focused on the Linguistic, Visual, and Spatial semiotic systems as defined by Anstey & Bull's (2018). Therefore, the descriptive task did not consider the semiotic dimensions of sound, motion, and interactivity.



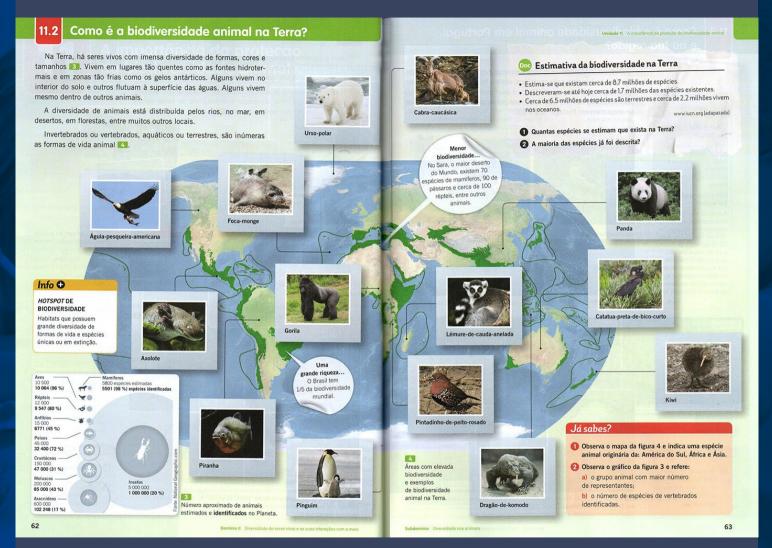


Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, typographic variations, weight and color.
- Visual: photographs, illustrations, icons, colors, arrows. Variations in pictorial styles, scale and color.
- Spatial: variations in positioning and spaces for segmented reading. Central and lower infographics and distributed auxiliary information boxes. Block linear and macro nonlinear reading.

5th year Terra Viva, Natural Sciences 5, V.1 , Santillana, p. 18-19. 2022.





5th year Terra Viva, Natural Sciences 5, V.2 , Santillana, <u>p. 62-63. 2022.</u>

Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, captions, typographic variations, weight and color. Numerical information.
- Visual: map, photographs, illustrations, icons, colors, arrows. Variations in scale and color.
- Spatial: variation of positioning and spaces for segmented reading.
 Infographics with central map, left-side numeric infographics, distributed auxiliary information boxes, question boxes. Non-linear macro reading central and linear verbal top and in boxes.



E2

Ouestões

2000.

74

 Indica, com base na figura 1.70. três atividades humanas

dependentes da água.

2. Descreve, com base no gráfico da

3. Sugere uma explicação para a

evolução do consumo de

água a partir de 2010.

figura 1.71, a evolução do consumo

de água em Portugal a partir do ano

A água, o ar, as rochas e o solo – materiais terrestres

E2) O consumo de água em Portugal

São muitas as **atividades humanas** que dependem diretamente da água. Em Portugal, cerca de 80% da água é destinada à agricultura e os restantes 20% distribuem-se entre a indústria e o consumo doméstico.

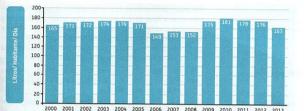
A água serve para beber e cozinhar os alimentos. Também serve para tomar banho e lavar roupas, louças, automóveis, pavimentos e tudo o que for necessário. Sem água, não seria possível regar campos de cultivo e jardins. A água é, igualmente, muito procurada para atividades desportivas e de lazer.

Nas barragens, a água é aproveitada para produzir eletricidade. Através da água, os navios transportam muitos passageiros e mercadorias. A criação de peixes para consumo humano, a piscicultura, realiza-se na água. Sem ela, os fogos florestais dificilmente seriam apagados.

Figura 1.70 Aáguae as atividades humanas – combate a fogos 🔯, transporte de pessoas e

mercadorias (3), produção de eletricidade (3), desporto (3), piscicultura (3), lazer (3), rega doméstica (3), lavagens (1) ingestão de água (1) e rega agrícola (1).

Atualmente, cada português consome cerca de **160 litros de** água por dia, registando-se, nos últimos anos, um decréscimo



A importância da água para os seres vivos

75

gura 1.71 Evolução do consumo de água em Portugal.

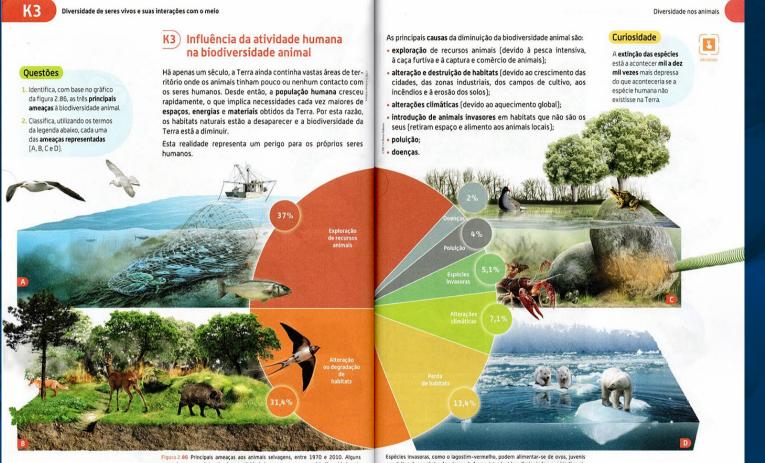


5th year CienTIC, Natural Sciences 5, Porto Editora, p. 74-75. 2022.

Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, captions, typographic variations, weight and color. Numerical information.
- Visual: Process and statistical infographics, photographs, illustrations, icons, colors, arrows. Variations in scale and color.
- Spatial: variations in positioning and spaces for segmented reading. Central process infographics, right side numeric infographics, circular spaces, question box. Macro and micro linear reading, with letter indicators.





Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: Linguistic: titles, subtitles, captions, typographic variations, weight and color. Numerical information.
- Visual: quantitative infographics (pie chart), photographs, photomontages, boxes, icon and colors. Variations in scale and color.
- Spatial: Overlays of photos on the sides. Largescale infographics in the center, right-side numeric infographics, question box. Non-linear macro and micro linear reading, with letter indicators.

169

Figura 2.86 Principais ameaças aos animais seviagens, entre 1970 e 2010. Aiguns exemplos: a pesca intensiva é uma atividade humana que ameaça a biodiversidade animal dos oceanos (); os incêndios levam à degradação dos habitats ().

168

Espècies invasoras, como o lagostim-vermelho, podem alimentar-se de ovos, juvenis ou adultos das espècies dos rios onde foram introduzidos, diminuindo a sua biodiversidade animal [®]o, a aumento do efeito de estuda provoca o aquecimento global do planeta e a fusão das placas de gelo, que são o habitat do urso-polar D.

CienTIC, Natural Sciences 5, Porto Editora, p. 168-169. 2022.



7. Sistema cardiovascular humano

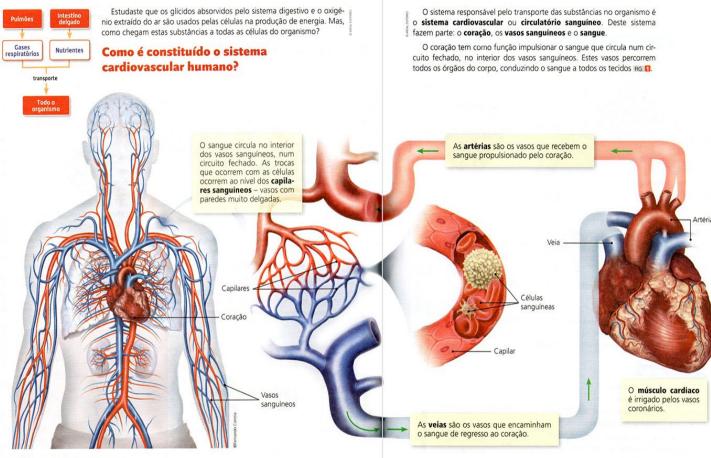


FIG. 🚺 Sistema cardiovascular humano

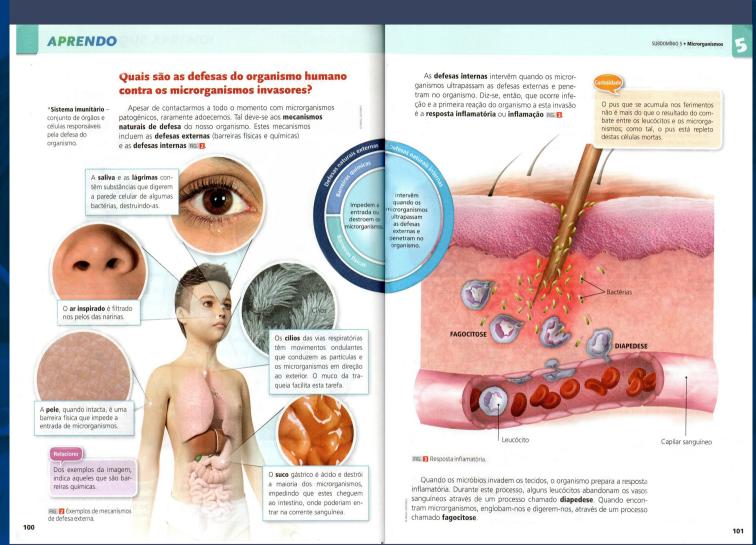
6th year

Novo CSI 6 - Ciências Sob Investigação, Natural Sciences 6, V.1 , Areal Editores, p. 98-99. 2022.

Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: Linguistic: titles, subtitles, subtitles, typographic variations, weight and color.
- Visual: explanatory infographics, diagrams, scientific illustrations, boxes, arrows and colors. Variations in scale, color, and thickness (arrows).
- Spatial: Infographics between pages, central part; smaller scale diagram, in the upper left lateral part; box with texts that help the infographics; Non-linear macro and micro linear reading. Without reading indicator elements.





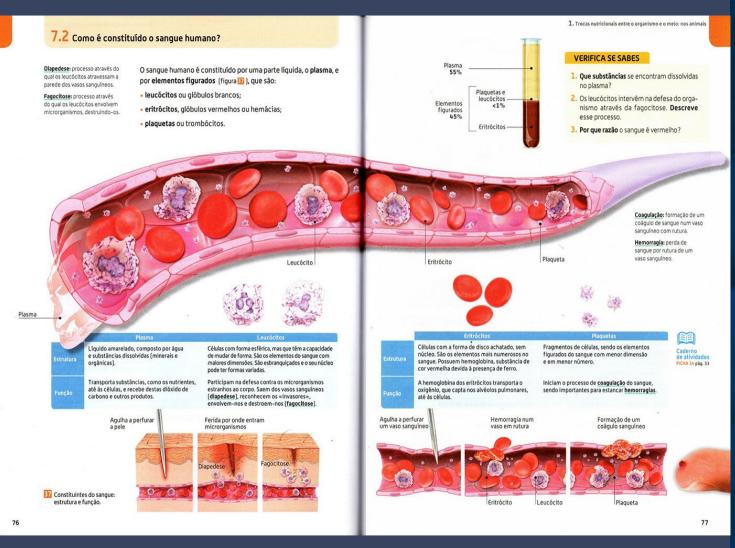
Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, sub-titles, typographical variations, weight and color.
- Visual: explanatory infographics, diagrams, photographs, scientific illustrations, boxes, arrows, and color. Scale variations, color.
- Spatial: Infographics with diagram in the central part; boxes with texts that help the infographics; macro non-linear and micro-linear reading. No reading elements.

6th year

Novo CSI 6 - Ciências Sob Investigação, Natural Sciences 6, V.2 , Areal Editores, p. 101-102. 2022.



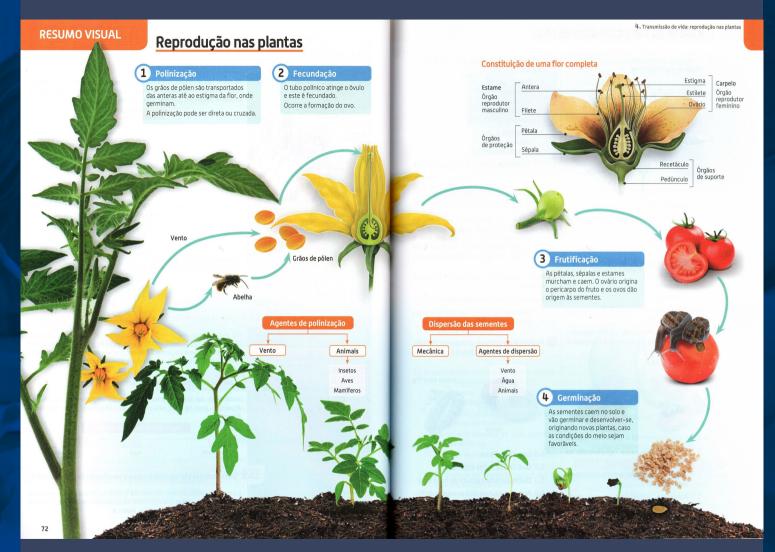


Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, captions, typographic variations, weight and color.
- Visual: explanatory infographics, tables, scientific illustrations, photography, boxing, arrows, and color. Variations in scale and color.
- Spatial: explanatory infographics in the central part; tables with texts that help the infographics; macro and micro linear reading. Without elements indicating reading order.

6th year 100% Vida, Natural Sciences 6, V.1 , Texto Editores, p. 76-77. 2022.





6th year 100% Vida, Natural Sciences 6, V.2 , Texto Editores, p. 72-73. 2022.

Multimodal characteristics

- Linguistic: titles, subtitles, captions, typographic variations, weight and color. Numerical information.
- Visual: Process and explanatory infographics, diagragms, photographs, scientific illustration, boxes, arrows and colors. Variations in scale and color.
- Spatial: larger process infographics, between pages; explanatory infographics at top right; diagrams in central part; boxes with text of steps and reading order indicators. Non-linear reading, but guided by numbers.



Conclusions

Given the social and technological changes of the last decades, a **school education based on multimodality**, as a principle of Social Semiotics, as advocated by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), is essential. The theoretical contributions between design and education provided a reflective and motivating path to promote multiliteracy in educational artifacts. The result of the direct observation of the textbooks in the sample allowed us to confirm the **presence of multimodal characteristics in several hybrid reading resources**.

With the exploratory research it was possible to perceive that schematic or mixed graphic language, with textual and pictorial elements simultaneously, has a significant presence in Portuguese editorial production. Even so, this non-linear and multimodal reading mode is still reduced in terms of use when compared to the verbal/numerical mode.



Conclusions

In greater number and degree of complexity of multimodal resources, the Natural Sciences infographics encompassed several semiotic modes: texts, images, illustrations, maps, quantitative graphics, tables, arrows, text boxes, colors, and diagrams.

Infographic representations for process cycles, timelines, spatial or quantitative data, explanations, and scientific experiments displayed several features of linguistic, visual, and spatial semiotic systems. Anstey and Bull (2018) point this out as a way to promote multiliteracy in school. Thus, students' experiences will be richer as semiotic systems are worked together. This is fundamental to the practice of educators and producers of instructional materials.

From this point, we project the need for investigations focusing on infographics as a multimodal resource, its construction, its relationship from analog to digital, and its decoding by the target audience.



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Thank you!

Fábio Luna

PhD Researcher ID+ Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture fabiolunarte@gmail.com

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