

# Semiotics and Instructional Technology

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## Semiotics and Instructional Technology

### Abstract

The purpose of my paper is to define and discuss semiotics and relate it to instructional technology.

### Discussing Semiotics

Huyghe says that if you are a semiologist, then you study systems of signs (Huyghe, 1993, p.1). This area of discussion can cover a broad range of topics from hieroglyphic writing to "Masks and the semiotics of identity." "In semiotic terms, an icon is a variety of sign that bears a resemblance to its object; a diagram, for example, is an icon of that which the diagram represents ([Pollock](#), 1995, p. 1). In Bourland-[Davis](#)' article, she draws from Johnson and Hackman to discuss semiotics as a form of symbolic communication (Bourland-Davis, 1998, p. 2). In Bourland-Davis' article (Bourland-Davis, p. 2), Johnson and Hackman state that 'human (symbolic) communication ... generates new and relevant combinations of associations of existing elements (materials, words, ideas, facts, sounds,

movements, colors, lines, mathematical notations, procedures, etc.) through lateral (divergent) thinking' (as cited in Johnson and Hackman, 1995, p.15). Sometimes the most effective way to represent an abstract problem is by using symbols, as students learn to do in high-school [algebra](#) (Matlin, 1998, p. 347).

Often by comparing an idea to an object that can be symbolically related somehow, the level of understanding is increased, and then that object can later be used as a trigger mechanism for recalling the specifics of that concept (Matlin, 1998, p. 351). "...a visual image can let us escape from the boundaries of traditional representations. At the same time, however, the visual image is somewhat concrete; it serves as a symbol for a theory that has not yet bee...

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