MAPPING MULTILITERACIES ONTO THE PEDAGOGY OF K-12 TEACHERS

by

Kristin Lee Main

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Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

This qualitative research maps multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of teachers of kindergarten through grade 12. It examines how teachers ready their students to become multiliterate beings, that is, how teachers approach literacy in a manner that is reflective of the diversity of students in order to prepare them for their futures in a competitive digital world.

Twenty teachers from Northwestern Ontario were selected using intensity sampling to participate in audio-taped interviews. The sample included three teachers from each of the elementary grades (kindergarten, primary, junior and intermediate) and eight teachers from the secondary panel (intermediate/senior). Teachers were nominated by school administrators and curriculum leaders based on a provided list of multiliteracies indicators. An interview guide was used to isolate elements of the content of multiliteracies (designing processes) and the form (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice). One teacher from each of the four elementary grade divisions, as well as two teachers from the secondary level were observed and participated in follow-up interviews. Individual interviews were coded using a deductive frame as well as constant comparison. The observational field notes and follow-up interviews were used as triangulation to enrich the interview data. Excel and macros were used to organize the data.
Findings document teachers’ conscious inclusions of content reflective of student subjectivities as well as the need for teachers to continue to challenge the role of literacy as more than compensatory education. Teachers’ pedagogies were rooted in engaging students and demonstrated a focus on the affective needs of students that reached beyond multiliteracies theory. Both critical literacies and information technology were integrated into pedagogy, although teachers reported feelings of low confidence and the desire for additional professional development opportunities. Other findings that emerged emphasized a range in orientations to student risk in literacy learning and strong alignments with provincial protocol. This study advances the research field by describing connections between multiliteracies as a theoretical frame and teachers’ perceptions of their literacy practices across grades K-12 and highlights ways in which multiliteracies can extend literacy pedagogy.
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Chapter One: Introduction

"Literacy can’t be left to the English teacher. I think that we have fallen into a trap where we think that literacy is about reading and writing in our society and it can’t be about that, it has to be about so much more."

- High School Math Teacher

This research maps multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of teachers of kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12). It is focused on the role that literacy plays in pedagogy and learning. Students need to be provided with the means to communicate effectively in all subjects, whether it is to be able to read and write sentences in English, to complete equations in math, or to decipher charts in geography. In today’s global community many factors need to be considered: students are coming to the classroom from a variety of cultures, speaking a multiplicity of languages, using a myriad of technologies and requiring that their individual needs are met.

These considerations were foundational to the assemblage of the New London Group (NLG) in 1996 and their collaborative efforts behind the creation of the theoretical model, multiliteracies pedagogy. Multiliteracies pedagogy aims to bolster active learners who are capable of designing their social futures, which need to include multiple communication patterns in their public, private and work lives. The NLG focused on two main considerations for multiliteracies pedagogy and in turn, for multiliterate practices to attend to “a multiplicity of communication channels and media” in addition to recognizing the “increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity” (p. 63).
Multiliteracies pedagogy is recognized as a complicated theory and there is limited research conducted on how to better prepare educators to incorporate multiliteracies pedagogy (Kist, 2005; Neville, 2005; NLG, 1996). By mapping elements of multiliteracies pedagogy present in teachers’ literacy approaches, this research aims to position the theoretical model in practical application. The focus of this study is an exploration of the relationship between understandings of literacy pedagogy and multiliterate practices. More specifically, how are teachers from the elementary and secondary panels including multiliterate practice in their pedagogy? Twenty teachers were interviewed and the transcripts were analyzed deductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994) using multiliteracies pedagogy as a frame and analyzed a second time using constant comparison (Glaser, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to identify emerging patterns. Follow-up observations and interviews were conducted with six teachers from across the grade divisions to isolate further connections with multiliteracies pedagogy.

**Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this research is to describe the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy and the inclusion of multiliterate practices. It examines how teachers envision their roles as teachers of literacy in comparison with the ideologies behind multiliterate practices. The NLG’s *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* (1996) served as the guiding framework. This theoretical model engages students in a designing process that socially situates literacy learning. Teachers provide students with opportunities to work as part of learning communities that utilize explicit metalanguages as they draw from multiple modes of meaning (such as linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal elements) to describe the
patterns behind meaning. This designing process serves as the content of multiliteracies pedagogy.

As part of the process teachers encourage students to relate meaning to the larger social contexts and transfer their understanding to purposeful extensions. The goal is to better prepare students to be active, multiliterate citizens who are able to participate fully within the local diversity of their own neighbourhoods or the global connectedness of a society unified by technology and other modes of communication that “frequently cross cultural, community and national boundaries” (NLG, 1996, p.64). This application is referred to as the form of multiliteracies pedagogy and it is based on four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Situated practice draws from students’ prior experiences and understandings to help locate learning. Overt instruction is explicit teaching that uses metalanguage, a “language to talk about language, images, texts and meaning-making interactions” (NLG, 1996, p. 77) to describe patterns of meaning. Critical framing is centred on identifying and explaining the purpose of a text and the ability to relate meaning to the larger social context. Finally, transformed practice is the application of learning that includes the transfer of meaning from one context to another and includes the addition of new understandings.

This research uses multiliteracies pedagogy as a lens to examine the perceptions of teachers in terms of their approaches to readying students to become multiliterate beings. The researcher was interested in how teachers prepare students to participate as socially conscious citizens who are able to interact with the diverse texts that are representative of the plurality of their local and global communities. This includes the impact of the rapidly increasing forms of
information communication technology (ICT). The purpose of this research is to map multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of a large group of teachers as means to critique the suitability of implementation into the theory into the classroom.

Often multiliteracies research focus on one aspect of the model such as plurality of subjectivities (e.g., Crafton, Brennan, & Silvers, 2007; DiPardo, 2005), the role of ICT (e.g., Alexander, 2008; Williams, 2008) or multimodality (e.g., Jewitt, 2008) rather than the theory in its entirety because of the complexity of the theory. This research is designed to document the role of multiliteracies pedagogy and further unpack the layers of complexity by better understanding the connections between teachers’ perceptions of solid literacy pedagogy and multiliteracies. This includes not only identifying elements of multiliteracies that are present in the teachers’ perceptions, but locating those elements that are not present or additional elements that teachers believe are important to pedagogy that are not reflected in multiliteracies pedagogy.

Research Rationale

It has been a dozen years since the first multiliteracies pedagogy article was published. Since that time there has been a surge of research and literature about multiliteracies that includes multimodality; socially situated learning; integration of students’ lives into teaching; ICT; critical literacies; cultural and linguistic diversity, and learning to learn (e.g., Anstey & Bull, 2006; Kalantzis, Cope & Fehring, 2002; Kalantzis, Cope & Harvey, 2003). Initial research focused on understanding the theory, which included comparisons with other theories such as new literacies and media literacy (Gee, 1990; Grabill & Hicks, 2005; Hagood, 2000; Kist, 2005; Street, 1997). Research has branched into investigations of the practical applications of multiliteracies
pedagogy focused on both teachers and teacher candidates (Cummins, 2004, 2006; Rowsell, Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Unsworth, 2001; Yelland, Cope & Kalantzis, 2008). This research furthers current understandings about the potential for implementing multiliteracies pedagogy. As well, this study advances the research field by describing connections between multiliteracies as a theoretical frame and teachers’ perceptions of their literacy practices across grades K-12. This comparison also proves useful in highlighting ways in which multiliteracies can extend literacy pedagogy.

There are several noted concerns surrounding the implementation of multiliteracies that this research further explores. First, Street (1997) saw reference to “multi” in multiliteracies as approaching literacy pedagogy in a fragmented manner that could not capture the complex relationships between text, content and diverse subjectivities. Second, VanHeerten and Share (2006) were worried by the potential opening for corporate sponsorship of education to shape curriculum in a manner that would be driven by the capitalistic needs of industry. They were also concerned that multiliteracies pedagogy did not taking a strong enough stand to guard against the reproduction of inequitable division of resources. Finally, they questioned whether multiliteracies pedagogy was a specific enough frame through which to critique issues of power. Would educators be able to support students’ voices and encourage them to become agents of change? This study supplements previous research by considering the value of multiliteracies as a pedagogical lens for the analysis of literacy pedagogy.

Currently in Ontario, protocols set by the Ministry of Education (MOE) are reflective of many elements of multiliteracies pedagogy as outlined in curricula and initiatives such as the creation of Early Reading Strategy: Report of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario.
Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2003), Literacy for Learning: Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario (2004) and Think Literacy Success, Grades 7–12: Report of the Expert Panel on Students at Risk in Ontario (2003). While the literacy protocols produced by the MOE do not directly cite the NLG, the influence of multiliteracies pedagogy is present. In 1997, the province introduced a new curriculum that recognized the centrality of literacy in all subject areas. Of the changes, one included students being evaluated on achievement chart categories and learning skills. One of the achievement chart categories, Communication, linked all content areas with literacy. New expectations were created for grades 1-8 as well as for kindergarten. The MOE also released new curricula for the secondary level.

In terms of specifically supporting multiliterate practices, the new curricula include critical literacy and teaching approaches for literacy and integrating ICT into pedagogy. Elements of multiliteracies pedagogy are reflected in Ontario’s literacy and language curriculum documents, through such expectations addressing making personal meaning through text production and consumption; understanding the patterns behind the structure of language and literate practices; and learning to critically approach texts using text purposefully. The importance of integrating these elements of multiliteracies is reflected throughout the continuum of curricula for kindergarten; language and English; mathematics; arts; social studies and history and geography; and science and technology. This research aims to clarify the connections between the provincial documents and multiliteracies pedagogy to describe the relationship between the teachers’ literacy perceptions that align with multiliteracies in relationship to protocol.
To better serve the continued literacy needs of students, a clearer understanding of the literacy continuum is required, that is, the literacy experiences that were created at the previous grade levels. Current multiliteracies pedagogy research is isolated to single groups of learners, most often, primary (e.g., Ranker, 2007; Taylor, Bernhard, Garg & Cummins, 2008), intermediate students (e.g., Mills, 2007), or teacher candidates at faculties of education (e.g. Macken-Horarik, Devereux, Trimmingham-Jack & Wilson, 2006; Steinman, 2007). Very little work has been done to understand what multiliteracies pedagogy involves as an approach to literacy rather than isolated situations. This research is designed to identify patterns of multiliteracies set in the teachers' pedagogical approaches to literacy, in terms of designing processes and implementation.

In addition, much of this research has been conducted with small samples, often consisting of one participant – either teacher or student (e.g., Cumming-Potvin, 2007; Kitson, Fletcher & Kearney, 2007). While research of this nature helps to highlight the individual cases and provide data for future directions, generalizability is low and findings may speak more to the individual study rather than multiliteracies as a theoretical frame. The intent of this research is to describe the elements of multiliteracies as implemented across the grade levels.

**Research Questions**

The research questions are:

1. **How do the literacy perceptions of K-12 teachers align with and diverge from the content of multiliteracies pedagogy?**

   This question was created to trace the elements of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy embedded in the instructional approaches of teachers who are representative of
various subject areas. It represents the “what” of literacy pedagogy. There are several key components that combine to structure the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. The content is based on an interactive designing process where both teachers and learners play active roles. The three stage designing process helps students identify the resources that are available to them to help make meaning of new information (available design), transform previous resources to best fit the new task (designing) and finally implement the newly created design and then add it to their available designs (redesigned).

Central to the designing process is not only the inclusion of, but the recruitment of “different subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments and purposes” that are a part of the learners’ interactions with text (NLG, 1996, p. 18). Therefore the creation of a metalanguage that allows the communication of a critical analysis of text and interaction with text in all modes will support dynamic meaning-making processes in our pluralistic society. The NLG proposed that the design elements help describe meaning in a variety of modes: linguistic, audio, spatial, visual, gestural and multimodal. Learners can describe the patterns of meaning that are created in terms of textual comparisons that can be related to context.

The descriptions put forth by the NLG were used to create five categories to represent the content of multiliteracies pedagogy for this study: designing process, design elements, pluralism of subjectivities, information communication technology and metalanguage.

2. How do the literacy perceptions of K-12 teachers align with and diverge from the form of multiliteracies pedagogy?

The second research question focused on identifying the four elements of multiliteracies designed to relate meaning-making within the social, cultural, material and technological
contexts in which knowledge is located. This included uncovering examples of the four components of multiliteracies. Situated practice focuses on drawing from students’ previous experiences and resources to transform their understandings as a community of learners. Overt instruction uses explicit teaching to describe patterns in meaning. Critical framing focuses learners on relating meaning to social contexts and locating purpose. Transformed practice shifts meaning from one context to another that impacts their lives (NLG, 1996; Taylor, Bernhard, Garg & Cummins, 2008).

The form of multiliteracies pedagogy provides a description of “how” teachers can mesh together curriculum expectations with the different subjectivities of their students (NLG, 1996, p. 72). The non-linear approach involves complex relationships among four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice provide the frame used to access the form of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Assumptions

There are three main assumptions upon which this study is based. The first assumption is that all teachers are teachers of literacy. For nearly 100 years American educators have been documented as advocating the importance of the role of the teacher in cross-curricular literacy instruction (Gray, 1925; Whipple, 1919). Teachers participating in this study were recommended by school administrator and resource teachers. The assumption was that because part of the criteria for nominating teachers was a demonstrated interest in literacy that all teachers, regardless of grade or subject area, would be able to speak to their literacy perceptions and practices. The selected sample provided a wide range of experiences from just beginning to explore literacy pedagogy to system level leadership roles. While all teachers were
not able to articulate their literacy pedagogy within theory, they were all able to address their instructional approaches, their goals for students and their roles as teachers of literacy. The range in literacy experiences helped portray the realities of classroom instruction. Enthusiasm concerning the importance of literacy across the curriculum was demonstrated by all.

Second, because of the theoretical nature of the framework, the base assumption was that the teachers in this study would have no prior knowledge or experience with multiliteracies. To establish their understandings of multiliterate practices the interview and observation guides used concrete language demonstrative of the ideologies, rather than specific terminology associated with multiliteracies. Because focus was on the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of solid literacy pedagogy and the inclusion of multiliterate practices, the teachers were asked to speak to areas of literacy pedagogy that were central to their individual programs. This information provided the basis for the comparison as their ability to describe multiliterate practices was not the focus of this research. Rather, the purpose was to isolate examples of pedagogy that demonstrate multiliterate practice as well as instructional instances that would be enhanced by inclusion of multiliteracies. The goal was to better understand the application of theory to practice.

Finally, because the MOE curriculum documents and other literacy protocols used by teachers support multiliterate practices, such as the aforementioned socially situated learning, learn to learn, ICT, multimodality, critical literacy, as well as inclusion of student subjectivities, this research is based on the assumption that although teachers may be unfamiliar with multiliteracies pedagogy as a theoretical lens, there would be elements of multiliterate practices in their instruction and literacy approaches.
Overview of Content

This research is organized into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the research problem and situates the current context of literacy instruction in Ontario classrooms as outlined by provincial curriculum, initiatives and research.

Chapter Two presents the initial paper created by the NLG (1996). The efforts of the NLG cohort, as well as the individual contributors shape the description of the theory that is organized into the Content of Multiliteracies and the Form of Multiliteracies. Next, multiliteracies pedagogy is located within the larger scope of socially situated literacy pedagogy (e.g., Gee, 1990; Street, 1997), including the Four Resource Model of Literacy (e.g., Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke, 1995; Luke & Freebody 1999) and critical literacy (e.g., Freire, 2004; Luke 2005). The Pedagogy Embedded within Multiliteracies is a review of current research and the connections made between multiliteracies and literacy pedagogy. Finally the provincial curriculum documents and main literacy resources are summarized to provide a clearer understanding of the expected role of the participants as teachers of literacy.

Chapter Three presents the methods for this study. It draws from the work of Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Erickson (1986) and Patton (1990) to establish the qualitative design. The sample considerations for participants are covered as well as the framing of the interview questions. The procedures for the classroom observations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Glesne, 2006; Patton 1990) and follow-up interviews are also outlined. Ethical considerations are also included in this chapter. Finally the deductive analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), constant comparison (Glaser, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1987), and coding methods including the use of technology as means to sort and organize data electronically (LaPella, 2004; Ryan 2004;
Swallow, Newton, & Van Lotten, 2003) are discussed. Triangulation of data is also reported (Denzin, 1978).

The findings are organized into two chapters. Chapter Four examines the interview transcripts in terms of locating elements of the content of multiliteracies: the designing process, design elements, pluralism of subjectivities, information communication technology and metalanguage. Chapter Five presents the findings for the form of multiliteracies pedagogy, centering on the four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice.

Finally, Chapter Six is organized into four sections. The first subsection, Summary of Findings and Discussion, provides an overview of the findings and discussion. It is organized by themes that emerged from the deductive and constant comparison analyses. It is followed by Implications that present the contributions of this study to the field of multiliteracies pedagogy. The third subsection, Limitations and Areas for Future Research, reports the limitations of this research and makes suggested areas for future research. The last section, Concluding Comments, includes reflections of the study.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Everything comes from literacy. If you have troubles with reading and writing, you’re going to have troubles with everything else.

- High School Technology Teacher

The literature review is organized into three main sections. The first section, Multiliteracies Pedagogy, provides a description of the theoretical frame used to shape the research questions for this study. It discusses the content and the form of multiliteracies pedagogy; the corresponding research; and addresses the gaps that led to this study. It also includes links with the Ontario provincial curricula with multiliteracies. The second section, Contributing Theories, locates multiliteracies pedagogy within the larger field of literacy; specifically, it focuses on the connections with the New Literacies Studies, the Four Resource Model, and critical literacy. Pedagogy Embedded within Multiliteracies Pedagogy isolates current research that investigates the pedagogical implications of multiliteracies. Finally, Overview of Provincial Documents describes the provincial expectations for the teaching of literacy.

Multiliteracies Pedagogy

A cohort of ten educators from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States, known as the New London Group (NLG), met for a week in the fall of 1994 to consider the implications of the linguistic and cultural needs of students in our rapidly changing, ever increasing technological world. In the pursuit of school transformation, the NLG focused their efforts on preparing students for future success by extending literacy practices in schools to include modes of representation that “differ according to culture and context, and have specific
cognitive, cultural, and social effects” (NLG, 1996, p. 64). This concentration provided means to acknowledge the “realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness” (p. 64) in the three realms that impact students: their working, public and personal lives. The role of the multiliteracies teacher is to help create space that does not “destroy the autonomy of private and community lifeworlds” to serve future needs of the work force, but rather preserve room in the classroom where “local and specific meanings can be made” (NLG, 1996, p. 70). To accomplish this balance of ideologies, teachers need to draw from students’ local understandings and scaffold learning to contextualize their knowledge onto an international stage.

The NLG wanted to shift the focus of literacy pedagogy away from a project that was “restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (p. 61). They rejected the concept of literate practices as they were deemed too narrowly centred on a singular national language created in response to what were perceived as stable and governable. In contrast, multiliterate practices were designed to incorporate the cultural and social implications of literacy where “language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes” (p. 64). Specifically, multiliteracies pedagogy would address the needs of learners shaped by the fast-capitalist market including “thinking and speaking for oneself, critique and empowerment, innovation and creativity, technical and systems thinking, and learning how to learn” (p. 67). These practices focused on practices that incorporated “a range of texts and technologies; in socially responsible ways; in socially, culturally, and
linguistically diverse worlds” so that learners could fully participate as active members of society (Anstey & Bull, 2006, p. 55).

The initial discussions held by the NLG were centred on two tenets. First, they believed that language is needed to discuss literacy pedagogy in ways that recognize the increasing role that technology and communication media plays in all facets of daily life. There “cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitute the ends of literacy learning” (NLG, 1996, p. 64), but rather there should be opportunities to use multiple modes of meaning such as visual, audio, linguistic, spatial and gestural that are continuously remade by individuals to best support text consumption and production. Second NLG identified the need for links to connect “local diversity and global connectedness” (p. 64). They wanted to address the implications of the rapid developments in communication technology. They noted that boundaries between communities, cultures, nations and languages were being navigated by advancements that allowed access to information and people as never before.

Based on these tenets, multiliteracies pedagogy was developed and organized into two sections: the content of literacy pedagogy and the form of literacy pedagogy. It provided the frame for the NLG to contemplate the need for a literacy model that would reflect the diversity of students and prepare them for their futures in a competitive digital world. The content of literacy pedagogy, also known as the “what” of multiliteracies pedagogy, draws from multiple modes of meaning-making to support a design process for literacy learning. The form of literacy pedagogy, also referred to as the “how,” draws from a range of relationships between four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. These will be expanded upon further in the following sections.
Content of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Learning, specifically literacy learning, is seen as being “part and parcel of collaborative interactions with others of diverse skills, backgrounds and perspectives joined together in a ...community of learners” (NLG, 1996, p. 30). This dimension of meaning is pivotal to understanding multiliteracies pedagogy. Multiliteracies pedagogy centres on interactions between cultural and linguistic boundaries, that is, cultural hybridity, and multiple modes of meaning referred to as multimodality. The goal of implementing multimodality is for teachers to use a combination of audio, gestural, linguistic, spatial and visual elements to disrupt the students’ understandings and encourage learning. To facilitate this process, multiliteracies pedagogy uses metalanguage to discuss the use of language, visuals, and text in the meaning-making processes. Metalanguage represents the grammar of multiliteracies pedagogy; furthermore, it is used to explain patterns of meaning created during the design process. The NLG adopted the term design to refer to the production or consumption of language. The designs of meaning involves three elements: available designs, designing and redesign as defined in Table 1 (NLG, 1996, p. 77).

Table 1: Designs of Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available Designs</th>
<th>Resources for Meaning: Available Designs of Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designing</td>
<td>The work performed on or with Available Designs in the semiotic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Redesigned</td>
<td>The resources that are produced and transformed through Designing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students draw on their experiences, interests and knowledge (available designs) and transform their processes (designing) into remade resources (redesigned). Ultimately, the effect of the
designing process in the classroom is to “extend students’ cultural and representational horizons beyond where they already are” and encourage them to seek “more expansive and deeper forms of knowing and meaning” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 207). Teachers move students from the familiar to the unexplored. By locating learning within the students’ knowledge, teachers can then further the students’ understandings in meaningful contexts.

The designing process begins with identifying existing discourses that the NLG defines as “a configuration of knowledge and its habitual forms of expression, which represent a particular set of interests” (NLG, 1996, p. 75). Students need to be provided with opportunities to relate multiple discourses (e.g., teacher, cultural, community) as means to shape new knowledge. This is a complex process as the aim is to facilitate transformation. The goal is for students to demonstrate growth in content areas, as well as personal growth as they “reconstruct and negotiate their identities” (p. 76) within the multiple discourses at play.

Elements of the process of designing are evident in the Ontario curricula. The kindergarten document (2006) acknowledges that children come to school having had a variety of learning experiences in diverse environments. It is part of the teacher’s role to use his or her knowledge of the students’ cultural and social context to create programs that encourage students to “generate new connections and to expand their existing understandings” (p. 13). One of the suggested approaches is the use of teacher modeling through thinking out loud. The curriculum document for language teachers of grades 1 through 8 (MOE, 2006) focuses on a cumulative approach to focus students on the “interconnectedness of learning” (p. 23). Teachers are asked to encourage talk during learning and focus on the decisions that students make as they construct meaning of new information. The purpose of this is to create a learning
process that is transparent for students so they see the value of literacy skills outside of school.

At the secondary level, students are required to reflect on their learning strategies in all curricular strands of the English curriculum documents (oral communication; reading and literature studies; writing; and media studies). Metacognition, thinking about how one thinks and learns, is included in all language and English curriculum documents.

The NLG’s description of metalanguage uses six design elements to facilitate the exploration of meaning: linguistic design, visual design, audio design, gestural design, spatial design, and multimodal design. Linguistic design is the productive, innovative and representational aspects of English rather than the mechanical skills of reading and writing. Visual design pertains to such elements as images, layouts, and computer screen views. Audio design includes sound effects and music. Gestural design focuses on body language and sensuality. Spatial design looks at environmental and architectural elements. Finally, multimodal design concentrates on the interdependence of the designs, that is, various combinations of the previous elements. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) provide an example of one approach to describe the modes used in the classroom that involves questioning five dimensions reported in Table 2.

**Table 2: Questioning of Five Dimensions to Describe Meaning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Question to Add Depth to Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representational</td>
<td>What do meanings refer to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>How do meanings connect the persons they involve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>How do the meanings hang together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>How do the meanings fit into the larger world of meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Whose interests are the meanings skewed to serve?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, pp. 212-217.
For instance, an example of a question focused on how the linguistic mode could be used to describe the organizational elements of communication includes consideration of whether the use of language is monologic or dialogic. Questions for the visual mode could focus on the movement and representation of images. Questions for the spatial mode could consider geographical influences on communication. Investigations of the gestural mode could question bodily cues that are incorporated into language and audio elements could be described through questions designed to access such items as the intonation of voice (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000).

Although the Ontario curriculum documents do not cite the NLG’s designs of meaning, they do advise teachers to include a variety of modes of meaning. In the kindergarten document (MOE, 2006) teaching approaches include investigations and discovery learning through play, which provides such opportunities for students as role play and experimenting with manipulatives that are focused on sensory stimulation (p. 14). The language curriculum document (MOE, 2006), which includes media studies, for grades 1-8 centres on reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing. Students are supported as they consider language learning in wider contexts than school (p. 7). Linguistic elements are firmly embedded in the reading and literature studies and writing strand, and the media strand includes a combination of modes (e.g., audio, visual and spatial) as the language of media includes: “images, sounds, graphics, and words” (p. 13). These elements are repeated in the intermediate/senior English curriculum documents (MOE, 2007).

One rapidly growing area of multimodality research centres on furthering the connections that students make with information in digital contexts. Ball (2004) emphasized the need for new teaching approaches focused on the inclusion of multimodal elements “that
can help readers interpret meanings made through modes that are beyond linear, print traditions” (p. 421). Others such as Chandler-Olcott and Mahar (2003) investigated the influence of literacies that fall outside of the scope of traditional classrooms. They examined the potential impact of incorporating anime-inspired writing into the classroom through the lens of multiliteracies pedagogy. The fanfictions that the students created in their digital anime demonstrated their ability to situate visual, spatial and audio design elements within their experiences with technology.

This multimodal approach was not well received by all. New Literacies proponent Street (1997, 2002, 2005) was concerned by multiliteracies pedagogy’s focus on the six design elements used to help students describe their meaning-making processes. He wrote:

If you identify a literacy with a mode or channel – visual literacy, computer literacy – then you are slipping into the danger of reifying it according to form: you are failing to take into account the social practices that go into the construction, uses and meaning of literacy in these contexts. (2002, p. 59)

Street’s apprehension was based on the concern that if modes of meaning were assigned to text consumption and production, then elements of literacy may be considered as discrete units rather than complex domains born from social contexts. However, the multimodality proponents counter this argument by using two key terms: intertextuality and hybridity. In terms of intertextuality, the NLG includes the work of Fairclough (1992a, 1992b) to describe intertextuality as the “potentially complex” (p. 82) relationships formed between meaning, text and modes. The goal of identifying the modes (as separate from multimodal) is to open space for discussion through an explicit metalanguage. By understanding how individual text elements link together with other text elements students create cross-references that can be used for gaining knowledge. Secondly, the term *hybridity* is used to “highlight the mechanism of
creativity and of culture-as-process as particularly salient in contemporary society” (p. 82). This approach in fact aligns with Street’s (1997) concern that curricula and assessment need to be reflective of the rich and complex nature of literate practices marked in society. The NLG agrees that: “To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities [original italics]” (1996, p. 72).

Teachers adhering to multiliteracies pedagogy draw from the plurality of subjectivities that students bring to the classroom and use them as foundational resources for innovation. While the term metalanguage is not present in the protocols, there is some overlap with the Ministry’s use of the term metacognition. This will be discussed further in a following section, Overview of Provincial Documents.

**Form of multiliteracies pedagogy.**

The form of multiliteracies pedagogy centres on the integration of four components reflective of thinking, learning and society. These include situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Although presented in a list, the NLG stressed that the four components are not intended to create a linear representation of literacy pedagogy. They are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Four Components of Multiliteracies Pedagogy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situated Practice</td>
<td>the world of learners’ designed and designing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt Instruction</td>
<td>students shape for themselves an explicit metalanguage of design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Framing</td>
<td>relates meanings to their social contexts and purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformed Practice</td>
<td>students transfer and re-create designs of meaning to other contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from NLG, 1996, p. 83.
The first component to be introduced, situated practiced, focuses on incorporating the affective and sociocultural needs of all students. The goal is to create a community of learners who are motivated because the learning is located in meaningful contexts referred to as previous experience. The work on previous experiences is connected to work conducted by Dewey (1939). His progressivist approach to education created a means to capitalize on the social nature of humans by centering on problem-based learning. He, too, focused on drawing from the learners` previous experiences and reshaping them for learning.

Situated practice also aligns with the work of Paulo Freire (1987) who recognized the interconnectivity of language and life. He believed that in order “[f]or the notion of literacy to become meaningful it has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform and reproduce meaning” (p. 142). This component aims to use the students’ lifeworlds as motivation for their learning. The NLG worked from the premise “that people do not learn anything well unless they are both motivated to learn and believe that they will be able to use and function with what they are learning in some way that is in their interest” (1996, p. 85).

In order for students to make meaning in school, learning must draw from the knowledge and experiences of the students, that is, it must be situated in social practices. In many cases, the students’ experiences, knowledge and interests are linked with technology such as computers, games, text messaging and the internet (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland & Warschauer, 2003). Other research arrives at similar conclusions such as studies focused on digital writing that involves online publications, incorporation of images, layout and typography (e.g., Grabill & Hicks, 2005; Lewis & Fabos, 2000; Matthewman & Triggs, 2004).
Situated practice also includes using film and television as meaningful contexts for students’ literacy learning (e.g., Ball, 2004; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Grabill & Hicks, 2005; Love, 2004; Mackey, 2003). Trier (2005) incorporated the use of multiliteracies pedagogy in his teacher education course to facilitate his students’ descriptions of patterns of meaning between thematically similar films. Students drew from their own experiences, related their constructed meaning to the field of teaching, and applied their meaning to their own pedagogical ideas.

As well, situated practice addresses the importance of including the students’ native languages, home languages or first languages – especially if the languages are not the dominant language of the school. Cummins (2004) notes that in schools:

> the teaching of literacy is narrowly focused on literacy in the dominant language and typically fails to acknowledge or build on the multilingual literacies or the technologically-mediated literacies that form a significant part of students’ cultural and linguistic capital. (p. 69)

This is problematic for English language learners because in conjunction with literacy learning, they require additional time to learn English. For students in the early grades it typically takes two years to catch up with the basic decoding skills in English. The later the students come to English language learning, the longer it generally takes for mastery. For example, for English language learners in high school who are in the academic track planning to attend university, it generally takes five years to catch up with the decoding skills of their peers (Cummins, 2006).

The work of Matsuda et al. (2003) demonstrates the range of application of multiliteracies pedagogy for English language learners. Their research focuses on Generation 1.5 students, who are students with literacy abilities generally more developed in English than in their native languages. Specifically they focus on the postsecondary pedagogical experiences
of these students. They believe that “learning to write in a second language is not simply the accrual of technical linguistic abilities but rather is intimately related to identity — how one sees oneself and is seen by others as a student, a writer, and as an ethnolinguistic minority” (p. 155). This focus is to encourage students to use their past experiences and understandings to shape new knowledge in a meaningful way. This includes drawing from home language as part of situating practice.

The Ontario curriculum documents are reflective of situated practice in their recognition of the need to include the students’ identities. The kindergarten document advocates that teachers “should also use their knowledge of the social and cultural context in which children live and develop and provide learning experiences that are meaningful, relevant, and respectful” (MOE, 2006, p. 3). The elementary language curricula documents as well as the secondary English documents describe successful language learners as being able to make the connections between self and text as well as being able to meet with and interact within their communities for personal growth.

The second component, overt instruction, unites a range of learners: from novices to experts including students, peers, teachers, parents, or members of the community. Those who are proficient in a particular practice take on a mentor role, guiding others through the process of designing. This draws from the work of Vygotsky (1987). His influence is demonstrated in multiliteracies through the inclusion of collaboration that allows students to accomplish more as a community or learners than they would have been able as individuals. He proposed that students could perform some actions before they had actually achieved a specific stage of cognitive development through social learning that provided the context, the Zone of Proximal
Development (ZPD) (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). This connects with Dewey’s recommendation that education should be based on personal experiences enhanced through guidance from an experienced mature learner.

Overt instruction is in part defined by its inclusion of metalanguages. Students work as members of their learning communities to create languages to discuss their processes of design in terms of the key features of the activities. This involves a language to discuss form, content and function of the discourses of practice. The use of metalanguage also describes meaning making processes that involve: “patterns in available designs of meaning, that is, the resources we can find and use to make meaning; how we do designing; and how meaning becomes redesigned” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000, p. 246). This also aligns with the work of Vygotsky (1978), who saw language as a tool invented by humans to help organize thinking. Through his studies on how drawings represent written language for children, he noticed that the processes involved students making “discoveries in inventing an appropriate mode of representation” (p. 114). What Vygotsky refers to as a means of invented mode of representation correlates with the NLG’s use of the term metalanguage in that the communities of learners negotiate a language to communicate about text and their meaning making processes.

Alexander’s (2008) research provides example of metalanguage being used in the digital sphere. He uses surfacing technical language as the metalanguage, such as: Web 2.0, blogs, blogospheres, folksonomies, walled gardens and net.generation, to discuss emergent multiliteracies. His work includes overt instruction by implementing the technologies that are part of the students’ out-of-school literacies to inform instruction through the multimodal opportunities created by the internet.
Teachers who align with multiliteracies play active roles in shaping learning experiences. A part of overt instruction requires teachers to help students understand the patterns of meaning behind ICT as well as print media. Erstad, Gilje, DeLang (2007) argued that a strong understanding of how students use multimedia would help educators shape production opportunities. This means that “teachers would need to be flexible in realizing creative control as well as keep focus on out-of-school practices being integrated into subject frameworks” (p. 195).

Kitson, Fletcher, and Kearney (2007) documented potential challenges that teachers faced in creating metalanguage to use with technology. They conducted an empirical study on teachers’ perceptions of reading multimodal text on an interactive whiteboard. They noted that “one of the gaps was in taking up the meaning making potential of available semiotic systems and how technical language affords teachers and students to develop shared understandings of multimodal text and how they work” (p. 37). There was little or no evidence of semiotic systems, cultural or linguistic diversity or critical literacy in debriefing reflections with the teacher. While the study recognized the potential of the inclusion of multiliteracies pedagogy, it also acknowledged that change had been slow. They advised educators to recognize the challenges created by the explosion of technology, such as social networks, that are a part of our students’ lives.

Overt instruction aids students by teaching them to describe the patterns behind meaning. It focuses on scaffolding activities rather than rote learning. Assessment and evaluation of this component is intended to be developmental, to inform additional activities.
All of the curriculum documents for language and English in Ontario support pedagogy that involves a variety of instructional approaches as covered in overt instruction such as small group learning, guided instruction, and exploratory learning. As well, there is specific reference in the kindergarten curriculum (2006) to the ZPD that centres the program on working with others to extend individual learning.

The kindergarten, language and English documents also include statements regarding the role of information and communication technology. At the kindergarten level, technology is recommended as a tool to motivate students “to explore ideas, concepts, and questions in all areas of the program (MOE, 2006, p.27). Multimodal interactions with technology such as computers, overhead projectors or digital cameras can be used to support interactions with visual images, sound and text. The curriculum documents for grades 1 -12 suggest further use of ICT in terms of supporting learning as a process. Suggested use for technological tools such as the internet, multimedia and word processors focus on helping students: collect, organize, and sort the data they gather and to write, edit and present reports on their findings” (MOE, English 1-8, 2006, p.30; MOE, English 9-10, 2007, p. 35; MOE, English 11-12, p. 35). The potential risks of use, such as issues of internet safety are also included in the curriculum documents.

Another component of the form of multiliteracies, critical framing, centres on pedagogy that helps students locate a purpose for their learning. This includes relating learning to a social context and framing learning in terms of “historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and valued-centred relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice” (NLG, 1996, p. 86). This involves accounting for constructive criticism; cultural location; extensions and
application of learning; and personal innovations. Kalantzis and Cope (2000) envisioned critical framing as having “students stand back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context” (p. 247). Drawing from Luke’s earlier work, critical framing aimed to incorporate a language that provided a means for students to recognize and discuss the elements of a text so that they may “contest or rewrite a cultural text” (2000, p. 109). Students need to be encouraged to ask questions that situate topics into larger contexts; for example, what is the impact of a local or global perspective? Because this requires that students distance themselves from their learning to critique it, a transfer of learning occurs.

In their work with critical literacy, Leland, Harste, Ociepka, Lewison and Vasquez (1999) describe literate beings as having the ability to “not only know how to decode text and make meaning but also understand how language works and to what ends, so that we can better see ourselves in light of the kind of world we wish to create and the kind of people we wish to become” (p. 71). This is directly connected with the content of multiliteracies pedagogy: The recognition of a process of using dynamic resources remade by users that helps to locate meaning for social purposes.

Connections with critical framing are evident at all levels of the Ontario curriculum documents for Kindergarten, Language and English. For example, through prompts, teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for kindergarten students to begin to “develop their captivities for metacognition and use of higher order thinking skills involved in critical thinking” (MOE, 2006, p. 17). The connections with critical framing are extended at the primary to intermediate levels. The curriculum document for grades 1 to 8 outlines part of the learning process as encouraging students to move beyond literal meanings of text and to “think about
fairness; equity, social justice; and citizenship in global society” (p. 23). Through critical literacy at the intermediate and senior levels, teachers are required to focus on supporting students to gain the skills needed to “identify perspective, values, and issues; detect bias; and read for implicit as well as overt meaning” (MOE, English 9-10, 2007, p. 34; MOE, English 11-12, 2007, p. 34).

The final component of the form of multiliteracies is transformed practice. The focus of transformed practice is on the addition of meaning; it is the application of learning referred to as “reflective practice” (NLG, 1996, p. 87). Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to design, implement, and reflect upon new learning as related to their own goals and values. It also involves opportunity to recreate discourse for meaningful purposes. This model is situated in the learner’s ability to achieve transformed practice through redesigning as it is through the transfer of meaning that the learner becomes “a new person by being able to do new things” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000, p. 248). Students recreate discourses through application to authentic tasks. The demonstration of designs and implementations provides opportunity for the “situated, contextualized assessment of learners” (NLG, 1996, p. 87).

Kalantzis and Cope (2000) identify the purpose of transformed practice as dichotomous. One representation involves the “transfer of acquired knowledge and experience to an unfamiliar cultural context” while the other is based upon the “return to the lifeworld of one’s original experience with fresh perspectives and newly relevant knowledge of underlying processes” (p. 241). The intent of this component is to encourage students to imagine the potential of their resources and to contribute to their learning communities. The goal is for
students to be able to select and implement their available designs. Transformed practice provides students with opportunity to demonstrate extensions of their learning, as they transfer their designs of meaning from one context to another.

There is evidence of Dewey’s influence on transformed practice. In learning, Dewey’s (1939) principle of continuity of experience states, “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies it in some way the quality of those which comes after” (p. 35). As part of the designing process in multiliteracies pedagogy, learners are guided through redesigning their available resources so that they can remake meaning. This is demonstrated in the learner’s ability to transform practice, that is, transfer learning to other contexts, recreate their designs for meaning-making and implement their newly created designs for learning.

Vygotsky’s (1978) work on the ZPD and scaffolded instruction focused on drawing from culture and dialogue embedded into socially constructed understandings. Vygotsky’s ideas were of particular interest to NLG member Cazden (2003), who viewed multiliteracies pedagogy as including the transformational potential of recognizing the collective nature of culture and literacy, thus moving the learner from individual to participating member of society. Emihovich and Souza Lima (1995) also believed that Vygotsky’s work shifted from a “single path of development,” as suggested by Piaget, toward a more socially constructed approach that acknowledged individual pathways to learning that children follow (p. 377). Bidell (1992) furthers this consideration as he proposed a union of Piaget’s constructivist approach with Vygotsky’s inclusion of personal and social experience to support participatory education (p. 307).
Specific connections can be made between the MOE Language and English curricula for language and English and transformed practice. All documents, from kindergarten through grade 12, stress the need to encourage students to be actively engaged in the reflective process of learning. This involves consideration of learning as well as implementation. The kindergarten curriculum advises that students can be motivated by real-life contexts in their learning because “children grasp ideas more effectively and maintain their interest in school when they have an educational program that enables them to connect their learning to their own lives and the world around them” (2006, p. 18). The intermediate/senior level English documents use the four strands (oral communication; reading and literature; writing; and media) to provide opportunities for students to redesign their learning by drawing from text that plays a significant role in their daily lives as well as exposing students to “the many dimensions of human though and human experience…. that represent a wide range of perspectives and reflect the diversity of Canada and the world” (MOE, English 9-10, 2007, p. 16; MOE, English 11-12, 2007, p. 16).

It is important to note that the four components of multiliteracies pedagogy are not a linear presentation of meaning-making. Rather, they are approaches that occur during continual processes of meaning-making. Multiliteracies pedagogy does not teach rules, or skills that are to be applied to literacy learning. The approach that is taken centres on design of meaning “which involve the identities of all meaning-makers…and which are not necessarily or rigidly ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’ Meanings either work or don’t work for a particular social and cultural context” (Kalantzis, Cope & Ferhling, 2002, p.2). The NLG believes it is short sighted to assume that thinking and reading skills will naturally prepare students to use the skills effectively and
properly in unfamiliar scenarios (NLG, 2000). Multiliteracies pedagogy is an admittedly a complex process. This research aims to address the gaps created between theory and practice. There is need to understand how current literacy pedagogies align with and diverge from multiliteracies to better understand the potential for the theoretical model.

**Contributing Literacy Theories**

There are three literacy theories that make a significant contribution to multiliteracies pedagogy. First, it is important to clearly locate multiliteracies within New Literacy Studies as there is often confusion that is associated with the overlap in terminology that accompanies the frameworks. Second, it is equally important that multiliteracies pedagogy is connected with critical literacies, as they share much common ground; namely, how texts work, how to socially situate literacy learning, how multiple perspectives can be considered, and how created meaning can be transferred. Finally, the Four Resource Model of Literacy (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Luke, 1995; and Luke & Freebody, 1999) is also foundational to multiliteracies.

**New Literacies Studies.**

The New Literacies Studies introduced in James Gee’s (1990) publication *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* is a precursor to multiliteracies pedagogy. Gee’s ideas integrated linguistics, social psychology, anthropology and education. His goal was to challenge instructional practices that “cloaked literacy’s connections to political power, to social identity and to ideology” (p. 49) without acknowledging how some social groups and types of literacy were privileged over others. The New Literacy Studies operate on the premise that language and literacy are socially situated: the sociological context underpins multiliteracies pedagogy.
In examining the cognitive process of literacy, Gee (1990) turned to the work of his predecessors and contemporaries to construct an argument for approaching literacy as social practice that recognizes and challenges existing ideologies. For example, when considering the role of privilege attached to literacy, Gee cited the work of Vygotsky and Luria (1976, 1985). They documented the importance of contextualizing literacy so that non-literates were not disadvantaged in learning. They found that “non-literates were dominated by their immediate practical experience, and they resisted using language in a decontextualized manner” (Gee, 1990, p. 57). This connects to Gee’s (1987) earlier efforts where he reported that children in non-mainstream homes often did not have the opportunity to develop secondary discourses. This created a disadvantage due to a lack of “control of secondary uses of language” (p. 8). The NLG built on this realization and multiliteracies is focused on the cognitive advantages of recognizing the interactions between complex systems of knowing that is created by welcoming cultural and linguistic diversity.

Gee also drew from the work of Scribner and Cole (1981). They found little difference in performance on categorization and abstract reasoning tasks between literate and non-literate English speakers; however, English speaking participants were able to better explain with answers. From this Gee ascertained that it was the role of the English teacher, “like it or not”, to address the emotional, cultural and political influences that affect learners (1990, p. 49).

Street (1997) furthers the work with the New Literacies Studies in recommending a shift from an autonomous model, where literacies of the curricula mirror the dominant ideologies, to an ideological model where literacy is not regarded as a neutral technical skill but “embedded in relations of power” (p. 48). Literacy is therefore “not a single, essential thing
with predictable consequences for individuals and social development. Instead there are multiple literacies that vary with time and place and are embedded in specific cultural practices” (p. 48). This connects back to Gee’s purpose for the New Literacies Studies: curricula should encourage individuals to draw from their literacies, incorporate a fuller myriad of literacies, rather than replicate the literacy experiences of the dominant ideologies. Multiliteracies pedagogy incorporates this consideration, as the NLG describe the role of curriculum as “need[ing] to mesh with different subjectivities, and with their attendant languages, discourses’, registers, and use these as a resource for learning” (1996, p. 72).

**Four resource model.**

The contributions of Alan Luke to multiliteracies pedagogy can be traced in two related strands: the four resource model and critical literacy. The four resource model of reading was created by Freebody and Luke in 1990 to describe what they believed represented socially situated practices of proficient readers. These four competencies: coding, semantic, pragmatic, and critical, would become known as: code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyst (Luke, 1995). The characteristics of the model are summarized in Table 4.
Table 4: Summary of the Four Resource Model of Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description of Practice</th>
<th>Guiding Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Breaker</td>
<td>- begin to understand and use the knowledge of the structure of spoken and printed language (such as the alphabet, grapheme/phoneme relationships, directionality of text, spelling and grammar rules)</td>
<td>How do I crack this text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(coding)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning Maker</td>
<td>- draw from and develop personal resources of previous knowledge and engage them in constructing meaning - learners need guidance to understand the culture-specific, ideological, and interpretive nature of reading</td>
<td>What does it mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(semantic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text User</td>
<td>- becoming more familiar with how, where and to what purpose a text might be used, including the role of power - developing and practicing using sociolinguistic and social resources when reading for use at home, school or work</td>
<td>What do I do with it now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pragmatic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Critic</td>
<td>- learning that texts are not neutral and to question their validity, force and value - learners need to be engaged in the political nature of text and recognize the dominant ideology</td>
<td>What is the text trying to do to me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(critical)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The model was created to provide a framework for educators to incorporate many of the well-developed techniques into their teaching, rather than deflecting to a singular approach to reading instruction. Anstey and Bull (2006) further this work and applied the four competencies to multiliteracies pedagogy. They envisioned a dynamic approach to be undertaken by learners in working with a multitude of text forms and increasing hybridity of both text consumption and production. The influence of the competencies can be seen later in this chapter through the four elements of multiliteracies pedagogy: situated practice, direct instruction, critical framing and transformed practices.

**Critical literacy.**

challenged educators to consider the relationship between power and language. It acknowledges that there are multiple lenses through which text can be examined that are influenced by such elements as society, politics, economics, culture and gender (Creighton, 1997; Daves, 1997; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Roberts, 1998). The influence of Luke’s work on multiliteracies pedagogy can also be seen through the four elements of approaching literacy education critically identified with Freebody (1997). This includes the beliefs that reading and writing are social activities; there are no neutral positions in text; text consumers are responsible for their positions taken towards text; and institutional views of “self” are represented in all text and influence what ways of being are valued. Multiliteracies pedagogy includes critical literacy in terms of:

- diverse meaning systems and the socio-cultural contexts in which information is produced and embedded; technical and analytical skills with which to negotiate systems; and operation of systems and skills in relations and interests of power within and across social institutions. (NLG, 1996, p. 72)

These factors join culture, social contexts and technology to incorporate the student’s world and literacy learning.

Within the larger scope of critical literacy, teachers of critical literacy are described as engaging in dialogue used to guide students through the process of creating identities as text consumers and producers (Behrman, 2006; Moje, Young, Readance and Moore, 2000). The role of the teacher is to encourage students to be cognizant “of how some forms of reading carry greater cultural and social capital, of the levels of skill and concentration needed to engage in different types of reading, of the purposes and implied audiences for different text” (Hall & Coles, 1997, p. 67). These factors have direct implications on critical framing. Teachers who implement multiliteracies pedagogy are seen as supporting the pluralism that enables students
to incorporate their histories, backgrounds and knowledge, rather than having to distance themselves from their lived experiences (NLG, 1996, p. 72).

This concept is further embedded in critical literacy as found in the work of Loban (1979), who believed that “language and personal, social and mental development, and literacy cannot be separated” (p. 486). Likewise, McLaren & Lankshear (1993) warned against reducing reading to the “subjective act of the reader” (p. 393). Giroux (1993) contextualized these concerns by stressing the importance of the role of teachers and how they “actively produce, sustain, and legitimate meaning and experiences in the classroom” (p. 14). These ideas are reiterated in multiliteracies pedagogy as one of the goals for teachers is to support students as they develop their identities as active global citizens.

In his later work, Luke (2005) examined the need for “student debate and understanding of the political and material consequences of technological change” (p. 74) in order to comprehend the complexity of society. This included consideration of power relations, ICT, and economics. He believed that students need to be taught to recognize practices that are inclusionary, as well as exclusionary. He proposed that the aim of critical literacy was to encourage students to become actively involved with text: students need to learn how to uncover the effects of text on individuals and society. The goal of critical literacy is to “reshape” instruction; “to enable students to read and write ‘differently,’ to see, discuss, and encounter the techniques that text use to position and construct their very identities and relations” (p. 111). These ideas are central to the main premise for the creation of multiliteracies pedagogy, that is, the need for literacy pedagogy to represent more than the dominant ideologies and
create equitable participation in society. Multiliteracies pedagogy welcomes the plurality of subjectivities that students draw from as they engage with a diverse range of texts.

**Pedagogy Embedded within Multiliteracies Pedagogy**

The current trend in multiliteracies pedagogy research is practical applications of multiliteracies pedagogy. Karchmer (2002) focused on the influence of the internet on literacy and literacy instruction as perceived by thirteen teachers from kindergarten through grade 12. Results of this study were limited to features of the internet; reading and writing as specialized for the internet; and the growing importance of the internet. Karchmer noted that elementary teachers believed that teaching students to use the internet was no more complicated than teaching them to use print text. As well, elementary teachers’ instruction was influenced by the internet as they found their students motivated by the opportunity to use the internet.

Secondary teachers believed that their students benefitted from the malleability of electronic text. Their instruction was influenced by the internet because students were being asked to publish their work on the internet and were dedicating more attention to revising their work before submission. The revision process was regarded as less arduous due to the malleability of electronic text.

In terms of studying the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in primary grades Crofton, Brennan and Silvers (2007) traced the rethinking of literacy pedagogy of Brennan who taught grade 1. They concluded that even in the primary years, teachers needed to include ICT into their planning in meaningful ways that capitalize on technological advances rather than mere repetition of what could be produced with a pencil and paper. Cumming-Potvin (2007) described the benefits of using multiliteracies and scaffolding that focused on the successes of
a seven-year old previously identified as having difficulties with literacy. Her study reported that the student was able to construct his identity as a literacy learner through responses to text; participation in dialogue with peers; and drawing from his own cultural and intellectual resources. Cumming-Potvin admitted to uncertainty surrounding the value of this approach at the secondary level where the schools are often segmented into subject areas. Ranker (2007) also traced the impact of multiliteracies, specifically through the writing process of one 8 year-old boy. Through analysis of the grade two student’s use of motifs drawn from popular culture and media, Ranker identified the process of producing new meanings and understandings from previously consumed media. As well, he documented the student’s usage of metalanguage during text production and discussion.

At the intermediate level, the work of McClay (2006) reported on the relationships between researchers and teachers involved in conducting research in multiliteracies classrooms. Her three case studies involving grade 6, 7 and 9 teachers noted disagreement regarding the impact of new and multi in terms of literacy. This emphasized the challenge of integrating multiliteracies into pedagogy. As well, McClay considered the partnership that researchers played with teachers as essential to addressing the difficulties that surround the integration of the lifeworlds of all students.

One study that has proved to be of particular interest for this research area is that of Mallette, Henk, Waggoner and DeLaney (2005). They investigated the role of 90 middle school teachers in award winning schools in the United States both qualitatively and quantitatively. Their focus was on how accomplished teachers:
1. defined themselves as teachers of literacy;
2. viewed multiliteracies in adolescents’ lives; and
3. valued these literacies in the classroom.

Data were collected from a three part survey. The first part focused on demographic information. The second part posed open-ended questions regarding such topics as the role of literacy instruction and the level of influence of students’ literacy usages on literacy instruction. The third part was a series of topics that participants ranked on a Likert-scale based on the perceived level of importance. It is the second part of the survey, teachers’ perceptions of literacy, with which this study is most closely connected. These questions centred on teachers’ perceptions of pedagogical approaches to literacy and the potential impact of students’ prior experiences. This is the only part of this study that was analyzed qualitatively. The researchers were able to identify emergent themes that supported literacy instruction across the curriculum. Their findings noted two areas of concern: first they found that participants placed a lower value upon out-of-school literacies and second, there was little support for integrating out-of-school literacies into literacy instruction.

There are a few foundational concerns with this research, the first of which is the low completion rate of surveys. Twelve principals were invited to participate in the research and only seven agreed to allow their schools to be included. A total of 345 surveys were distributed and only 90 completed surveys were returned, thus, a final return rate of 26% with no administrator responses. Second, although the research questions focus on multiliteracies, the research itself focuses on new literacies and basic literacies. The research was able to prove that there was a statistical difference between basic and new literacies, but the numerical
difference was so small that questions were raised as to the educational significance of the study. Finally, the study reported that teachers placed value on teaching literacy in all subjects, but the survey questions did not address how teachers approached literacy pedagogically. The researchers admitted that more research needed to be conducted into how teachers taught literacy and what the larger picture of desirable literacy practices may entail.

Jewitt (2008) reviewed research focused on multimodality and literacy in school classrooms centred on multiliteracies. He concluded that there was need for further research that considers how the porousness and boundaries of classrooms could serve as resources for pedagogy. He also thought that the research field would benefit with further investigation of the use of multimodal texts for critical engagement and the explicit teaching of meaning-making. In response to Jewitt’s call for further research this study documents resources used to support multiliterate practise from K-12 in terms of in- and out-of-school literacies, variety of modes, critical consumption and explicit instruction.

As well, the more recent study conducted by Rowsell, Kosnik and Beck (2008) investigated the challenges of implementing multiliteracies pedagogy. They interviewed 10 elementary level literacy instructors and 22 graduates who aimed to include multiliteracies pedagogy in their classrooms. Steps were taken throughout the participating graduates’ nine month teacher education program to include elements of multiliteracies pedagogy; however, the description of this exposure was not included. The research team acknowledged that the new teachers did not have a strong enough understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy to fully implement the theory into practice. The sample for this study was limited to novice teachers. Further research using more experienced literacy teachers may provide a sample with a
stronger ability to situate practice. The graduates believed that due to tight time constraints they were not able to explore multiliteracies pedagogy deeply. As well, their experiences in their education program did not expose them to a broad enough range of literacies, nor the explicit inclusion and critique of literacies. Therefore, implementing multiliteracies pedagogy proved to be a challenge. For example, when cultural diversity was introduced by the graduates into their classrooms, they often focused too heavily on differences between cultures that were believed to lead to othering. They often omitted the commonalities with students’ own lives, which helped to create the critical framing needed to dispel stereotypes.

Cope and Kalantzis have continued to further their work with multiliteracies. In 2008, Yelland, Cope and Kalantzis introduced the learning by design framework that elaborated multiliteracies pedagogy. The approach drew from four fundamental ways of knowing: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying, which resemble the form of multiliteracies: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. The intent was to help make knowledge processes more explicit for the learner. The components of the learning by design process consisted of: learning elements, learning framework and learning community. For over three years, 30 language/ literacy/ English teachers from the intermediate grades participated as case studies. Teachers were interviewed and observed. Overall the participants believed that the template provided them with means to begin to transform their pedagogies by providing opportunities for reflection on the impact of knowledge processes as well as instruction. The frame was intended to help classroom teachers access the multiliteracies as well as begin to consider and implement it into their classrooms which included the integration of newer technologies for authentic purposes.
Overview of Provincial Documents

Teachers in Ontario are provided with provincial curriculum and support documents. An awareness of the role of literacy in these curricular protocols is essential in better understanding the teachers’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy. This section is divided into two parts. The first subsection, curriculum, provides an overview of the role of literacy as located in the core curriculum documents. The second subsection, literacy resources, summarizes the literacy support documents that are available for teachers.

Curriculum.

Created in 2006, The Kindergarten Program acknowledges that all students enter into school with prior learning that has taken place in their homes, child care and communities. Oral language is regarded as the foundation of literacy development. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are considered to be interrelated.

Focusing on oral language, teachers are required to draw from the social and cultural contexts of their students to create and provide meaningful learning experiences. Recommended teaching approaches include a balance of investigation, guided instruction, explicit instruction, modeling and scaffolding that focus on providing students with “opportunities to learn in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time in their development, and need to be given learning experiences that are within the range of things that they can do with and without guidance (in their ‘zone of proximal development’)” (p. 2). This is enhanced by bringing in activities that are meaningful to students in terms of interest and their own lives as motivation. In kindergarten, children should be provided with
opportunity to bring their first languages into the classroom and their parents are also encouraged to continue to use their own language in a variety of ways in the home.

Expectations for learning are organized into five categories: oral communication; critical awareness of written materials read by and with teacher; reading; writing; and understanding of media materials. Students are encouraged to pose and answer questions “to develop their capacities for metacognition and use of higher-order thinking skills involved in critical thinking” (p. 17). This involves students working using an inquiry process of engagement, exploration, investigation, and communication. The critical awareness is central to all language and English curriculum documents, as well as being present in some other curriculum subjects. Technology is used as motivation for children as they explore and interact with a variety of text forms.

The Grades 1 – 8 Language document was also released in 2006. It continues with the belief that language is a fundamental element of students’ identities and cultures. Language skills are to be integrated across the curriculum, as students are supported in the areas of: knowledge and skills; listening and speaking; reading; writing; and viewing and representing. The curriculum aims to help students become successful language learners, meaning students understand the importance of language learning; communicate effectively; make meaningful connections; think critically; understand that all text represent a point of view that needs to be “recognized, questioned, assessed and evaluated; appreciate the cultural and aesthetic powers of text; and use language to connect” with others (p. 4).

The document is organized into four strands: oral communication, reading, writing and media literacy. The recommended instructional approaches include clearly articulated purposes, activating prior knowledge, scaffolded learning activities, differentiated instruction,
explicit teaching, and encouraging students to talk through thinking that are both explicitly taught and modeled by teachers. Students are also encouraged to reflect on their learning, learning processes and the interconnectedness of learning as they begin to move from literal interpretations of text “to think about fairness, equity, social justice, and citizenship in a global society” (p. 23). The role of technology takes on an even greater integrated role as student use technology to collect, organize, sort data, write, edit and present information and understandings.

The Grades 9-10: English and Grades 11-12: English documents (2007) are a continuation of the earlier grade documents. They continue to focus on supporting students to become successful language learners as global citizens in this technologically based world. The curriculum documents also are organized into four strands that have been expanded to: oral communication; reading and literature studies; writing; and media studies. Where the documents differ from the previous Language document is a greater focus on providing students with opportunities to discover and pursue their own interests. Also, in the Grades 1-8: Language document, teaching approaches for grades 4-8 demonstrate a gradual increase of practiced independence and this is furthered in the grades 9-12 documents with the noticeable removal of the scaffolded approach to learning.

The Grades 1-8: Mathematics (2005) document recognizes the important role that literacy can play in mathematics (p. 29). It is the role of the teacher to foster good communication skills with a focus on oral communication. Communication in mathematics can be supported by teachers modeling thinking out loud; modeling proper use of symbols, vocabulary and notation in a variety of forms; ensuring students use a mathematical vocabulary
and provide feedback on their usage; encouraging talk during problem solving; clarify and extend questions; modeling a variety of approaches to answering questions; and encouraging students to seek clarification (p. 17).

The Grades 9-10: Mathematics and Grades 11-12: Mathematics curriculum documents also focus on the need to equip students with the skills to communicate effectively. It is a part of the mathematics teacher’s role to support students in developing their reading, writing and oral communication skills. The documents include the same recommended teaching approaches as the grade 1-8 document with the exclusions of modeled thinking out loud and talking through the problem solving process. There is no reference to critical analysis, critical thinking or critical literacy in any of the mathematics documents.

The Grades 1-8: Arts document last published in 1998 includes three strands of study: music; visual arts; and drama and dance. Programming centres on students learning about artistic traditions and cultures, developing the means to communicate in a variety of artistic forms and understanding that “the arts have long served as important media for recording and communicating ideas and feelings” (p. 5). In the Grades 9-10: The Arts (1999) and Grades 11-12: The Arts (2000) documents for music, the focus of arts is bifurcated: to nourish the imaginations of students while developing a sense of beauty and “providing unique ways for the students to gain insights into the work around them” (p. 3). This involves complex symbols that are verbal, visual and aural. Recommended teaching approaches are independent, cooperative learning, direct instruction, hands on and study followed by practice through use of different kinds of technology.
The 2004 curriculum document that covers grades 1 through 8 is organized into two main parts: *Grade 1 to 6: Social Studies* and *Grades 7-8: History and Geography*. The social studies curriculum for the primary and junior students focuses on understanding communities from local to global perspectives. The intermediate level documents focus on history in terms of individuals; and unique events and geography people and places. The curricula are designed to help students acquire the skills and knowledge “to function as informed citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world and to participate and compete in a global economy” (p. 2). This involves use of guest speakers and local resources. Focus is on more precise use of language to enhance communication efficiency (p. 17).

Science and technology are represented in a single document, published in 2007 for grades 1 to 8 alongside the *Grade 9-10: Science* (2008) document. They represent the most in depth inclusion and description of literacy (and more specifically scientific and technological literacies) that has been produce by the Ontario Ministry of Education to date. Not surprisingly, these are the most recently revised curriculum documents.

In the curriculum document for grades 1-8, scientific and technological literacies are acknowledged as being the “overarching object of science and technology education throughout the world” (p. 3). A part of understanding science and technology involves the roles that people in the science and technology community perform; the generation, validation, costs, benefits and risks of scientific knowledge; and the interaction of science with technology, society and the environment. Furthermore, technology is described as “revolutionizing the way we communicate” (p. 5). Teachers need to support students as they learn to make connections between their understandings and the world.
Also a focus of the document, which is shared by the *Grades 9-10: Science* document, incorporates critical thinking and critical literacy. In terms of critical thinking, the teacher’s role includes how to support their opinions logically and detecting bias, implied meanings in the opinion and values of others. In addition to this, teachers are expected to integrate a more specific type of critical thinking, critical literacy, which involves “looking beyond the literal meaning of a text to determine what is present and what is missing in order to analyze and evaluate the text’s complete meaning and the author’s intent” (*Science 1-8*, 2007, p. 38; *Science 9-10*, 2008, p. 38). This extension of critical thinking requires that teachers work with students to consider issues that involve fairness, equity and social justice. This differs from the senior level science curriculum published in 2000, as critical literacy is not referenced. Scientific literacy is included; however, and is considered as both an “intellectual pursuit” and “an activity-based enterprise within in a social context” (*Science 11-12*, 2000, p. 11).

Technological education is separated from science at the secondary level and the two corresponding curriculum documents *Grades 9-10 Technological Education* (1999) and *Grades 11-12 Technological Education* (2000) support development in literacy. Both English and literacy skills are need for proposal writing and evaluations (*Tech 9-10*, 1999 p.3; *Tech 11-12*, 2000, p. 3). Focus is placed on supporting students as they develop their technological literacies to become critical and innovative thinkers who can be competitive in postsecondary education or the world of work.

**Literacy Resources**

There are three main divisions for literacy resources that are available for teachers in Ontario. For K-3 teachers there are three main documents: *Early Reading Strategy: The Report*
of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario (2003); A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading: Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2003); and A Guide to Effective Instruction in Writing: Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2005). The resource for junior level teachers is Literacy for Learning: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4-6 in Ontario (2004). Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches Grades 7-12 (2003) is used at the intermediate and senior levels. As well teachers have access to subject specific Think Literacy documents.

In 2003 the MOE produced two documents for K-3. The First Early Reading Strategy: The Report of the Expert Panel on Early Reading in Ontario provides educators with a developmental approach to reading instruction that includes: oral language; prior knowledge and experience; concepts about print; phonemic awareness; letter-sound relationships; vocabulary; semantics, syntax and pragmatics; metacognition; and high-order thinking skills. It promotes collaboration among teachers and members of the community. Instructional approaches include read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading that are supplemented with comprehension skills.

Also published in 2003 was the first of two guides: A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading: Kindergarten to Grade 3. This document provides teachers with practical applications of the recommendations from the expert panel report. Also included in the guide is a focus on the home and community connections. The second guide, A Guide to Effective Instruction in Writing: Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2005), is also reflective of a developmental approach. It is framed around a released approach to guiding students from modeled writing to shared and interactive writing to guided writing then independent writing. Not included in this document
are any of the social or technological considerations that are identified in the reading documents.

The core resource documents are influenced by the joint position statement put forth by the International Reading Association alongside the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998), who identified elements representing children’s development in literacy. The developmental continuum is central to the MOE’s goals for literacy instruction. This paper focused on five developmental phases reminiscent of the work conducted by the West Australia Department of Education with their literacy program First Steps (Allen, 1994). The Continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing are organized into the following phases:

Phase 1: Awareness and exploration (goals for preschool)

Phase 2: Experimental reading and writing (goals for kindergarten)

Phase 3: Early reading and writing (goals for first grade)

Phase 4: Transitional reading and writing (goals for second grade)

Phase 5: Independent and productive reading and writing (goals for third grade). (IRA & NAEYC, pp. 15-6)

These phases align closely with the developmental stages in First Steps: role play, experimental, early, transitional, conventional and proficient (Allen, 1994). They translated into three phases in the support documents for effective instruction in reading and writing for kindergarten and primary level students: emergent, early and fluent (MOE, Reading Instruction, 2003; MOE, Writing Instruction, 2005).
The developmental literacy document used by junior teachers, *Literacy for Learning: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4-6 in Ontario* (2004), addresses talking and listening; reading; and writing. It takes a social constructivist approach, including topics such as: text of all types; language, culture and identity engagement; critical literacy; metacognition; activation of prior knowledge; gender and family context. Also included is the Four Roles of a Literate Learner (Luke & Freebody, 1997). Literacy learning is presented as transformative and is supported by scaffolding.

Finally, the intermediate and senior teachers draw from the *Think Literacy 7-12* series. The original resource released in 2003 provided strategies for teachers to use to support reading, writing and oral communication. Included are strategies for pre, during and post reading; inferring and asking questions about text; writing as a process; and group discussion. While subject specific documents are available, the resources are focused on strategies and do not include social or technological considerations.

Overall, the provincial literacy protocols provide opportunity for teachers to include multiliterate practices in their pedagogy. Expectations are for teachers to draw from the students’ prior knowledge and scaffold learning through a developmental approach to literacy. Most of the documents require reading to include critical literacy and writing to be process based. Technology should be used in meaningful ways to enhance learning. Space for students to reflect and pursue their own interests is also considered beneficial. Although the teachers in this study have not received training in multiliteracies pedagogy, the curriculum and supporting resources include many aspects of multiliterate practices.
The current research body raises questions about the complexity of multiliteracies as a practical application. The studies focus on isolated aspects such as use of the design process or grade level. This study aims to create a fuller understanding of the potentiality of multiliteracies pedagogy. By mapping multiliteracies on the pedagogy of teachers from K to 12 this research documents where pedagogy aligns with and diverges from multiliteracies. It creates a representation of how teachers are using pedagogy to ready their students as multiliterate beings.
Chapter Three: Research Methods

The art of teaching is a difficult thing to explain.

- Kindergarten Teacher

This study is a two phase investigation that maps multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of elementary and secondary teachers in one Northwestern Ontario school board during the 2007-2008 school year. In the first phase, 20 teachers from kindergarten to grade 12 participated in an audio taped interview. The interviews followed a 20 question interview guide. The research questions asked how the content and form of multiliteracies pedagogy were reflected in the participants’ approaches to literacy. Participants were representative of ten of the 23 elementary schools and all four high schools in the district. The interviews averaged 36 minutes in length and were transcribed and coded deductively to map elements of multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of participants. They were also analyzed using constant comparison to access emergent themes.

In the second phase, six of the interviewed teachers were selected for observation. One teacher was selected to represent each of the grade divisions from the elementary panel (kindergarten, primary, junior, intermediate) and two teachers were selected to represent diverse subject areas at the secondary level (English and Technology). The six teachers were chosen because their responses demonstrated strong connections with multiliteracies pedagogy. Each of the six participants was observed for one day to contextualize the everyday realities of integrating multiliteracies pedagogy into practice. The observations were followed up with a second interview that followed a five question interview guide. The observations and follow-up interviews were also coded.
Research Design

For any study, the question of best-fit needs to be addressed to determine appropriate research methods. There is still much debate between the rigour of quantitative methods as compared to the descriptive nature of qualitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Sandeloski, 1993; Shaffer & Serlin, 2004). Patton (1990) refers to this debate as “breadth versus depth.” The purpose of this study was to map multiliteracies on to the pedagogies of classroom teachers. It focused on the experiences of teachers and used what Gertz (1973) referred to as “thick description” to better understand what elements of multiliteracies were embedded into pedagogy as well as what aspects would be new to teachers’ pedagogies.

Interview Participants

For qualitative research the sample sizes are generally smaller than those used in quantitative research. For that reason, selection of the participants and their individual contexts is significant (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participants for this research were from one Northwestern Ontario school board that included 23 elementary schools and 4 secondary schools. While relatively representative of many characteristics of a typical Ontario population (e.g., socio-economic status, religion, sexual identity, culture) there was only one elementary school and no secondary schools that offer specialized credit generating ESL courses. As well, the board of education studied is located in a region where the Aboriginal population is growing rapidly and has made a commitment to supporting Aboriginal student success. They created an advisory council, produced a staff handbook and implemented a voluntary Aboriginal self-identification process to facilitate welcoming, safe environments that are focused on building Aboriginal cultural awareness.
This sample for this research was 12 teachers from the elementary panel, with equal representation from each of the four grade divisions: kindergarten, primary, junior and intermediate divisions. Eight teachers were selected at the secondary level. Unlike elementary teachers, who commonly were assigned to a single grade division, the secondary teachers were often assigned to multiple grade divisions, courses and even departments. In this particular board of education, teachers were assigned to courses that are divided into seven areas: arts, business, communications, guidance, science, social science, and technology. The teachers may also teach between 6 to 12 different courses within the span of a single school year, within multiple departments. To contend with these factors, the goal for the secondary sample was set at eight teachers representing the widest range of teachers from the seven departments. Some subject areas, such as guidance, offered a significantly smaller percentage of the courses than the larger departments, such as communications (English and languages), offered. Because this study is centred on literacy pedagogy, multiple English teachers were invited to participate; however, participants were not limited to teaching English. To capture literacy pedagogy across the curriculum areas, teachers representative of all subject areas were invited. The final sample for the secondary level included 3 English teachers, 2 technology teachers, a math, science and music teacher. This created an overall sample of 20 participants.

Teachers in this study were selected purposefully using intensity sampling, that is, “information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)” (Patton, 1990, p. 171). Because teaching is often considered to be an isolated profession that often takes place within the confines of individual classrooms separated from the rest of the school, it took the co-operation of the board at multiple operational levels to
successfully access the teachers. A list of multiliteracies pedagogy identifiers was created and provided to principals, vice principals and curriculum program coordinators as a means to locate teachers who were believed to demonstrated elements of multiliteracies pedagogy. These educators were asked to nominate teachers based on criteria reflective of multiliteracies pedagogy (See Appendix 1: Recruitment Email – Administrators and Resource Teachers). They were asked to forward the names of teachers who were believed to meet basic indicators. The multiliteracies indicators included teachers who make references to students using literacy outside of the classroom; use multiple methods of presenting new information to students; use multimedia and/or technology to enhance instruction; support connections between students’ learning and their lives; display a clear purpose in activity designs; and provide opportunities for students to apply their learning.

This process raised an unavoidable concern: the teachers were selected based on others’ interpretations of a list of indicators for multiliteracies. This course of action was a necessary process. In terms of application and understanding, multiliteracies pedagogy is relatively new to educators. In fact, the participants and nominating educators were unfamiliar with multiliteracies, although, they were familiar with many of the underlying concepts such as socially situated learning. As well, the multiple dimensions to the theoretical frame add to the complexity of understanding multiliteracies; in turn, the level of necessary professional development for the nominators to fully understand all aspects of the model was not a realistic option. Since a random selection of teachers may have proved fruitless, resulting in no examples of multiliterate practices, the best approach to accessing teachers with an increased
likelihood of demonstrating elements of multiliteracies pedagogy was through the purposeful sampling approach used.

Two high school vice-principals and one elementary school principal forwarded nominations. The majority of the nominations came from the three curriculum program coordinators who represented kindergarten, primary/junior and intermediate/senior teachers. The coordinators worked with classroom teachers in literacy professional development and were responsible for inviting teachers to demonstrate best practices and lead workshops for other classroom teachers. They based their nominations on their interactions with the teachers during professional development sessions. Table 5 summarizes the nominations:

Table 5: Nominations of Teachers Meeting Multiliteracies Pedagogy Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of Teachers Nominated</th>
<th>Number of Teachers Interested in Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Grades 1-3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior: Grades 4-6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate: Grades 7-8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate/Senior: Grades 9-12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 52 teachers were nominated. Fifty teachers were sent an invitation to participate in this research on their board of education email account (See Appendix 2: Recruitment Email- Nominated Teachers). Two teachers were not invited: one teacher was a personal friend and the other was acting as a half-time vice-principal who served as a nominator. From the 50 invitations came a total of 26 responses. These teachers were sent a research package that included a summary of the study, the interview questions and the
consent form (See Appendix 3: Participant Consent Package). Three kindergarten teachers, 3 primary teachers, 4 junior teachers and 4 intermediate teachers from the elementary panel returned consent forms. As well, 8 high school teachers representative of the arts, communications (English), mathematics, sciences, and technology (manufacturing, technological and transportation) also completed the consent forms.

One of the junior teachers was a half-time vice-principal and he was used as a pilot for the interview questions. His interview focused on clarifying the interview questions. Because of his administrative role and strong connection with the board’s literacy initiatives, as well as his active role as half-time teacher, he was “close to the realities” (Glesne, 2006, p. 43) of this study and provided balance between board expectations and implementation. The wording of two interview questions was clarified based on his feedback. For example, the second interview question asked teachers to discuss the impact of student subjectivities. To ensure that the term “subjectivities” would not be problematic for the participants the revised interview questions did not use this term. Rather, the question was reworded to better connect with the teachers’ awareness of student lives including outside of the classroom that specifically focused on: background literacies, ranges of literacies, connections with learning, and roles in society. Also, one of the questions asked the participants to provide an example of how they include multimodal activities into their lessons. The vice-principal’s response confirmed that his understanding of the term “multimodal” aligned with the intended definition; however, to further clarify this for the participants the question was altered to: please provide me with an example of how you used multimodal activities, that is, activities that draw from visual, audio, linguistic, gestural and spatial elements, in your lessons.
Two intermediate teachers were teaching partners at a single school site. Because of their highly collaborative teaching nature (that was made apparent after the interviews); there was a problem of replication of responses. The teachers had discussed the interview questions after the first teacher’s interview and before the second teacher’s interview. Together they had shaped the second teacher’s responses. The second teacher was not included in this study. The final sample for this study includes 20 teacher participants (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Summary of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Grade/Subject Area</th>
<th>Number/ Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>3 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5/6</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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**Kindergarten Teachers.**

The three female kindergarten teachers came from a wide range of schools: one rural school, one French immersion and one school that had recently absorbed students and staff from a school closure. One of the teachers was entering into her fifth year of teaching and the other two teachers had approximately 20 years experience. All of the kindergarten teachers remained active with their own educational training, all having taken a series of additional qualifications for such areas as reading, math and special education. One had also completed her Master of Education.
Primary Teachers.

The one grade 1 teacher and the two grade 3 teachers were also all female. One teacher was from the previously mentioned school that had taken on students and staff from a school closure, one was from a rural school, and one was from a small community school. All three were experienced teachers with 13-29 years of classroom practice. All three had multiple additional qualifications including: reading, math, drama, special education and computers.

Junior Teachers.

Two of the three female junior teachers had 30-31 years of teaching experience, while the third teacher had 15 years of practice. All three were from different schools and like the other participants had remained active with additional qualifications and special education training. Two of the three had also taken additional computer courses. One participant had her special education specialist, as well as her reading specialist.

Intermediate Teachers.

Two of the intermediate level teachers were entering into their fourth and sixth years of teaching, and were highly educated individuals. One possessed additional qualifications in special education and guidance as well being able to teach in multiple grade divisions, while the other had her specialist in mathematics. The third intermediate teacher was entering into her 15th year of teaching and held a Master of Arts, a special education specialist, a math specialist, and multiple other additional qualification courses.

Secondary (intermediate/senior).

The participating high school teachers came from the four public high schools in the school board. The school sizes ranged from 900-1500 students. All high schools had a full range
of both technical and academic programming. Most of these teachers, especially within the subject areas, had worked together within the schools or at system wide training sessions. The three English teachers were all females who had 9-14 years of teaching experience. Two had completed their honours specialists in English and one had also completed a Master of Arts in English. The third English teacher had completed her special education and guidance specialists, as well as being certified to teach at all grade levels.

The female teacher of mathematics had 18 years of teaching experience and had also completed her specialist in chemistry. The music teacher had obtained her music specialist and had been teaching for 15 years. The science teacher had an honours specialist in biology and geography as well as completing two of the three parts for his special education and principal specialists. He had been in the classroom for 9 years.

The two technology teachers had the least classroom experience as one was in his first year of teaching and the other was in his second year of teaching; however, they both had technical careers before entering into teaching. One of the teachers taught construction manufacturing, transportation and automotive courses. The other had limited certification and was able to be in the classroom teaching because of his background in the workforce (teaching at the community college) and because he was expected to complete the program for his certification by the end of the school year.

*Observation Participants*

For the second phase of this study, teachers from both the elementary and secondary panels were observed to isolate examples of multiliteracies pedagogy. The observations and follow-up interview questions provided additional means to access examples of multiliterate
practices located within the everyday realities of teaching. A total of six teachers were selected in stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 1999) for observation: four teachers were selected from the elementary panel (kindergarten, grade 3, grade 5/6 and grade 8) and two teachers from the secondary panel (English grades 9, 11, 12 and technology grades 10 and 11). The teachers were selected because their responses demonstrated elements of multiliteracies pedagogy. In addition, all of the teachers selected demonstrated a keen enthusiasm in discussing their literacy practices and several extended invitations to visit the classrooms. Pseudonyms have been assigned to the teachers.

**Kindergarten: Kaija.**

The kindergarten teacher, Kaija, used many resources located within her well organized classroom including a computer, listening centre, water table, play centre, levelled books, mathematics manipulatives and paint centre. The students worked with the various resources at learning centres while in rotational groups and when they had free time. Her room was on the first floor of the school which was located in a middle class working neighbourhood. It had large windows, two washrooms and an exit to the kindergarten playground.

Kaija was originally from the city and had attended elementary and secondary school with the board by which she was currently employed. As well she had attended the local university for her education degree and admitted to having taught the children of some of her former classmates. Community and local pride was important to her, but she did also note that there were changes occurring within the community. Due to school closures, her former school being one of them, she was working with students coming from a wider range of backgrounds: socio-economically, linguistically and culturally.
**Grade 3: Kathryn.**

The grade three teacher, Kathryn, was at the same school as Kaija. Located at the opposite end of the school as the kindergarten room, her classroom was extremely well planned: labelled resource bins, anchor charts and levelled books were organized around the room. There was also a carpeted area in this room for students to assemble for instruction as well as read alouds. Her students were each assigned a desk that was paired with another, as well as having a low work table, a small group work table and a reading table available to them. Surprisingly – there was no teacher desk in this room. This decision was reflective of Kathryn’s pedagogy: she placed a high value on student workspace. Kathryn had taught for 29 years and played many diverse leadership roles within the school board and the university’s faculty of education. She had recently returned to the classroom after serving as a resource specialist at the system level. Kathryn admitted to not needing a desk of her own as she preferred to work with the students at their desks, at a shared work space or on the carpet. Like her colleague, Kaija, she noticed that there were many students in the school who came from lower income homes as well as an increase in Aboriginal students who were either being billeted in town from their reserves or living with relatives away from their parents.

**Grade 5/6: Jill.**

Jill, the grade 5/6 teacher, was in her final year of teaching after 30 years, but she still considered herself a student. She was always looking for new and interesting approaches that would best support and engage her students. Her school was located in a lower income neighbourhood and ran a breakfast program for its students. Jill’s classroom was in an open
concept school that unlike most of the other elementary schools, which were for kindergarten through grade 8, was a kindergarten to grade 6 school.

Her class was mainly comprised of grade 5 students and a small group of grade 6 students who were placed in her class so that they could benefit from the additional exposure to the grade 5 curriculum. Her room had a carpeted area for the students to gather that was surrounded by a semi-circle of desks with resources, such as a classroom library, textbooks and anchor charts. Jill’s desk was tucked away behind the students’ desks, but she was more often working amidst the students’ desks at or in the reading chair at the students’ seated eye level. The building was a well-used structure in the area: day care programs were run out of the building and it also served as the community centre. The strong sense of community was felt within the building.

Jill was committed to helping her students not only better understand their educational strengths and weaknesses, but she also focused on helping them understand how they as unique individuals were capable of contributing to society: by using their abilities, they, too, would make a difference.

*Grade 8: Rosa.*

The grade 8 teacher, Rosa, was also an experienced teacher (15 years). Her school drew students from both rural and urban neighbourhoods due to its geographical situation as well as offering French immersion programming. Her classroom was located on the second floor of the most recently renovated of all schools visited. The large windows framed a variety of community facilities and recreation opportunities (hockey arena; skate board park; basketball and tennis courts; and baseball and soccer fields) situated in close proximity.
Rosa organized her classroom layout into three main sections. First, student desks were arranged in small groups as well as ungrouped, individual desks in order to meet the needs of all students. The second section was a large work table for special projects that was pushed up next to shelving that housed the students’ assignment portfolios. Finally against the back wall were open shelving and hooks for the students’ outerwear. Rosa’s desk was located close to the students’ desks as she often worked on the same assignments. She believed in modeling the process for students so they could be involved with the dialogue about the approaches used. She also had shelving to house supplies for the students. Other available space was filled with anchor charts, informational texts and student tracking charts.

*Secondary English: Miljana.*

The high school English teacher, Miljana, had spent six of her nine years at her current school. She had strong ties to the community as she attended neighbouring elementary and secondary schools, as well as the local university. Her classroom was located on the fourth floor of a 75 year old building that was recommended as a site for closure due to an overall decline of students in the city. The school population covered a wide geographic area, drawing from many diverse economic backgrounds. Many Aboriginal students from the city and surrounding communities opted to attend the school. The students came from both urban and rural settings with students being bussed in from the region.

Her classroom was a display case of student exemplars from all classes. Mixed media posters created by students were interspersed among the commercial anchors and colourful board notes. There were two well used computers and a television and DVD player in her classroom. The windows provided a spectacular view of the area that showcased the natural
beauty of the city. The desks in the classroom were organized into rows that the students would move freely to arrange themselves in discussion groups as needed. Miljana’s desk was off to the side. She spent the majority of her time leading discussion and recording notes at the front board or dialoguing with the students as individually or in groups. The time spent at her desk was reserved for one-on-one work with students or modeled writing.

*Secondary Technology: Grant.*

Grant, the technology high school teacher, was a novice teacher with two years of in-class experience. He came to education after spending time in the work force; practical examples from his years of experience were embedded into his instruction. Grant worked at the opposite side of the city as Miljana’s high school. His school also drew students from a range of economic backgrounds from both rural and urban settings. His technology department worked as a team to support the needs of their students.

Grant’s classroom was unlike any of the other classrooms observed in this study: his large space was industrial. A series of high counters with stools located to the front right quadrant of the room was used for the theoretical studies. This is where the students were situated for notes, instruction and more formalized discussions. There were four machines for wood work located at the right rear of the room. Ventilation systems, additional machines and a garage door were located on the rear wall. In the left rear quadrant there were work tables as well as a vented table work space. In the front left quadrant there was neatly organized storage and additional work space and machinery. All of the informational texts, besides the regulated health and safety notices, were student generated and centred on health and safety.
Sample Considerations

This research is centred on how literacy, more specifically elements of multiliteracies pedagogy are being integrated across grades divisions and content areas and in turn better understand the value of using multiliteracies as a pedagogical frame for teaching. This Northwestern Ontario board of education was selected because it has a solid reputation for supporting literacy practices across the curriculum. There is a tradition of involvement with literacy initiatives at the provincial level by multiple organizations levels comprised of teachers, administrators and senior administrators. Second, this researcher had access to the board, which helped negotiate entry into the system, that is, this researcher had a working relationship with the educational resource teachers as well as the secondary level principals. This helped facilitate the conversations necessary to clarify the criteria for participant nominations.

Data Collection

This section describes the two main sources of data collected for this study. It first describes the methods used during the interviews, including the framing of interview questions. Secondly it describes the methods used during the observations.

Interviews.

The purpose of the interviews was to help create a fuller understanding of the elements of multiliteracies pedagogy occurring from K-12. An interview guide provided a means to systematically gain information, on the same topics, from all participants while allowing for the flexibility to use probing questions to illuminate particular information (Patton, 1990). Using a structured interview guide allowed the elicitation of information about predetermined areas
(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), that is, multiliteracies pedagogy. A range of open-ended questions used six options (Patton, 1990) that are based on the participants’ behaviours/experiences, opinions/values, feelings, knowledge, senses, and backgrounds. By utilizing a single interviewer, consistency was enhanced; as well the interviewer had freedom in using probing questions in a uniform manner.

The interviews took place in the spring of 2008. Of the twenty participants, 17 preferred being interviewed over the telephone, most opting to schedule interviews in the evenings or on the weekend. Three of the teachers wanted to meet face to face and selected their classrooms as the locale for their interviews. The interviews on average were 36 minutes in length, with the shortest being 20 minutes and the longest 65 minutes. Teachers were provided with the list of 20 interview questions (See Appendix 4: Interview Questions). Prior to the interview they were advised that the interview would be recorded and they could opt not to respond to any question. As well, they were reminded that their participation was voluntary and they could stop the interview at any time. This was the case for two interviews that needed to be halted due to family obligations, but both were rescheduled and completed within one week.

Care was taken to ensure that participants felt safe to articulate both their perceptions of their roles of teachers of literacy and the realities of what they were able to implement in their classrooms. The participants were approached as the experts in their field with the goal being to “establish the subject as the one who knows and the researcher as the one who has come to learn” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 97). Care was taken during interviews to achieve a “balanced rapport” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 650) where the participants felt welcome to
share their experiences, confident that their responses were heard and that their responses were not influenced by feedback from the researcher.

Upon completion of the interviews, the participants were asked if they would like a copy of their transcript to confirm that their responses reflected their understandings as per member checking. All declined, citing a lack of time or a high level of confidence in their responses, save one. The grade 5/6 teacher’s audio recorded interview included responses of low quality. When asked to supplement the responses, the teacher (who also participated in the second phase) faxed her clarifications back in writing.

**Framing of interview questions.**

A potential area for concern during the framing of questions was based on the need for questions to elicit rich details from the teachers about multiliteracies - a theory with which they had no experience. Much thought was put into the creation of the interview questions. They were designed to access multiliteracies pedagogy through two categories. The first centred on the content of multiliteracies in terms of describing the multimodal design processes. This also included elements of multiliterate practices for the three life realms: working, public and private. The second was based on the form of multiliteracies demonstrated through examples of the four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice.

To map the content of multiliteracies pedagogy onto the teachers’ literacy approaches interview questions considered: designing processes, metalanguage, and the inclusion of design elements. The main challenge in developing this series of interview questions was the need for questions to reflect the many processes that could be created. The purpose was to create
multiple spaces for teachers to describe their own approaches onto which elements of the content of multiliteracies would be mapped. This was also a consideration during analysis: Interview questions were not coded individually, but rather transcripts were coded in their entirety to ensure that a full understanding of the teachers’ experiences could be captured.

The questions focused on the designing processes included elements of available designs, designing and the redesigned. Questions were created to gather information on the resources that teachers perceived students were using, how they were supporting students to transform their knowledge and how students were remaking meaning. The questions included: What literacy backgrounds do your students enter your class with? What literacies, that you are aware of, are students using outside of the classroom? What role do you think literacy plays in supporting students as they make meaning of new information? Once you have presented new information to the students, what do you see them doing, or hear them talking about to confirm that learning is taking place? How do you encourage students to draw connections between their learning and their own lives?

The main interview question based on metalanguage aimed to access the language used to talk about texts, including the role of power and context: once you have presented new information to the students, what do you see them doing, or hear them talking about to confirm that learning is taking place? The interview question for the usage of design elements asked the teacher to describe a lesson that involved various modalities including linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, gestural and multimodal.

The interview questions focused on the form of multiliteracies pedagogy were based on the four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed
practice. Situated practice is a developmental approach based in progressivism (Dewey, 1938) that helps learners draw from their own experiences and extend their understandings by engaging them in the designing process by means of motivation and purpose (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000). The primary interview question used to identify elements of situated practice was: What do you expect your students to be able to do, in terms of literacy when they come to your class? Teachers’ responses to the interview questions that were created to locate connections with the designing process for the content of multiliteracies also provided additional information for situated practice because of this component’s inclusion of the designing process.

The second component, overt instruction, uses direct instruction and metalanguage to help focus learners as they begin to articulate their positions in terms of text and create meaning (Nakata, 2000). It uses scaffolding to help learners organize what they already know, identify patterns in meaning and, gain control over new knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). The interview questions created for overt instruction were: How do you introduce new concepts to students? What are your goals in terms of reading, writing and oral communication? Can you please provide an example of a multimodal activity? How do you use multimedia and/or technology to support your instruction?

Critical framing involves supporting students as they locate a purpose for their learning in terms of the social context. This requires them to re-examine their understandings “in relation to the historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and value-centred relations of the particular systems of knowledge and social practice” (NLG, 1996, p.86). This also involves critical literacies, and critical multiliteracies that focus directly on the political implications of
technology (C. Luke, 2000). Interview questions for critical framing were: How are activities designed so that students are able to identify a purpose for their learning? What opportunities are students provided to reflect upon how they can have a positive impact on society? What does critical literacy mean to you? In what ways do you encourage students to reflect critically upon their learning?

The fourth component in the form of multiliteracies pedagogy is transformed practice. During this juncture, learners transfer meaning from one context to another: theory becomes practice. Students make conscious decisions about practice (Nakata, 2000). As well they recreate designs of meaning that are applied for real purposes. Not only are learners provided with opportunity for implementation, but they are also provided with occasion for reflection. The interview questions used to gain access to transformed practice were: How do you introduce a new concept to students? What types of opportunities do you provide for your students to apply their learning? What opportunities are students provided to reflect upon how they can have a positive impact on society? In what ways do you encourage students to reflect critically upon their learning?

Overall, the interview questions were designed to provide opportunities for examples of multiliteracies pedagogy to emerge. They guided teachers through the key aspects of the theory to uncover the patterns of multiliteracies pedagogy that may otherwise have been missed due to unfamiliarity, on the part of the participating teachers, with multiliteracies. The open-ended interview questions were designed not to highlight the limitations of their understandings of multiliterate practices, but rather to tease out the elements of multiliteracies pedagogy that were present.
**Observations.**

Observations provided the opportunity to contextualize the teachers’ responses and provided further examples that would connect multiliteracies as a theoretical frame and multiliteracies in daily practice. The observations focused on six participants whose responses demonstrated elements of multiliteracies. The inclusion of observations, as described by Patton (1990), provided “the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape the conscious awareness among participants” such as the application of multiliteracies, and second the ability to observation “things that no one else has ever really paid attention to” (p. 204). This study draws from McClay’s (2006) assertion that “the value of research in a classroom context is authenticity and creation of knowledge-in-action” (p. 193). In this study, many of the teachers, especially in the content areas at the high school level, had no previous opportunities to share the application of their literacy beliefs.

Balance among the participants is important (Stake, 2000); therefore, one teacher from each of the elementary grade divisions and one intermediate/senior English teacher and one intermediate/senior technology teacher were selected to represent the fullest range of participants. These selected teachers were invited through email to participate (See Appendix 6: Observation Recruitment Package). Once the teachers’ indicated interest, they were sent a consent package, as well as the observation guide (See Appendix 7: Observation Consent Package; Appendix 8: Observation Guide).

A logistical concern arose during the observations. Access to the secondary school classrooms proved to be more challenging than at the elementary level. For example, participants such as the music teacher admitted to having a busy travel schedule with her
performance classes that played in various venues and perceived that having an observer in the classroom would be too distracting for her students. Likewise, one of the English teachers felt that because she was pulled from her classroom duties for professional development activities, her students’ routines had been too disturbed to allow for observation. The math teacher and science teacher were not interested in being observed.

The observations were conducted over a two week period at the end of April running into the beginning of May, 2008. The observation schedule was created in consultation with the six participating teachers and ended up being arranged in sequence chronologically according to grade level. Pseudonyms have been assigned to both participants and schools.

Careful consideration was paid to reducing observer bias. First, an observation guide based on the key elements of multiliteracies pedagogy (See Appendix 8: Observation Guide) was used to ensure that the field notes would be accurate and focused, as it is the “quality of what is recorded becomes the measure of usable observational data... rather than the quality of the observation itself” (Anagrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000, p. 676). The observational guide helped to focus field notes and increase the consistency in note taking between sites (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It included elements such as: outside of the classroom literacy, methods of presenting new information, multimedia or technology, connections between learning and student lives, purpose in activity design, critical literacy, application of learning and reflections on the impact of literacy on society. The data collected during the observations included notes about the setting/appearance of the classrooms; events; processes and talk that occurred within the classroom; and teacher documents and artefacts used to supplement instruction (Glesne, 2006).
At the end of the observation day, each of the six teachers participated in a follow-up interview, following a discussion guide. It was designed to help the teachers make transparent the pedagogical decisions behind their teachings as well as providing them with opportunity to address any atypical issues that may have risen or provide additional information to help contextualize the day. The follow-up questions included: What were your goals for today’s lessons? What literacy skills did you place focus on? How do you think that your instruction supported students as they made meaning of new information? Which of the resources that you used today best demonstrates how to help students make meaning of information? Was today a typical day, or did any untypical events occur? What do you think are the next steps for your students so that they continue to make meaning of new information? The follow-up interviews took between 10 and 20 minutes to conduct. The technology teacher responded to the questions by email, as he was actively involved with coaching after school and was not available for an additional interview.

**Data Collection**

The data collection for both the interviews and observations was based on Patton’s (1990) areas of ethical concern that included: promises and reciprocity; risk assessment; confidentiality; informed consent; data access and ownership; and advice (pp. 356-7). First, concerning promises and reciprocity, there were no promises made to participants, nor were there any rewards offered for their participation in the interviews or in the observations. Most of the participants chose for the interviews to take place over the telephone on their own time in the evenings or on weekends. Three of the participants preferred to be interviewed during
their preparation periods at their school sites. None of the teachers were interviewed during instructional time.

In terms of lowering risk and protecting confidentiality, information that would reveal the participants’ identities, including the school at which they worked was either removed or pseudonyms were assigned. The overall expected risk for participation in this study was low. Informed consent was obtained in writing after the participants received a copy of the interview questions, and then again orally before the interview was conducted. At both junctures, participants were advised that they could choose not to answer any of the interview questions or withdraw from the study. All participants completed the interviews and remained in the study.

The remaining areas focus on the handling of data and the role of interviewer. Access and ownership of the data (digital recordings and transcripts) is limited to the researcher and dissertation committee. All identifying information has been removed and the data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. Finally, any unforeseen difficulties were raised with the dissertation committee.

**Data Analysis**

Patton (1990) defined the purpose of data analysis as the gathering of “comprehensive, systematic, and in depth information about each case of interest” (p. 384). The data analysis was intended to map multiliteracies onto pedagogy of teachers. The analysis used in the research looks at pre-specified elements, in this case, the characteristics of multiliteracies pedagogy. Wolcott (1994) believed that “adopting any framework imposes structure on the

descriptive account” (p. 20). For the purpose of this study, structure allowed for connections between the teachers’ perceptions and key aspects of multiliteracies pedagogy.

**Coding**

The coding took place in three stages. First the individual interviews were coded using a deductive analysis framed on the foundational elements of multiliteracies pedagogy. Next, the interviews were analyzed using constant comparison. The third stage of coding involved the observational field notes and follow-up interviews. The coding that occurred during this stage proved to be redundant and is not included. However, the raw observational data collected were beneficial in providing further clarifications and add greater depth to the research and were considered during analysis. References to the observational field notes and excerpts from the follow-up interview transcripts were included in the findings and discussions.

**Deductive analysis.**

Provisional codes for deductive analysis of multiliteracies were created before the interviews were conducted as per the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). They were based on the original multiliteracies pedagogy paper created by the NLG (1996), supplemented by contributions of individual NLG members as presented in *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures* (2000). The initial set of 8 categories was organized into three sections reflective of multiliteracies pedagogy: multiliterate practices for working, public and private lives; the content; and the form. Codes for multiliterate practices included elements reflective of pluralism of subjectivities, thinking and learning and ICT. The codes for the content of multiliteracies pedagogy included the design process, metalanguage and design elements. Finally, the codes for form of multiliteracies pedagogy included the four components: situated
practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. A total of 55 codes were created.

Codes for multiliterate practices for working, public and private lives were based on connecting teachers’ responses with elements of multiliterate practices centred on moving literacy beyond “a stable system based on rules” to an approach that “focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone” (NLG, 1996, p. 64). Also included were the abilities that were considered important for individuals to develop in order to function as a multiliterate being. These aspects were folded into what would come to represent the content of multiliteracies. Codes included the ability to:

- think and speak for oneself; critique and understand empowerment; use innovation and creativity; incorporate technical and system thinking; negotiate global text (mass media, culture, global commodity culture, and information networks); learn to learn; embrace culture and community; work with varying visual and iconic meanings and gestural relationships; and understand the complexities of subjectivities (differences in identity and affiliation such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). (pp.67-71)

Also included in the codes for the content of multiliteracies were the processes that accessed the students’ available designs, resources that have been used previously; the designing, re-working previous designs; and the redesigned, the new resource that is produced to create meaning of text. Codes were also assigned to the roles of the teachers, learners and resources. This section also addressed the role of ICT and mass media, acknowledging that today’s learners need to recognize the current global commodity culture and its future developments to be well versed and competitive in digital literacies and system thinking. Another six codes were assigned for use of design elements: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural,
spatial and multimodality. The remaining five codes were used to describe metalanguage. This referred to mention of a language for talking about the various forms of text.

The final section of the codes created for isolating elements of the form of multiliteracies included 17 codes based on teachers’ perceptions of the four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Codes used for situated practice consisted of: immersions in meaningful practices, motivation, purpose, designing experiences, extending knowledge and experiences, and progressivism. The codes used to reflect critical framing were based on: critical literacy/critical multiliteracies; framing the learner’s growing mastery; identifying and positioning within social contexts and purposes; and constructive critique for contextual considerations. Finally, codes for transformed practice included: transfer of learning and reflective practice; decisions about practice; recreated designs of meaning; engagement in real purposes; and implementation of understandings.

Initially 55 codes were applied to three of the 20 transcripts. The codes were not pre-assigned to set interview questions in order to capture the fullest understanding of the teachers’ perceptions. Glesne (2006) recommends revisiting codes to ensure that they are able to access the required data. The code book for multiliteracies pedagogy was revised twice. The first revision addressed overlapping codes. For example, there were four codes used to isolate ICT. The codes were reorganized to eliminate codes that would duplicate information. This reduced the codes to 46.

Then the new code book was applied to three more transcripts. The second revisions focused on tightening the language of the codes to be more reflective of the responses. To clarify the differences between codes, examples were included with the original codes to
distinguish the difference as recommended by the work of Ryan and Bernard (2000). For example, under situated practice, one code was purposeful. The intent of the code was to reflect pedagogy that allowed the students to understand the purpose in situating practice. The wording was changed to *meaningful practices* as the teachers often provided example of how they would help students understand why an activity was meaningful rather than simply stating the purpose of the activity. As well codes were merged together when the differences between them appeared to be small, such as for *innovative* and *creative thinking*. The complete code book is found as an appendix (See Appendix 5: Code Book).

Once all transcripts were coded, the code book was revisited. In this case two additional sets of code were merged. For example, in describing situated practice two codes were used: purposeful and immersion in meaningful practices. The overlap between these two codes was tight enough that they were merged together to form a single category. The final code book of 43 codes was organized into the thematic categories according to the multiliteracies framework. The two main sections, that are reflective of the research questions, are described in Table 7.

**Table 7: Categories for Code Book**

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| **How do the literacy perceptions of teachers from K to 12 align with and diverge from the form of multiliteracies?**               |                 |
| Situated Practice                                                        | 5               |
| Overt Instruction                                                        | 5               |
| Critical framing                                                         | 4               |
| Transformed Practice                                                      | 4               |
All transcripts were revisited and recoded to ensure that coding was completed consistently and adhered closely to the code book. The codes were applied a total of 2051 times.

*Constant comparison analysis.*

With every carefully considered design, there is always the reality that new information gained during the data collection process may lead research in an unexpected and meaningful direction (Patton, 1990). Constant comparison (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1987) was used for the generation of theory to compliment the deductive analysis. Glaser’s (1965) four stages of constant comparison provided the frame for the analysis: “(1) comparing instances applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory” (p. 439). The first stage included comparing individual instances to one another to generate categories. This occurred during the first reading of the transcripts. Summaries were used to facilitate the process. For the second stage of the constant comparison, the individual instances within each of the preliminary categories were analyzed to isolate the common properties of the categories. During the third stage, the categories were refined as well as their defining properties. Once this was completed, the transcripts were revisited. Instances of the categories were colour coded and previous coding was reconsidered based on the refinement to categories and defining properties. The effect was the merging of categories where similarity dictated a need and other categories were omitted where there were few occurrences.

The fourth stage of the constant comparison identified emerging themes that were not a part of the code book. The themes included: developmental approach to literacy; alignment with provincial protocol; technology as motivator; and space for students to take risks using
literacy strategies. One category that stood out in particular was based on the teachers’ responses that included affective aspects of literacy, namely, the students’ level of enjoyment and sense of accomplishment for both academic and personal purposes. Affective considerations or enjoyment is an implied result of being multiliterate, rather than explicitly stated. However, it is clearly an area of thought for participating teachers.

The constant comparison was used as a systematic method to categorize and review the interview data to ensure that patterns in the participants’ perceptions not addressed by the deductive analysis were identified. This was extremely important as the teachers were unfamiliar with multiliteracies as a theoretical framework and the constant comparison provided me with a second approach to assess information. In order to cope with the complexity of the data and concepts, the findings from the deductive analysis have been supplemented with the categories generated from the constant comparison to provide greater depth to the examples of the teachers’ literacy perceptions that align with multiliterate practices.

Data Management

Technology was implemented to help manage the coded data. There are qualitative data software programs available that allow researchers to code data on screen using a variety of features such as colour. However, purchasing these programs, buying corresponding licenses and attending training are expensive. More recent studies have investigated the use of word processors such as Microsoft Word as qualitative data software. Although such programs are limited to small scale sorting options, in many cases they are still powerful enough to be effective for smaller-scale studies.
Ryan (2004) focused on the use of Microsoft Macros. Macros act as a means of repeating a series of commands. Users are able to record their steps such as using the search engine in Word to find all the occurrences of a particular phrase, copy them and recreate a new document that lists all of the found occurrences. With greater computer knowledge, this same task can be written programmatically in Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), the language for writing Macros. However, this feature would be of greater benefit to quantitative data analysis, where there is a set response to a question. Interviews, even those following an interview guide, will vary in length. Because of this, a Macro could not be effectively programmed to sort through the transcripts and copy the requested information – the unpredictable length of the responses would prevent a pattern from being established; therefore, Macros operating in Word is not an efficient or effective option.

La Pella (2004) used the table feature of Microsoft Word to record codes and sort transcripts to three levels. This provides a basic, but user-friendly approach to data management. The functionality of tables is increased dramatically when utilizing a spreadsheet program, such as Excel. Microsoft Excel 2007 has made many changes to the program since the previous version, 2003. It uses many of the user-friendly features of Word, and the table features are enhanced by the power and capabilities of its spreadsheet program. Although this is a relatively new means to manage qualitative data it has received support. Swallow, Newton & Van Lotten (2003) advocated the use of Excel 2003. They used the spreadsheet program in a clinical setting to manage and display data. Excel 2007 as an electronic means of organizing and sorting through the coded data for this study. Coding was recorded in a spreadsheet format,
allowing for efficient control of coded data. The advances in the program since 2003 are substantial enough that there is no justification for using the 2003 version.

The process itself involved several stages. First, the digitally recorded interviews were transcribed into Word. These files were then converted into Excel files. Columns were used to identify such items as participant, response, line number, and personal information (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Excel Organization of Transcripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Exp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KG 6</td>
<td>INT XX</td>
<td>What do you expect students in your grade to be able to do, in terms of literacy, when they come to your class in September?</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG 7</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>First thing I hope then can do is recognize their name how to spell it and print some or all of the letters, especially if they attended JK. Typically their upper case, some use lower case. I look to see if they can sing the alphabet and how many letters they can recognize, Upper case letters. Sometime lower case they know as well. I am hoping that they know upper case. I like to see what they know about books. Whether they know front and back. How a book works. Ton to bottom. Inking at</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individually organized transcripts were then merged into a master file of all interviews. Text used for deductive coding was colour coded blue and the corresponding code was entered into the column designated for codes. In the case of multiple codes being assigned to a single response, each of the occurrences within the text were colour coded blue and all codes were entered into the codes column separated by a comma. This procedure would be important for running sorting programs. As well, any of the constant comparison categories were also colour coded in the Excel file. For example, comments made by teachers concerning the affective elements of their literacy pedagogy were coded green (see Figure 2).
Figure 2: Excel Assigning of Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seq.</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td>2.6, 4.4, 3.7, 7.3</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the coding was completed, a Macro was written in Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) to organize the codes. For the deductive codes, the program identified the unique codes (a total of 43). It next created a new worksheet to house each row of data that corresponded with each code. It would then copy each row of matching code and copy it to the appropriate worksheet. The result was the isolation of each like code. From this, tallies were generated to report on the frequency of the code. Figure 3 shows an excerpt of code 1.1 as an example.

Figure 3: Excel Sorted Deductive Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Seq.</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>860</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.2, 5.1, 2.5, 7.4</td>
<td>II.8</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>When they leave my class I am hoping that they have the skills to verbally communicate with oral language their partner. With their writing, my main goal is with organizing how to organize their writing. We have done a lot of work with mind maps and making connections with text to work and text to self, those kinds of things. The third, reading, what I did focus on a lot this year is being able to choose books that are of interest to them for their independent reading along with being able to decipher textbooks and the different parts of them and things like that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.1, 1.1, 1.2, 5.1</td>
<td>II.12</td>
<td>LOPREDOS</td>
<td>My main goal for reading, writing and communication is to pick things that they enjoy doing and find ways for them to creatively show what they are writing or in anything that they are doing in reading or oral language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sorting the constant comparison categories was much simpler; this was accomplished by using an editing feature of Excel. The sort and filter option allows for custom searches so the text that
had been colour coded could simply be organized by colour – all text in the same colour font would be grouped together. This allowed for the data, along with the information contained in the complete row (such as participant name, division, grade, school) as well as the location in the transcript to be easily viewed.

**Triangulation of Data**

Because the goal of this research was to gain a better understanding of what the elements of multiliteracies pedagogy looked like in the daily practice of the participants, the research methods include data triangulation. Todd Jick (1990) stated, “researchers can improve the accuracy of their judgments by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon” (p. 136). Denzin (1978) identified data triangulation as incorporating a variety of sources in a research study. For this study, teacher observations and follow-up interviews were used to enhance the credibility of patterns of multiliteracies pedagogy that was noted in the interview transcripts (McMillian, 1996). The field notes from the teacher observations and transcripts from the follow-up interviews were used to enrich the data collected from the teacher interviews by providing illustrative examples of the patterns of multiliteracies pedagogy in classroom practice.
Chapter Four: Findings for the Content of Multiliteracies Pedagogy

*Literacy is a hard and absolutely necessary thing. I think that we are all always looking for ways to make it better.*

- Grade 8 teacher

Chapter Four and Chapter Five present the findings of this study. Both chapters centre on identifying elements of multiliteracies that are already embedded into the pedagogy of teachers in this study as well as establishing where the teachers’ pedagogies deviate from multiliteracies. Specifically, Chapter Four focuses on the first research question: How do the literacy perceptions of teachers from K-12 align with and diverge from the content of multiliteracies pedagogy? It is organized by the key elements of the content of multiliteracies and their respective attributes, which also serve as deductive codes for constant comparison: *Designing Process, Design Elements, Pluralism of Subjectivities, Information Communication Technology* and *Metalanguage*. Chapter Five reports the findings in response to the second research question: How do teachers’ literacy perceptions align with and diverge from the form of multiliteracies? It is further organized into four categories used to represent the form of multiliteracies: *Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing* and *Transformed Practice*.

Examples of the participants’ responses are included in Chapters Four and Five to illustrate relationships between the teachers’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy and elements of multiliteracies. To supplement the findings, emergent themes identified during the constant comparison are also reported throughout. In addition, the observational data and follow-up interviews of six teachers, representative of the grade divisions, are used to provide greater depth to the analysis of the coded interviews. The participants in this research did not make
direct reference to the NLG’s specific terminology such as multiliteracies, design process or metalanguage. Consequently, in order to map elements of multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of teachers the teachers’ descriptions of their pedagogies were used as items of comparison rather than their abilities to use the discourse of multiliteracies. This enabled detection of what elements of multiliteracies pedagogy were embedded into teachers’ pedagogy as well as identification of what areas multiliteracies pedagogy offers that would be new to their pedagogies.

Furthermore, the structure of both of the findings chapters is based on the grade distribution of participating teachers. Where elementary teachers’ interview responses have been cited, their grades are included in parentheses. In cases where there are two teachers at the same grade, each teacher was assigned a letter. For example (gr. 7/8 a) refers to the first intermediate teacher of a split grade class of grade 7 and grade 8 students. The high school teachers are identified in parentheses by the letter that corresponds with their subject area because they all taught at intermediate and senior levels. The subject areas include: English (E), mathematics (M), science (S), technology (T) and music (Mu). In the case of the multiple English teachers each was assigned a lower case letter: (E a) and (E b). Any excerpts from the participants involved with the observations and follow-up interviews (including their original interviews) were referenced by their assigned pseudonyms: Kaija (K), Kathryn (gr. 3), Jill (gr. 5/6), Rosa (gr. 8), Miljana (E), and Grant (T).

This chapter focuses on the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. It centres on the NLG’s belief that pedagogy needs to create space for learners to draw from their own subjectivities as they interact within a dynamic process of meaning-making. Furthermore, learning needs to
include a strong focus on technology that is reflective of the rapidly advancing digital world, as well as incorporating multimodal learning opportunities. Therefore, pedagogy that aligns with multiliteracies includes process-based learning where teachers encourage students to draw from their previous experiences (available designs), shape them to best suit specific tasks (designing), and implement the newly formed resource (redesigned). The NLG regards these elements as essential in preparing students to become active citizens prepared for and competitive in all facets of life. The five categories created to represent the content of multiliteracies pedagogy also serve as the organization structure for this chapter and are reported in order of frequency: Designing Process, Design Elements, Pluralism of Subjectivities, Information Communication Technology, and Metalanguage.

The first category, Designing Process centres on how teachers design process-based approaches to learning. Three subcategories are used to access this process: Curriculum and Resources, Thinking to Support Learning, and Teachers’ Roles in Designing. Curriculum and Resources focuses on how teachers incorporate curricular expectations and use resources to support a process approach to literacy learning. Thinking to Support Learning reports how teachers include such elements as learning how to learn, using creativity to encourage learning, and regarding learning as non-linear in their approaches to literacy. Finally, Teachers’ Roles in Designing investigates teachers’ perceptions of their roles in the designing process as well as their expectations for the roles of students.

The second category, Design Elements, represents the NLG’s position that making meaning draws from multiple modalities, which are the major areas they use to describe how text is represented. The six major areas serve as subcategories: Linguistic, Visual, Audio,
Gestural, Spatial and Multimodal. The NLG identified each of these areas as requiring a specialized language to describe and explain complex patterns of meaning with the latter subcategory, Multimodal, focusing on the complex patterns of meanings between modalities.

The third category, Pluralism of Subjectivities, centres on the teachers’ recognition and inclusion of their students’ subjectivities. Three subcategories: Students’ Home and Community Lives; Northern Identities; and Aboriginal and Cultural Identities emerged from the teachers’ responses and demonstrates their perceptions of diversity among students. It also helps to establish their understandings of the role that student subjectivities play in shaping pedagogy.

The fourth category for the content of multiliteracies centres on Information Communication Technology. It is divided into two subcategories: Technology, Multimedia and System Thinking, and Mass Media, ICT and Global Commodity. These subcategories examine how teachers integrate technology into their pedagogy and encourage students to consider the implications of a rapidly evolving technical world.

The final category, Metalanguage, is based on teachers’ inclusion of a flexible, open-ended language to talk about language. This category focuses on how teachers help students articulate how they came to understand a piece of text. Together these five categories represent the content of multiliteracies.

Designing Process

The references to Designing Process account for 35.4% of the responses that address the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. It is organized into three subcategories: Curriculum and Resources; Thinking to Support Learning; and Designing Process Roles. More specifically, Curriculum and Resources investigates how teachers include curriculum expectations or
resources focused on process writing into their planning and totals 35.3% of all responses in this category. *Thinking to Support Learning*, 33.6% of the responses for this category, involves the teachers’ descriptions of the steps and strategies used to understand text. *Teachers’ Roles in Designing* addresses how teachers create opportunities for students to better understand processes used to make meaning of text and accounts for 31.2% of the category. This involves teachers’ inclusion of time for students to consider how they approach tasks in comparison with the methods of their peers. The roles attached to the designing process that describe the teachers’ roles totals 20.4% and the roles they believe that their students play in designing processes adds up to 10.8% of responses.

*Curriculum and resources.*

The teachers in this study did not use the NLG’s term *design process*; however, 18 of the participants acknowledged the impact of curriculum documents, that are process writing based, on their teaching. The 20 teachers focused on a process approach to literacy in various ways: how resources were integrated into lessons, descriptions of specific programs or documents such as *Think Literacy* (MOE, 2003), or the rationale for using a specific resource. The subcategory totals 12.5% of responses addressing the research question focused on the content of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Overall, the references made by teachers at the kindergarten and primary levels about process based literacy frequently spoke about literacy development. They referred to a developmental continuum for literacy learning that is reflective of the MOE’s resources for effective instruction for reading (2003) and writing (2005). These teachers specifically focused on the process of modeled, shared, guided and independent work as demonstrated in the
documents. This process was demonstrated by Kaija (K) as she integrated Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) resources, large visual images used for making predictions, into her work stations. As well, she spoke of the value of the First Steps (Pearson, 2008) writing continuum, which is also included in the MOE’s (2005) effective writing document that is used in the school board at the primary levels. She hoped that its use would extend across all grade levels. The kindergarten and primary teachers were focused on implementing developmental approaches to literacy instruction that were reflective of provincial resources.

The junior and intermediate teachers used resources that focused on specific stages of process-based literacy used by students before, during or after literacy tasks. Jill (gr. 5) emphasized the need to model strategies for students so that they could better understand the process of consuming or producing text.

One of the intermediate teachers (gr. 7/8 a), who had experience at the primary and junior levels, noted that:

Primary [division] had a great big influx of money and training and they were doing all sorts of training and they kind of filtered into junior. Intermediate, it feels like it has almost been kind of glossed over; it seems like they get to grade 7 and 8 that they should have all of the skill in place and we are just building on them, but I don’t think that is the case.

She appreciated the support and resources available at the primary level and hoped that the support and resources would be extended into the intermediate grades. She felt that this was important so that there could be a unified approach to literacy, thus augmenting the processes that were established in the earlier grades. Intermediate teachers also acknowledged that even though they had access to literacy strategies, they felt a disconnect between the elementary and secondary panels. The other grade 7/8 teacher believed that the transition from grade 8 to
grade 9 was “disjointed” because students were expected to work more independently without the needed scaffolding.

Teachers at the secondary level also believed that more instructional resources and training were needed to assist in the delivery of a developmental approach to literacy. The science teacher understood the importance of the processes behind literacy learning, but believed that high school teachers needed more professional support:

I think that there should be more training for teachers so that they feel more comfortable.... I will be honest with you the only reason why I know how to [use literacy] is because my wife has shown me how because she has gotten herself educated in trying to teach our kids how to read.

The secondary level teachers in this study, like the elementary teachers, understand the important role that literacy plays in their curriculum areas. The process-based literacy was focused on developmental literacy at the kindergarten and primary level and on scaffolded literacy opportunities at the junior and intermediate levels. At the intermediate/senior level, teachers placed greater concentration on using literacy practices to best support the subject area, rather than fully implementing a process approach to literacy. For example, the music teacher believed that literacy was “intrinsic to the curriculum” and that part of her role was to include literacy skills by getting her students “to be musically literate in that in the sense of reading notes and things like that it facilitates them progressing more quickly as a musician.”

Both the elementary and secondary teachers understood one of the goals of the provincial curricula as providing students with literacy skills necessary for interaction within society. The level of support for process-based literacy resources as well as professional development necessary for delivery was emphasized by the K-3 teachers. Intermediate and secondary teachers placed greater focus on content literacy skills rather than a process
approach to literacy. Missing from the teachers’ responses were references that critically critiqued the resources, as the teachers focused on the aspects that they believed were most beneficial to their pedagogy. To align more closely with multiliteracies pedagogy educators need to critically consider their resources, including curriculum, and question the historical, social, political, cultural and ideological contexts of the documents as well as their positioning in relation to the documents.

**Thinking to support learning.**

Sixteen of the 20 teachers noted the importance of fostering student development in the areas of speaking and thinking. This included all of kindergarten, primary, junior teachers, two of the intermediate level teachers and four high school teachers. The teachers’ references to the subcategory, *Thinking to Support Learning* account for 11.9% of responses focused on exploring the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. The teachers’ responses were tightly connected with the use of metalanguage that centred on metacognition. This was more prevalent at the junior and intermediate levels where the instructional focus for literacy was on helping students gaining a deeper understanding of text production and consumption as, opposed to the introduction of new language that was extensive at the kindergarten, primary and secondary levels.

Specifically, during the observations, Kaija (K) provided an example of guided instruction focused on helping students learn how to spell. She asked the students to stretch a word phonetically to see what sounds they heard. She emphasized process over product, saying, “I always tell them, I don’t care about spelling, but what sounds do you hear?” Another kindergarten teacher (K a) included parental involvement as part of the process of supporting
children as learners. She shared resources with parents about the benefits of modeling thinking processes when reading with children. She provided parents with reading “pointers on how to make it worthwhile. You know points to the title, about the author, point out beginning letters, point put the punctuation.” The third kindergarten teacher (K b) helped her students understand the purpose of thinking about learning. She provided the example of making predictions when reading:

We talk about how [thinking] helps us to understand about our reading and we say, “It’s okay if your predictions aren’t right, whether it is right or wrong.” I don’t like to use those words, but “did we make a good prediction?” Or, “that was a good idea anyway.” We just say, “That helps us to think about our book and that is what good readers think about their reading and they ask questions.”

At the primary level, the grade 1 teacher was aware of the curricular need to include thinking to support learning and acknowledged that it was foundational to student learning that would be continued at the next grade level. She did not directly link the benefits of thinking on student meaning-making; however, that is not to say that she did not recognize the importance:

In terms of communication they need to be doing more and more talking about what strategies they are using in reading and writing and maybe in communicating and which ones they found helpful because metacognition is a huge part of the revised language curriculum so students are going to be expected to reflect upon what strategies they are using.

Modeling thinking to support learning did not come naturally to all teachers: some teachers admitted to feeling awkward. One of the grade 3 teachers was a part of a professional learning community (PLC) that focused on modeling thinking for students. She recalled conversations with her colleagues where they “said that it kind of feels weird to think out loud” and their PLC focused on providing teachers with “strategies on how to work with that whole
inner conversation that they need to be having....How important it is for kids to model for them and to show them our internal conversations that we have when we are modeling.”

Jill (gr. 5/6) believed that her students gained by being “able to understand and explain all of the reading strategies that are taught.” During her follow-up interview she stressed the importance of allowing students time to talk about making meaning of information. She was protective of the space created for talk about learning: “We are always afraid to spend too much time orally because it doesn’t seem like they aren’t doing anything, but they need more talk. They will be better able to make meaning of information if they are able to talk about it.”

At the intermediate level, Rosa (gr. 8) had her students write journal entries about their thought processes in math class. She had her students reflect on their solutions by asking them to describe how they achieved their answers. Another intermediate teacher (7/8 a) valued the opportunity to reflect metacognitively as part of a PLC. The monthly meetings were used by teachers to discuss their own understandings about thinking and connections with supporting learning. This, she reported, impacted her teaching. She consciously included time for her students to reflect metacognitively because of the positive experiences she had with her PLC.

At the secondary level, two of the three English teachers addressed thinking to support learning. The Advanced Placement (AP) English teacher (E a) had a clear understanding of the role of thinking for her senior students. She thought, “Metacognitively the expectations have been really important in helping kids understand how they are really getting something and how they have done that.” The music teacher also demonstrated the value she saw in helping to make thinking transparent for students:
if students themselves have an understanding about how to understand the important points or what is a central point or what is an explanation or an example and they are going to see more clearly when they read material and they are going to be able to take, to pick out the most important points and understand.

As well, teachers noted the inclusion of thinking in the revised curriculum documents. One of the intermediate level teachers (gr. 7/8 b) confirmed the need for the explicit insertion of thinking to support learning in the provincial curriculum documents. She noticed that “the intermediate do ask questions. They are already inquisitive enough, but they aren’t telling me why they are thinking what they are thinking.”

One of the technology teachers, Grant, saw value in modeling practical examples of thinking to support learning. He used practical references: “If we are doing electrical today I will say, ‘Okay a technician will have to read a manual like this one’ and I will take it out and show them the lines and wires and all the parts that are involved to diagnosing all the electronics in the car.” This approach was also evident during the observation of his class. He worked with students one-on-one or in their small groups and prompted them with questions to help them think through their problems theoretically before beginning a project. For example, one group of students was trying to decide the best way to integrate a pattern of wooden pieces on the top of a jewellery box. Grant posed a series of questions to help them isolate what they wanted the finished pattern to look like. He also had them consider the benefits of mapping out their design as well as the arguments for and against their plans (e.g., type of wood or adhesive method).
The math teacher had her students think about the process of mathematics in terms of thinking through the necessary steps as well as their concerns to help them become more confident mathematicians. Her goal was to have them:

express more of a thought process so they are able to put on the paper the step that are involved and how they are working through problems .... I would like for them to get over some of their fears .... They just have a high level of anxiety over the words in math and get them to see that the two are married together that you can’t separate the words from the numbers as one without the other is meaningless.

Part of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy is based on making the processes behind learning transparent for students. In their approaches to thinking that supports learning, teachers predominately modeled their own processes to highlight the steps that they found useful. As well, teachers encouraged students to include their parents and peers in the process, thus drawing from the students’ multilayered worlds (public and private). Intermediate and senior teachers also included opportunities for students to consider the relationship between thinking about literacy and the possible benefits to their future worlds of work.

**Teachers’ roles in designing.**

Nineteen of the teachers identified part of their instructional roles as being designers of student learning processes. The exception was one technology teacher at the secondary level who was in his first year of teaching high school (he had served as a college instructor) and was teaching under limited certification as he worked concurrently on his teaching degree. The 121 occurrences accounted for 11% of the overall category, content of multiliteracies pedagogy. One of the kindergarten teachers (K b) described her hands-on approach to accessing the students’ available designs and helping them shape their learning processes during learning centres. This involved:
going to that carpet toy and bringing that clip board and ask them, “Let’s try and
draw that castle that you are trying to make right now. What else do we need to
make a castle?” Writing it down and showing them that there is a value in
planning and writing things down and sketching and bringing things to where
they are; where their interests are.

Another kindergarten teacher (K a) used a designing process during her PLC. She appreciated
the modeling and feedback of which was a part in her own learning. Overall, at the
kindergarten level there was a perceived need to create space for students to have time to
design their own learning processes, most notably at the learning centres.

At the primary level, the grade 1 teacher felt that her role was to support students as
they considered what previously used designs were available to them and how to redesign and
implement them when faced with a new challenge. One of the grade 3 teachers (gr. 3a) focused
her role on releasing control of the designing processes to her students. She reflected, “I do a
lot of stuff that is modeled. And then the gradual transfers of ownership to them, but there are
a lot of stages in between that you have to go through so it is that model both in reading and
writing and then the shared and a part of the guided too.”

At the junior level, the grade 4 teacher also aimed to transfer some of the responsibility
of designing to her students. Jill (gr. 5/6) reflected on one of the roles that she believed her
students needed to play in the designing process as being able to “understand and be able to
explain all of the reading strategies.” And at the intermediate level one of the teachers (gr. 7/8
a) described part of her role as creating space for talk related to designing processes:

I try to incorporate talk time more often. So I will circulate and see what the
[students] are using and what they are talking about in their discussions and
usually by their discussion I usually give them instructions and see where they go
on to from there.
It was her hope that students would continue to be encouraged to reflect on their roles in shaping learning at the secondary level.

At the secondary level, teachers most strongly identified their roles as designing literacy learning opportunities for students as well as colleagues. The science teacher took on the role of mentor as he worked with pre-service teachers. He tried to “articulate to them what I think is important in terms of literacy and try to pass on my skills and what I know and show them what I think is important so that they understand that it is not just about the photosynthetic equation it is more than that.” One of the English teachers (E b) saw her role as designer as creating occasion for students to discover that the “greatest meaning is [found by] using the text as a starting point and extracting the wisdom by using their skills and the strategies to extract the information and also being able to apply that to their own lives and, in other words, make a text to self connection.”

The teachers’ perceptions demonstrated a commitment to the basics of the NLG’s designing process. At all grade levels, teachers identified their roles as focused on helping students access available designs and transform them to best suit current learning. Teachers created space for students to consider the designing process. As well, several also helped to support their colleagues and teacher candidates. Additionally, they approached designing as a continuum that moved from a guided to a modeled approach with the end goal set on releasing responsibility of learning to the students.
Design Elements

Design elements accounted for 22.6% of the responses for the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. There are six design elements used to describe and explain patterns of meaning: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodality; that is, a combination of design elements. These design elements served as part of the metalanguage through which teachers and learners talk about meaning as related to various realms of life.

Kindergarten teachers accounted for 45% of all coded responses for the category followed by 20.5% high school teachers, 15% intermediate teachers, 12.5% primary teachers, and 7% for junior teachers. Among all teachers the focus was on linguistic elements. In addition to this, teachers also made frequent references to multimodality (in direct response to an interview question), talking about audio and visual design elements. Spatial and gestural elements were the smallest subcategories.

Linguistics.

At 42%, teachers most frequently included linguistic elements in their responses (with the exception of high school teachers where references to linguistics were matched by references to multimodality). The kindergarten teachers used linguistic elements to support students in the introductory stages of learning to read and write. Often this involved creative use of a variety of media such as edible pretzel letters for spelling (and eating) and access to shaving cream to practice letter formations. Kaija (K) described her experiences for delivering their language curriculum in terms of linguistic elements:

I hope what they can do is recognize their name how to spell it and print some or all of the letters, especially if they attended JK. Typically they use upper case, some use lowercase...how many letters that they can recognize - upper case letters and sometime lower case they know as well.... I like to see what they
know about books. Whether they know front and back. How a book works. Top to bottom, looking at pictures knowing where a title is. ... Getting a sense of rhyme, sequence of events and do they recognize or print any familiar words like mom, no, stop. Do they have a sense of what a word is...

In the primary grades, the grade 1 teacher also drew from the linguistic elements described by the kindergarten teacher. Her goals included students being able to read level A, B, and C books, to point to each word as they read and to recall the topic of their reading material. She described the phonetics based process she used to help students learn to read.

Her aim was for students in grade 1:

be able to produce all of the consonant sound except for maybe x and y and at least one sound for each vowel because they need that skill to be able to decode words when they are reading the simple pattern books when they see the s-t-o-p they can map the sounds of the letters, they can figure out is says stop. They also need to be able to do the opposite, map letters onto sounds when they write. If they want to spell stop, they can stretch out the sounds and for them to know that it is s-t-o-p. They should also have rhyming knowledge; to be able to recognize and produce rhyming words that helps them spell by analogy; like if I can spell cat I can also spell mat. And I also have them read by analogy, if I can recognize cat, then I can also read the word mat.

In terms of oral language, she focused on conversational skills: listening, posing questions and speaking in clear, simple sentences.

Kathryn (gr. 3) shifted her focus from decoding words to a controlled usage and understanding of language that involved reading comprehension and organized writing and speaking in complete thoughts. She also used a listening centre in her class and encouraged her students to listen to the radio on a daily basis as means of receiving oral text.

Jill (gr. 5/6) also continued to advance her junior level students’ use of linguistic design elements and further encouraged them to take greater responsibility over their efforts. Her goals were to have her students:
comprehend at grade level with as much independence as possible and demonstrate it orally and written.... express their ideas, communicate in writing and variety of forms. I would like for them to work on their non-fiction writing, so there is a really succinct pattern to their writing, like an introduction-thesis, supporting details, topic sentences in paragraphs, conclusions, and appropriate grade level vocabulary. I would like them to be able to punctuate in their writing with a few reminders - conventions.... To have a love of reading, appreciate good literature, choose appropriate level of books for themselves and write frequently enough to make their thoughts and ideas clear.

These goals were also present at the intermediate level, although Rosa (gr. 8) recognized that students may not have advanced control of the linguistic elements of design. She felt that her students knew “that there should be details that should support [a topic], but they will often still struggle in coming up with the good details to support it. They will know that a longer piece of writing is a collection of sentences, paragraphs essentially about the same topic.”

At the secondary level the intermediate/senior level teachers focused on a variety of elements. During the observation of Miljana’s grade 10 English class much of the discussion centred on Shakespeare’s use of language. In her follow-up interview, Miljana identified that one of her goals for her students was “getting them comfortable with the language” in a wide range of texts. For example, in order for her students to interact with the text in Romeo and Juliet, they needed to be comfortable with the cadence of iambic pentameter, the application of a sophisticated vocabulary and confident enough to work with their peers in making meaning of the play. The other English teachers focused on writing organization, oral reading and comprehension. This included distinctions between formal and informal purposes, and scaffolding. Grant (T) specifically included interview skills in his technology program, while the music teacher acknowledged that her program mainly focused on performance. However, what
she looked for in terms of literacy was “an evolution; so clearer writing, fewer errors, better paragraph and sentence structure, more descriptive writing, different lengths of sentences; so an improvement of their writing throughout the semester.”

The responses of the participants created a continuum across the grades focused on working from sound, letter and word recognition at the kindergarten and primary level to control over words, sentences and paragraphs at the junior level to subject specific vocabulary and structural patterns at the intermediate and senior levels. While the teachers’ responses centred on linguistics do align with many aspects of multiliteracies pedagogy linguistic design such as delivery, vocabulary and information structure (usage of clauses and sentences), none of the teachers included the more complex elements such as local and global coherence. In order to better demonstrate linguistic design, teachers would need their focus to include the role language plays in engaging audiences, that is, how language can be used to assign blame to avoid responsibility.

**Multimodality.**

Nineteen of 20 teachers provided examples of multimodality used to enhance their instruction. As previously mentioned, one kindergarten teacher chose to make specific reference to gestural elements when asked about multimodality. Multimodality accounted for 25% of the responses for Design Elements.

The kindergarten teachers often approached new information by drawing from a combination of modalities such as linguistic, visual, audio and gestural elements. For example, Kaija (K) described her multimodal approach to reading:

> I definitely need to have big books in my classroom.... I also like to have the listening centre to have multiple copies of the stories and tapes to that the
children can revisit that again and again and it backs up what we did in our lesson for that day or the day before. We do role plays and all of our activities are hands on activities. They are not paper pencil activities. I try to use as many different kinds of materials as I can to make it fun and interesting for the kids to be touching and learning in various ways.

Listening centres and manipulatives were also used in the primary grades. The junior teachers included dramatic movement, such as, tableaux to enhance the students’ understandings of a written text.

Creative examples of integrating multimodal elements continued at the intermediate level. One intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 b) described a geography lesson on comparing strip mining and underground mining and how they were going to use cookies as a means to connect their readings and understandings:

They didn’t understand how we were going to do it through cookies, but then we were talking about it over, and over and over again so when we got to the demonstration we had already talked about two different kinds of mining so it was, “Oh this is like strip mining when we take the chocolate chips off of the top” and they were using the language.

She also believed that it was important to include students in the dialogue about selecting design elements the most appropriate mode because “if you give them an option they are more apt to doing it or they’ll decide what they want to do and they will go with it.”

The high school English teachers used visuals to demonstrate the patterns behind the linguistic elements of essay writing. The science teacher created assignments that involved linguistic and spatial elements. He “had [students] make models of cells with all of the organelles they had to build little flags and things - one student did a kind of a cake, with jujubes and stuff.” The technology and music teachers drew heavily from multimodal elements, due to the performance-based curricula. For the music teacher this involved such elements as
reading music, listening to the other band members and following the teacher’s conducting gestures. In the most basic form, for the technology teacher, multimodality was integrated through the introduction, modeling and theoretical explanation of a new process:

If we are learning about a new process of the lathe, I will talk about it I will show them it and then I will let them practise it and then will do the book work afterwards, and it seems as if they can grasp the book work better when they have that. They have a better understanding and they pay more attention to it.

The teachers were able to provide a wide range of examples of multimodality used to support meaning-making. Teachers’ perceptions demonstrated an awareness of the hybridity of text and the impact of accessing the students’ subjectivities as sources of potential modes for meaning-making. Although a second key concept in multimodality is the role of intertextuality focused on the examination of textual relationships, and this aspect was not evident in the teacher’s responses: few teachers spoke about the potentially complex relationships between production and consumption.

Audio.

Audio elements made up 15% of the design elements category and were mentioned by half of the teachers at all grade levels. At the kindergarten level, teachers incorporated listening skills to determine if students were decoding syllables, words and sentences. Kaija (K) had students “clap for each word in a sentence to see if they understand syllables, to get a sense of where they are at, and where we need to program from there on.” She also focused on their auditory memories by reading books that “would be completely catered to where their oral language development is—so it’s not any more difficult than it needs to be; it is just enough that is in that zone of proximity for them and it is used to help them develop their auditory memory.”
The grade 1 teacher acknowledged that her students who had used the *Jolly Phonics* program in kindergarten tended to “have a pretty good grasp of sound-symbol association.” She used what she called *timing books* to simulate songs. During this approach she encouraged students to chant along with her as she read a rhyming story that produced a set rhythm, that is, it used a beat that was timed like the meter used in music. As well, she believed that auditory elements helped students learn from one another as “they are learning to listen to what their peers are saying and they are learning.”

One of the more technologically advanced references to audio elements was made by one of the grade 3 teachers. She worked in a building that had been retrofitted with multidirectional speakers so she and the students were able to use a microphone that was flexible enough to be shaped around the speaker’s neck (hands-free). The class was then able to hear the speaker regardless of volume or directionality:

> I use in my classroom, we call it Mr. Squiggles. It is kind of a head phone set where all of the kids can hear me. I don’t have to raise my voice. We have speakers in the room so it is like a sound system so the kids can hear everything. Some of the parents who come into volunteer think it is amazing because the kids can hear from every angle. There is a speaker at the back and there is a speaker at the front so the kids can hear all of the time and we use that when the kids share their work.

At the intermediate level, one teacher (gr.7/8 a) used music to help students make-meaning of new information. She reported that her students were currently:

> beat-boxing *Green Eggs and Ham*. I do have an assignment where they take lyrics and they change it to something that they are learning about. I have also experimented a bit with music and the different types of music and how it affects learning. We have been playing a bit with or I have been playing around a bit with that and I have them drawing on paper while listening to music and I have them write about what they are hearing or what kind of setting it creates and those sorts of things.
The inclusion of audio elements was naturally most prevalent in the responses of the secondary school music teacher. She was able to explain the role of auditory design elements that aided student understanding. One of her discussions with her class involved her asking the group to:

play along and let’s listen and see if we can hear when we change. Tell me when you hear that the intonation was not as good as it was. They have the opportunity to do that. Once they start to listen that way, they start to use that skill on a more regular basis and that is what our goal is – we want kids to play in tune all the time or as much as possible.

In the high school English program, one of the teachers used audio books with her students who were not strong readers.

Overall, the teachers who did include references to audio elements in their pedagogy aligned with the content of multiliteracies pedagogy through their consideration of such elements as music, sound and rhythm.

**Visual.**

Visual design represented 11% of the Design Elements category with the kindergarten teachers’ responses accounting for over half (61%) of this subcategory. Kaija (K) referred specifically to the importance of visual elements for young learners. She described her students as “so easily distracted” and in need of visual stimulation that was representative of their worlds that were infused with television and video games. She deliberately included visual elements into her instruction to help connect with her students: “When I have a new word I outline red lines all around it light flashing lights so it is indicating, and they know, when they see these red light flashing around it is like, ‘Yoo-hoo, it is a new word!’” Another kindergarten teacher (K
a) had her students create visuals in order to understand the role that visuals play in representing information:

We draw pictures, and we talk about how it is easier if you have a picture that is connected to the words because you might get stuck and you don’t know what the word is, but the picture is there so it helps to identify what it is and draws them into the next level which is reading.

By the end of the primary years, there was a shift in thinking that moved to include the visual environment of the classroom in the teachers’ understandings of visual designs. Whereas Kaija (K) hoped that her students would be able to identify environmental print in the classroom, there was no mention by the kindergarten teachers to students being able to understand or use the information located in the text.

One of the grade 3 teachers strove to include more student created exemplars to serve as visuals rather than commercial posters as advised by her principal: “there is not enough kids’ work on the board – there should be more. It should be embedded with what kids do. ...I have so many posters up but the kids really need to see other kids’ work being appreciated.”

At the junior level, visual design elements also included visual organization and presentation of information such as charts, and overheads. The grade 6 teacher expanded on work that was introduced by one of the kindergarten teacher through her use of pictures to demonstrate the process of inferring meaning. She would show her students “a picture and if there is no written text describing what is going on they can infer that like this is happening or that has happening.”

Rosa (gr. 8) integrated storyboarding into her media program that involved creating and deconstructing visuals:
One of the things that we work on is storyboards and in order for that to work we use some things on the computer. As well, we have worked with the *Heritage Minutes* [CBC]. They have a really high production quality and nobody is getting naked like in a music video and because of the high production quality you can talk about camera angle, camera distance and editing techniques.

At the secondary level, the most common means for teachers to include visual elements into their courses were by videos (including on-line videos such as YouTube). All of these references were integrated into their responses about their literacy practices. Only one high school teacher, Grant (T), directly cited visual elements. He believed that his technology students tended to be more visual and tactile.

The teachers’ perceptions of visual design closely aligned with the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. In speaking about visuals, the teachers’ responses often included such topics as colour and perspective.

*Gestural.*

Gestural design elements represented only 4% of the *Design Elements* category. Two kindergarten teachers and one intermediate level teacher included references to gestures during their interviews. It is interesting to note that although one kindergarten teacher did not reference multimodality as a design element (even though it was an interview question) she did focus on gestural design elements. Overall, the kindergarten teachers drew heavily from gestural elements. During the poetry recitations the students were called upon to respond to the rhythms by though rehearsed actions such as snapping, clapping or wiggling their fingers. One of the kindergarten (K b) teachers worked in a French immersion program where she used a gesture program to support vocabulary building called *Accelerated Integrated Method* (AIM),
created by a British Columbia teacher, Wendy Maxwell who was described as taking: “high frequency words in French and putting them to gestures.”

Another way that gestural elements were integrated into the kindergarten program was through meaning-making of emotions and facial expressions. Kaija focused on distinguishing emotions so that students would be able to consider appropriate questions: “If someone is showing emotion, why is that person showing emotion and looking that way? Did you do something or what can you do to help that person?” This was also important to the intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 a) who spent time with her students helping them to understand body language:

I am big on how you present your question to me, or how you present your comment to me, your body, how you represent your tone your attitude, even just looking at your eyes down are your eyes up? Are your hands crossed, your arms crossed, so concentrating mostly on tone and what you are actually saying? What are you looking for?

The three teachers who spoke about gestural design did reflect many elements of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy such as body language, feelings, affect and behaviour.

**Spatial.**

Spatial design elements were the least referenced design element. Five teachers: three from the elementary panel (two kindergarten and one grade 3) and two from the secondary panel (technology and one English) specifically spoke about including spatial elements that totalled 3% of the category *Design Elements*. One of the kindergarten teachers used Velcro letters and sentence strips to help the student understand the text construction and the grade 3 teacher had her students use single word stamps to encourage her emergent writers to construct text.
At the high school level, one of the technology teachers used spatial design as a part of his curriculum in terms of “blueprint reading - understanding actually how to read a blue print, interpret the information from the blueprint.” As well, Miljana (E) used a creative approach to understanding the five paragraph format through spatial design elements in her English class:

I had no idea of where they were coming from in terms of essay writing so I had them using LEGO, I had [the essay represented] as a block that was colour coded. It showed that a lead was, let’s say blue, and then my thesis was red because red stand out and it is powerful and they had their three point directions three different colours. So I made my LEGOs that way and I show the students and say, ‘Okay this is my essay....’ The kids had to come up with their own five paragraphs. These kids were coming up with three dimensional models like spaceships and everything. They related it to the five paragraph essay because the wheel was their helm; it steered everything.

The NLG explains spatial meanings as a mode of meaning that describes environmental and architectural spaces. This understanding of spatial literacy was not easily located in the teachers’ pedagogies.

*Pluralism of Subjectivities*

Pluralism of subjectivities centres on student-based learning that considers the subjectivities of students as producers and consumers of text. It was referenced by all teachers, save the technology teacher who was teaching under limited certification. *Pluralism of Subjectivities* totalled 20.6% of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Unlike the other categories, *Pluralism of Subjectivities* is not reported by subcategory. Attempts to isolate the elements did not adequately reflect the teachers’ perceptions nor the integral relationships formed between student-based learning; student subjectivities; and culture and community. However, during the constant comparison of the data, three themes emerged: *Students’ Home and Community Lives; Northern Identities; and Aboriginal and*
Cultural Identities. By organizing this category thematically a more complete representation is created.

Students’ home and community lives.

As the main source for data concerning student subjectivities, teachers were asked directly: What literacy backgrounds do students enter your class with? Literacy backgrounds were explained to participants as including home and other outside-of-school literacy experiences. While the kindergarten teachers shared responses that demonstrated a deeper reflection on the role of the students’ home lives as well as the influence of the surrounding communities on literacy, there were no direct references to the term student subjectivities. However, the teachers did provide examples that demonstrated consideration of the plurality of subjectivities found within their classrooms.

All three of the kindergarten teachers felt that it was important to reach out to the community, and to include the students’ home lives in classroom learning. The kindergarten teachers provided parents and caregivers with guidance in structuring reading time at home that would bridge school and home literacies. There was a range in motivation behind the literacy programs as well as a range of value that was placed on the literacies taking place within the homes, even within the individual participants. Kaija (K) questioned the use of print media in the homes of her students:

I can see when the book bag comes back that no one has done anything. Nothing has been recorded and I know this because sometimes the sheets that are a communication from me keep on coming back, so no one is opening it. No one is doing anything like that. I can only base it on that. I am not in the home so I don’t think that there is a lot in some of these homes – books in terms of literacy. And if anyone is... I question if any of them can read, it’s quite sad. As for what they actually have in their homes, I am not sure. I just hear some things, what they say. I know that a lot of kids are watching TV.
She went on to explain that during Show-and-Tell time, her students were more motivated to speak and listen when provided the opportunity to share from their home lives. She provided the example of: “when I do the collections for show and tell, and again, even incorporating literacy in to the show and tell helps them with the connections with their lives – bringing their lives in from home.” She struggled between privileging traditional school-based print text and valuing home literacies.

Another kindergarten teacher (K a) believed that her students were exposed to a large amount of print text in their homes:

> I know that the parents are, with those [students] who are not reading, are doing what I call cuddle up and read. So, the parents are reading to the children, giving them pointers on how to make it worthwhile. You know point to the title, talk about the author, point out beginning letters, point put the punctuation…. For those who are reading, they are also doing a nightly reading program; they are reading to their parents.

Kathryn (gr. 3) reported a range in literacy practices in the community, “I think that going to the library and having experiences outside of school are helpful to the kids and they don’t all have those chances.” Rosa (gr. 8), recognized the role of home literacies and exposure to media in the students’ environments as, “what their parents have on in the background will come in, like CBC radio. And some will have on CNN....” She saw these as literacy experiences that helped shape students’ understandings of the world beyond their own lives.

At the secondary level, the science teacher noted that his students represented a wide range of home reading. The music teacher also had feelings about this diversity:

> I have some very academically advanced classes where students come from a really rich background where they read for pleasure when they can, they read for their classes at school, and as a part of their home lives. They have support from parents when it comes to projects or writing assignments, teachers aren’t the only resources that they have. Mom or Dad will check their work or help
them search something on the internet and refine the information that they have. And I mean, other students have almost no literacy resources at home; everything that they have is in the classroom.

When the teachers perceived students as not receiving literacy support at home that would further their academics, teachers typically took on the roles as provider of support and resources. It is important to note that the teachers were clear to admit that they were making assumptions about the students’ home literacies based on their levels of preparedness for class and academic performance. These assumptions might not have been an accurate reflection of the students’ home literacies.

One high school English teacher (E b) reflected on her role in terms of delivering curriculum in light of the range of her students’ immediate needs:

There are days that I am trying to teach how to develop a thesis and the problems that the kids are facing are so much more necessary for them to deal with than a thesis. I have never seen as many social issues than I have recently and I am supposed to be following the curriculum and teaching how to write a thesis and mom has been drunk at home for three days and they are kind of holding down the fort. So first and foremost, it’s not reading, writing and communicating, but it is that comfort in the class that they are happy to be there and they feel like I am not going to be on them about reading writing and communicating all of the time because their fundamental securities need to be met.

The teacher wanted to ensure that regardless of differences in identities and affiliations in her students, she would provide a program that created a safe space for all of her students to receive the support that they individually required.

Teachers were aware that their students entered into the classrooms coming from a wide range of backgrounds, having varied literacy experiences and requiring that their individual needs were met. They considered the plurality of student subjectivities in terms of their home and community lives as they encouraged students to draw from their available
designs. They were also conscious of potential gaps between home and school literacies. To better represent the content of multiliteracies pedagogy, a greater inclusion of home and community lives is required to minimize assumptions and to benefit from the resources from the students’ out of school lives.

**Northern identities.**

By the end of the primary years, the teachers’ responses that focused on subjectivities shifted from how literacies were being used in the homes to how the role of the community affected literacies, especially how a northern identity shaped the students’ interests. Due to the geographical location of the school board, all schools in the region were partially comprised of a rural student and staff population; although, only one elementary school in this study was designated a rural school. The grade 3 teacher, from the rurally situated school, saw the importance of situating lessons within the students’ experiences. She drew from her students’ “backgrounds and their cultures within the community…. This is a country school so usually the activities are…not all country based but I try to go on what they already know and go from there.” She was pleased by the financial support that her rural school received from the board for resources that would connect with the students: “The Board a couple of years ago was wonderful. Do you see all of those books back there? They are all country connection books.”

Rosa (gr. 8) saw a range of diversity in her class. She described her school as:

diverse in terms of the population. I have some who come to me from a rural setting and it is because it is a lovely plot of land and a very expensive house so they will have highly educated parents, high expectations and books are just a part of what they do. Then I will have some who come to me who would rather be fixing a car than reading about a car. We are in a predominately working class area in this part of town.
Another intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 b) felt that it was important to draw course content from the students’ lives and the community. She tried to connect her lessons with:

... something that is going on in our community or something in Northwestern Ontario, I have a lot of students who are from Northern reserves so compare that to something that might happen on your reserve, or how would they handle that on your reserve? How do we look at this in [the city], not necessarily on a whole city scope, but how do we handle this in the community. I mentioned a street or I mentioned a business, like Mrs.L’s where they all go for french fries: They can make those connections.

One of the high school English teachers’ (E b) comments spoke to the perception of country kids, “We have a really cool school in terms of non-academic kids and country kids at [the high school] and it is kind of neat. “ The teachers noted a trend with the rural students in that there was active parent involvement that fully supported the teacher.

All teachers recognized the importance of addressing the plurality of student subjectivities. In particular, teachers often focused on their students’ identification with their Northern or rural lives. This was more prevalent at the elementary level and with the secondary English teachers. The other subject specific high school teachers acknowledged that students’ needs were a consideration to pedagogy, but these needs were described in terms of academic achievement rather than considering the contributing social factors set out in the content of multiliteracies pedagogy.

**Aboriginal and cultural identities.**

The teachers noted an increase in Aboriginal students that was reflective of an increase in Aboriginal population for the region at-large. The board of education had recently created positions for an Aboriginal resource teacher, assembled an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, as well as authored support documents for teachers of Aboriginal students.
At the kindergarten and primary levels, the teachers also reported a shift in cultural demographics in terms of Aboriginal students. Kaija (K) recognized that what she once considered a typical traditional family was no longer representative of her students, as some students’ families consisted of a single parent, grandparents or foster care. She felt that “those things affect their backgrounds. This year it is more noticeable – the level of poverty, the lack of resources. Kids needing breakfast programs, extra clothes; their emotional needs are quite varied as well.” She continued by describing a shift in the cultural composition for her school, “I have more of an Aboriginal population. Every year or so, I typically have children who have come from impoverished backgrounds. They may have spoken another language, come from another country.”

Another primary teacher (gr. 3) in the rurally situated school observed that “there are not a lot of ESL students. I don’t think that we have any in our school. Our population is pretty stable; it isn’t very transient at all.” Kathryn (gr.3) integrated a range of her student cultures into her program. The intended effect of this inclusion was to honour the subjectivities of her students without making the students feel “othered”. She provided the example of integrating some Aboriginal traditions: “Well there are lots of chances to do those things that are real. If we are writing a procedure then we’ll make something. We’ve made ice cream bannock, we’ve done the recipe. They have written the procedure to go with it.”

The one grade 4 junior teacher considered the relationship between literacy experiences and English language literacy experiences:

We have cultural diversity in our school. We have quite a few Aboriginal students and they tend not to have as much as a background with books and language and that is not to say that quite a few of the others don’t as well. I am finding
that more in these years that the kids do read and the kids are buying books and getting books with their families.

The grade 6 teacher noted that she had ESL students in her classroom for the past couple of years. She was thinking about connections between home language, literacy and English Language Learners (ELL) experiences, although classroom literacy was described in terms of English language literacy. She noticed that “some [students] are coming with very little English. A lot of our students, as well, come from the Northern reserves so a lot of them are coming with no literacy backgrounds.” She saw her Aboriginals students as really shy, and her goal was based on the “hope that over the year [students and teacher] can build confidence in that area.”

Another intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 a) discussed a new after-school program that was designed to support Aboriginal students as well as extend cultural understandings to all students:

Urban Aboriginal Strategies is run out of our school for all kids in our community but primarily most of the students from our school go. It is an after school program. It is not just for Aboriginal students; it is for anybody. They do a whole bunch of things. They will do cultural teaching but they will also do extracurricular....

She recognized that in working with Aboriginal students, she would have to consider the role of oral communication and the implications on the classroom culture: “I have a high Aboriginal population so it is not always necessarily in their culture to be speaking; they are seen and not heard.”

At the secondary level, Miljana spoke about the novel she used in her grade 11 English class, *In Search of April Raintree*, by Beatrice Culleton. She considered it a good novel for her students because:
you do have Aboriginal students in your class who are not sure; they are treading water, and the book is about searching for identity. The girl is Métis so she is half white and half Aboriginal. She doesn’t like the Aboriginal side of her and she tried to live life as a white person so that has been challenging because it has been about race, acceptance and tolerance. And the kids really responded.

Only 7 of the 20 participants’ responses recognized dominant ideologies, although there were no comments that directly identified the potential biases of their own perspectives. One of the kindergarten teachers noted that there were two children who spoke other languages besides English in their homes, although she was uncertain as to what those languages were. The grade 3 teacher spoke about some of her considerations when working with Aboriginal students who were new to the school and did not share the same literacy backgrounds as her current students. She found that “in schools that have a higher Aboriginal population the kids have a lot of limited schema. They don’t have a lot of that background knowledge when they come to us. In terms of literacy we have to create conditions for kids.”

The teachers in this study recognized the increased demand for pedagogy to address and include materials, resources and approaches that would support Aboriginal students. Part of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy requires teachers to integrate the plurality of student subjectivities into pedagogy. While the teachers were consciously planning for their Aboriginal students, there was no reflection about the ideologies that they were bringing into the classrooms. As well, teachers made few comments that acknowledged students’ cultural backgrounds that were neither representative of the dominant ideologies, nor Aboriginal cultures, but made no mention of how these subjectivities were considered.
Information Communication Technology

There were 123 references to information communication technology (ICT), which accounted for 11.2% of the content of multiliteracies pedagogy. When talking about technology and multimedia, teachers commonly included references to the role of technology and system thinking together. For example, teachers would reference the impact of student usage of text messaging on writing skills. Because of the close relationship between these two subcategories, they will be reported together as one subcategory, Technology, Multimedia and System Thinking. This includes references to the use of technology and multimedia as part of the designing process and totals 90.2% of the subcategory. This was followed by Mass Media, ICT and Global Commodity (9.8%), which focused on the inclusion of the role of technology, most often in the form of discussions, in the three life realms.

Technology, multimedia and system thinking.

All teachers reported using technology and multimedia. Eighteen of the participants addressed the role of technology and technical systems. Teachers spoke about using computers, television, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and LCD projectors. At the kindergarten and primary levels, audio recordings, such as listening centres and mail writing (and even receiving) were a part of the classroom routine. One of the kindergarten teachers (K a) spoke about the role of computer navigation in the kindergarten classroom. She reported that “the senior kindergartens go to the lab once a week. A part of their technology is learning how to log on, how to find an icon on the menu and how to manoeuvre through [the interfaces].”
By the junior level, much discussion focused on the internet, email and MSN, including the concern of digital discourse permeating the curriculum. References to IPods and MP3 players were introduced at the intermediate level as well as Facebook. At the high school level, the music teacher was amazed by the technological literacies being willingly engaged by students on Facebook and in fact, had also joined the social network:

I only recently started to do Facebook but there are a number of games that they have started to play all sorts of literacy games. They play [Scrabble]. They play one where they make up a whole bunch of words like boggle, actually, so to me, those kinds of technology related literacies are really powerful because they want to do them and do them in their free time.

There was a noted increase in the use of cell phones at the high school level, as well as an increased focus on the use of technology that was more representative of students’ technological abilities and interests. The science teacher saw advantages to the integration of technology into the classroom:

I am very slowly taking all of my overheads and converting them into PowerPoint presentations and I can say that over the past 2 years that the kids say that they unequivocally prefer it. They like the font size, they like the colour and this year my discovery of how easy Google images is - they really like it. They really find it appealing and YouTube is really quite good. The reason why it is so good is because you can find a three minute clip. You don’t have to show a half hour video.

One of the high school English teachers (E a) believed that, “multimedia, laptops, the projectors are definitely part of our world and the kids are tending to react to it more. And therefore... we try to model good PowerPoints and they are able to use that stuff in their own instruction as well.”

Teachers used technology as part of their daily classroom routines. There was a range of comfort reported with most teachers revealing a lack of confidence and ability to integrate and
use technology. However, their self-reported usage of technology indicated that the teachers had solid technological foundations that were contrary to their reported levels of comfort. Teachers often expressed concern because they did not feel like technology experts and many did not openly draw from student or community expertise. As well, to better reflect the content of multiliteracies pedagogy teachers would need to address the usage of technology as more than a motivating and attractive medium to present text. A greater consideration of thinking about technology as part of a larger system involving distribution, organization and management of data are needed.

Mass media, ICT and global commodity.

In conjunction with Technology, Multimedia and System Thinking, teaching practices that align with multiliteracies pedagogy recognize that private spaces are being flooded by mass media, information networks, a multiplicity of communications as well as the global commodity culture. Students need to be supported as they learn to negotiate through text that spans beyond the printed word. Ten of the participants acknowledged this role. Teachers made 12 references that totalled 9.8% of the responses for this subcategory.

One trend that immerged is the impact of technology on student engagement. Kaija noted that her kindergarten students’:

... worlds are so visual – their play stations or they just watch tv... I think that things have changed. And when they come into your classroom and you’re not bopping around all over and not being visually exciting for them, they kind of tune out and go into their own little lands.

This idea was reiterated by Grant, one of the technology teachers:

I always say that we are up against MP3, YouTube and all that kind of stuff, video games, and I tell this to the kids just think of all the stimulation and all the frames per second and everything is instant on the internet and the microwaves
are quicker and all of the sudden I am standing at the front of the room with a piece of chalk? I don’t stand a chance and it is true.

The day that he was observed, Grant’s lessons were embedded with references to the advances in technology that he balanced with recommendation that students carefully consider the best medium for a given task. For example, he encouraged his students to use their partners before deferring to the internet so that students would continue to work as a part of a team. As a team, if the students needed to use external resources, then they would turn to the internet.

There was a full range of perceptions regarding the role of media outside of the classroom. Teachers acknowledged that all students were using literacy outside of the classroom, but there was discrepancy as to how much of that was traditional print text versus digital text as well as just how much of students’ literacy experiences should be text based. The grade 4 teacher noted, “they are involved with television, with listening, whether they understand what they are hearing on TV…. Writing - I don’t know if they do a lot of writing outside of the classroom in grade 4.” The grade 3 (a) teacher acknowledged a full range of literacies:

They are reading signs; they are reading monies; they are reading notes from Grandma; they are reading labels on the sides of cereal boxes, as well as books outside of the classroom. They write notes to Mom and Dad. They write thank you notes. They write notes to me that they bring from home. They obviously talk and listen outside of the classroom.

She went on to demonstrate awareness that the students were using their media literacy skills to discuss television programming and commercials:

They use media literacy too. I hear them at recess they talk about films and cartoons and TV shows and ads and they will even say why they think that certain things are done certain ways, like why they show toy ads: “So we will ask Mom and Dad for that toy.”

Miljana (E) questioned the role of technology on language:
All of the writing that I see has all been changed by modern technology like MSN and all of the internet jargon, text, Facebook and you see that in their writing coming through too. You see the LOL after they write a point. It is a different time. At the same time I wonder how we are going to preserve that literacy that is changing and the parents are doing the same thing.

She also admitted to using films less in her English classroom as a result of the ease of accessibility to technology that students had on a daily basis. She said that she used:

DVDs almost always but I never watch a whole movie any more, it is always clips. It is not a treat the way it was five or even ten years ago because they are just bombarded with the stuff. It is not a big deal any more. Technology has just changed so much.

The music teacher also recognized that in some cases there could be overdependence on technology, specifically with Wikipedia, as she said, “I think that some of my students couldn’t function without Wikipedia because they wouldn’t know where to get information from.”

The growing frustration about chat acronyms and text shorthand was voiced by one intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 b):

I constantly hear about them texting, even when they write notes to one another or writing in their notes for language, I hate it, the MSN then a lot of the time they don’t have capital letters like “I” they never capitalize “I” because they just do it on the computer.

Grant (T) admitted to being frustrated by acronyms and shorthand. But, he acknowledged that student were in fact reading and writing and using literacy in his technology classes, but in a specialized manner. He saw this as an entry point for drawing from the students’ technological understanding to engage them in the literacy tasks needed in his shop:

the problem with that [texting and emailing] is and this is my personal bias, the text messaging and emailing promotes that shorthand and that promotes not proper writing skills so is that counterproductive to literacy…. Well, they are reading and writing, but that is where they are coming from. Every time I pull out a new piece of computer equipment in the shop I always say, you probably know this stuff better than I do. We had no MSN or computers or microwaves when I was a kid and they all laugh.
While the role of technology was generally regarded as important because “people need to be more media literate than they are because they are so entrenched in the use of media” (E a), not all teachers were comfortable or satisfied with their current level of expertise. One English teacher (E b) admitted to knowing that she “should do a PowerPoint. We have been encouraged to use that or YouTube, but I haven’t yet.”

Teachers were aware of the role of ICT on social networks, but few considered the role of ICT on literacy learning. Many of the teachers strove to protect print-based text and Standard English. Some teachers did turn to students as experts, while it was one technology teacher who questioned ICT in terms of his own biases. This self reflection and posing of critical questions are important aspects of multiliteracies.

**Metalanguage**

Similarly to the usage of the term *multiliteracies pedagogy*, none of the participants referenced the term *metalanguage*; however, that did not mean that they did not make reference to using a specific language to talk about language, which accounted for 83.9% of the category. The realistic and flexible use of metalanguage totalled 13.4% of the category. Finally, the use of a sophisticated and critical metalanguage was reflective of 2.7% of the category. The subcategories for use of metalanguage are reported together because 97.3% of the category reported on the first two subcategories which combined to represent the use of language for talking about text that was flexible, open-ended realistic.

References to metalanguage in the most general sense were part of all of the responses. The kindergarten and primary level teachers accounted for 49% of the subcategories using a specific language to talk about language, and the high school teachers accounted for 32%.
Eighty-one percent of teachers’ responses focused on metalanguage occurred in the first and last four years of schooling. The junior and intermediate responses added up for the remaining 19%.

*Flexible, open-ended and realistic language for talking about text.*

The kindergarten teachers focused on language that was reflective of the students’ various stages of learning in terms of reading, writing and communication. The teachers introduced such terminology as letter, syllable, word and sentence to their students. Many of the students were emerging readers and writers, and the teachers were concerned with providing them with language to access learning about language, namely decoding and encoding text. Kaija (K) noted that she was particularly conscious of the instructional language that she used with her students. She thought that teachers needed to:

> make sure that our instructional language is appropriate for all of the kids because some of the kids aren’t able to follow simple instructions. Their receptive language just isn’t where it should be in the grade that they are in, so we make sure that the children understand what’s asked of them; that there is understanding, that there is comprehension that you do need to hear your instructions according to the children.

The grade 1 teacher began to include deeper discussion about language and continued the conversations that began in the kindergarten program about how language works. She often found discussion challenging due to the complexity of English. When working with her students and their parents she stressed that: “65% of the English language doesn’t follow the rules. That’s what I tell parents for shared reading. You’ll have to understand that they can’t sound out the word *the*. It doesn’t follow the rules. You have to memorize some of them.” The majority of responses that addressed metalanguage made at the kindergarten and primary levels centred on providing students with the names for the components of text as well as
providing space to talk about how syllables become words, words become sentences and how this process communicates meaning.

At the junior level, the teachers continued to ensure that students used the appropriate terminology when talking about text. The grade four teacher confirmed her students’ understandings of new terms by how well and how often they incorporated the terms into classroom discussions. She found that if her students tried to use the appropriate terminology frequently then they became more immersed. The result was evidence that a connection had been made. Jill (gr. 5/6) used metalanguage with her students to talk about reading content. Her responses indicated a connection between the use of metalanguage and metacognition, as she wanted her students “to be able to understand and be able to explain all of the reading strategies that are taught. For example we are really focusing on inferences - making connections both orally and written.” Jill presented a lesson on global warming during her observation. She explained that part of her plan was to have her students focus on the key terms (e.g., green house gasses and carbon dioxide) and having them repeat the terms and use the terms because “it is important that they put that into their heads.”

At the intermediate level, there were also examples that connected metalanguage and metacognition. The teachers used metalanguage to help their students understand how they learn. For example, one of the intermediate teachers (gr. 7/8 a) used Reflect, Retell, and Relate chart in her media program to focus on having her students identify connections:

First we have them making basic connections, and asking them to separate them into whether or not it impacts the text to world, text to self, text to text - so trying to get them familiarized, to organize where their thoughts are coming from. And we are really focusing on expanding it and extending their learning and their answers and learning where they are getting their information from.
At the secondary level, focus was similar to kindergarten and primary levels in terms of metalanguage and the introduction of subject specific terminology. For example, one of the technology teachers addressed the need for a shared vocabulary for communicating in the shop. His students needed to “get to know the trade language that [they] are actually using. Instead of calling a lathe a ‘thingy,’ they are actually going to call it a lathe and now the parts and the properties.” The science teacher aimed to increase his students’ metalanguage, in this case, their scientific vocabulary:

I would like to see them use scientific vocabulary in their everyday language and ultimately when they leave my course and come across a scientific issue that they will have a better understanding of it and they will be able to interpret and make conclusions based on their scientific knowledge and vocabulary. Ultimately that is what I want.

As well, the math teacher used metalanguage to help her students understand the relationship between formulae and their applications. She focused on discussion that supported her students as they learned to interpret word problems and “convert it over into a mathematical formula of some kind so math literacy is more about being able to interpret a word problem than what is actually being asked of them.”

Teachers in this study did report the use of specific language that was created to talk about language. Their understandings of metalanguage were shaped by their knowledge of metacognition in their instructions. There were few references to the critical consideration of language use.

To summarize, in terms of the form of multiliteracies pedagogy teachers used design processes that aimed to shift the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the students. They led the designing processes, with the junior and intermediate teachers taking the greatest
control over designing processes as to ensure the success of their students. Teachers also drew from a variety of design elements, but for the most part, they integrated them as means to address students’ learning styles rather than for adding depth to meaning. As well, teachers used an explicit language to talk about literacy learning; however, a lack of fluency in metalanguage caused some teachers (especially subject-specialists outside of English) to have lower confidence in their literacy pedagogies. Teachers welcomed further professional development opportunities that would allow them to connect formal training (theory) with practice. Additionally, this would provide them with space to critically consider theory, resources and practice.

All teachers were aware of the benefits of drawing from their students’ backgrounds; however, few were able to describe the students’ out-of-school literacy practices or languages that were spoken in their homes. Secondary level teachers found this particularly challenging. Teachers were focused on connecting with the students’ northern identities as well as meeting the needs of Aboriginal students.

Finally, teachers’ use of technology was located within Web 1.0 practices. Teachers reported low levels of comfort with their technological abilities but demonstrated solid understandings. Most teachers identified the Web 2.0 practices that the students were using as a hindrance to learning and were not exploring ways to use social networking to support learning.
Chapter Five: Findings for the Form of Multiliteracies Pedagogy

Literacy is like a ladder. You need to meet each rung to get to the top.

- High School English Teacher

Chapter Five reports the findings in response to the second research question: How do the literacy perceptions of teachers from K-12 align with and diverge from the form of multiliteracies? It focuses on how teachers help students learn to make meaning of text by transforming their previous understandings. This includes how teachers introduce new information, use explicit language during instruction, and encourage an awareness of ideologies that shape text consumption and production. This approach is not a linear presentation of meaning-making; rather it is based on the complex relationships that are formed between texts and the understandings that are continually revisited and reshaped during meaning-making.

There were a total of 918 responses in the interview transcripts that represent the four categories of the form of multiliteracies and serve as the organization for this chapter: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing and Transformed Practice. Each of the four categories is further divided into subcategories and discussed according to grade level. For complete frequency break down of the four categories refer to the appendix (Appendix 10: Frequency Counts and Percentages for the Form of Multiliteracies Pedagogy).

The first category, Situated Practice, centres on how teachers help students recruit their previous learning experiences and reshape them into a foundation upon which new understandings can be built. The five subcategories, to be examined in greater depth subsequently, are summarized as: extending knowledge; meaningful practice; progressivism; motivation to learn; and design and designing experiences. The subcategories locate situated
practice in the tradition of whole language and process writing; report how teachers draw from student experience so that efforts are focused on furthering competence; note the resources that individuals use and their processes of working with them; trace the use of motivational approaches to learning; and identify how teachers created community of learners to guide meaning making.

The second category, *Overt Instruction*, investigates how teachers scaffold learning for students by isolating the patterns behind meaning. This involves explicit teaching as well as active collaboration with the students (and their previous understandings) that includes the usage of metalanguage to describe and interpret modes of representation. These elements form the subcategories: *organization and guided practice; focus learners; metalanguage for position and personal significance; direct instruction; and metalanguage for design*.

*Transformed Practice* details the application of learning to other contexts or cultural sites. Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to design, implement, and reflect upon new learning as related to their own goals and values. It also involves the opportunity to recreate discourse for meaningful purposes. Three subcategories are used to highlight the elements of transformed practice: *implementation for real purposes; transfer context; and conscious transformation decisions and re-create designs*.

Finally, *Critical Framing* maps the teachers’ efforts to help students locate a purpose for their learning in terms of social context; it is a means for students to frame learning. The four subcategories used to describe critical framing (*framing growing mastery, critical literacy, contextualization of learning, and constructive critique*) report on cultural location; extensions and application of learning; and personal innovations. As well, it focuses on how students are
provided with opportunities to demonstrate their conscious control over new learning in relationship to dominant ideologies concerning historical, social, cultural, political, and value based knowledge.

**Situated Practice**

References to *Situated Practice* total 35.5% of responses that address the form of multiliteracies. The five subcategories are reported in order of frequency. The first two subcategories accounted for 65% of the responses: *Extending Knowledge* totalled 32.7% and *Meaningful Practice* was 32.4%. The subcategories focused on furthering student knowledge to increase competency and locating learning in meaningful practices, respectively. Next frequent was *Progressivism* at 14.4% and *Motivation to Learn* at 14.1%. *Progressivism* reports on references to whole language, process writing and developmental approaches. *Motivation to Learn* focused on teachers’ perceptions on how they engaged students in learning. Finally, the subcategory *Design and Designing* accounted for 6.4% of the responses and documents how teachers created their literacy programs.

*Extending knowledge.*

Extending knowledge accounted for the most responses for the category *Situated Practice*. These responses focused on extending students’ understandings that knowledge can be used to increase competency and competitiveness. It is important to note that there is overlap between the *Content* and *Form* of multiliteracies pedagogy that is evident between the designing process (the previously reported subcategory, *Teachers’ Roles in Designing*) and situated practice (this current subcategory, *Extending Knowledge*). The overlap in the theory bridges the “what” and “how” of multiliteracies and links what the students need to learn with
the how they can relate meaning-making contextually. All teachers’ responses had at least one reference to *Extending Knowledge*. The grade breakdown for this subcategory was unevenly distributed. The kindergarten teachers accounted for 31%, followed by the primary teachers at 25.1%, and the intermediate teachers at 20.7%, the intermediate/senior teachers at 13% and the junior teachers at 9.3%.

The kindergarten teachers focused on helping students locate meaning of new information within their own experiences. One teacher (K a) specifically spoke with her students about extending their understandings: “We are talking about anything and everything: inferring and making connections like personal to text. We have been working on that; specifically, trying to get the kids to move to a deeper connection.” Kaija (K) used approaches that connected school literacies with home literacies. For example, when she introduced the letter “s” to her students, she had them search grocery fliers to see how many examples they could find.

At the primary level there was a progression from making simple connections to activating prior schemata. The grade 1 teacher used read alouds to encourage students to talk about their connections with text. She provided an example of a student who during a read aloud “put up his hand and said, ‘Oh! Oh! I have a connection!’” As well, one of the grade 3 teachers believed that she played an important role in teaching students to start to extend their understandings; she saw it as critical to their success in later grades. She also traced her students’ abilities to extend their knowledge by making connection through discussion that occurred during read alouds. She considered that the students were extending their understandings when they were able to bring in prior knowledge and were able to talk about it.
She believed that “once students start doing that, connecting it to their own lives, that is when I think that they have a good handle on [making connections].”

The junior level teachers were focused on providing structure for extending knowledge. They often referred to text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. The grade 4 teacher saw evidence of her students extending knowledge in their journals where students connected their readings with events from their own lives.

The intermediate level teachers integrated a new dimension to the extension of knowledge. While the teachers of the lower grades focused on supporting the students in terms of understanding the processes involved with making meaning of information and understanding the content and possible connections, the intermediate level teachers centred on challenging their students to focus on extending learning. During the observation, Rosa (gr. 8) demonstrated how she helped to extend her students’ understandings by discussing current events from the daily newspapers that the students were provided with every morning. She saw this as important to introduce students to events that might have been outside of their current knowledge base because “if you don’t know a lot about the world it is hard to make connections.” Another intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 a) also stressed the importance of her teaching being focused on making connections with the world beyond school.

At the intermediate/senior level, Miljana (E), who worked with a grade 9 locally developed English program, also continued the use of daily newspaper reading in her class to encourage her students to continue to improve their literacy skills in terms of understanding content as well as making connections. She also used media with her grade 10 academic
students to help them extend their understandings of popular culture to the Shakespearean tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. She asked her students to brainstorm on:

all of the factors that affect love and relationships that they saw on TV. So they came up with some very stereotypical things.... I asked them, 'Why do you think I asked you to do this? How do they relate?' And finally someone said, ‘Are these the things in Romeo and Juliet?’.... and they realized that the things happening on TV were things that happened in Shakespeare’s plays.

The science teacher provided his students with questions to consider as means to encourage them to extend their scientific competencies: “We are increasingly living in a scientific society and if you are going to make decisions as a parent, like are you going to get your kid immunized against chicken pox? These are scientific decisions that everyone is going to have to make.”

The teachers’ responses that addressed extending students’ knowledge focused on supporting students as they create deeper connections with text, which was representative of a basic understanding of the form of multiliteracies. There was a developmental pattern noted within the individual teachers’ responses as well as across the grade levels. Teachers first concentrated on students extending their knowledge in terms of text to self, then moved to text to text, and further challenged the students to make text to world connections. Most commonly, the text to self connections were shared through discussion, the text to text connections were accessed through journals, and the text to world connections were based on responses to current events found in newspaper articles. There were few references made by teachers that centred on extending knowledge as means to increase competencies and competitiveness for the students’ future lives.
**Meaningful practice.**

All 20 teacher included practices for that they believed would be meaningful for their students. The kindergarten teachers accounted for 29% of the subcategory followed by primary teachers at 26.5%, intermediate teachers at 19.3%, intermediate/senior teachers at 16.7% and junior teachers at 8.4%.

There was a clear celebratory theme for the kindergarten teachers in terms of making literacy practices meaningful. Teachers often incorporated the theme of parties into their literacy practices: making guest lists, writing invitations, or mailing letters. One of the teachers (K b) held a classroom tea party so she could send her students mail:

I sent my JKs an invitation to a tea party and we had a big party and it was so exciting for them to get mail. We had read a book and I said, “Do you ever get mail?” And they said, “No.” so....

One of the grade 3 teachers was transparent about the need for meaningful practice:

“We teach them how to make connections ... but if they don’t know why they are making them then I think it is kind of a lost cause.” Kathryn (gr. 3) recalled some current topics of interest to the students that she then used for instructional purposes. She spoke about her students’ interests in “animals and cruelty to animals. We are reading right now about whether there should be zoos and of course they have lots of stories. They have seen movies and now the Shrine Circus is coming and there is a group protesting the use of animals to entertain.”

At the junior level, “Everything has to have a purpose” stated Jill (gr. 5/6). The grade 6 teacher reported “hearing that the curriculum is about real life learning so no matter what the subject is, tie it into how the [students] are going to get better, to how they are going to apply it to their own lives.” This was important in preparing her students for the literacy tasks that
would be on the EQAO’s Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics for the junior division.

Intermediate teachers shared a common purpose for their literacy practices. In the school board, there was a system level grade 8 award that recognized one exemplary student leader from each elementary school. To be considered, students had to submit a résumé and cover letter to a review panel. Rosa (gr. 8) identified the application process as adding purpose to the students’ efforts that were beyond evaluation. Similar to Jill (gr. 5/6), another intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 a) had a simple goal: “Use common themes that are real” to make learning purposeful for her students.

The aim of meaningful practices was also clearly articulated by the intermediate/senior teachers. The science teacher designed his lessons following his own saying, “I try and make it relevant.” Grant (T) provided his technology students with a concrete approach to meaningful practices:

I encourage them to bring in their own vehicles... And when they get to bring in their cars – Wow! They do the detailing or check the fluids. They love it and there is the purpose. I was no different when I was in high school. I wanted to know the purpose, well give them the reason and they love it. That is the thing about tech; it is very practical.

The other technology teacher recognized the importance of considering his students when planning. For example, one resource that he found was an authentic task for designing a gumball conveyer that he redesigned to better suit his students:

The kids are 18 years old, they aren’t 12... I end up changing that to creating a back hoe that you could actually tow behind your vehicle. Something that is real world, something that they are going to see in the real world that they are going to be able to work with and bring it with them and carry on, that type of thing.
The music teacher believed that the practical base of her program gave her an advantage:

> We will talk about the uniform appearance in clothes and being there on time. And then we make the connection afterwards that all of these skills that they bring the organization... that these are all skills that no matter what they do, whether they are a musician or a doctor or a student. That they are going to take these skills and they are going to benefit in every aspect of their lives; similarly with the literacy skills as well.

The English teachers saw literacy practices as having cross-curricular benefits. The content covered in English class in terms of reading, writing and oral communication could be extended to the students’ other courses. One of the teachers (Eb) said:

> I am hoping that the strategies are helping them in other classes as well, maybe how to get through a tough science text or history text or whatever and there is that bigger picture that I hope that the stories or the poems that we are reading that will enrich their lives and maybe they will want to create literature, too, or maybe they will find that there is some, you know, some amazing things to be learned from reading a good book.

The teachers’ responses representative of meaningful practice connected with the form of multiliteracies pedagogy. Kindergarten teachers included practices that students would find fun. It was their hope that this would create a positive foundation for future learning. Teachers from grade 1 – 8 aimed to have their students know why practices were meaningful. Locating the purpose was paramount and teachers offered their students reasons for why they believed activities were meaningful. At the intermediate/senior level, teachers focused on encouraging students to consider why practices were meaningful, rather than providing them with reasons.

*Progressivism.*

Progressivism includes inclusion of whole language programming, process writing and developmental considerations. It connects those who have previously achieved mastery in an area to serve as mentor to others. In its simplest form, it can involve teachers and students.
Similar to the subcategory *Extending Knowledge*, this subcategory also overlaps with the
*Content of Multiliteracies* subcategory, *Teachers’ Roles in Designing*. It connects the “what”
teachers are doing with the “how” they are meshing their pedagogies with their students’
literacy needs. There was a wide range of number of responses for this subcategory. The most
frequent responses were found at the primary level at 31.6%, followed by kindergarten
teachers at 28.3%, intermediate/senior teachers at 20.5, intermediate teachers at 11.1% and
junior teachers at 8.5%. This may be reflective of the emphasis on whole language programs in
kindergarten and the introduction of process writing at the primary grades that was revisited in
the secondary grades as teachers tailored writing and reading processes to subject specific
literacy requirements. One junior and one intermediate level teacher had no responses
assigned to this subcategory.

The kindergarten teachers drew from their own training in whole language, as was
described by Kaija (K): “When I started teaching in primary, we were in the whole language days
and I don’t think that I have ever left those whole language roots.” Another kindergarten
teacher (K b) believed that literacy “should be a whole approach, not a piece approach” and
because of that she ran a balanced literacy program in her room.

At the primary level, the grade 1 teacher built on the whole language program that was
introduced in kindergarten by including “a scaffolding approach, the whole idea of modeled,
then shared, then guided, then independent allowing for the gradual release of responsibility.”
The grade 3 teacher drew from many literacy approaches including *Four Blocks* (Cunningham,
Hall & Sigmon, 2000); *6+1 Trait Writing* (Culham, 2003); and *Jolly Phonics* (Lloyd, 2001). She also
saw the application of prior learning, including the writer’s workshop that she used in her
classroom as being cross-curricular: “There is a procedure that we are learning how to do in our writer’s workshop and we do it in science; for example, scientific method is parallel.”

The few references made to progressivism at the junior and intermediate levels were centred including writing processes in curricular planning that focused on supporting students’ active engagement in pre, during and post writing.

At the secondary level, similar to the kindergarten and primary grades, teachers were focused on a progressivist approach to literacy reflective of subject-specific literacy needs. The English teacher focused on writing as a process, whereas the mathematics teacher used popular culture from her students’ childhoods to use a process approach to math literacies. She provided an example of introducing triangles:

> We started a concept today that was called Similar Triangles so I started way back and I said, “Why don’t we start with Sesame Street? What do you remember about triangles?” So they went through everything that they remembered about triangles and we drew some triangles on the board and then we went right back and the kids said, “I’ve done this,” and I said, “I know and that is the point - to try and connect it all together.”

The teacher stimulated the students’ memories of the childhood television program to serve as an entry point into discussion about the defining elements of discourse on triangles.

Kindergarten and primary teachers clearly demonstrated progressivism in their literacy approaches. They drew from several commercial programs such as Four Blocks and Jolly Phonics to frame their teaching. Junior and intermediate teachers commonly referred to using a writer’s workshop approach by following formal or informal programs. At the secondary level, teachers were driven by subject content. While they did describe opportunities for students to benefit from learning through immersion in rich complex practices, they also relayed examples of some of the NLG’s own concerns with progressivism, that is, mastery set solely in a specific area.
Motivation to learn.

Fourteen of the participants accounted for 14% of the responses for the category, *Situated Practice*, focused on motivating students to learn. Teachers were not asked specifically how they motivated students; rather the responses are reflective of aspects of their teaching approaches that they considered important to encourage student engagement.

All three of the kindergarten teachers included the need to include motivation in their programs. Their ideas about motivation were rooted in creating positive literacy experiences for their students. In fact, one of the first comments made by Kaija (K) during her interview was that she wanted her students: “to love coming to school and have a successful experience. They have to feel like they leave with their self-esteem in check and boosted and they want to be there and that they have had a successful year.” For students who were just beginning to read, she used picture books that labelled pictures with short phrases (rather than complete sentences) “just so that the students get the idea that they can try to do something by themselves or with a partner and to bring it home and show their parents and feel good about themselves as a reader.” She also incorporated writing and reading text in creative ways like using letter pretzels that the students can eat or shaving cream to spell their names.

At the primary level, one of the grade 3 teachers focused on ways to engage students through creative use of media. She noticed that her students were motivated to write when encouraged to use coloured pens. She also saw the need to activate their schemas as a way to motivate students as they could become more engage in the material. Jill (gr. 5/6) was the lone junior teacher who made reference to motivating students. She was vague about describing her methods of motivation because she considered engaging students as an active task that
changed year-to-year and student-to-student. She said, “Every year you are learning and your kids are different. What you would use one year in literacy you won’t use the next because you have a different group of kids. It is always a learning game for you and the students.”

At the intermediate level all three teachers made reference to using motivation to engage their students. One teacher (gr. 7/8 b) reflected on the importance of engaging the students:

If it is something new and the [students] are totally lost, they start getting agitated or frustrated with their work: there is work refusal. If somebody really doesn’t understand something they’ll sometimes become defiant or they don’t want to do their work at all or they are off topic; whereas if they are getting excited....

Rosa (gr. 8), along with her teaching partner, introduced a grade 8 currency to motivate their students. In their economic systems unit they paid their students for their work with play money that could be used in an auction at the end of the year.

Six of the high school teachers included references to motivation in their responses. There were a few interesting trends that emerged in their discussions of motivation. The academic and university stream teachers spoke of needing to provide motivation for their students, but it was the locally developed, applied and college stream teachers that went into depth about how and why this was necessary. This richer description was also present in the performance based courses: music and technology. The math teacher recognized a disparity of engagement between her senior university streamed students and her applied level students: “the grade 12s are at the highest level of math that we’ve got and they are obviously interested in what I am trying to give them; whereas the 10 applieds, it is a mandatory course and a lot of them are unengaged. So it is always a challenge to get them to buy in.”
Grant (T) admitted to changing his thinking about what to use in his shop as positive, relative motivation:

When I first started teaching I saw motorcycle magazines and car magazines in the shop and I thought, “Oh-no! That is terrible! It is not the textbook or the curriculum!” But, you know what? They pick it up and they read it and it is directly related to what we are doing.

He also credited his technology department as being a sound source for brainstorming about how to engage students. This included techniques to grab their attention:

You have to get their attention with something that interests them. Sometimes we bring in new cars from the dealership here. They like that, new cars, turbo... now they are excited, but that is not why I brought it there. I brought it there to show them a circuit or how anti-lock brakes work; it is the car that they like or the big Ford truck. You can’t force anybody to do anything; you can’t force them to learn, so if you get their interest and they want to do it then they are self-motivated.

He considered these times as moments for “accidental learning” and believed that he had an advantage over the English teacher because his students were in his course because of their interest in cars; not because it was a compulsory credit.

The music teacher was in agreement with this idea. She saw the advantage of being in a subject area that was performance based. She considered the opportunities for her students to perform in public were:

more interesting for them [than a written assignment]. They get a chance, too, to practically tie [their learning] together and it is all very immediate, which I think is an advantage of some of the classes in the arts. They don’t have to write something, then hand it in and I take it away and then I give it back and they get individual kinds of feedback. It is a much more group orientated activity and you are more willing to take a chance because they are not going to be centred out.

The NLG believed that students need to be motivated to learn. Teachers in this study described motivation as a crucial affective consideration. At the elementary level teachers used motivation to create positive literacy experiences for students that were believed to contribute
to constructing lifelong learners. At the secondary level, teachers described motivation as necessary for engaging students in locally developed, applied, and college level courses. The academic and university students were considered to be self-motivated learners and less attention was placed on providing external motivation.

*Design and designing.*

Thirteen of the participants’ interviews included elements of design and/or designing processes accounting for 6% of the *Situated Practice* category. These responses contained the teachers’ explanations of how they created their programs to support student learning. All three of the kindergarten teachers; two of the primary and intermediate teachers; one junior teacher and five of the high school teachers had evidence of designing processes in their responses. Interestingly, one of the technology teachers made four references to design, which is perhaps reflective of the design nature of his programs.

One of the kindergarten teachers was in the process of obtaining her specialist qualification in literacy. She was using her professional development as opportunity to reflect on the literacy program that she designed, specifically making connections. She believed that it was important to allow for space in her program for students to make connections between text and their lives, other text and the world, as well as to be able to discern the value of the connection. At the primary level, the grade 3 teacher reflected about the importance of long-term planning for designing literacy programming. She pondered about a systematic approach to literacy: “imagine if they had started in grade 1….then you could just build on that. I think that having that consistency would be great…. if everybody used those best practices....”
The grade 4 teacher accounted for all of the responses at the junior level. She reflected about her role in the process of design. She saw herself as a facilitator and weighted her position against the positions of students carefully:

I don’t want to be the “be all and end all” and say do what I do, but I introduce them to all forms of reading and writing. I model those forms, I give them the basics that they have to know and then I try and guide them through it. I still am the teacher, but I try not to do it in a transferring the information way I try to make it a pleasant group environment, it is not just a reading and writing environment all of the time.

The consideration of the role of students in the designing process was also evident in two of the intermediate level teachers’ responses. Both of the grade 7/8 teachers encouraged student choice as an active part of their program designs. Students often had choice about topics and modes of presentation within thematic units.

As expected, all three of the high school English teachers spoke of the designing process for literacy. One teacher spoke in great depth of the literary design of her program for her AP students. Another one spoke about recruiting the students’ ideas in content creation. In other subject areas, the math teacher included helping students overcome math anxieties into her design for math literacy. Her aim was to help students:

to get over some of their fears. I mean with the level of kids in the applied level - kids come in and they just have a high level of anxiety over the words in math and we need to get them to see that the two are married together; that you can’t separate the words from the numbers: one without the other is meaningless.

Grant (T), whose practices accounted for 18% of the category, included creating a safe environment in his shop room where the students would focus on content and application first. He saw his role in designing literacy opportunities as “quiet” integration as demonstrated in his approach to spelling:
I usually don’t mark spelling, and this is not because I don’t think spelling isn’t important. But I am trying to get the information that the kids know and some of our students are very, very weak in their literacy; but, if you kind of get that relaxed environment going where spelling isn’t important and they just write stuff down, well that is something. They can express their answers there.

Overall, the teachers did engage students in the design process; however, the teachers’ descriptions of facilitation more closely resembled guided instruction. Students would require greater control over resources and encouragement to develop further as team members to demonstrate the intent of multiliteracies.

**Overt Instruction**

There were a total of 288 responses for *Overt Instruction* that account for 31.5% of the form of multiliteracies. It is further organized into five subcategories. The largest subcategory, *Organization and Guided Practice*, represents 28% of the category and investigates the teacher’s use of explicit instruction and guided practice to help students organize their understandings of new information. The second subcategory, *Focus Learners*, 24%, centres on approaches applied to help students understand the benefits of connecting new knowledge with prior experiences. With 20% of the responses, *Metalanguage for Position and Personal Significance* focuses on the inclusion of metalanguage to support students as they uncovering personal significance in their design processes. The fourth subcategory, *Direct Instruction*, traces instruction that scaffolds new information with the students’ prior experiences and totals 16% of the category. Finally, *Metalanguage for Design* (12%) describes the specific language that teachers used with students to talk about elements of reading, writing and oral communication.
Organization and guided practice.

This subcategory centred on the approaches used to help organize the students’ thinking and learning, which included the implementation of guided practice. On average, the kindergarten teachers represented 28.6% of the responses followed by 24.6% by intermediate teachers, 20% by intermediate/senior teachers, 15.4% by junior teachers and 11.4% by primary teachers.

Kaija (K) provided an example of creating space for her students organize their learning. She worked with students one-on-one to make their thinking processes transparent. She recalled a conversation with one young boy building a sandcastle. She brought him a clipboard and asked, “Okay, let’s try and draw that castle that you are trying to make right now. What else do we need to make a castle?” She believed that “is a value in planning and writing things down and sketching.” Another kindergarten teacher (K a) admitted that the best approach to engaging kindergarten students was to do the activity:

I do it. I model it and that is the biggest key in kindergarten - showing it. If you do it, they are more inclined to follow because they look up to you…. You have to live it. If you want them to pick it up, you have to do it.

The modeling remained important throughout the divisions. The grade 1 teacher described the process that she used for reading as moving from modeling to guided practice to independent practice. Kathryn (gr. 3) also attributed the success of all teachers on staff using modeling in their programs to school level professional development: “Sometimes I will provide some PD for the staff on what [modeling] looks like and how it should be filtered through grade one. Modeled writing still happens the same was in grade 1 as it does in grade 8 so then it
doesn’t get lost.” In her follow-up interview she identified modeling strategies as one of her instructional strengths.

The grade 6 teacher drew from her 15 years of teaching experience and reflected that her students appeared to be having greater success in literacy because of the modeling and guided practice that was occurring more frequently than in the past 10 years. At the intermediate level, Rosa (gr. 8) provided an example of her approach to organization and guided practice:

So if I am going to ask you to do a lyric analysis, then I am going to write a lyric analysis so I can share my trials and tribulations and I am going to have that model accessible.... So if I am going to ask you to write it, hopefully, I have defined it for you, I have given you samples to look at, we have worked through some examples, you’ve had an opportunity to talk with your friends, write with your friends and then finally, little birdie, you need to fly on your own and now I get to see what you can do.

The intermediate teachers, similar to the rest of the participants, often referred to modeling and guided practices as stages that worked well together. One teacher (gr. 7/8 b) depended on “lots of modeling. Model, model, model. Show them this is where I want you to be.”

The intermediate/senior teachers remained focused on their respective subject areas. The math teacher used literacy skills as means to help her students organize their understandings of word problems; that is, “to get them from being able to read into an interpretation of what is being asked of them.” Grant (T) revealed that his department was taking a unified approach. They were placing focus on direct instruction about the organization of notes and note taking as they promoted organization in their courses, as well as in the students’ lives. The music teacher included guided practice in her reflection on helping students
make meaning of new information. Even at the senior level, she saw the benefit of including direct instruction regarding how to use their individual literacy resources.

The teachers provided many examples of guided practice in their responses. They organized their lessons so that they could work alongside students. They aimed to build on the prior experiences of students as outlined by the form of multiliteracies. Missing from their responses was the inclusion of inclusion of varied experts from the community or even students themselves.

*Focus learners.*

Accounting for 24% of overt instruction the subcategory, *Focus Learners* is based on the teacher’s role to help students recruit their prior knowledge to help them situate new learning. All of the teachers’ responses demonstrated elements of focusing the learner save one junior teacher. The kindergarten teachers total 36% of the responses followed by intermediate teachers at 23%, primary teachers at 20%, intermediate/senior teachers at 14% and junior teachers at 7%.

One of the kindergarten teachers (K b) saw her main goal as “getting into those routines.” Part of her program was readying students to learn. Another kindergarten teacher (K a) expanded on this idea and included helping students develop their oral language as a means to create the focus for developing their literate practices into her aims.

The grade 1 teacher thought that cooperation among teachers was needed to focus students. She reported that at her school, staff supported the idea that all teachers were responsible for the learning of all students: “We can all work together particularly to help our
struggling students succeed. Our principal has the same motto – we own them all from k-8 and that is how we look at it. We are all responsible for them all.”

At the junior level, teachers invested time focusing learners to better understanding their own strengths and weaknesses in literacy. Jill (gr. 5/6) believed that the junior level students should centre on understanding themselves as learners. To her, that included: understand their literacy strengths; weaknesses; and which strategies worked best for them, in what situation and why. She believed that the students were old enough to be able to articulate and understand their strengths as well as areas for improvements.

One of the intermediate teachers (gr. 7/8 a) used goal setting as a means of focusing students. Rosa (gr.8) focused her students on making connections across subject areas as well as between text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world. In her follow-up interview Rosa shared her understanding of the value of probing questions; she used probes to “lead students towards an idea being modeled.”

The intermediate/senior teachers described a range of responses regarding focusing their students that were more reflective of content area understandings than the elementary teachers’ responses. The English teachers often used metaphors to help focus their students and they spoke about strategies that helped to focus their students’ note taking, such as sticky notes. One English teacher (E b) was using technology, such as PowerPoint presentation software, to focus her students on content, as was the science teacher and one of the technology teachers. What quickly became apparent was the strong connection at all grade levels between focusing learners and the subcategory organizing information and guided
practice. Teachers were following the form of multiliteracies by explicitly focusing their students to approach literacy tasks as well as understand their selves as literacy learners.

**Metalanguage for position and personal significance.**

This subcategory represents 20% of the form of multiliteracies pedagogy. The responses for *Metalanguage for Position and Personal Significance* were comprised of substantially higher number of secondary teachers: 48.6% high school teachers and intermediate teachers, followed by 18.9% junior teachers, 16.9% primary teachers and 14.7% kindergarten teachers.

At the kindergarten level, teachers used language with their students as a basic form of identifying personal significance which included learning how to express themselves. Specifically one teacher (K b) asked her students, “What do you think that you learned today?” as a way to encouraged students to reflect on their practices with the hope that they would learn “to become independent and to make choices and decisions.”

At the primary level, the grade 1 teacher noted that her students were struggling with communication:

> most of them are really good listeners and have really good vocabularies, but one of the things that we are finding is that they are having more and more articulation problems and this affects not only their speaking and the ability to be understood, but also their reading and writing abilities.

In response to this, a part of her program included using metacognition to help the students identify their strengths and weaknesses, along with selecting approaches to literacy that work best for them. During this metacognitive process, she did use specific language to talk about language, although she did not reference the term metalanguage. She saw the need for her students to be:
proficient about self correction when they are reading; recognize when their reading has broken down and knowing what they can do to fix it. They need to have that certain level of metacognition, being able to identify what strategies that they can use when they are faced with a difficult word.

At the grade 3 level, the emphasis on metalanguage was based on ensuring clear instructions.

Kathryn modeled think alouds to demonstrate language for talking about reading:

We connect text to self, text to text and text to world. We think about how the text is like an experience we have had or how it is different, or how a book that we have read is like another book and you can do a Venn diagram or anything like that. And text to world is anything that we are seeing in the paper or on TV or on the news and talking about those things.

This approach continued at the junior level where the teachers engaged students in conversations that spoke directly to making connections as means to locate significance. It was often centred on key questions such as: What does this remind you of? Have you read anything else by this author? What connections can you make?

The intermediate teachers also used framing questions to help students improve their abilities to find personal significance and position. One teacher (gr. 7/8 b) noted that “intermediate students do ask questions. They are already inquisitive enough, but they aren’t telling me why they are thinking what they are thinking so that is why making connections and inferencing is important.”

At the intermediate/senior level, Miljana (E) continued to directly involve her students in establishing personal significance. She would often pause to pose the question: “Why are we doing this?” Another English teacher (E b) focused on use of discussion. She noted the importance of students having the space to create their own understandings within their own contexts. She drew on Socrates for her inspiration aiming to talk with her class philosophically
“so that they can make connections between what they are learning and their lives so through discussion and through activities with their close friends developing what we have learned.”

The music teacher introduced a more complex layer to metalanguage. She acknowledged that her senior students were working with increasingly more challenging concepts and practices and therefore had a much more substantial musical foundation to draw from than her intermediate students. She considered the senior years as the opportunity to fully appreciate the foundational work that occurred at the intermediate level:

There is another level of being a musician that they don’t become aware of until they get to the more senior grades and then some of the vocabulary, some of the literacy, some of the discussion and questions that we have evolve. They don’t occur to them from the early stages because their definitions and understandings of the subject are still very surface.

In terms of using metalanguage of position and personal significance, the teachers focused on supporting students in understanding their positions as literacy learners and finding personal meaning in text. For most, this was accomplished through dialogue and reflection. While the responses demonstrated a basic connection with the form for multiliteracies in terms of the creation of a space for reflection, also needed was the inclusion of a purposeful language used to communicate positioning and personal significance.

**Direct instruction.**

Direct instruction accounted for 17% of the category *Overt Instruction*. The term, *Direct Instruction*, is not meant to represent static approaches to teaching; rather direct instruction involves scaffolding activities that draw from the expertise of the teacher and student prior knowledge. Nineteen of the 20 teachers used explicit instruction as means of scaffolding new information with their students’ prior learning. The one teacher who did not mention direct
instruction was the technology teacher, a former college instructor, who was in the process of obtaining his teacher’s certification. His instructional role was so deeply embedded with working as part of the learning community that he was unable to identify elements of his interview where he was explicitly sharing new information in an instructional role. Kindergarten teachers accounted for 26% of the responses and were closely followed by primary and intermediate teachers who each represented 21%. Intermediate teachers totalled 18% of the responses and intermediate/senior teachers 14%.

The kindergarten teachers focused on making learning visually stimulating as well as promoting positive social experiences. Kaija (K) considered multimodal opportunities important to her direct instruction. She used “as many different kinds of materials as I can to make it fun and interesting for the kids to be touching and learning in various ways.”

Similar to the kindergarten teachers, the primary teachers also demonstrated how tightly the elements of overt instruction were entwined. Guided practice was an active part of their direct instruction. The grade 1 teacher provided an example of direct instruction that used a strategy to help students retell called, retell gloves. She described this process as students creating paper gloves “with their reading buddy. Their non-fiction glove has a T, three Fs, and a question mark: That stands for a topic, three facts and a question that they still have after reading the book.”

At the junior level the teachers were cognizant of the curricular content that needed to be delivered to their students, but this consideration was balanced by the individual needs of students as well as their strengths and interests. The grade 4 teacher also saw a direct connection between instruction and student application:
I have been around for a while teaching and I still think that kids need a lot of practice reading out loud; reading in small groups, grammar, language and spelling. I still think that the focus has been taken off of that a bit, but I can see it coming back like a big circle. I still think that they really need to be taught.

One of the intermediate teachers (gr. 7/8 b) allocated considerable time in her program for communication: She strove to include more time for she students to talk. She would circulate during this time so that she could draw from their conversations to shape her instruction.

The secondary level teachers provided many diverse examples of direct instruction. Grant (T) believed that his instructional role was not to “just give students answers,” rather he gave them “just enough information and let [students] figure it out on their own. I mean that is a life skill for everybody.” His instructional approached merged teacher instruction with student involvement. He saw it as the practical meeting the application:

We have the practical aspect of [instruction], we do something on the board…. and then we can apply it to the car, or we can build whatever it is in construction. We learned the theory - now let’s apply it and they see the benefit of it.

The AP English teacher (E a) was very specific with the instruction that she presented to her grade 12 class. As explicit as the instruction was, she also believed that direct instruction needed to be complimented with application:

For example, in my grade 9 English class in order to have a methodology as an entry into poetry we used an AP technique TPCASTT: Title, Paraphrase, Connotative Device, Attitude, Shifts, Title, and Theme…. we talked about methods to get into poems and I more formally introduced this TPCASTT method via PowerPoint and then as a whole class we modeled how that works.

The teachers’ responses did align with the NLG’s direct instruction. In addition to providing students with information, they also provided students with the scaffolding needed
to understand the application of new material. As well, teachers encouraged students to consider resources other than the teacher.

**Metalanguage for design.**

Another important aspect of metalanguage is using language to describe design processes. The aim is to help students understand the “intra-systematic relations of the domain being practiced” (NLG, 1996, p. 86). *Metalanguage for Design* involves using specialized language with students to provide them with the vocabulary to have conscious control over what is being learned. This includes being able to isolate their own understandings from their teachers. This was the least referenced element of *Overt Instruction* that was connected to 14 of the 20 participants’ interviews. On average the 34 responses are broken down into 39.2% made by primary teachers, 22.5% by intermediate teachers, 19.6% kindergarten teachers, 12.7% junior teachers, and 5.9% intermediate/senior teachers.

At the kindergarten level the teachers’ responses stressed the explicit use of metalanguage. One teacher (K b) provided an example about using the word prediction with her class for the first time. She recalled:

> What I did was very explicit. I was reading and then I put my book down and said, “Now I am thinking and I am making a prediction. That is a big word. That means I am thinking about what is going to happen” and I actually went and made a prediction.

Another kindergarten (k b) teacher introduced strategies to her students such as chunking and allowing them opportunity to practice using the strategy and familiarize themselves with the terminology. She felt that the students would need more time to work with the specialized language and approaches as well as needing further support from teachers in latter grades.
At the primary level, the grade 3 teacher’s responses also included the use of a literacy vocabulary:

We teach all kinds of strategies for thinking around text. We usually start the lesson with, “Readers use their schema” or “Readers think about the text, and how it is organized”. Or “Readers use the index”, that sort of stuff. We are teaching that and it really helps them, I think, to be aware.

She noted that although her example was based on reading she wanted to facilitate the same awareness regarding literate practices for writing.

At the junior level, discussion was the main means of connecting metalanguage to the students’ designing processes. For example, the grade 4 teacher wanted her students to “be able to understand and be able to explain all of the reading strategies that are taught,” as she wanted her students “to know their own strengths and areas for improvement and articulate them.” The intermediate teachers also used metalanguage and aimed to further their students’ understandings of the application of literacy approaches.

The intermediate/senior teachers demonstrated the impact of subject specific literacy practices on metalanguage. For example, one of the goals for the math teacher was to help develop her students’ understanding of the metalanguage of mathematics they would be “able to really pick a question apart and figure out what is really being asked of them so from going from the big paragraph to a much more detailed analysis.” The music teacher made reference to her gentle approach to integrating literacy into her course and explained that her role was to focus first on the musical literacy and to provide individual students with the needed support in creating their own design processes:

I think that I have to be very subtle in the sense that I would never stop teaching a class and start teaching a literacy lesson on the blackboard about how to write a sentence or how to write a paragraph, it would be much more individualized.
Often the metalanguage for design used by teachers during overt instruction focused on specific literacy tasks. Teachers consciously modeled individual steps involved in making-meaning. Students were also provided with the vocabulary needed for discussion. However, students were not encouraged to use metalanguage as means to understand how their own ideas reproduced or even challenged those of the teacher as described by the NLG.

**Transformed Practice**

*Transformed practice* is focused on the addition of meaning; it is the application of learning to other contexts or cultural sites. Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to design, implement, and reflect upon new learning as related to their own goals and values. It also involves the opportunity to recreate discourse for meaningful purposes (Kalantzis, Cope & Fehring, 2002). Three subcategories highlight the elements of transformed practice that provide the focus for the category: *Implementation for Real Purposes; Transfer Context; and Conscious Transformed Decisions and Re-create Designs*.

Participants made 192 references to transformed practice accounting for 20.9% that address the form of multiliteracies pedagogy. *Implementation for Real Purposes* and *Transfer of Context* and accounted for 96% of the subcategories while *Conscious Transformed Decisions* and *Re-create Designs* each totalled 2% and are reported together. Fifty percent of the teachers’ responses formed the first subcategory, *Implementation for Real Purposes* and describe teaching practices that focused on recreating meaning for real purposes. *Transfer Context*, the second subcategory totalled 46% of the category *Transformed Practice*. 
Implementation for real purposes.

Implementation of Understanding for Real Purposes was present in all participants’ responses. The subcategory centred on the teachers’ approaches to drawing from newly formed knowledge and engaging students in applying it purposefully. The intermediate level teachers accounted for 30% of the responses followed by intermediate/senior at 22.6%, junior at 20%, kindergarten at 15.8% and primary at 11.5%

The kindergarten teachers demonstrated a range of activities that enabled their students to utilize their learning for real life purposes which were meaningful to them. In terms of writing, Kaija (K) aimed to: “make sure that I am keeping it real, so it is not always responses to things that are teacher directed, but that we keep things more on their level, that we do things that they feel are important.” She also encouraged her students to consider how they could re-create their learning and support the community in which they lived. This included:

Basic things, environment, recycling, waste, those sorts of things even using too many paper towels – no sense of waste – those are the kinds of things that I try to, on a daily basis. I remind them and hope that it will have some sort of impact on society.

Another kindergarten teacher (K b) also focused on an environmental theme to help her students re-design their learning from a school based context to a community focus. She reported, “in the spring we start to do some gardening…. we start to talk about community. I think it is a good time of year to talk about the people in our community. In the past I have done the same thing, asking, ‘What can you do?’”

The primary teachers also provided opportunities for their students to transfer their learning from the classroom context to their lives beyond school. The grade 3 teachers made reference to helping students understand how to transform the literacy skills that they were
focusing on in class to meet the expectations of the grade 3 EQAO Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. As well, Kathryn (gr. 3) focused on drawing from the students’ interests as another means to connecting learning and authentic purposes:

There are a lot of chances to do those things that are real. If we are writing a procedure then we’ll make something. We’ve made ice cream bannock, we’ve done the recipe; they have written the procedure to go with it. I have gotten them to do book talks and do recommendations for books and we have developed a little magazine that they have written articles for that they feel are important.

Jill (gr. 5/6) spoke about re-creating student practice for both school-based and community-based purposes. She hoped that her students would be able to transform their knowledge across the curriculum. She also hoped that students would be able to transfer their understanding of literacy to foster “a love of reading; the appreciation of good literature; the selection of appropriate level of books for themselves; and the desire to write frequently enough to make their thoughts and ideas clear.” In terms of extending their learning to their lives beyond school, she encouraged the students to consider the impact they could have on such things as they environment. For example, as a class they strove to eliminate waste at lunch time. The grade 6 teacher also encouraged students to transfer what they had learned by considering their potential roles beyond academics:

I am always trying to impress upon them to try their very best and to be a good person in life, how to be productive and how to be successful so I think those are the types of behaviours we are talking about.

As part of the programming at the intermediate level, teachers were conscious about making the processes behind reading, writing and oral communication transparent for students. Rosa (gr. 8) reflected, “I think that literacy is incredibly embedded. It is hard to imagine that you are not using it. I still think that you have to be very conscious about how you
are using it best.” She also provided the example of re-designing the use of critical questions used while reading the daily newspaper to events within their school:

For example, our school sold hot dogs and they don’t usually sell hot dogs. So some of the kids said, “So what is the money going toward?” And I thought, “What a good question to ask. I am glad you are asking that question – where is that money going?” That is something that you would want to know. I am happy when they are skeptical. That, to me, is the best application.

Another intermediate teacher (gr. 7/8 a) recalled a student initiative that re-designed the purpose of a media study after viewing the film:

We watched the Pursuit of Happiness and how you can hit rock bottom and how you can make changes - how you can change. Two of the kids in my class jumped in and have started their own campaign. They have been collecting things for the Shelter House; things like shampoo and canned goods. And they are putting together little bags of items that they are getting ready to handout at the shelter.

At the intermediate/senior level, the teachers made reference to the culminating activities for the courses as being the main way that students were to transform practice. As the science teacher stated, “That is when they have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning over the semester according to the expectations.” Grant (T) liked to focus on the curriculum as the starting point for engaging his technology students in real purposes:

We learned the theory, now let’s apply it and they see the benefit of it -without that basic knowledge they don’t know where to begin. And they see the benefits. They really do! We are constantly going back and forth from the theory to the practical and they see that they complement one another.

He focused his program on supporting his students in terms of understanding how to engage in taking the theory that is covered in class and extending it to their day-to-day lives as well as future implications. For example, some of his students were involved with the Bicycles for Humanity project (refurbished bicycles are donated to African villages). As part of the refurbishing process, students had to apply their understanding of gear ratios:
They fix this bike up, it gets sent to Africa and now someone, instead of walking for 3 hours to the hospital, can now take a bike. That is powerful. And with the bike we do all sorts of things we do gear ratios; we do physics and theory that goes with it. And once again it accents the learning and now they can fix their own bikes or their friends’. It just compliments.

The music teacher’s programs were performance based and she felt that she had an advantage over the subject areas because her culminating activities were concerts. She believed that her students were able to understand the relevance of transforming their skills into practice because the “connections are very authentic in the sense that students have a skill for example that is appreciated.”

The AP English teacher (E a) realized the significance of encouraging students to extend their learning outside of the classroom:

I think that with teaching AP, I realize how important that their thinking is going to be beyond my classroom and that is really an important piece too. I think that these kids are going to take these critical thinking skills to university, to their jobs, to interactions with other people; so, realizing that they have the confidence to move beyond the classroom because they are confident critical thinkers.

The math teacher captured the essence of transforming practice when she stated, “math on its own is really meaningless you have to be able to apply it somehow.” This was a similar realization as one of the English teachers (E b) who tried “not to do something unless it has both of the forms of value - I like to do something that has both micro and macro values it has some practical value and then it has a higher philosophical value too.”

Teachers provided numerous examples of Implementation for Real Purposes that align with the form of multiliteracies pedagogy. Teachers were considerate of their students’ abilities and interests and as part of the students’ school literacies they encouraged the transfer of learning across the curriculum. They also promoted students to transfer their literacy learning
outside of school as means of social activism. Further extensions of implementation for real purposes should also address the tensions that may be encountered when transforming school based literacies for varied contexts.

*Transfer context.*

All 20 teachers made reference to requiring students to transfer learning from one context to others. On average, the kindergarten and intermediate teachers each accounted for 22% of the subcategory followed by primary teachers at 20.7%, intermediate/senior teachers at 19% and junior teachers at 16.3%.

The examples of transferring context provided by the kindergarten teachers mainly focused on helping students understand possible applications for their learning. For example, Kaija (K) focused on dialogue with her kindergarten students that would help them reflect. In her follow-up interview, she said, “At the end of the day we want children to be able to realize what you think you can say, what you say you can write, and what you write you can read.”

The grade 1 teacher used a cross-curricular approach to encourage students to recognize how learning can be applied to multiple contexts. She would take a form of writing from one subject area and use it in another subject area. For example her students used instructional writing in their arts program as they wrote: “plans for their art projects and what medium that they are going to use and what tools they are going to use and what the theme of their art is.” One of the grade 3 teachers focused on connecting writing that they were learning about in class to purposes that the students may be encountering outside of school. She believed in having her students write letter, recipes and notes “all based on the types of things that you might have to do in the future.”
In addition to having their students apply Language Arts and literacy practices across the curriculum, the junior level teachers also included references to having provided a range of choice in culminating activities for the students so they could showcase their learning in a variety of contexts. The junior level teachers were also conscious of ensuring that their students were able to apply their reading, writing and communication skills across a variety of genres. For example, Jill (gr. 5/6) hoped that her students would be able to recognize that “there is a really succinct pattern to their writing, like and introduction – thesis, supporting details, topic sentences in paragraphs – conclusions” and use these elements in their paragraph writing for any topic. She also saw the benefit of applying learning strategies across the content areas: “when learning the concept of inference, the idea of inferring information should be broached in science, social studies, math, etcetera and students should practice inferring when working in all academic areas.”

At the intermediate level, one teacher (gr. 7/8 b) used an assignment that had her students adapt their subject notes to lyrics of popular songs or verses of children’s literature. She hoped that by changing the context of the text (textbook to lyrics for example) that her students would become more engaged with the subject matter and form deeper connections and understandings. She also incorporated student choice into creating opportunities for students to apply their learning to multiple contexts. She noticed that when she involved her students in the process:

they are more apt to doing it or they’ll decide what they want to do and they will go with it ... they have different skills. Some of them are great on the computer, some of them are great visual artists, some of them want to make something out of clay. So, just giving them more options to respond to their learning. Giving them the power then they have more ownership over it and then they don’t think that they are doing something for me, they are doing it for themselves.
The high school teachers took a direct approach to stress the importance of transferring learning from one context to another. They often focused on the applications of learning to life outside of school or the reality of applying learning to the culminating activity for the course. The music and technology teachers focused on the performance base of their subject areas. The music teacher highlighted how understanding about intonation transferred to performing as part of the orchestra and used: “the logistics of the subject, these authentic kinds of things are built in” to support students as they learn to understand how their interpretations as individuals impact the larger group. The math teacher designed assignments that required students to apply geometry concepts to costing out the materials need to renovate their bedrooms. One of the literacy goals of Grant (T), was to ensure that the students were able to have the literacy skills needed for entry into the trades, but this would pose a challenge for some of his students: “You want them to continue to be learning and challenging themselves, but I do see a gap there for some students. They might not be able to be a skilled trades person because of the literacy, or lack of literacy skills.”

Teachers did align with the form of multiliteracies pedagogy in terms of Transfer Context. Teachers focused on the importance of in school literacies, as well as the potential of using literacy across the subject areas and outside of school. However, missing from the teachers’ responses was the critical piece: dialogue about the implications of transferring knowledge, such as the role of power and privilege.

Conscious transformation decisions and re-create designs.

The subcategory, Conscious Transformation Decisions and Re-creating Designs of Meaning, reported the inclusion of students in processes created to help decide what
approaches to literacy best supported their individual needs, as well as how they could repurpose previous approaches to better suit their current or future needs. There were 7 responses made by three teachers (kindergarten, primary and intermediate) in this subcategory. One teacher’s (K b) comments indicated consideration of transformed practice in that she focused on students as “the ones doing the learning: it is them making the decisions.” Her goal was to help them understand that they played a role in deciding how to best use their learning. She noted conversations at learning centres that demonstrated students extending their understandings of a lesson by reworking them for their play opportunities. The primary and intermediate level teachers’ responses were focused on the space that was created for students to discuss how to use strategies in various ways.

The comments made were general references about designing meaning, not specific enough to provide rich information. There were no examples of transformed practice in terms of considering which domain practices belong. Due to the extremely limited evidence, the teachers’ responses did not reflect Conscious Transformation Decisions and Re-creating Designs of Meaning as part of the form of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Critical Framing

There were a total of 111 responses that made reference to elements of critical framing, making it the least often referenced of the four components of multiliteracies. The interview questions based on critical framing, specifically critical literacy were the most challenging for the teachers. There were four subcategories used to describe critical framing: Critical Literacy, Framing Growing Mastery, Contextualization of Learning, and Constructive Critique. Critical Literacy and Framing Growing Mastery represented 81% of the discussed elements (35% and
46% respectively). Contextualization of Learning represented 17% of responses and Constructive Critique was the least discussed elements of critical framing totalling 4.5%.

**Framing growing mastery.**

Framing growing mastery focused on isolating pedagogy that supported the practice of critically framing the students' understandings. Framing Growing Mastery works in conjunction with the third largest subcategory, Contextualization for Learning. The premise is that once the students are able to identify their own interpretations in terms of history, society, politics, culture and values, the teachers are then able to help students disrupt their thinking and constructively critique it. Nineteen of the 20 participants' responses included elements of framing growing mastery, accounting for 46% of the elements of critical framing. Primary and intermediate teachers each represented 23.8%, intermediate/senior teachers accounted for 20.6%, and kindergarten and junior teachers each totalled 15.9%.

At the kindergarten level, teachers focused on supporting the students as they worked toward understanding some of the ideologies that impacted their thinking. For example, one teacher (K a) used literature to promote students to consider what their understandings are:

I might say, “Hmmm...that is interesting. What do you think about that?” And listening to the discussion that happens with that, not passing judgments but helping them realize that you can talk about anything and everything in a polite way.

As part of the framing growing mastery, the participants’ responses also included supporting students as they developed their understanding about the social functions of writing. Kaija (K) recalled a discussion that she had with her class surrounding list writing:

I have kids right now making lists for birthday parties because someone had a birthday and making lists of the names they want and they’re taking it home.
Hopefully [laughter] it doesn’t include everybody, but it is exciting to see that they understand the value of writing and why we have lists. The kindergarten teachers also reported a need to include the social practices of the students’ home literacies in their learning. Kaija encouraged students to bring books “home and show their parents and feel good about themselves as a reader” although she admitted to “hoping” that the parents were reading with their children.

The grade 3 teacher considered reading, specifically reading for deeper meaning as something that students needed to become “cultured to it; once they understand it, it is so easy to filter through it.” She integrated reading and writing into her goal of developing the students’ abilities to better understand their ideas and thinking. She wanted her students “to know that reading is thinking, to be able to speak about their ideas and be able to write them down and to be able to extend them beyond the literal to the higher level thinking.”

At the junior level, the teachers involved students with projects to expand their knowledge and include the perspectives of other people. The grade 4 teacher used a project with the community mental health organization to learn about empathy. The grade 6 teacher spoke about following Board initiatives on developing character education.

The intermediate level teachers continued with a similar approach to framing students’ understandings as the junior teachers. They included direct discussion and projects to help the students understand experiences that may be different from their own. Topics included body image and critical media literacy. One of the differences between the junior and intermediate approaches was an increase in student involvement in selecting the product, enabling the students to consider their own strengths and preferences.
At the intermediate/senior level the English teachers, like the kindergarten teachers, used literature to provide the forum for talking about historical, social, political, cultural and value based ideologies as means for students to consider their own perspectives and alternative points of view. In particular, at the senior level the AP English teacher (E a), was excited by her grade 12 students’ investigations of the social relationships embedded in text. The focus of the course had students consider form, audience and the tools used to create text. She believed that the students “have to be able to recognize who they are writing for and knowing which tools to use.” She noted that her most advanced level students are required to journal while they are reading so they “are able to read more analytically, read for more awareness. [Teachers] are encouraging kids to take more analytical quotations and annotate them as they read” so that they can question both content and form. This was not mentioned as a requirement of her other students.

Grant (T) included time to read and discuss newspapers as part of his course of study. He believed that students needed time to read articles that were of interest to them and share their understandings with their peers as part to help create a positive social atmosphere thus enhancing the learning environment.

Teachers provided students with the opportunity to frame their growing mastery. In many cases there were critical elements present, such as consideration of multiple perspectives. However, explicit dialogue that connected understanding the shape of a writing format and the social functions that text performs were not present in any of the interviews in the junior and intermediate levels. As well, there was no mention of identifying dominant
ideologies present within the classroom or community, nor the impact of reproducing and challenging the dominant ideologies.

*Critical literacy.*

The participants were asked to define critical literacy and 19 of the 20 teachers made an attempt - either an informed response or an educated guess. In the newer Ontario curriculum documents for language and English grades 1 to 12, critical literacy is defined as:

The capacity for a particular type of critical thinking that involves looking beyond the literal meaning of texts to observe what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate the text’s complete meaning and the author’s intent. Critical literacy goes beyond conventional critical thinking in focusing on issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice. Critically literate students adopt a critical stance, asking what view of the world the text advances and whether they find this view acceptable. (*MOE*, 2006, p. 152)

The curriculum document for kindergarten does not include a definition for critical literacy, but it does include the following definition for critical awareness:

The ability to evaluate something from multiple angles. For example, children may begin to respond to a text they have heard from their own point of view, or may connect their thinking to a prior experience or text that they know. Later, they may see events in the text from another person’s point of view. A child may begin to demonstrate a critical awareness after it is modeled by a teacher. (2006, p. 63)

Of all of the participants ten thought that they knew what critical literacy meant, and 11 were able to, if not discuss critical literacy, provide evidence of elements of critical literacy in their instructional approaches.

Two of the three kindergarten teachers were comfortable in sharing their understandings about critical literacy. The third declined to answer as she was unsure. The two kindergarten teachers spoke about critical literacy through a range of ideas as Kaija (K) explained starting with as getting a “sense of the character” to viewing literacy from different
viewpoints to understanding the author’s message. Her example of integrating critical literacy through the viewing of a Curious George video:

We watched *Curious George Goes to the Hospital*, and it is a little bit outdated. So we asked, “Hmmm? Do you think that’s how they would operate now-a-days?” Or “When I went to the hospital they didn’t have something like that. So this is something that was from a few years ago so it is probably not used today, it has probably changed.” So the kids don’t just see something and not think about it. Is it something that is valid today or not? Does it have any relevance to them? This is again the text-to-text and text-to-self. Is the message that you are getting from the book; it is a good versus bad, or true versus untrue? Because in some of the books there is a message or a point of view.

At the primary division two of the three participants were able to identify key elements of critical literacy. The grade one teacher integrated critical literacy into her program as a means of “reading or viewing and looking past the surface and not just taking the text or media at face value and thinking about the author, director or artist and their points of view or biases are.” She considered that it was important to provide students with “the chances to be authors and media creators so they have a better understanding of how personal beliefs and values permeate what one creates.” One of the grade 3 teachers was uncertain about the term and Kathryn (gr. 3) was able to demonstrate her understanding about critical literacy, although she was not confident in her response. She had her students think:

about what the author is saying to you. You have to know what is on the page, but you also have to know what he is not saying: Issues. It is about issues and treatment of people and places. And to be really thinking about what is the message here - to not take very thing at face value or to go alone with somebody. You have to make sure that that person is speaking knowledge and has a background that you can trust.

At the junior division, one teacher was confident that she understood critical literacy and two of the junior level teachers were able to describe their approaches to critical literacy. The grade 4 teacher was not confident that she could define critical literacy, but saw it as a
means of evaluating a piece of text in terms of text written by oneself or by another: “being able to self evaluate. Or to evaluate the work of someone, the work of an author: What is he getting at? What do you think that he is thinking? How would you have written this differently? It is kind of an abstract concept.” Jill (gr. 5/6) explained critical literacy to her students as being able to access “what is the underlying message in the text or the photograph.” She thought of it as a way to use inferences to ask the questions that would help to contextualize the text for students. The grade 6 teacher was not familiar with the term and thought that it might be related to the critical skills that students need to be a functional part of society. This was a shared misunderstanding by many of the teachers who were unfamiliar with the term.

At the intermediate level, two of the teachers believed they understood critical literacy, but only Rosa (gr. 8) described an aspect of critical literacy based on using text cues to understand context. Her ideas surrounding critically literacy were grounded in critical thinking and questioning. The other teachers connected the term with setting goals and the skills needed to be a literate being.

At the intermediate/senior level, two of the English teachers provided description of many elements of critical literacy. The AP English teacher defined critical literacy as a “very” interactive process that means students “are able to draw an informed judgment.” The third English teacher connected critical literacy with the basic literate practices needed to interact within society. The music teacher was the only other secondary teacher who provided an example of critical literacy. Her responses demonstrated her understanding of critical literacy as a means to raise critical questions about text, as in the case of her example about using the
internet to locate accurate and appropriate information about composers for the purpose of research:

they have to have the ability to say, “Hey that’s Bob Smith’s site. That may not be at the same level of sophistication than if I can find a university site that has X or a source about that composer” so it gives them the ability to discern good resources from the resources that are not as strong or aren’t edited with as much precision.

The other teachers were uncertain of the term and connected critical literacy to the literate practices need to function in society, which was similar to the elementary teachers.

While the teachers were making solid efforts to raise critical questions with their students, few were able to describe critical literacy. There was evidence of critical literacy reflected in the teachers’ pedagogies, even in those who were unfamiliar with the term.

*Contextualization of learning.*

Only 11 of the 20 participants’ responses talked about contextualizing the students learning. This element works in conjunction with the previous subcategory – where students developed an understanding of their own knowledge and experiences. Contextualization is intended to work with the framed understandings and situate them in larger contexts and purposes including historical, social, political, cultural and ideological. The primary teachers accounted for 39.2% of responses followed by kindergarten at 33.3%, intermediate/senior at 15.7% and junior and intermediate each at 5.9%.

The kindergarten teachers continued to work with literature as an entry to help situate the children’s experiences in a variety of contexts, for an assortment of purposes. For example, one of the teachers worked with the concept of social skills and drew in a children’s book and puppet to put students in another person’s shoes, or in this case dog’s:
included in my literacy block I covered friendship and what makes us a good friend and those sorts of things. I did a Clifford [the Big Red Dog] unit, for Clifford the main character, we talked about different social skills like problem solving, asking to play, sharing so Clifford and I demonstrated the skill we are trying to cover so the kids really relate when it is something like that even better than a video because I can fine tune it to a specific child, situation or get the student to help me.

At the primary level, the teachers drew from character education and worked with the concept of understanding alternative perspectives. Students were actively engaged not only to consider the experiences of others, but to take action as a means to help students situate their own experiences in a larger context. Kathryn (gr. 3) had her students involved with an anti-poverty project that focused on the experience of poverty on children to help her students better understand the social issue:

We talked about homelessness and how you can help and how it feels to be homeless and how it feels to be ignored. The face of poverty is not always the one that you think it is. We also have the value education going on. [We talk about] all the characteristics of being a gladiator[the school mascot]. Or things like empathy. I think that the whole idea that you can impact within your own school with each other, just by being kind and that kind of thing. I think that reading really good books helps students to imagine themselves in situations that.

At the junior level, Jill (gr. 5/6) demonstrated her approach to contextualizing critical literacy during the observation through her read aloud of the non-fiction text, *Owen and Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship* (Hatkoff, Hatkoff & Kahubmu, 2006). The story is based on a rescued hippopotamus paired with a tortoise who would serve as an adoptive parent. Her goal was for students to consider the author’s message about friendship and consider their own roles as members of society. She hoped that they would realize “we have the power to make some kind of change.”
Rosa (gr. 8) was the only teacher that included a reference to helping students understand how they position themselves. She emphasized the role of clear communication so that would be able to represent their ideas accurately. She believed that “part of what it means, to be communicating in this world, is that we have different roles and we are communicating to others and we have to be as clear as we possibly can.”

Three of the teachers at the high school level integrated projects that would help students situate their understanding within a larger social context. In his class, Grant (T) had the students involved in the aforementioned international project called Bicycles for Humanity where students reclaim old, discarded bikes and resort them and send them to Africa so that they can be used as transportation for doctors: “There are these old bikes that are just sitting in someone’s shed kind of rusty, garbage. Well, that is how we feel. Now they are transportation for somebody there.” He helped them understand how an item that may be discarded by one holds great value for another. The students were truly engaged in this project. On the day of observation, students would continue to work on bike restoration as soon as they completed their required projects. The other technology teacher (T a) engaged his students in environmental projects so that they could better understand their impact on the environment as well as the proactive roles that they could play in supporting environmentally sound practices. In partnership with an environmental science teacher, he was “working with a few students on a system that will be able to heat hot water and create steam to make electricity. We want to get one classroom off of the grid.” And although the math teacher felt that “there really isn’t a whole lot of math that we can apply directly to those kinds of societal issues,” she
did involve discussion about classroom dynamics and working as part of a larger group that
considered the feelings and needs of all its members in her program.

Teachers were able to provide examples of framing student learning within a larger
social context. Discussions were used to examine multiple perspectives and potential roles for
students to contribute to society. To better align with the form of multiliteracies pedagogy,
framing of student learning needs to include historical, social, political, cultural and ideological
contexts.

*Constructive critique.*

The final subcategory for critical framing involves the ability to constructively critique
both practices and approaches to literacy. This included the context and assessing applications
and extensions. This was the least involved aspect of critical framing and there were only five
references from intermediate/senior teachers it accounted for 5% of the subcategory. All
responses were at the secondary level.

Two of the English teachers were able to integrate the critique of critical framing into
the literature components of their courses. The music teacher related critiquing of critical
framing to working as part of learning to play as a collective group, that is, as a band or
orchestra. Grant (T) was involved with a project designed to generate enough steam power to
be equivalent to the power consumed by one classroom was the only teacher who asked of his
students: “what do you want to do with the rest of your life?” He had the student reflect on the
choices that they had to make and the impact of these decisions on a world that extended past
their own needs and wants.
Due to the low reported examples of constructive critique there is not enough evidence to report the teachers as aligning with constructive critique, save the two senior English teachers.

To summarize, the teachers’ pedagogies aligned closely with the form of multiliteracies in terms of situated practice and overt instruction. Teacher based learning on the students’ prior knowledge and experiences. They aimed to create learning experiences that would engage and motivate students. Explicit instruction was used during instruction and discussions also included revisiting the designing processes. While teachers were aware of the need to further engage students in learning communities in expert roles, there was low indication that this occurred, or of experts from the community being welcomed into classrooms.

There were noted divergences between the teachers’ pedagogies and transformed practice and critical framing. Teachers provided students with opportunities to transfer learning from one context to another, but the teachers controlled the decisions about what practices to transform and how to re-create meanings. As well, the critical framing was for the most part limited to discussions about represented perspectives in text. Further inclusion of critical framing needs to encourage critique, question positions and challenge ideologies.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

*Sometimes what we do in the classroom is so embedded that we don’t step back to see the big picture.*

- Grade 4 Teacher

By mapping multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of teachers, this study is reflective of a pedagogical change in what it means to be a teacher of literacy in a multiliterate world. This study focused on how teachers incorporated student subjectivities and prior knowledge to prepare learners to interact with the wide range of literacies needed to be competitive in their futures. More than just understanding individual classroom practice, this research aimed to describe the *big picture*, that is, the experiences that educators create with students across grades K-12.

The NLG (1996) asked the question, what new learning might literacy pedagogy need to address? This researcher asked the same question about multiliteracies: What new pedagogies might multiliteracies need to address? In the creation of multiliteracies, the NLG drew from the expertise of educators and previous theoretical frames. In doing so, they created a flexible frame that can be used to access the perceptions of teachers about literacy pedagogy - even though the teachers had no prior experience with multiliteracies. Additionally, it provided the means to trace patterns that were created from K-12 that demonstrated solid literacy pedagogy as well as suggested areas for further development.

One of the goals for this research was to consider the value of multiliteracies as a theoretical frame through which to examine pedagogy. In 1996, the NLG referred to its foundational paper on multiliteracies pedagogy as a “programmatic manifesto,” rather than a
practical guideline (p. 73). Their purpose was to engage educators in critical dialogue aimed at creating spaces for learning that were respectful of diversity and acknowledged the rapidly changing face of technology. The intent for this study was to explore how teachers’ perceptions of literacy compared with multiliteracies to provide a practical balance to the theory. The goal was to understand the value of moving the NLG’s conversations into action.

Chapter Six is structured into four sections. First, Summary of Findings and Discussion summarizes the findings and locates them within the larger field of study. This section also reports the main conclusions drawn from this study. Second, Implications, presents the contributions that this study makes towards furthering current understandings of multiliteracies pedagogies. Next, Limitations and Areas for Future Research discusses the limitations of this study and provides suggestions for further studies. Finally, Concluding Comments presents reflections on the study.

**Summary of findings and discussion**

This study focused on reporting how multiliteracies aligned with and diverged from teachers’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy. This section provides a summary of the main findings along with discussion. It is further divided into themes that were created from the deductive and constant comparison analyses. The themes are representative of the form and content of multiliteracies pedagogy as reflected in the interviews and classroom observations. The six themes are organized in terms of the focus on the Pluralism of Subjectivities, Engagement of Students in Literacy Learning, Orientations to Student Risk, Considerations for Instruction, Alignment with Provincial Protocol, Understandings of Critical Literacies and Integration of ICT.
**Teachers’ focus on the pluralism of subjectivities.**

Teachers in this study were aware of the *pluralism of subjectivities* in their classrooms. Most commonly this was marked by their considerations of student backgrounds as means of comparing previous literacy experiences with in-school literacies. Teachers frequently focused their literacy instruction on compensatory education (Bernstein, 1971) so that all students would have the necessary literacy skills that would enable them to be successful in school. The goal was for homogeneity of literacy experiences so no students would be disadvantaged. In placing focus on establishing shared literacy foundations, teachers were not capitalizing on the out-of-school literacies, or the plurality of their students’ subjectivities. Part of shifting pedagogy to be more reflective of multiliteracies pedagogy requires teachers to move away from the compensatory focus and view literacy as more than neutral skills taught in school (Luke & Carrington, 2002). The concept of homogeneity needs to be re-examined. Classrooms are populated with pluralisms of subjectivities – the “one-size-fits-all” approach to curriculum does not apply.

There appeared to be the assumption in the teachers’ responses that solid pedagogy would naturally meet the needs of all students; good teaching would allow full social participation. Multiliteracies aims to move pedagogy from the tradition of institutionalized schooling focused on creating “homogeneous national citizenries” to “develop an epistemology of pluralism” (NLG, 1997, p. 72). In order for teachers to align with the pluralism of subjectivities as described by the NLG, the dominant ideologies and the corresponding roles of privilege need to be investigated. While teachers did consider their roles as teachers of literacy, there were few responses focused on the role of cultural context and privilege assigned to text.
Teachers were conscious of including content reflective of the subjectivities, in terms of cultural differences, rather than of commonalities between cultures. Teachers at the secondary level spoke less about the inclusion of their students’ cultures than the elementary teachers. Their perceptions more closely represented what Crafton and Silvers (2007) described as using language for a means of communication rather than a dynamic, social design process fuelled by a range of subjectivities.

Several of the teachers did consider the impact of their students’ out-of-school literacies; however, there was lower value placed on out-of-school literacies that did not reproduce school-based ideologies. This concern has also been reported by Mallett, Henk, Waggoner & DeLaney (2005). The teachers discussed the perceived weaknesses of the students’ home literacies. The kindergarten teachers expressed concern about the increased number of students coming from impoverished backgrounds, which was perceived as preventing students from accessing literacy resources within the home and community. The importance of home reading programs was stressed. At the primary level, teachers spoke about the home literacies of their students; although examples of home literacies were narrowly defined. Continued focus was placed on the importance of home reading of English language text. For example, the teachers described Aboriginal students as generally receiving less exposure to reading and having less practice with speaking than other students. There was no mention of the role of out-of-school literacies for Aboriginal students in terms of writing, creating visual images or listening. Teachers could increase their resources for students by expanding their understandings of rich literacy experiences that occur in the students’ homes and communities (Hagood, 2000).
The junior, intermediate and senior level teachers were aware that their students were going to libraries and bookstores, but they also noted that many of their students were coming from impoverished backgrounds and homes where English was not the only language spoken. These factors were perceived as limiting the students’ literacy skills. Compton-Lily (2004) warns that students are put at a disadvantage if their understandings and experiences are not seen as representing the ideologies of school. However, one of the teachers believed that because her students were coming from an inner city area, the school had focused on providing strong balanced literacy programming at all grades. She considered this to be an attempt to compensate for weaker out-of-school literacies. To more closely align with multiliteracies, teachers need to know more about their students so they don’t make assumptions that might stereotype.

**Teachers’ engagement of students in literacy learning.**

Teachers across all grade and subject areas believed that part of their roles as teachers of literacy was to provide a range of positive literacy experiences for students. They hoped that students would: find enjoyment in reading and writing; understand that in-school literacies held purpose beyond the classroom; gain confidence in text production and consumption; and be able to make text to text, text to self, and text to world connections. Teachers drew from the students’ prior experiences and interests. However, motivation as associated with multiliteracies is based on the belief that increased engagement with a topic increases retention of information and leads to a student’s preparedness for the competitive in the world of work (NLG, 1996). Van Heertum and Share (2006) identified this as an area of concern. If the end goal of education is driven by corporate needs, then the ability to compete in the
marketplace may supersede affective goals for students, such as the desire to remain life-long learners. The emergence of this theme highlighted the need for multiliteracies pedagogy to pay greater attention to the affective domain.

Rather than burying affective considerations in the subtext, multiliteracies pedagogy needs to focus more on the individual student. While part of the motivation for the NLG did look at the individual student’s quality of life, emphasis was also placed on the preparation of students to meet the needs of a competitive global market. The teachers in this study demonstrated the importance of helping students find enjoyment in learning. They believed that the students were motivated by the experience as it engaged them in the learning process and the hands on experience created a memorable context for the lesson.

**Teachers’ orientations to student risk.**

One of the emergent themes that developed from student engagement in literacy was the teachers’ orientations to student risk. The kindergarten, primary and high school teachers encouraged students to experiment and to take risks with possible approaches to literacy tasks. In contrast, junior/intermediate teachers provided concrete models that students were to reproduce. The kindergarten and primary teachers wanted their students to focus on finding enjoyment in reading and writing and not be concerned with whether they were right or wrong. Teachers wanted their students to try. They believed that encouraging students to take risks in making connections were what made kindergarten exciting for students. At the primary level the teachers gave their students many chances to work on a task because a part of learning was taking the risk to try.
The pedagogical approaches to literacy discussed by the junior and intermediate level teachers were less about taking risks in learning and more about providing a framework for students to follow. Typically teachers would model a literacy strategy to the whole class, then model it a second time with student involvement. Students would then use a template and repeat the strategy for their assignment. The focus was on mastery of individual strategies, rather than engaging students in understanding how to selecting strategies best suited for the student and assignment. The overall orientation to engaging students in the designing processes was low. The intermediate teachers, more so than the junior teachers wanted to ensure that their students knew that if they followed instructions, they would achieve success. In wanting to protect their students from failure, they were blocking them from taking risks. Risk is a part of designing. The designing process is intended to be a dynamic process of remaking, thus engaging students in learning (NLG, 1997).

Similar to the kindergarten and primary teachers, the high school teachers encouraged students to use the modeled lessons as starting points from which they could investigate their own ideas. They wanted students to actively engage with the designing process and part of that process was the opportunity to try a variety of strategies when approaching a task. During this process there was space for students to discover the approaches that would be more beneficial for their own needs, interests or goals. This supports the work of Jewitt (2008), who believed that teachers need to create “flexible spaces” where students are able to engage in “planning, thinking, hypothesizing, testing, designing and realizing ideas” (p. 258).

As well, in taking risks, students would experience why an approach was suited or not suited for a task and the process would help inform future successful approaches. Students
critically reflected on their designing processes in terms of what aspects were successful and unsuccessful. This is reflective of Gee’s (2007) belief that when teachers demonstrate patience by allowing students to take risks, or even experience failure, their students would become more successfully literate. Students would have a safe environment to learn the course content, as well as learn about their literacy processes. However, the junior and intermediate level teachers took care to work actively with students during the designing processes to ensure that the students were prepared to achieve success on their assignments without further deliberation.

*Teachers’ considerations for instruction.*

Another emergent theme centred on the developmental patterns created by the K-12 teachers’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy. Teachers spoke about extending the students’ knowledge by shifting thinking from text to self connections; to text to text connections; to text to world connections. Greater emphasis was placed on the text to self connections in the lower grades, while the intermediate and senior teachers expanded their foci on text to world connections. This developmental approach was repeated with the teachers’ approaches to meaningful practices, that is, the lower grade teachers focused on practices that engaged students because they were designed to have immediate personal significance for them. The intermediate and senior teachers included purposes that may not be realized within the school year; the purpose was not always made initially transparent for students. This approach helped students understand that their actions could extend beyond school assignments and positively impact the lives of others.
Teachers also used direct instruction to scaffold new meaning-making. While teachers across the grades acknowledged that students needed to take on greater responsibility for shaping their learning, teachers often played the role of the expert. Less often did students have opportunity to take on leadership roles within the community of learners and there were infrequent references to the inclusion of members of the community as experts. This complicated teachers’ abilities to represent the students’ lives, rather than reproducing their own ideologies.

Teachers’ understandings of modalities also emerged as a central theme. While aspects of the teachers’ orientations toward multimodality centred on providing students with an assortment of modes for the purpose of variety and motivation rather than describing patterns of representation that support meaning-making. To better reflect multiliteracies pedagogy, the teachers’ orientations needed to recognize modality as more than preferred learning modes (e.g., Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences). By considering dimensions such as representational, social, organizational, contextual and ideological patterns could be traced that identified how meaning is created (NLG, 2000). This approach would serve to focus students on understanding how knowledge is shaped and located (Jewitt, 2008).

Finally, across the grade levels, the teachers’ demonstration of Transformed Practice aimed to move students from local and concrete examples to global and abstract applications. Students were encouraged to consider their role in making positive contributions to society. Most of the examples included social activism. As well, teachers were focused on ensuring that students understood the importance of literacies and how school-based literacies could be transformed for use beyond the classroom. The teachers’ pedagogies diverged from
transformed practice in two main areas. First, teachers did not address the tensions associated with transforming non-school based literacies; in fact, there was low inclusion of these literacies in general. And second, there was no mention of a deliberate consideration of the role of power and privilege that are associated with which practices are transformed.

**Teachers’ alignment with provincial protocol.**

The extent to which teachers constructed their praxes around the MOE documents was unexpected. Institutional views of the provincial government permeated their orientations as literacy teachers (e.g., an awareness of the literacy initiatives based on government policies). In particular a shared approach to literacy was stressed by the primary level teachers. The teachers reported feelings of frustration when they understood other teachers to be interpreting initiatives too freely. Some teachers questioned whether the theory behind the board of education’s initiatives could come to fruition if the teachers did not accurately follow the training protocol. The belief was that PLCs were designed to foster a single vision of literacy that would benefit students by creating a literacy continuum. This contradicts one of the principles of critical literacy (which informs multiliteracies critical framing) in that no texts have a singular meaning or truth as they “exist in a state of intertextuality” (Creighton, 1997, p. 440). If teachers are to be active members of the students’ learning communities, then they too need to explore how text work and the roles that they play in shaping learning opportunities (Luke, 2000). While this study was not designed to report on teachers’ critical reading and application of curricula and provincial resources, it does underscore the importance of ensuring that teachers understanding the complex relationship between the ideologies represented in protocol and the pluralism of subjectivities in the classroom.
Overall, the elementary teachers described their orientations to literacy in terms of the provincial initiatives that were supported by their board of education. There was little reference to literacy pedagogy outside of the scope of local or provincial protocol. In fact, the elementary teachers hoped that the grade 9 and 10 intermediate level teachers in the secondary panel would continue to follow the literacy approaches (e.g., scaffolding) that were used by the grade 7 and 8 teachers, but were not confident that they did. However, the secondary level teachers believed that they were building on literacy strategies implemented in the early grades. Unlike the intermediate level teachers in the elementary panel, the intermediate/senior teachers in the high schools did not have direct knowledge of the pedagogical approaches to literacy supported by elementary teachers due to the separation of grades 8 and 9 into different school sites. The high school teachers’ descriptions of their orientations toward literacy were centred on their subject specific literacy practices. While most of the teachers made reference to drawing strategies from MOE’s Think Literacy documents, others relied on their own resources. Teachers in subject areas other than English were not as confident in their literacy instruction as the elementary teachers were. They believed that their approaches to literacy were focused on supporting student learning in their subject area, but they did not follow particular programs.

A part of the teachers’ orientations to effective literacy instruction was attached to the ability to integrate the locally supported initiatives in a more formalized context. Teachers, even exceptional teachers of literacy, demonstrated lower confidence in their pedagogies than the teachers who received in-service training. The teachers did describe creative ways that they took initiative to improve their literacy practices; however, during the interviews they placed
greater emphasis on aligning with protocol than their own efforts. As well, confidence was
influenced by the teachers’ leadership roles within the board which often positioned them in
training roles. Interestingly, the upper grade teachers perceived their lack of a formalized
language and literacy program as a deficit, although they acknowledged that their approaches
to literacy instruction were best suited for their courses.

Part of orientating oneself to multiliteracies involves the ability to “navigate change and
diversity, learn-as-[you]-go, solve problems, collaborate and be flexible and creative” (Kalantzis,
Cope & Harvey, 2003, p. 23). The teachers did not focus on how they shaped resources to their
classroom contexts to ensure that their students have equitable access to learning (Mills, 2007),
rather their reporting was two-fold: using personally developed resources or using provincial
resources.

**Teachers’ understandings of critical literacy.**

One of the surprising findings of this study was the level of uncertainty demonstrated by
teachers surrounding critical literacy. Luke and Freebody (1997) describe critical literacy as an
awareness of multiple socio-cultural contexts in which information is presented and the skills
that are necessary to critique and make meaning of this information both within and beyond
the dominant ideologies. Although critical literacy is present in many of the provincial curricula,
less than half of the teachers in this study were able to articulate or provide examples of their
understandings of critical literacy. This lack of confidence with critical literacy resulted in few
traceable instances of *Critical Framing.* The teachers had not received professional
development or training focused on critical literacy. The term was often confused with essential
literacies, meaning those literacies that were considered critical to full participation in society. Others believed that critical literacy were reflective of best practices in literacy.

During the interviews, teachers struggled to talk about critical literacy. While they provided examples of critical literacy throughout their interviews, most of the teachers were not confident in their understandings of critical literacy. They spoke of critical literacy within isolated contexts that would impede critical literacy from being embedded into pedagogy. It was somewhat unexpected that teachers were for the most part unaware of the term, even those teachers using the Language and English documents. It was expected that they would make reference to these sources or paraphrase the definition of critical literacy. As previously identified, the elementary language curriculum documents centers on “looking beyond the literal meaning of texts” where students adopt a critical stance and question the view that is presented (MOE, 2006, p. 152).

It is worth noting that all teachers integrated elements of critical literacy into their pedagogy; for example, teachers were commonly considering the effect of voice in selected reading passages and asking students to consider the implications of vocabulary selection. However, their integration of critical literacy was often associated with their understandings of critical thinking. Narrow ranges of social and cultural implications were explored and roles of power and privilege were often left unchallenged. When roles of privilege were challenged, they were challenged as means of contextualize content. However, the overall absence of a critical stance prevented the teachers’ perceptions from representing the core ideas that inform all aspects of multiliteracies pedagogy. Multiliteracies pedagogy includes helping students critically frame their understandings by gaining theoretical and personal distance from
learning by asking such questions as whose meaning is privileged or where does the created meaning fit in the larger world view.

**Teachers’ integration of ICT.**

Multiliteracies pedagogy addresses the need for students to be able to adapt to constant change, including the rapidly advancing technological worlds (NLG, 1996). This includes incorporating ICT and technical and systems thinking into pedagogy, as well as the ability to learn how to adapt with the changing digital times. While the teachers in this study made conscious decisions to integrate technology into pedagogy, their approaches in terms of digital literacies were situated in Web 1.0 practices (such as basic usages of computers, internet and audio-visual materials for retrieving and presenting information) and not representative of the potentiality of Web 2.0 practices, such as collaboration through social media, that are central to multiliteracies pedagogy.

At the kindergarten level, technology use ranged from educational games to regularly scheduled computer lab time for students to become familiarized with login procedures and clicking on icons. Overall, in the early grades, the described technology was used for what Kist (2006) referred to as “embellishment” to curriculum. Technology was used for organization of ideas and a fun alternative to paper and pencil learning. Often times, digital activities were electronic versions of tasks that did not fully capitalize on technology, such as educational software that simulated flashcards, which is an issue previously documented by Crofton, Brennan and Silvers (2007).

Junior, intermediate and intermediate/senior level teachers’ main uses for technology were PowerPoint presentations, basic internet searches and word processing. At the
intermediate and senior levels, subject-specific software applications did demonstrate a shift in usage from students as electronic information retrievers to digital producers. For example, teachers used software to enable students to represent word equations as geometric shapes or composition software that allowed students to realize complex musical pieces that they had created. Teachers did not mention using Web 2.0 practices in class. For the most part, technology was implemented as an isolated application by individual students. The teachers’ comments demonstrated their increased awareness of the technological nature of students’ lives outside of school and the implications of their out-of-school literacies. They were becoming more comfortable in welcoming students’ expertise with digital literacies. However, the reality was that access and funding for technology, training and technical support was limited for participating teachers. This impacted pedagogy.

The teachers did recognize the potential of technology in the classroom; changes to their pedagogies were slow. This aligns with findings by Alexander (2008) and Kitson, Fletcher and Kearney (2007). The hesitant pace was affected by two main factors. First, the primary aim of teachers was to deliver curriculum. Second, there was uncertainty in regards to how to capitalize on the digital literacies of students, which echoed the challenges of implementing new literacies in the classroom raised by Knobel and Lankshear (2006). Research by Mills (2007) also noted that gaps exist between the technological worlds of students and teachers that challenge dialogue. However, access to technology and training, as well as recurring time for teachers to continue to gain experience with digital literacies may help facilitate integrate of out-of-school literacies into practice. Teachers were integrating technology in a meaningful way; however, they were not confident in their abilities. Teachers and students were able to
bridge ICT gaps by developing what Kitson, Fletcher and Kearney (2007) referred to as a shared technological language used to open dialogue within the community of learners to make meaning of multimedia.

Many of the teachers who reported low levels of comfort with technology wanted to increase their abilities. Knobel and Lankshear (2008) recommended that teachers become familiar with Web 2.0 practices for classroom use, including podcasts, video responses, lessons filmed or created in virtual worlds, and class blogs. In order to implement these technologies, teacher would require support from administrators and technical advisors as well as access to technology and professional development (Kist, 2006). With this in mind, to increase technology into classrooms, including Web 2.0 practices, the digital literacies of teachers would also need to include understanding of fair usage of digital materials, and the technical dimensions of programs and the discourse of social networking, which incorporates the rules, norms and criteria for online services as identified by Knobel and Lankshear (2008).

There are further pedagogical considerations for teachers in this study concerning the formal use of Web 2.0 practices. The teachers in this study received communications from their college of teacher and teachers’ federations that advised extreme prudence with electronic communications as well as the potential dangers of cyber bullying and online predators. Moreover, the board of education and the individual school sites controlled access to online services, including such social networking sites for sharing text, images and audio files. The message sent to teachers was to approach technology with professional caution.

In addition to understanding actual digital applications, teachers were grappling with the tensions created by wanting to support student agency and draw from out-of-school
literacies, and yet being concerned that students’ in-school literacies were deteriorating due to *netlingo* and the text messaging jargon and acronyms that students were incorporating. This perceived decline in Standard English also led teachers to approach the students’ digital literacies cautiously, and in limited ways. The teachers used computers competently for communication, research and presentations, although most were too shy to admit to their technology strengths, a trend also reported by McVee, Bailey and Shanahan (2008).

**Implications**

This researcher not surprised that many pedagogical aspects of the K-12 teachers aligned with multiliteracies. Specifically, teachers in this study demonstrated the use of design processes that drew from students’ previous experiences, included overt instruction and created activities that they believed were meaningful for students. Teachers also encouraged talk about literacy learning and integrated a variety of modalities. However, areas where the teachers’ pedagogies diverge from multiliteracies contribute to furthering current understandings of multiliteracies pedagogy.

First, while teachers were aware of the potential for engaging students in learning processes, there was little mention of how student experts were being playing lead roles within their learning communities. A key part of multiliteracies requires collaborative efforts to connect learning and sharing of information with students. Students need opportunities to experience lead roles in their learning communities. For this to occur, educators must reserve time to discover possible areas of student expertise, as well as create space for students to serve as experts. To further enhance learning collaborations, community members can also serve as experts. By including individuals who play important roles in the students’ lives
outside of school additional ties can be made linking in and out of school literacies.

Additionally, teachers planned activities that they believed were purposeful for students to demonstrate a transfer of practice. However, for an authentic transfer of learning students need to have greater responsibility in this process. Students need to contribute to the decisions about what practices are being transformed and how designs are being recreated. Currently, examples of transformed practice identified in this study more closely resemble extensions of student competence. Even when teacher provided students with choice for demonstrating learning they made the primary decisions as to how students shaped their understandings. For transformed practice to take on greater meaning students need to make conscious decisions about what practices to transform and how to implement their understandings for real purposes. This will require a shift in pedagogy. Students will need to be involved in shaping activities that will mesh curricular expectations with their own reflective practices.

As well, this research also makes significant contributions to understanding the application of metalanguages. Provincial curriculum documents include the expectation that students understand the importance of metacognition. This study points to the need to expand the focus on a language to talk about thinking to learning the metalanguage to talk about the patterns meaning that represent literacy learning. First, this explicit use of language may help make literacy learning more transparent for students. As well, it may encourage further dialogue between teachers at their varied grade levels and in their range of subject areas, thus better supporting all students as they become multiliterate beings.
Another implication of this study indicates need for professional development for teachers to learn more about critical literacy and have opportunity to clarify their own understandings. In order for teachers to better prepare students to participate as multiliterate beings who are able to interact with diverse text representative of the plurality of society, a more specific focus on implementing critical framing for real purposes is required. Professional development needs to focus on recognizing the role of critically framing a text to include more than point of view; it requires identification of dominant ideologies and positions of power (Crofton, Brennan & Silvers, 2007; Vasques & Van Sluys, 2005). Dialogue to help teachers recognize the privilege of the primary discourse of school and consider the roles of secondary discourses would allow teachers to further engage the subjectivities of their students as well as encourage students to think about the relationships between text in historical, social, cultural, political, and ideological terms.

Furthermore, this study recommends the continued need for professional development regarding instructional approaches to literacy to address the plurality of student subjectivities. It reported the resources were actively used by teachers to better understand Aboriginal ways of being. These resources included professional development opportunities with the university’s Aboriginal Teacher Education Program; documents created by the school board and produced by Aboriginal centres to help teachers better understand Aboriginal traditions; and dialogue with local elders. Still, there is more work that needs to be done in order to recruit the subjectivities of all students. In order for sustained growth, educators need to continue to support caring environments where students feel safe in not only expressing their identities but using them to contextualize learning.
This study also increases awareness of the technological abilities of teachers. It documents teachers’ efforts to improve their confidence levels in terms of integrating technology into the classroom and drawing from the varied lifeworlds of students to purposefully inform their instruction. They were aware of the range literacies with which their students entered school and were taking more risks with technology. Teachers described an increase in their comfort in turning to students as experts who can serve as mentors in learning communities. The teachers admitted that the release of instructional control was difficult, but beneficial. They noted students taking pride in their contributions as teachers transitioned into the role of learner. This study has the potential to encourage educators to continue to challenge themselves to grow with Web 2.0 practices and seek creative and meaningful ways to include them in the classroom.

**Limitations and areas for future research**

There are several limitations to this research. The first limitation involves the process of gaining access to participants. For this study intensity sampling (Patton, 1990) was used as means of identifying teachers from K-12 representative of a range of subject areas who demonstrated solid literacy pedagogy. The teachers were identified by six school board employees: three seconded curriculum program coordinators (kindergarten, primary/junior and intermediate/senior) and three school administrators. All administrators in the school board were invited to forward nominees. Nominations were limited to the nominators` understandings of the list of multiliteracies indicators included in the recruitment email and their experiences with teachers in school settings and at professional development sessions. As well, the nominations were limited to the 23 elementary schools and 4 secondary schools. The
invitation to participate in this study, along with the multiliteracies indicators were not extended to all teachers in the school board consequently potential participants may have been missed.

The teachers involved with this study had active roles within the school board, often times running the literacy professional development sessions. As a result, the sample may not be representative of the larger school board teaching population as these teachers had an invested interest in supporting the provincial and local literacy initiatives. In fact most of the teachers in this study held leadership roles within the board of education and were often responsible for staff training for literacy initiatives based on the provincial and local initiatives. They were committed to the successful implementation of the institutionalize views. Further research needs to focus on all teachers to access a fuller understanding of the role of literacy pedagogy across the curriculum. Research focused on mapping multiliteracies onto the pedagogy of teachers would also benefit from an increase in sample size and diversity. This study focused on one school board of education in Ontario. Additional research examining teachers from across the province, and country would help to better contextualize the role of literacy pedagogy in preparing students to become multiliterate beings.

Another limitation to this study that needs to be addressed was the use of single interviews and observations. The initial data were collected from interviews of the 20 participants who self-reported information about their literacy pedagogies. Such research, as Fletcher (2005) noted, may cover up inconsistencies between teacher beliefs and practices. With the exception of two of the participants (who needed to complete their interviews on a later date), the interviews occurred on a single occasion. The teachers in this study were active
members of their communities and many had young families. Although Glesne (2006) recommends multiple interview sessions to increase rapport and raise validity, the teachers found it difficult to find additional time outside of the classroom to be interviewed.

As well, gaining access to the classroom for observations as means of collecting data for triangulation, as per Poire (1983) and Patton (1990), proved to be difficult. The teachers participating in this study were involved with many professional development opportunities and extra-curricular activities that took them away from the classroom and some believed the presence of an outside observer would further disrupt their classroom schedules. Six of the teachers, one representative of each grade level agreed to participate in observations and follow-up interviews. Because of the limited access to the teachers in this study further research, including extended classroom observations would provide greater depth into how the teacher perceptions translate into practice. This would help highlight elements of multiliterate practices that are deeply embedded into pedagogy. This field would also benefit from conducting action research studies that provide training for teachers in multiliteracies so they can try the theory and experience how it works.

Furthermore, the data collected in this study are limited to the perception and practices of teachers. Inclusion of multiple perspectives such as students, parents and administrators would contribute to fuller understanding of the potential role of multiliteracies pedagogy (Glesne, 2006). Further research needs to focus on investigating what literacies students are accessing. How students are integrating literacies into school? How do students envision schools that support multiliterate practices?
Finally, this study raises an important question about the potential redundancies in data collection that can occur from using multiliteracies as a theoretical framework. The potential for overlap in reporting is in part due to the nature of multiliteracies. Multiliteracies is not a linear approach to pedagogy. Teachers are encouraged to draw from the components as they are needed and even revisit components on multiple occasions within the same activity. As well, both the content and the form of multiliteracies include such considerations as student subjectivities, ICT, thinking, designing, metalanguage and reflective practice. Because multiliteracies focuses on creating communities of learners that are in turn shaped by the pluralism of subjectivities within the classrooms the resulting applications of multiliteracies pedagogy are as unique as the individuals who make up the learning communities. This research created a framework representative of the content and form of multiliteracies that minimized redundancies where possible and was transparent in reporting overlap where needed to accurately represent the theory. Further research focused on describing how the potential redundancies in data collection represent the non-linear approach to pedagogy would continue to advance research in the application of multiliteracies to practice.

Concluding comments

This research documented teachers as they considered student subjectivities, integrated technology, used multimodal approaches, made learning more transparent through scaffolding and provided opportunities for authentic implementation of learning. What was most surprising was that these teachers were not trained in multiliteracies; rather their pedagogies were based on curricula, educational reading and professional development. However, due to the current culture of grade divisions and subject specializations, the teachers remained
relatively unaware of the literacy experiences that were being created from K-12.

Multiliteracies, as a pedagogical framework, may encourage further dialogue between teachers by providing a lens to talk about literacy learning, thus creating a learning community that supports our students as they develop as multiliterate beings through the public education system.
References


Dear xx,

Research is underway for my study titled, Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices that Contribute to Student Meaning Making: An Investigation of the Cross-Curriculum Literacy Pedagogy from K-12 for which I have received ethical approval from the xxxx School Board.

From my experience with the secondary panel I have developed an interest in exploring the literacy instruction that students receive across the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12. As a secondary teacher I felt disconnected from the students’ previous leanings and experiences. I began to consider how my instructional approach to literacy might better serve students if I better understood what instruction had taken place. Perhaps, the converse would also hold true. I hypothesized that perhaps literacy instruction in earlier grades could benefit from understanding what learning experiences were created at the secondary level.

The focus of my research is to examine cross-curriculum literacy instruction from kindergarten through grade 12 as a means to support student meaning making processes. A multiliteracies pedagogical lens will be used to investigate the perceptions and practices of teachers as they engage students in socially situated literacy learning. A total of twenty-four teachers, 16 teachers from the elementary panel and 8 from the secondary panel, will be interviewed. Ultimately, I am interested in documenting how literacy is being integrated across the curriculum and what kinds of learning opportunities that this generates for our students.

Currently I am seeking nominations of teachers from all grades and content areas who:
- make references to students using literacy outside of the classroom;
- use multiple methods of presenting new information to students;
- use multimedia and/or technology to enhance instruction;
- support connections between students’ learning and their lives;
- display a clear purpose in activity designs; and
- provide opportunities for students to apply their learning.

I am aiming to interview a total of twenty-four teachers, 16 teachers from the elementary panel (4 kindergarten, 4 primary, 4 junior and 4 intermediate) and 8 from the secondary panel (representative of intermediate and senior grades across the content areas). The interviews will focus on twenty questions (attached) and are expected to take approximately 40 minutes.

I am hoping to draw from your experience with the xx Board to identify teachers who best represent solid teaching practices with a focus on literacy in all grades, and from all content areas. Nominated teachers will be contacted by email and invited to participate in the study. Your nominations will be kept confidential.

You can contact me through email at kmain@oise.utoronto.ca or at (416)xxx-xxxx with your nominations. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your assistance,

Kristin Main
PhD Candidate, OISE of the University of Toronto
kmain@oise@utoronto.ca
Appendix 2

Recruitment Email- Nominated Teachers

My name is Kristin Main. I have taught with the xx School Board for eight years at xx C.V.I. and, more recently, xx High School. Currently, I am a Doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE/UT. My supervisor is Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson.

You have been nominated by a school administrator or program coordinator as a teacher who demonstrates good practice by integrating literacy into your instruction across the curriculum [for elementary teachers] in your subject area [for secondary teachers]. I am writing to ask if you would like to take part in a research project. This project is being undertaken in partial fulfillment of my degree, which has received approval from the Board. It is non-evaluate, that is, I am looking to report on the experiences and beliefs of teachers that demonstrate thoughtful literacy instruction.

From my experience with the secondary panel I have developed an interest in exploring the literacy instruction that students receive across the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12. As a secondary teacher I felt disconnected from the students’ previous learning and experiences. I began to consider how my approach to literacy might better serve students if I better understood what teachings had taken place. Perhaps, the converse would also hold true. I hypothesized that perhaps literacy teaching in earlier grades could benefit from understanding what literacy experiences were created at the secondary level. My study aims to interview 24 teachers from k – 12 to create a comprehensive picture of how teachers are integrating literacy into their classes. It will also examine teacher perceptions of their roles and the needs of their students. Specifically, I am interested in how reading, writing and communication are used in all subject areas to help students create meaning. I would also like to report the findings of this research in academic journals and conferences for literacy and pedagogy.

Your participation will involve a telephone interview that will take approximately 45 minutes to compete. The interview will take place at a time that is mutually convenient. The interview questions will focus on your literacy perceptions and practices as they relate to helping students make meaning. The questions will include such topics as:

- your goals for your students,
- the literacy experiences students have as they enter into your class, and
- your recommendations involving supporting students as they continue to make meaning of information at the next grade level.

Please let me know if you are interested. Please DO NOT feel any pressure to indicate an interest in participating. To protect your identity, I will mask the names of the Board of Education, schools and participants.

Thank you for considering this invitation. I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not feel that you need to provide reasons if you are unable to take part. Please just indicate that you are not able to participate.

Thank you,

Kristin Main, PhD Candidate
kmain@oise.utoronto.ca

Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, Associate Professor
speterson@oise.utoronto.ca
Appendix 3

Participant Consent Package

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study entitled, *Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices that Contribute to Meaning Making: An Investigation of Cross-curriculum Literacy Pedagogy from K – 12.*

Your participation in a non-evaluative study will involve an interview that will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The interview questions are attached. The audio recorded interview will take place at a time that is mutually convenient. After the interview, you will be provided with a summary of the transcripts. At this point, you will have opportunity to confirm that the summary is reflective of your ideas or make any clarifications.

The transcripts and digital recordings of the interviews will be stored in my OISE/UT office and then destroyed five years after the completion of the study. You, my advisor Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, and I are the only ones with access to your transcripts.

To protect your identity, I will mask the names of the Board of Education, schools and participants.

No names will be attached to the quotations that I will publish in the study. Your participation is voluntary, so you may chose not to participate in the research study and may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or negative repercussions. Please be aware that I may publish the results of my research in academic journals and for presentations at conferences.

You may contact me at (416)xxx-xxxx, if you have questions about your participation in the study. Please complete the consent form and return it to me by fax (647)xxx-xxxx, mail xx or email kmain@oise.utoronto.ca.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,

Kristin Main, PhD. Candidate
kmain@oise.utoronto.ca

Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, Associate Professor
OISE of the University of Toronto
slpeterson@oise.utoronto.ca
Consent Form

I consent to participation in Kristin Main’s research entitled, *Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices that Contribute to Meaning Making: An Investigation of Cross-curriculum Literacy Pedagogy from K – 12* that is under the supervision of Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson OISE/UT.

The purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me. I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that my questions have been answered to my full satisfaction. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty or negative repercussions. Please retain a copy of this consent for your records.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntary.

Date: ________________________________
Name: ________________________________
Signed: ________________________________

Please send me the results of the study ______ yes ______ no
(If you wish to have the results mailed to you, please print your preferred email address.)

Email Address: ____________________________________________________________
Appendix 4

Interview Questions

1. What do you expect students in your grade to be able to do, in terms of literacy, when they come to your class at the beginning of the school year?
2. What literacy backgrounds do students enter your class with?
3. What do you expect students in your grade to be able to do, in terms of literacy, when they leave your class at the end of the year?
4. What areas of reading, writing, and communicating do you see students needing to work on at the next grade level?
5. What are your goals for your students in terms of reading, writing, and communication?
6. What is the current literacy focus in your school?
   a. In your opinion, what should the focus be placed on?
7. What do you see your role as in terms of literacy instruction?
8. Have you considered the role of literacy in supporting students as they make meaning of new information?
   a. What role do you see it playing?
9. Are you able to include multimodal activities, that is, activities that include elements that address language, visual, audio, gestural, spatial or combinations of these elements?
   a. Please provide an example.
10. What literacies, that you are aware of, are students using outside of the classroom?
11. How do you introduce new concepts to students? Please provide an example.
12. Once you have presented new information to the students what do you see students doing, or hear them talking about to confirm that learning has taken place?
13. How do you use multimedia or technology to enhance your instruction?
14. How do you encourage the students to try to draw connections between their learning and their lives?
15. How are activities created so that students are able to identify a purpose for their learning?
16. What does critical literacy mean to you?
   a. In ways are students encouraged to reflect critically upon their learning?
17. How do you provide opportunities for your students to apply their learning?
18. What opportunities are provided for students to reflect upon how they can have a positive impact on society?
19. What resources do you find most helpful that focus on supporting student meaning making?
20. Do you have any further information that you think that I missed or you believe is important for this research?
Appendix 5

Code Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are teachers’ understandings of a multiliterate being?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active learners who can be active designers of social futures that includes multiple languages, multiple Englishes and communication patterns crossing cultural, community and national boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.0 Literacy Pedagogy for Working, Public &amp; Private Lives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(productive diversity, civic pluralism &amp; multilayered lifeworlds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 thinking and speaking for oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 critique and empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 innovation and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 technical and system thinking (technology and media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 invasion of private spaces by mass media, culture, global commodity culture, communications and information networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 learning to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 role of culture and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 varying visual and iconic meanings &amp; gestural relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 subjectivities (differences of identity and affiliation like gender, ethnicity, generation &amp; sexual orient.) inc. discourses of recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do teachers use a multimodal design?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of pedagogy is to develop an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without having people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities. Text and objects can exist predominately in a mode other than the mode of language with increasing salience of multiple modes of meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.0 Process of Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 teachers are seen as designers of learning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 learners are active designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 learning processes student based (recruit subjectivities, interests, intentions, commitments and purposes that students bring to learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 meaning-making is a complex, active, dynamic, non-linear process not governed by static rules visited at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 technology and multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.0 Metalanguage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 support a sophisticated and critical analysis of language (and other semiotic systems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 flexible and open-ended realistic for teacher and learner knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 relate text differences to the context, culture and situation in which they work not rules to set standards of correctness or to privilege certain discourses to ‘empower’

3.4 a language for talking about language, images, texts and meaning-making interactions

4.0 Design Elements
  4.1 Linguistic
  4.2 visual
  4.3 audio
  4.4 gestural
  4.5 spatial
  4.6 multimodal

How do teachers use meaning making processes?
How do they mesh curricular expectations with meaning making processes?
Curriculum now needs to mesh with different subjectivities and their attendant languages, discourses and registers and use these as resources for learning.

5.0 Situated Practice
  5.1 tradition of progressivism, whole language, process writing
  5.2 students’ own experiences and extending knowledge of the world beyond to extend competence and competitiveness
  5.3 design and designing experiences
  5.4 need motivation to learn
  5.5 meaningful practices

6.0 Overt Instruction
  6.1 teacher-centred transmission, direct instruction
  6.2 metalanguage to articulate position and personal significance
  6.3 explicit metalanguage of design
  6.4 help to focus learners
  6.5 organize information and guided practice

7.0 Critical Framing
  7.1 critical literacy
  7.2 frame learner’s growing mastery, conscious control and understanding
  7.3 social context and purposes: students begin to position themselves in terms of historical, social, political, cultural and ideological relations
  7.4 gaining ability to critique constructively, account for cultural location, extension or application, innovation, assess

8.0 Transformed Practice
  8.1 transfer of learning from one to another context (reflective practice)
  8.2 more conscious decisions about what practices to transform and which domain practices belong
  8.3 re-create designs of meaning
  8.4 recreate a discourse by engaging in it for real purposes implement understandings
Appendix 6

Observation Recruitment Email

Thank you for your participation in the first stage of my study, *Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices that Contribute to Student Meaning Making: An Investigation of Cross-Curriculum Literacy Pedagogy from K-12*.

I would like to invite you to participate in the second stage of the study. Again the focus will be on your perceptions and practices of literacy as they relate to help students make meaning. During this stage, I will be visiting the classrooms of teachers from each of the grade divisions, that includes kindergarten, primary, junior, and intermediate at the elementary level and intermediate and senior at the secondary level.

I will be focusing on literacy instruction. Such areas of interest are:

- References to students using outside of the classroom for non-school related activities
- Method of presenting new information to the students
- Use of multimedia or technology to enhance your instruction
- Connections between students’ learning and their lives
- Influence of purpose in activity design
- Opportunities for your students to apply their learning
- Resources used

Your participation would involve a researcher observe you teaching over the course of 2 school days, having audio taped conversations one-to-two times during that week to discuss classroom observations and normal routines for teaching and allowing me to look at the resources and assignments that you use.

I would like to report the findings of this research in academic journals and conferences for literacy and pedagogy.

Please let me know if you are interested. Please DO NOT feel any pressure to indicate an interest in participating. To protect your identity, I will mask the names of the board of education, schools and participants.

Thank you for considering this invitation. I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not feel that you need to provide reasons if you are unavailable to continue to take part of the study. Please just indicate that you are not available to participate.

Thank you,

Kristin Main
PhD Candidate
OISE of the University of Toronto
kmain@oise.utoronto.ca

Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson
Associate Professor
OISE of the University of Toronto
slpeterson@oise.utoronto.ca
Appendix 7

Observation Consent Package

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study entitled, Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices that Contribute to Meaning Making: An Investigation of Cross-curriculum Literacy Pedagogy from K – 12.

Your participation will involve me observing you teaching over the course of 2 school days, having audio taped conversations one-to-two times during that week to discuss classroom observations and normal routines for teaching and allowing me to look at the resources and assignments that you use.

The transcripts, field notes and audiotapes of the conversations will be stored in my OISE/UT office and then destroyed five years after the completion of the study. You, my advisor Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, and I are the only ones with access to your transcripts.

To protect your identity, I will mask the names of the board of education, schools and participants.

No names will be attached to the quotations that I will publish in the study. Your participation is voluntary, so you may chose not to participate in the research study and may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or negative repercussions.

You may contact me at (416)xxx-xxxx, if you have questions about your participation in the study. Please complete the attached consent form and return it to me in the attached envelope.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,

Kristin Main                                      Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson  
PhD Candidate                                      Associate Professor 
OISE of the University of Toronto               OISE of the University of Toronto 
kmain@oise.utoronto.ca                           slpeterson@oise.utoronto.ca
Consent Form

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Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntary.

Date: _________________________________

Name: _________________________________

Signed: _________________________________

Please send me the results of the study ______ yes ______ no

(If you wish to have the results mailed to you, please print your mailing address.)

Address: ____________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________
Appendix 8

Observation Guide

Physical Layout of Classroom
Seating Arrangement
Resources
Technology

Process of Design
Reference to previously used resources
Opportunity to shape resources
Created/selected resource for task

Design Elements

Design Elements include use of:
- Linguistic
- Visual
- Audio
- Gestural
- Spatial
- Multimodality

Situated Practice
- References to students using outside of the classroom for non-school related activities

Overt Instruction
- Conversations with students about how they come to understand a topic
- Method of presenting new information to the students
- Use of multimedia or technology to enhance your instruction

Critical Framing
- Connections between students' learning and their lives
- Influence of purpose in activity design
- Critical literacy (consideration of the social ramifications of ideas and actions in terms of such considerations as culture, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and language

Transformed Practice
- Opportunities for your students to apply their learning
- Opportunities to reflect upon how students can have a positive impact on society
## Appendix 9:

### Frequency Counts and Percentages for the Content of Multiliteracies Pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Content of Multiliteracies Pedagogy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process of Design</td>
<td>Curriculum and Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[388=35.4%]</td>
<td>resources</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curriculum</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thinking and speaking</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meaning-making as dynamic and/or non-linear</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking to Support Learning</td>
<td>learning to learn</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>critique and empowerment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>innovation and creativity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Process Roles</td>
<td>teachers as designers</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[248 = 22.6%]</td>
<td>students as designers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Elements</td>
<td>linguistic</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[248 = 22.6%]</td>
<td>multimodal</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>audio</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>visual</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gestural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spatial</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralism of Student Subjectivities</td>
<td>student-based learning</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[226=20.6%]</td>
<td>subjectivities</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture and community</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relate text differences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>technology and multimedia</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>[123 = 11.2%]</td>
<td>technical and system thinking</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mass media, ICT and global commodity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalanguage</td>
<td>language for talking about: language, images, texts and meaning-making flexible, opened-ended and realistic</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>[112 = 10.2%]</td>
<td>sophisticated and critical analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discourses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 10

### Frequency Counts and Percentages for the Form of Multiliteracies Pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Form of Multiliteracies Pedagogy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situated Practice</strong></td>
<td>extending knowledge</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[327 = 35.5%]</td>
<td>meaningful practice</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>progressivism</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>motivation to learn</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>design and designing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overt Instruction</strong></td>
<td>organization and guided practice</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[288 = 31.5%]</td>
<td>focus learners</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>metalanguage for position and personal significance</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>direct instruction</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>metalanguage of design</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Framing</strong></td>
<td>framing growing mastery</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>[111 = 12.1%]</td>
<td>critical literacy</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>contextualization of learning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>constructive critique</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td><strong>Transformed Practice</strong></td>
<td>implementation</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>[192 = 20.9%]</td>
<td>transfer context</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>re-create designs</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>transformation decisions</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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