A Theory of Literate Action

Literate Action, Volume 2

Charles Bazerman

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Literate Action, in its two volumes, makes an indispensable contribution to writing studies. Undertaken by one of the most learned and visionary scholars in the field, this work has a comprehensive and culminating quality to it, tracking major lines of insight into writing as a human practice and articulating the author’s intellectual progress as a theorist and researcher across a career.

A Theory of Literate Action makes a significant contribution to the field and enriches and deepens our perspectives on writing by drawing together such varied and wide-ranging approaches from social theory and the social sciences—from psychology, to phenomenology, to pragmatists—and demonstrating their relevance to writing studies. While much has been made of the ‘social turn’ in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, the impact of social theory and social sciences on rhetorical theory and literacy studies has not been as fully explored—not have these approaches been gathered together in one comprehensive text, to my knowledge. — Mary Jo Reiff

I have followed Charles Bazerman’s thinking closely over the years, but seeing it all together allowed me to see what I had not seen in it: how cognitive psychology (even neurobiology) intersects with social psychology and then sociology; how attentional processes and motive/emotion relate to genre; the historical insights; all up and down, macro micro meso. This work leads in so many productive directions. I’ve taken pages of notes. — David R. Russell

Charles Bazerman, Professor of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is the author of numerous research articles and books on the social role of writing, academic genres, and textual analysis, as well as textbooks on the teaching of writing.

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