

Abstract

Cormack, Phil (2001). "Subject to Reading: Historical Takes on Reading as a Technology", *Opinion*, Vol 45, No 2, pp 20-26.

Three historical 'vignettes' from Alberto Manguel's *A History of Reading* (1996) illustrate how reading is not the same thing in all times and places. Rather reading is a human technology that, like all technologies, changes and, in turn, changes us as readers. History can be used as something that can unsettle, and even disrupt, taken for granted ways of understanding schooling, as shown in examples from late nineteenth, early twentieth century reading curriculum materials demonstrating the process of technological change at work in the classroom. Contemporary concerns around reading may benefit from the kinds of disruptions that particular approaches to history can supply.

This is an edited version of Phil Cormack's keynote address to last year's SAETA conference. Phil works in the Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures at the University of South Australia.