



Coping with the online fatigue in post-pandemic classrooms: A social semiotic perspective

ZHANG Yiqiong

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China

Problems with online teaching



- **Bad internet**
- **Technology difficulties**
- **Disparate time zones**
- **Zoom fatigue**



Zoom fatigue

Nonverbal overload

- Gaze at close distance
- Cognitive load
- An all day mirror
- Reduced mobility

(Bailenson, 2021)

Sign/semiotic resource



Interpersonal meanings



Meanings	Realization
Demand	Gaze at the viewer
Offer	Absence of gaze at the viewer
Intimate	Close shot
Social	Medium shot
Impersonal	Long shot
Involvement	Frontal angle
Detachment	Oblique angle
Viewer power	High angle
Equality	Eye-level angle
Represented participant power	Low angle

(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 148)









Key concepts

- **Sign: a signifier (an observable form such as frowning), a signified (meaning invested in the form, such as frowning for unhappiness)**
- **Semiotic resources: “the actions and artefacts we use to communicate”. (van Leeuwen, 2005: 3)**



Meaning making

- **“the grammar of a language is not a code, not a set of rules for producing correct sentences, but a ‘resource for making meaning’” (Halliday, 1978: 192).**
- **Almost everything we do or make can be done or made in different ways and therefore allows, at least in principle, the articulation of different social and cultural meanings.” (van Leeuwen, 2005: 4)**



Metafunctions

- **Ideational**: concerns with the experience and logical relations in the world
- **Interpersonal**: concerns with the enactment of social relations
- **Textual**: organizes the ideational and interpersonal meanings into coherent and cohesive units of meaning.

(Halliday, 1994)



Social semiotics

- “Meaning is not ‘transmitted’ to us – we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are normally unaware. Becoming aware of such codes is both inherently fascinating and intellectually empowering. ” (Chandler, 2007: 10–11)
- Teaching: activities involving complex interplays of signs and conventions shaped by the social context.

Learning space at UBC



CLASSROOM

Learning space at UBC



Offline and online differences



- **Afforded channels of perception**
- **Semiotic resources and meaning-making practices**
- **Interaction order**

(Adami et al., 2020)

Afforded channels of perception



- **Online: visual and auditory through the screen, and sound tracks that are heavily regulated**
- **Classroom: visual (peripheral vision), auditory (360-degree hearing), smell, taste, touch**

Semiotic resources



Unicharm mask

Semiotic resources



Embodied teaching (Jewitt, 2008; Lim, 2020)

- Gesture (Lim, 2019)
- Space (Lim, O'Halloran, & Podlasov, 2012)
- Gaze and posture (Taylor, 2016)



Interaction order

Re-setting of the parameters of the interaction order (Rampton 2020)

- Private and public merged in another
- Formality and informality redefined
- Front stage and back stage invade each other

Semiotic technology



“how social and semiotic assumptions and norms are inscribed in software and other kinds of technology, and realized in social practices that use the technology”

(Poulsen, Kvåle, & van Leeuwen, 2018)

Online teaching platform



- **Historically developed social, cultural and semiotic constructs embedded in social practices and loaded with social values and norms (Kress 2005).**
- **Provide sets of semiotic resources and media for constructing texts, and function as platforms for the transformation of teaching practices.**



[Home](#)

[Syllabus](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Pages](#)

[Assignments](#)

[Modules](#)

[Grades](#)

[People](#)

[Quizzes](#)

[Files](#)



[Conferences](#)



[Discussions](#)



[Collaborations](#)



[Outcomes](#)



[Settings](#)



The new challenge

- “One of the pedagogical weaving is between school learning and the practical out-of-school experiences of learners.” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009: 185)
- “Sitting in classes and listening to lectures is an absurdly sub-optimal cognitive load for today’s students who on their personal devices have become habituated to designing their own information feeds then skipping through their messages.” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2021)

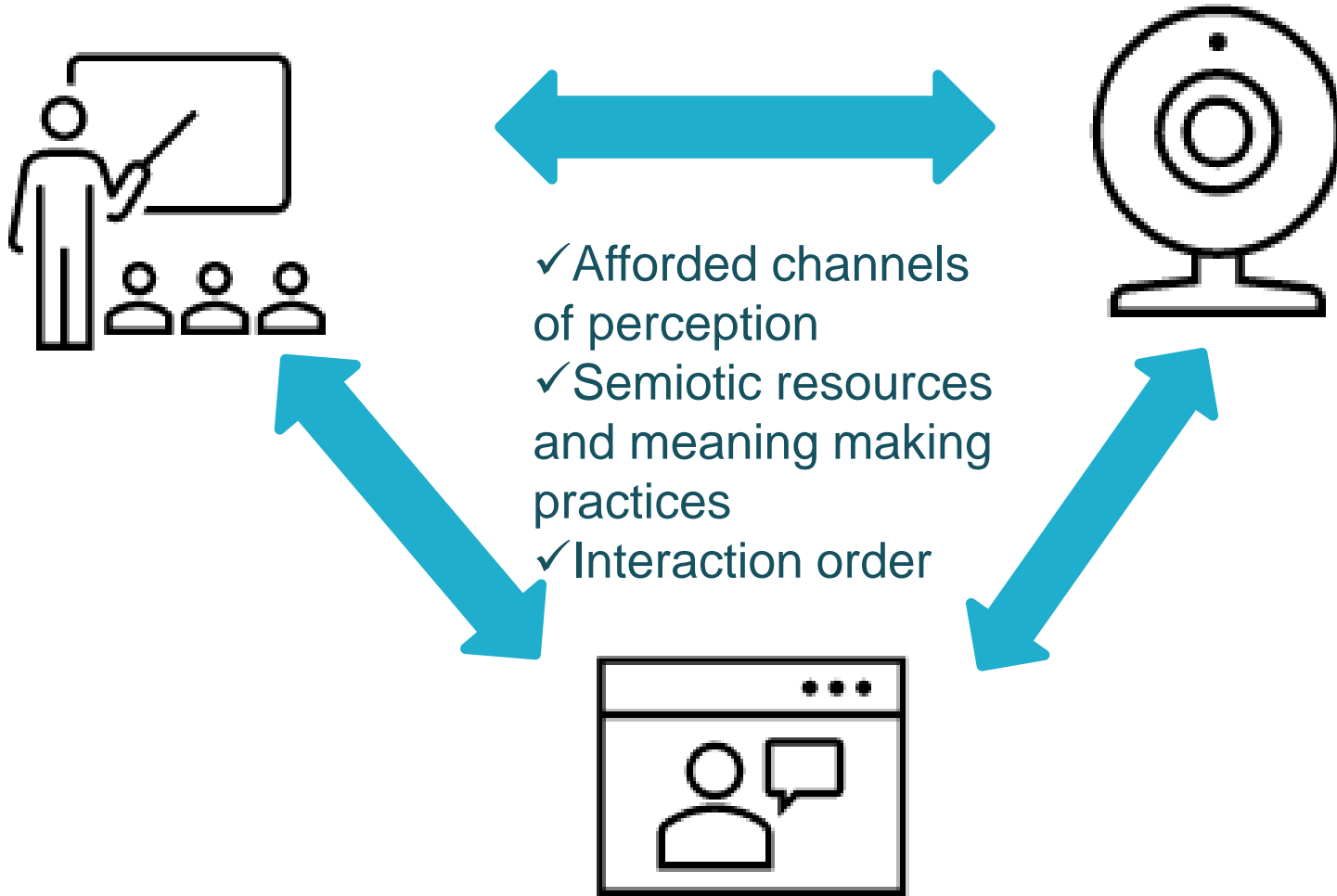


The HyFlex Model

- **Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex): a mixture of online and face-to-face learning components (Beatty, 2007, 2019)**

Beatty, B. J. (2019). Evaluating the Impact of Hybrid-Flexible Courses and Programs: Highlights from Selected Studies. In B. J. Beatty (Ed.), Hybrid-Flexible Course Design. EdTech Books. <https://edtechbooks.org/hyflex/impact>

The SS-HyFlex Model



Making teaching both perceptually realistic, and socially realistic.



Thank you!

zhangyiqiong@gdufs.edu.cn