

HEARD ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEEING THE SOUNDS OF LITERACY

DEFINING MY TERMS:

- **Text**--any artifact (oral, aural, visual or tactile) whose combined symbols are intended to be interpreted in order to convey or make meaning.
- **Reading**--as the perception and decoding of any text.
- **Aural literacy**--will specifically refer to the perception and processing of a text through listening
- **Alphabetic literacy**--the perception and processing of a text through tactile or visual means.

GUIDING AND FRAMING QUESTIONS:

- What are the absolutely necessary criteria for defining literacy and what are the social and cultural consequences of this definition for the people to whom it is applied?
- Is literacy being able to perceive alphabetic symbols (visually or tactilely), associate them with sounds, and put those sounds together to create larger linguistic symbols, ones which carry some meaning? Or is literacy the ability to perceive words, individually and in relation to one another and draw meaning from them, to such a degree that the perceiver can internalize their meaning and respond to it (i.e. comprehension)? Or must a person be able to do both to be called literate?
- What is lost and who is harmed if we were to accept, teach, and promote a broader definition of literacy which would include the aural?
- What are the consequences of a prevailing conceptualization of alphabetic literacy which understands it as both superior and in many ways mutually exclusive of orality and aurality?
- Most importantly, how might the experiences of individuals and others who read with their ears rather than their eyes complicate and trouble this traditional divide between orality/aurality and literacy?

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NOTES

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