

Speaking Out for Change:

Using a Dialogic Approach and Diverse, Multimodal Texts to Enhance Critical Literacy

by

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Abstract

This project explores how diverse, multimodal texts and a dialogic approach can be used to enhance adolescents' critical literacy. The project consists of a middle years' instructional unit, entitled *Speaking Out for Change*, which aims to enhance adolescents' critical literacy as they read, view, and discuss diverse, multimodal texts linked together by the common theme of contemporary social and environmental issues. Students will undergo a transformative, social action process by creating their own multimodal productions which seek to inform and educate others about contemporary social issues. The review of the literature outlines the research around critical literacy pedagogy and the dialogic approach and highlights principles of effective literacy instruction for adolescents. The instructional resource includes a unit matrix, suggestions for text selection, an overview of all lessons, and several appendices which provide the instructional and assessment resources needed to implement this unit. It aims to foster the growth of active, socially responsible, global citizens and encourage adolescents to speak out for change. Finally, the reflection discusses the personal, professional, and theoretical influences that inspired me to create this resource.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to all of my children: those that I teach for one year of their lives, and for my own two children who I will have with me for life. I hope I can inspire you to always pursue your passions and speak out for what you believe in.

Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION

I can trace a large part of the direction my life has taken until now to two fairly insignificant, everyday occurrences. The first happened when I was a student in grade four. My teacher brought in a guest speaker to talk to us about the work he was doing helping to alleviate poverty in rural villages in the Philippines. I was fascinated by the stories he told the class and with the photographic slideshow he presented. I'm not sure how his presence affected my classmates, but the images he showed and the stories he shared undoubtedly served as one spark which later ignited within me a passion for wanting to be aware of and involved with global social issues.

The second event occurred during an afternoon tea I had with my grandmother, Lulu Talbot, one day when I was in my early twenties. I had come to a junction in my life and was unsure of which way to go. I had been working as a waitress, taking courses in university with no clear direction of where I was headed, and volunteering at a locally-based, yet international in scope, civil society organisation. Her advice to me was simple and straightforward: "*Follow your passions.*" Her words were not extraordinary, yet for some reason they encouraged me to make profound changes in my life. In a short time, I completed my undergraduate degree, secured an opportunity to move to Indonesia, and began volunteering, and eventually working, with human rights and environmental organisations in Southeast Asia. Indeed, I had begun to follow my passions.

The advice my grandmother gave me has become a mantra for how I continue to live my life. Following my passions has so far led me on many life changing experiences: I have learned to carry pails of water on my head while living in an isolated village in

Sumatra; seen animistic rituals firsthand in Vanuatu; and slept on the wooden slats of a home occupied by a group of striking gold miners in a mountainous village in Fiji.

Following my passions has also led me on daily ventures even closer to home, such as returning to university to become a teacher, meeting my husband and building our family, and embarking on mini adventures everyday with the diverse thirteen year olds that I teach. It was the advice my grandmother gave me that also led me to embark upon a Masters of Education program at the University of Victoria, where I would have the opportunity to combine many of my passions: my love for literacy and education; and my deep-seated interest in learning about, and acting upon, local and global issues.

Technology and Teaching: The Tools of the Trade

When I first began my graduate studies at the university I was incredibly interested in how technology could be used to encourage literacy learning and engage the middle school students I teach. I thought my final project would focus on the merits of using tablets, smartphones, and interactive whiteboards. I wasn't sure *what* I wanted the technology to be used for, but I knew I *needed* it to be foremost in both my everyday classroom teaching and present within my final MEd project. I was caught-up in the discourse of 21st century and personalised learning being promoted by the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2011) and I interpreted their presence in education to signify that technology must be used in all aspects of the learning processes, regardless of the need. In my former role as the technology department head at my middle school there were countless times when teachers spoke to me about wanting to get their

students to learn PowerPoint, create Prezis or post blogs. I felt this way, as well, and viewed the use of technology more as an outcome, rather than a tool.

Over the past two years of graduate-level study, my thinking on this issue has undergone a radical transformation. Indeed, I certainly still recognise the merits that technology holds in the middle school classrooms I teach in, but I see it for what it is – a tool, albeit an essential one. Technology is something students can use to dive deeper into their learning and their inquiry of the world, to assist those who have difficulty with their fine motor skills, to provide opportunities for students to access and enhance their multiliteracies, or to hook a reluctant learner. I have learned that technology is not the focus of my teaching, but rather it is something that can be used to enhance, add to, and be interwoven into all aspects of classroom instruction and learning. Whether students bring their own devices into the classroom, or whether schools supply the technological resources, it is necessary for adolescents to learn how to use technology as the incredible tool that it is in order for them to think critically, evoke curiosity about the world, take action, and ask deep questions. Ferriter (2013) created an excellent visual to effectively illustrate the role that I believe technology plays in education (Figure 1). This idea greatly influenced how I designed the instructional unit featured in Chapter Three.

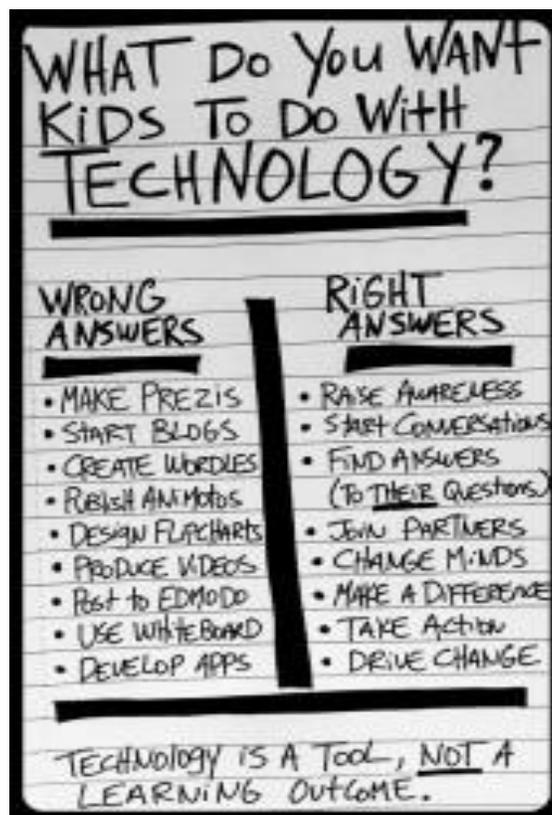


Figure 1. Technology is a Tool.
 Created by B. Ferriter (2013).
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The Proliferation of Technology and the Need for Critical Literacy

The instructional unit I have developed, *Speaking Out for Change*, does not focus on using technology in education. In fact, little reference to technology is made either in the unit or the literature review. However, technology does play a major role. It is because of the proliferation of technology – especially the Internet and portable digital devices – that brought about the need for a unit that deals with critical literacy. When students encounter multimodal and multimedia messages on the screens of their smartphones, tablets, and computers, it is essential that they have the knowledge and skills to view and reflect on these texts with a critical literacy lens (Apkon, 2013; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). Although there are varied definitions of critical literacy, in

general it refers to the processes used to analyse, critique, question, and transform information and knowledge (Luke, 2012). Critical literacy pedagogy is used to understand diverse perspectives, recognises that texts are never neutral, and acknowledges that individuals interpret text differently depending on their unique experiences and sociocultural backgrounds (Aukerman, 2012; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). Critical literacy pedagogy also has an element of social activism; that is, individuals should be transformed, or take action, if they encounter injustice or oppression (Banks, 2003; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). In our contemporary society, adolescents encounter a myriad of multimodal messages on a daily basis; therefore, providing them with the tools to critically analyse these messages is an integral part of equipping them with the skills to interact effectively and in a socially responsible manner in the 21st century.

The Speaking Out for Change Project

The literature review and instructional unit that follow embrace important aspects of teaching and learning that I am truly passionate about. This project focuses on how diverse, multimodal texts and a dialogic approach can be used to enhance adolescents' critical literacy. The instructional unit seeks to empower students to 'deconstruct', through a process of considering multiple perspectives and asking questions, diverse nonfiction texts related to contemporary social and environmental issues. Students will talk about the texts in small discussion groups while applying a critical literacy lens to their deconstruction of the texts. The diverse texts will encompass multiple modalities, such as: print, visual, and auditory modes. Students will

then ‘reconstruct’ these texts into their own multimodal creations which seek to inform and educate others about contemporary issues.

The essence of this project is to enhance adolescents’ critical literacy. It aims to do this by engaging and empowering students to think critically and learn about contemporary social and environmental issues as they read and discuss a selection of diverse texts. Using diverse, multimodal texts and a dialogic approach to enhance adolescents’ critical literacy is an important and timely topic. Students need to be able to critically transact with the multimodal and multimedia texts they encounter in order to “participate fully in our dynamic, technological and culturally diverse societies” (Mills, 2009, p. 103). I hope that by deepening their understanding and awareness, students will then undergo a personal transformation – in effect, they will demonstrate the qualities of a socially responsible and active citizen and feel compelled to take action on these issues. Since the overall aim of the education system is to empower and equip students with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential and actively participate in society, the critical literacy aspect of this project makes it relevant to today’s educational climate (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011). This project also features a dialogic approach to literacy learning in order for students to collectively construct understanding, explore ideas, and talk about the issues they encounter.

The Dialogic Approach

Twenty five to 35% of the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2007) Grade 8 English Language Arts curriculum is allocated for oral language and listening purposes, therefore, the addition of a dialogic approach is another important element. This

instructional unit incorporates a dialogic approach by providing a space for students to discuss and communicate their ideas, thoughts, perspectives, and worldview. A dialogic approach is student-centred and uses talk to enable students to explore their thinking, consider multiple perspectives, interact with others, and cooperatively construct meaning (Bakhtin, 1984; Barnes, 2008; Berk & Winsler, 1995; Smagorinsky, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Using a dialogic approach in the classroom can also lead to a deeper understanding of subject material and encourages students to partake in higher order thinking processes (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009; Reznitskaya, et. al, 2009; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). Critical literacy pedagogy and the dialogic approach both feature the importance of asking deep questions, considering multiple perspectives, and creating a classroom environment where diverse voices are encouraged; therefore, it makes sense to create an instructional unit that seeks to combine tenets of both these approaches. Even more importantly, in British Columbia's evolving curriculum climate, greater emphasis is presently being placed on the importance of critical thinking and on learning that is authentic and has real-world relevance (e.g. see British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2013).

Transforming Curriculum and Assessment in British Columbia: Relevance of the Topic

The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2013) has recently put forward curriculum drafts that seek to transform curriculum and assessment. Three core competencies have been identified in these drafts: thinking, communication, and personal and social competencies. In addition, these core competencies are divided into core competency continua (Table 1). All three of these competencies feature

prominently within the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit. The emphasis that the *Speaking Out* instructional unit places on developing and enhancing adolescents' critical literacy, communication skills, personal and social awareness, and responsibility demonstrates exactly how relevant this project is in light of the present changes.

Table 1

British Columbia Ministry of Education Core Competency Continua

<p>Creative thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for Generating Creative Ideas (e.g., valuing creativity and innovation; risk-taking; sense of play; flexibility; ease with ambiguity) • Approaches to Elaboration (Exploring and elaborating ideas, e.g., risk-taking; “playing”; collaborating; making connections) • The Creative Idea, Expression or Product (Creating novel/innovative ideas, expressions, works in various media)
<p>Critical thinking (Preliminary Ideas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify issues; develop questions • Gather, assess and analyze information • Understand perspectives; consider evidence and points-of-view • Consider, develop, and evaluate conclusions and solutions; reflect on outcomes
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect and engage with others [to share and develop ideas] Includes informal conversations, as well as contributing to focused discussions about ideas. • Acquire, interpret, and present information [includes inquiries] Many purposes and audience, from sharing personal interests to formal presentations. Often includes media. • Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities Working together to accomplish goals – ranges from young children planning how to create a construction to older students planning an inquiry; planning a performance; working together to collaborate through digital media. • Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments Students tell about their experiences – especially about their learning experiences and show/tell what they learned. Often

	includes self-assessment. Reflective.
Positive personal and cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of relationship and cultural context • Personal values and choices • Personal strengths and abilities
Personal awareness and responsibility (Preliminary ideas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Self-regulation • Developing relationships • Developing well-being
Social awareness and responsibility (Preliminary ideas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social awareness • Contributing to the classroom and school community • Solving problems in peaceful ways • Valuing diversity and defending human rights • Exercising democratic rights and responsibilities

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2013). *Transforming curriculum and assessment*. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>

The *Speaking Out* instructional unit focuses on developing and enhancing adolescents' critical literacy, encouraging oral communication skills, and providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their sense of social responsibility by speaking out about issues they are concerned about; all of these aspects connect well to the British Columbia Ministry of Education's (2013) proposed changes to curriculum and assessment.

Overview of Project

This project consists of four chapters. The first chapter has provided the reader with a general overview of the *Speaking Out for Change* unit and explained why this project is important and timely. The second chapter is the literature review, which outlines the theoretical framework and conceptual approaches for this project, and provides information and research on the importance of critical literacy, the dialogic

approach, and the use of diverse, multimodal texts, specifically in relation to teaching adolescents. The third chapter is the instructional resource, called *Speaking Out for Change*, which I created for middle school teachers to use as either a stand-alone English Language Arts unit or a cross-curricular Humanities unit. Although the instructional resource is detailed and provides many practical resources to be used for a unit focused on contemporary social and environmental issues, my intention was to design an instructional framework that could be used to enhance critical literacy using a dialogic approach and diverse texts. Thus, the instructional resource could be adapted by educators to fit a variety of different topics. Lastly, the fourth chapter is my personal and scholarly reflection on the process of completing this project and includes information about what I have learned throughout this process, how my literature review informed my instructional resource, and outlines possible next steps in my journey. Finally, I hope that the lessons and activities outlined in the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit will not only provide adolescents with the critical literacy skills needed to transact with the multimodal messages they encounter on a daily basis, but will also ignite within them a passion to speak out and bring forth positive change to the world.

Chapter 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

In our increasingly connected and digital world, individuals need to develop critical literacy in order to deconstruct, understand and analyse the proliferation of visual images, print messages and audio that we encounter on a daily basis (Apkon, 2013; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). Not only that, as an educator, I think it is important that students become active agents of change and develop the knowledge, skills and repertoire to critically interact and eventually bring forth positive social transformation when needed. The New London Group (1996) espoused a theoretical and philosophical understanding view of literacy pedagogy, known as multiliteracies pedagogy, where the objective of learning is to ensure “full social participation” and enable individuals of diverse cultural, social, political, economic, and ideological backgrounds to equitably access, utilise and derive meaning from the texts they encounter (p. 60). While we often view all literacies as falling under the ‘umbrella’ of multiliteracies, I believe that critical literacy could be the lens through which we view *all* literacy principles and practices; the ability to transact critically with multiple modes of text, develop and voice opinions may be some of the most important goals of education (Roche, 2011). In this chapter I will review some of the literature related to the dialogic approach, the use of diverse texts, and critical literacy as an impetus for social awareness and action. I argue that the use of diverse, multimodal texts and a dialogic, or discussion-based, approach can enhance adolescents’ critical literacy.

Although there are various interpretations of what critical literacy means, in general it refers to the processes used to analyse, critique, question, and transform the

information and knowledge conveyed in print and multimodal texts (Luke, 2012). More specifically, critical literacy is the ability to consider multiple perspectives, recognise that text is never neutral and is both written and interpreted by individuals with diverse sociocultural backgrounds and experiences, and encourages people to act upon issues of injustice or oppression (Aukerman, 2012; Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011; Soares & Woods, 2010). Adolescents encounter numerous digital, visual, auditory and print texts every day; therefore, it is imperative that they develop the skills needed to be able to both filter and critically analyse these messages (Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011; Sulkunen, 2013). According to Freire (1970; 1985), students need to be able to both read the word and the world critically.

I begin with a description of dialogic instruction and discuss several studies where this approach is used to enhance classroom literacy practices, particularly as it relates to discussions around diverse texts. I will identify some of the benefits of using a dialogic approach and illustrate how this approach can encourage students to actively co-construct and develop meaning (Barnes, 2008; Berk & Winsler, 1995; Lyle, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978), and lead to higher order thinking and deepened understanding of subject material (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009; Reznitskaya, et. al, 2009; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). In addition, I will examine the research on critical literacy pedagogy and illustrate how a dialogic approach can be used to enhance adolescents' critical literacy (Aukerman, 2012), elucidate the importance of critical literacy in our increasingly dynamic and digitally influenced world

(Mulhern & Gunding, 2011), and show how enhancing adolescents' critical literacy can encourage students to adopt a more socially just perspective (Banks, 2003; Ciardiello, 2010). Finally, I will introduce the place of multimodal texts. I will maintain that a pedagogical fusion of dialogic talk, critical literacy and the use of diverse texts constitutes effective adolescent literacy instruction and argue that diverse texts and a dialogic approach can be used to enhance adolescents' critical literacy.

Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivism and Sociocultural Theory

My argument is draped upon a social constructivist framework and guided by the sociocultural theory of learning, which elucidates the dynamic interplay between talk, cognition, and culture and situates learning within a social context (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Smagorinsky, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). A social constructivist view stresses that knowledge acquisition is an active, rather than passive, process and is collaboratively constructed among and between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). In our interactions with others, the construction of meaning is both an internal and an external process. Internally, our ideas, thoughts and actions are guided by the sociocultural and political experiences of each individual, but are also shaped by our external interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1962; 1978; Wells, 1999). In addition, one's identity is inherently linked to how one communicates (Spencer, Clegg & Stackhouse, 2013). Furthermore, the paradigmatic lens through which we view, interpret, construct and use literature is influenced by our social, cultural, ethnic, political, and ideological beliefs and practices;

this “identity kit” (Gee, 1989, p. 7), or Discourse, is always present in our interactions with others.

In the context of using a dialogic approach to enhance critical literacy, valuing the sociocultural and social constructivist views of learning is important because it highlights the importance of both the individual and the group in textual transactions. Akin to the tenets of critical literacy, where the notion of ‘truth’ is a highly politicized and contextual one (Bakhtin, 1984; Freire, 1970; 1985), acknowledging the diversity of individual experiences, ideas and sociocultural backgrounds is important in order for readers/viewers of text to constructively create meaning from their transactions with texts, and to ensure that all views are valued in the process. Through their discussions around diverse texts, it is hoped that the different experiences, backgrounds and ideas that readers encapsulate are able to collectively enhance the critical literacy of the group. Rosenblatt’s (1978; 1986; 1994) transactional theory will further illustrate how transactions with text may differ between individuals, but are also an inherently social act.

Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory

Implicitly present within my argument are the views of Rosenblatt’s (1978; 1986; 1994) transactional theory, which notes that all transactions or viewings of text are either “efferent” or “aesthetic” (1994, p. 1066). An aesthetic stance evokes the more emotive or private response to text, while an efferent stance relates more to the informative or public aspects of the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Text can be viewed using

both of these stances and no transaction is ever purely efferent or aesthetic, but rather falls somewhere on a continuum between the two (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Rosenblatt's transactional theory also maintains that individuals derive meaning from their transactions with texts in different ways due to their own unique experiences. According to Rosenblatt (1978), construction of meaning around text "involves both the author's text and what the reader brings to it" (p. 14). While commonalities are usually present, no two interpretations of the same text are ever truly similar due to an aesthetic interpretation of text when the reader becomes evocatively immersed within the text they are transacting with:

This meaning, shaped and experienced during the aesthetic transaction, constitutes 'the literary work', the poem, story or play. This 'evocation', and not the text, is the object of the reader's 'response' and 'interpretation', both during and after the reading event (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1067).

Rosenblatt's views ultimately value the individual interpretation of text on the part of the reader, noting that each interpretation will be at least somewhat unique and inherently connected to the individual's personal aesthetic understanding of the text. In addition, the notion of 'text' is not only understood as print-based texts, but also refers to the multiple forms text takes, such as visual, audio, and multimedia modes, as proposed by multiliteracies theory.

Multiliteracies: An Expanded Notion of 'Text'

Both conceptually, and theoretically, my argument is influenced by the work of the New London Group (1996) who first proposed the concept of "multiliteracies" (p.

63). The notion of ‘being literate’ now transcends the idea of merely being able to read or write, and acknowledges that a variety of different forms, or modes (e.g. linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial), of text types exist and can be used simultaneously to help construct meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; New London Group, 1996). With the emergence of digital and information and communications technology (ICT), the definition of text has expanded to include these multimodal forms. ‘Text’ refers to all constructions which form “sets of meaning and signifying practices” (Nielsen, 1998, p. 1). Therefore, text can refer to more than just print or written text, but also encompasses visual, auditory, performance, screen, gestural, and other modes (Bearne, 2009; Jewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Mills, 2009; 2010; New London Group, 1996). Students need to be literate in multiple ways in order to successfully interact and engage within our increasingly technologically connected, global and culturally diverse environment (Alvermann, 2002; Mills, 2009; 2010; New London Group, 1996).

The theoretical approaches that influence the *Speaking Out* instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three – the social constructivist and sociocultural theories, Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, and multiliteracies theory – complement the notion of using a dialogic approach to deconstruct and discuss interpretations of diverse texts in order to enhance adolescents’ critical literacy. Literacy and language use are viewed as an expanded concept which acknowledges the different modes, or forms, that both text and literacy can take. Present within all these theoretical arguments is the notion that the process of interacting and transacting with text is both a social and a personal act, and is linked to the experiences, background knowledge, and sociocultural context

of the reader/viewer. As Rosenblatt (1994) stated: “reading is at once an intensely individual and an intensely social activity” (p. 1089) and she stressed the importance of analysing and questioning issues “in the context of the ongoing life of individuals and groups in a particular cultural, social and educational environment” (1994, p. 1089). The next section will elucidate the importance of acknowledging and valuing the diversity of adolescent learners through the incorporation of a conceptual approach to instruction which seeks to address the learning needs of all students.

Universal Design for Learning: A Conceptual Approach

Conceptually, the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three incorporates the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pedagogical framework (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012). Akin to Rosenblatt’s (1978; 1986; 1994) notions on the personal nature of the reading transaction, the UDL framework also recognizes that “learning is as unique to individuals as their fingerprints or DNA” (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012, p. 2). Rather than only focus on students who require ‘special education’, UDL adheres to the notion that instruction that is effective for a few, in fact, can benefit many (Brownlie, Fullerton & Schnellert, 2011). According to Hall, Meyer and Rose (2012), in order to benefit all learners certain principles must be built into the design of instructional units, specifically: multiple means for *representation*, to enable all students to access and process information; multiple means of *expression and action*, to provide students with opportunities to express what and how they learn; and multiple means of *engagement*, to generate motivation and keep students engaged in their learning. At the core of the UDL conceptual framework is the notion of respect for diversity which

arises when all students are empowered and given opportunities to have access, be engaged, and express their learning.

Common to the various theories and approaches outlined here are the notions that an individual's interactions with diverse forms of text are influenced by their own sociocultural background, experiences, and views as well as the collective knowledge and construction of meaning of the group. Using a dialogic approach to constructively create meaning and to question, analyse, critique, and even transform the information displayed in texts is an approach which values diversity and seeks to enhance adolescents' critical literacy.

Valuing the Different and Diverse: A Shift to a Dialogic Approach

The ability to communicate in various ways is an essential aspect of human interaction. As noted above, the New London Group (1996) espoused an expanded notion of literacy – that moved the concept of 'being literate' beyond the confines of merely reading and writing – to include a variety of distinct, yet often overlapping modes. Being cognizant of and actively incorporating these expanded notions of literacy, or multiliteracies, into classroom literacy instruction are essential elements of pedagogical practice in the twenty-first century. The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2007) divides the English Language Arts curriculum into three streams: Reading/Viewing; Writing/Representing; and Speaking/Listening. These three streams address different modalities through which students engage in literacy activities. As elucidated by the New London Group (1996), these multiple modalities, such as the visual, aural or audio, gestural, spatial and print-based modes, complement each other

and should be present within literacy pedagogy; however, the oral/aural stream is often the most neglected within classroom instructional and assessment practices (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). While each mode is valuable – and they are most effective when integrated together – this literature review focuses on how ‘talk’ and the dialogic approach can be used as a means to enhance adolescents’ critical literacy.

Talk enables us to ask for clarification, use our imagination, communicate ideas, express emotions, command others, and fulfill needs; more importantly, talk helps us think. In *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky (1962) illustrates how meaning is constructed through our social interactions with others. It is through these interactions that we reinforce, reconstruct and develop knowledge, explore ideas, and become exposed to diverse perspectives (Bakhtin, 1984; Barnes, 2008; Berk & Winsler, 1995; Smagorinsky, 2007). According to Bakhtin a genuinely dialogic classroom is one where “truth...is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction” (p. 110) and a dialogic environment can be distinguished from a monologic one “which pretends to possess a readymade truth” (p. 10).

In education, a dialogic approach values the different and diverse perspectives that are present in a classroom environment. According to Wegerif (2013), “[f]rom a dialogic perspective, difference is seen as a necessary condition of meaning rather than as something to be overcome” (p. 14). As students engage in exploratory talk (Barnes, 2008), one aspect of the dialogic approach, they are exposed to a multiplicity of ideas and have opportunities to construct new meaning and contribute to classroom discourse. Not only does this process enable students to develop meaning, but it also

exposes them to and encourages them to better understand the diverse voices in the classroom. Using dialogical processes and uncovering the different and diverse voices present in both the classroom and in classroom texts are essential aspects of critical literacy pedagogy (Freire, 1970; 1985; Luke & Woods, 2009; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011).

Classroom Dialogic Spaces

According to Alexander (2008), a dialogic classroom is one that is: *collective*, where students and teachers work together and collaborate; *reciprocal*, where students and teachers listen, share ideas, and consider different views; *supportive*, where students and teachers help each other to construct meaning; *cumulative*, where ideas are built upon and connected; and *purposeful*, where educational goals are clear. When students are given *explicit* instruction on how to interact orally and careful consideration is given towards developing student-centred discussions, then a dialogic approach has the potential to enhance classroom literacy practices and ensure the classroom becomes a place where thinking and learning can unfold (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Thein, Guise & Sloan, 2011; Pantaleo, 2011).

In a recent qualitative case study, Maher (2012) examined the interactions of students in two elementary classes in Sydney, Australia as the teachers shifted towards a more dialogic approach. The purpose of this study was to determine how student-student interactions were enhanced and supported by the inclusion of interactive whiteboard (IWB) technology in a dialogic environment. Consistent with typical case study features (Creswell, 2013), Maher (2012) did a cross case analysis to compare the data from the two classrooms. A variety of data, such as observations, interviews, and

pre-and post-study questionnaires, were coded and analysed thematically. Findings from this study indicated that the quality and consistency of student-student interactions, which were centred upon the IWB, increased as the teachers shifted from a monologic to a dialogic method of instruction. While this study found that IWB technology was a useful tool in helping to foster deeper learning resulting from a conscious shift to a dialogic approach, other studies (e.g. Mercer, Warwick, Kersher & Staarman, 2010) found that IWB technology alone did not help create a more dialogic stance in the classroom, but was useful in promoting dialogic spaces when the teacher had provided sufficient front-end instruction to teach students to engage in effective discussions. In addition, although Maher's (2012) study focused on the conscious shift to a dialogic approach and the role technology and multimodal resources play, it did not address whether the classroom community was a factor leading to increased dialogic engagements.

Conversely, Cridland-Hughes (2012) conducted a phenomenological case study to examine the dialogic engagements of an urban debate club, and to determine whether these interactions contributed to youth empowerment and critical literacy development. Unlike the Maher (2012) study, which focused on classroom-based interactions, this study took place in an afterschool club in a large southeastern USA city. A variety of data was collected, including observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis; akin to the characteristics of a phenomenology (Creswell, 2013), the researcher interviewed 11 adolescent members of the debate club to understand their experiences with the club. Data was coded, analysed vertically to extract themes, and

then analysed horizontally to uncover cross case themes. As an embedded case study, Cridland-Hughes (2012) explored how the debate club influenced one 17-year old female participant in developing her critical literacy perspectives and practices. Findings from both the phenomenology and the case study indicated that the dialogical interactions that took place in informal settings (rather than in the formal debates) enabled participants to develop their critical literacy and become more involved in social action. Furthermore, the debate community provided a safe space for participants to discuss contemporary social issues, explore new ideas, and be exposed to diverse perspectives. While this study examined the importance of the creation of a safe space for dialogic interactions to occur, it did so in the context of an afterschool program and not in a school-based classroom. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the findings would be similar in a classroom-based context, which could potentially be restricted by evaluation and assessment agendas and classroom composition and dynamics.

While the findings from the Cridland-Hughes (2012) study may – or may not – be easily transferred to a classroom setting, other studies have specifically focused on how a dialogic approach can be incorporated into the classroom environment. According to a mixed-methods study conducted by Wells and Arauz (2006), the most important actions a teacher can do to shift from a monologic to dialogic approach are to ask open-ended questions, encourage open-ended exchanges of ideas (Alvermann, O'Brien & Dillon, 1990) and become proficient with building upon the ideas presented by students, a process that Collins (1982) refers to as 'uptake'. Encouraging an inquiry approach

from both teachers and students is another factor which can lead to a more dialogic approach (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells & Arauz, 2006). Lastly, as Wells and Arauz (2006) noted, the questions that teachers pose are one of the most important elements of incorporating a dialogic approach to critical literacy. Using an inquiry approach in the classroom and asking questions helps create classroom dialogue, focus attention and share what one is thinking (Fisher, 2009). However, when inauthentic, closed-questions are used and students are just trying to provide the 'right' answer (e.g. Initiate-Response-Evaluate or Initiation-Response-Feedback model as first espoused by Wells, 1993), questions can also "stop children making the effort to think" (Fisher, 2009, p. 28).

An important aspect of promoting dialogic and critical literacy spaces, therefore, is to encourage both students and teachers to pose open-ended questions that stimulate thinking, sustain classroom discussion and encourage students to learn from each other. In terms of promoting dialogic and critical literacy spaces, sometimes a 'less is more' approach on the part of the teacher can help to promote deeper thinking and discussion in the classroom (Fisher, 2009). As discussed, ensuring teachers consciously shift towards a dialogic approach and ask open-ended questions (Fisher, 2009; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells & Arauz, 2006), providing a safe environment for dialogic interactions and critical literacy to unfold (Cridland-Hughes, 2012) and incorporating multimodal tools, such as the IWBs (Maher, 2012), have the potential to shift the classroom dynamics from a monologic environment to a more dialogic space, which values different and diverse voices. The following section will look at some of the challenges, obstacles, and opportunities this shift may bring.

Challenges, Obstacles and Opportunities

In order for teachers to effectively incorporate dialogic principles into the classroom, they must have adequate knowledge and skills on how best to do this. There are many benefits of a classroom that is dialogic: it can lead to higher order thinking and deeper understanding of subject-matter (Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Reznitskaya et al, 2009; Wegerif, Mercer & Dawes, 1999); it can encourage students to take greater personal responsibility in co-constructing their knowledge, a process called 'interthinking' (Mercer, 2000; Soter et al, 2008); and it can lead to higher engagement in literacy activities (Gainer, 2008; 2010). However, the majority of classes in North America and the United Kingdom continue to be monologic and follow the Initiation-Response-Feedback/Initiate-Response-Evaluate model (Alexander, 2008; Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). For example, in their year-long study of 64 middle and high school English classrooms, Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran found that authentic classroom discussion averaged only 1.7 minutes per one hour of class time. So, what are the obstacles facing teachers who are attempting to incorporate a more student-centred, dialogic approach into their classroom literacy instruction?

The reasons why effective dialogical practices are not the norm are complex. Dillon (1994) suggested that discussion-based approaches are seen as more time-consuming and less efficient than more traditional lecture based means. According to Chinn, Anderson, and Waggoner (2001), some teachers fear a loss of control in the classroom and feel uncomfortable when allowing student voices to dominate during

interpretations of classroom texts and literature. Additionally, Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Nystrand (2008) examined the reasons why a dialogic classroom, or dialogic space, is difficult to attain and suggested ways that teachers can more successfully integrate authentic discussion into the classroom. They argued that creating dialogic spaces in the classroom can enable students to build upon classroom collective knowledge, engage students in literary discussions, and encourage critical thinking. However, the ability of the teacher to scaffold this dialogic shift is paramount: “[u]ltimately the effectiveness of instructional discourse is a matter of the quality of teacher-student interactions and the extent to which students are assigned challenging and serious epistemic roles requiring them to think, interpret, and generate new understandings” (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Nystrand, 2008, p. 7). Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Nystrand also argue that collaboration between teachers, teacher educators, and university researchers is key to the development of dialogic spaces because it can help facilitate the growth of classroom teacher capacity in this area and lead to the growth of “horizontal expertise” (p. 9), which occurs when new knowledge is created as professionals interact with one another.

The development of teacher skills in developing dialogic spaces in the classroom is clearly imperative for this shift to occur. However, as noted previously, multimodal resources such as IWBs or other forms of technology can also be used to encourage the development of dialogic spaces in the classroom. Groenke (2010) conducted a study to look at the effectiveness of synchronous (real-time) computer-mediated conversations (CMC) on fostering discussions between 24 middle school students and eight pre-service

teachers. Following a case study approach, and comparing the results through cross-case analysis, Groenke found that one obstacle inhibiting authentic on-line discussions between students and beginner teachers was that pre-service teachers' discourse about teacher-student discussion roles was grounded in traditional pedagogical beliefs and practices (e.g. IRF/IRE model). This study fills a gap in the research that looks at synchronous discussions (versus asynchronous discussions) using computer-mediated technology and also expands the notion of dialogic spaces to include digital, web-based realms.

In addition, Basmadjian (2008) showed how dialogic spaces could be constructed in the classroom by videotaping discussions around texts. Using an activity theory approach that builds upon the work of Vygotsky (1978), Basmadjian studied 14 pre-service teachers and their university instructor during a semester-long English Language Arts methods course to determine how videotaping could be used as a tool to expand their notions of classroom discussions and their views on the role that teachers play in fostering discussions around common text. As a participant-observer, Basmadjian observed and participated in the classroom sessions, interviewed participants, videotaped, and transcribed each session; data was then analysed thematically and cross-checked to ensure validity. Basmadjian found that as participants watched the videotaped discussions they moved from a more monologic view of discussions around literature to a more dialogic understanding. In addition, the pre-service teacher participants' views changed in relation to the role that teachers need to play in facilitating and fostering deep discussions as they realised that teachers needed to ask

“probing questions” (Basmadjian, 2008, p. 23) and like the students they teach be actively engaged in the discussion. This study illustrates how multimodal tools can provide opportunities to enable teachers and students to shift the classroom dynamics from a monologic environment to a more dialogic space.

As noted, in order for classroom literacy practices to reflect authentic and meaningful discussions, teachers not only require the desire to shift to a more dialogic approach, but also must equip themselves with the necessary skills to bring this transformation into fruition. Roche (2011) conducted a participatory self-reflection action research study to determine how she could shift her teaching practices to encompass a more dialogic and critical form of pedagogy. For five years she attempted to transform her practice by actively expanding her personal knowledge about the dialogic approach and critical literacy. Over the course of the study, she reflected on her practice as she implemented some of the newly learned principles of dialogic teaching and critical literacy into the classroom. Using a living educational theory approach, which is an approach that explains educational influences in a person’s learning (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), in her action research inquiry meant that the research was inclusive and collaborative. Roche found that in the process of trying to teach her students to be dialogic, critically literate individuals, she also began to embrace these principles herself: “I saw that I was changing from being the kind of teacher who imposed my views on my pupils to one who listened to them and argued with them and questioned with them” (p. 333).

In recent years, it is increasingly being understood that language is a key mechanism for learning. In light of this notion, Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) present a theoretical model that elucidates the relationships between dialogue, teaching, and learning and describes how a dialogic inquiry process can be used to enhance the learning processes and outcomes at both the individual level and the classroom community level. According to Reznitskaya and Gregory, dialogic spaces mean that classrooms are viewed as learning communities, where the teacher is not regarded as the sole bearer of knowledge; classroom dialogue and discussions centre around open-ended inquiry processes; and the dialogic process is inherently metacognitive. The theoretical model proposed by Reznitskaya and Gregory is cyclical and recursive, and “as members of the classroom community become more advanced in their intellectual capacities, they contribute new thought and language practices to group discussions, thus stimulating new rounds of development” (p. 121). While Reznitskaya and Gregory are not able to determine fully whether dialogic instruction explicitly leads to students becoming empowered and active citizens, they do maintain that using dialogic inquiry processes within a classroom enables students to collaborate with one another for a common goal of understanding, to better understand that knowledge is negotiated, and to assist in the development of “argument schema”(p. 119), or a set of cognitive and metacognitive practices that can be called upon when a judgement needs to be formed. All of these benefits of a dialogic approach are central to engaging both actively and meaningfully in civil society.

Clearly, the onus to shift to a dialogic approach is on the teacher. Individual teachers must have the necessary skills and motivation to ask open-ended questions, build upon student responses, and inject inquiry-based learning into classroom discussions. While the shift to a dialogic approach can be challenging, it also provides opportunities for teachers and students to interact and engage with each other in a learning community where all voices are acknowledged. In the next section, I will examine the influence of professional development on encouraging teachers to adopt new practices and look at some concrete ways that teachers are using a dialogic, student-centred approach to foster the growth of critical literacy and encourage the development of a social perspective amongst students.

Redefining Literacy in a Dynamic World: Critical Literacy Pedagogy

According to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2011), to effectively interact within the 21st-century global environment, students require collaboration, critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and inquiry skills. Interpretations of texts are shaped by the reader's sociocultural and political background and worldview; with access to multimedia and multimodal forms of information on the rise, it is imperative that readers develop the necessary skills to critically interact and interpret the messages that are present (Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011; Sulkunen, 2013).

In order to transact critically with various modes of text, students need to acquire critical literacy, which is the ability to understand a multiplicity of perspectives, acknowledge that individuals interpret text differently depending on their circumstances

and sociocultural and political histories, and realise that transacting with text is never a neutral act (Aukerman, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Luke & Freebody, 1999; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). Many of the ideas of critical literacy pedagogy can be attributed to Freire (1970; 1985), who identified that the more marginalized, or 'oppressed', groups in society must be made aware of the importance of having a critical perspective so that they can "liberate themselves and their oppressors as well" (1970, p. 28). Critical literacy pedagogy aims to debunk existing attitudes and paradigms that perpetuate notions related to inequity and inequality. Another element of critical literacy is the focus on personal responsibility, or student agency, particularly as it relates to social justice issues (Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). According to Janks (2014), critical literacy "takes us beyond deconstructing and problematizing the world by inviting students to intervene in ways that make a positive difference" (p. 354). This focus on personal responsibility and agency seeks to bring about personal transformation in the reader/viewer and sets the concept of critical literacy apart from critical thinking (Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011).

Critical Literacy Pedagogy and Teacher Influences

As illustrated by Roche (2011), for a dialogic and critical literacy pedagogical shift to occur, teachers need to develop skills and knowledge to enable this transformation. Assaf and Delaney (2013) examined the practices of two teachers as they attempted to enact the tenets of critical literacy into their classroom instruction. What is significant about this study is that it looked at the influence of professional development on teacher's classroom practices, specifically in relation to incorporating critical literacy

pedagogy. Participants included two female teachers (one elementary, one high school) who had participated in a graduate-level multicultural literacy course. Over a two-year period Assaf and Delaney conducted multiple participant observations, analysed documents, conducted interviews and kept reflexive journals to analyse whether and how the participants' practices had shifted since their graduate course. In addition, follow-up observations and interviews took place after two years in order to check the long-term viability of results. The results indicated that the knowledge gained through the graduate-level course helped shift the participants' instructional practices and enhanced students' critical literacies around multicultural texts. Similar to the findings of Wells and Arauz (2006) and Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013), a dialogic inquiry approach was seen as an effective way for the teacher participants to facilitate the development of critical literacy in their classrooms. The dialogic interactions students engaged in as they deconstructed, analysed and interpreted a variety of multicultural texts, led to the enhancement of a critical, socially just perspective on the part of the students.

The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of New Narratives

According to Apkon (2013), we are in an era where "we will be called upon to be not just consumers but producers...we now have to start *telling the story ourselves*, all of us, if this is to be a literate society" (p. 33). In a qualitative study, Gainer (2010) encouraged adolescents to tell their stories as they deconstructed and collaboratively reconstructed, or created, counter-narratives in the form of student-produced videos. In a purposive sampling of participants, 11 students of mixed ethnic background and

gender participated in an afterschool club located in an urban middle school in the southwestern USA. It is important to note that, like the Cridland-Hughes (2012) study, Gainer conducted his study outside of the confines of the regular classroom environment. In this study, Gainer followed a critical ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2013; Madison, 2005) and collected a variety of data, including observations, interviews and analysis of student-produced multimodal texts. Conducive to an ethnographic approach, field work was respected and reciprocity processes were evident (Creswell, 2013) when participants chose to create multimodal texts they deemed relevant to their lives, rather than the counter-narratives that the researcher had planned for. By allowing for this shift, Gainer incorporated both dialogic and critical literacy perspectives; it was evident that notions of power and authority were undergoing a mutually respectful transformative shift. Findings indicated that as a result of their dialogical and critical exchanges around media texts, participants engaged in a process of collaboratively constructing meaning and broadened their understanding of the texts they interacted with. In addition, students engaged in high-level discussion of sensitive topics; although they did not always agree, they were able to use dialogic means to enhance the collective critical media literacy of the group. According to Gainer: "...students were actively engaged with text, and with one another, as they socially constructed meaning around multimodal texts" (p. 371).

Huang (2011) also found that students were more engaged when critical literacy pedagogy was combined with conventional literacy practices in a class consisting of 36 English language learners in Taiwan. Using a framework based on Luke and Freebody's

(1999) critical competencies model, Huang supported students in posing critical questions as they read a variety of different texts in a class focused on reading and writing. Using a critical literacy approach that centred on the “conscious reading” of texts (p. 149), Huang found that the adolescent learners were more motivated to write, they were highly engaged in the literacy activities, and they became proficient at considering multiple perspectives and “uncovering hidden messages” (p. 150) in the articles read in class.

Similarly, in an action research project, Borsheim and Petrone (2006) infused traditional academic literacies, New Literacies pedagogies, and critical literacies into a high school language arts unit focused on researching and writing. The teacher researchers set out to foster critical literacy lenses in their students through the “consumption” (i.e. reading, viewing, listening), “production” (i.e. writing, speaking, designing), and “distribution” of diverse forms of text, which included both print and non-print texts, that were produced for a ‘real’ audience and focused on local social issues (Borsheim & Petrone, 2006, p. 79). Borsheim and Petrone described how their high school students became actively engaged in researching local social justice issues when encouraged to be involved in literacy activities in an “authentic, rather than decontextualized, process of inquiry and research” (p. 78). By encouraging students to take their learning outside the classroom walls, Borsheim and Petrone reported that students were highly engaged in the research and writing activities and claimed it to be potentially “one of the most important learning experiences” of the students’ educative lives (p. 83). Besides the high level of engagement students experienced, the changes in

attitudes, ownership and quality of written and oral communications were “surprising and refreshing” (p. 82).

Soares and Woods (2010) also discussed how students developed their “capacity for critical thinking in a global society” (p. 493) when given opportunities to engage in interactive dialogue with each other and incorporate a critical literacy stance to their discussions and readings about social issues. Similar to the findings of Borsheim and Petrone (2006), Soares and Woods found that providing students with the tools to critically read and discuss texts increased the opportunities for authentic learning and encouraged students to be active agents of change in making the world a better place.

Student Agency and Sense of Personal Responsibility

As noted, critical literacy seeks to bring about a transformative process within the individual reader/viewer by focusing on the individual’s sense of personal responsibility and agency. According to Janks (2014), the education system has a responsibility to develop students’ sense of agency and personal responsibility. In addition, many critical literacy advocates encourage this transformative, or action, element to explicitly bring forth positive change in the world (Banks, 2003; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). This active element – whether it is through a social action project, reconstruction of personal narratives, redesign of everyday advertisements, or the development of a project aimed to elucidate local or global issues – has the potential to engage students, encourage a sense of agency within adolescents and provide authentic and meaningful experiences for middle school learners.

In a four-month long ethnographic case study, Epstein (2010) investigated how a New York Grade 8 teacher was able to fulfill the state English Language Arts curriculum requirements by incorporating social action literacy projects. In addition, Epstein (2010) used this study to better understand how classroom instructional methods could lead to the enhancement of students' critical literacy and inspire them to become socially and politically active. In this study, middle school students were given literacy instruction and asked to produce written and visual texts that focused on current social and political issues. This approach was a departure from the teacher's normal routine of assigning a more traditional written assignment (specifically, a 'Five Paragraph Essay') to meet curricular requirements. Findings from Epstein's study indicated that in their production of diverse texts, students became prepared for a life of "active citizenship" (p. 364) and were engaged in rich and authentic learning experiences that helped them to develop "a sense of identity beyond that of 'student' to one of informed, concerned activist" (p. 365). This study illustrates how the inclusion of authentic and meaningful social action elements into classroom literacy instruction can potentially expand the learning environment out of the classroom and into the community and – hopefully – set students on a life trajectory of being active, engaged global citizens.

Like the dialogic approach, critical literacy pedagogy provides an inclusive space for students to voice their questions, concerns, and views that arise from their transactions with diverse texts. Gainer (2010) and Huang (2011) illustrated how the infusion of critical literacy pedagogy enabled students to question issues related to power that were prevalent in the text, consider multiple perspectives, and identify the

non-neutrality of the texts they encountered. In addition, students were engaged and motivated to participate in literacy activities. Borsheim and Petrone (2006), Epstein (2010) and Soares and Wood (2010) all connected literacy instruction to authentic learning and activities related to social issues, making the learning that was taking place in the classroom reflective of the contemporary social, political and environmental dynamics of the world in which we reside. The process of connecting classroom learning to authentic and meaningful experiences was not only engaging for the students, but also helped develop students' personal responsibility and sense of agency, or the ability to make change. The following section will look at how diverse texts can be used as a means for developing adolescents' critical literacy.

Using Diverse, Multimodal Texts to Develop Critical Literacy

As Gainer (2010) noted, critical literacy can be developed in adolescents through both the 'consumption' (reading, viewing and interpreting) and 'production' (creating, writing and representing) of diverse, multimodal texts. Using a discussion-based, dialogic approach, students can critically deconstruct or 'consume' a variety of different texts forms in the classroom environment. However, rather than merely acting as passive receptors of information, students also need to develop a critical literacy lens and an ability to be agentive in their own learning, so that they can reconstruct and 'produce' their own narratives and tell their own stories (Apkon, 2013).

In a recent broad-based survey on the state of adolescent literacy throughout the European Union (EU), Sulkunen (2013) noted that literacy in the EU is too readily defined merely by the ability to read and write; rather, it is imperative that adolescents

become proficient at using and producing a variety of digital and non-digital multimodal forms of texts. Vasquez (2010) found that when students used podcasting to share their views and thinking on issues related to injustice and social and environmental issues, they spent considerable time writing, revising, performing, and revising again their scripts in order to make sure they had “crafted a text they felt was meaningful to share with an audience” (p. 615). From a practical perspective, therefore, critical literacy pedagogy can be incorporated into humanities classes that centre upon discussions around both fiction and non-fiction prose and using a variety of different forms of technology.

By providing opportunities for young students to discuss and analyse multimodal texts in an English language arts class, Silvers, Shorey and Crafton (2010) examined how elementary students in a multicultural class in Chicago, Illinois asked critical questions, considered alternative perspectives, and used multimodal tools to express their personal views on social issues. In this narrative inquiry study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), students used a variety of multimodal resources to analyse, inquire about, discuss and subsequently create diverse texts related to the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. Data was analysed thematically and consisted of the following categories: multimodal literacies; communities of practice and the sociocultural context of learning; and critical literacy, which became a significant focus of the students’ research. According to Silvers, Shorey and Crafton “to these children, linguistic (print) texts were only one of a range of resources available to them as they constructed meaning and learned about their world” (p. 382). Silvers, Shorey and Crafton found that

through their sharing and analysis of multimodal resources (e.g. Internet, images, news stories, books, personal stories, magazines, videos) the students critically examined a contemporary social and environmental disaster; in the process, they developed a greater awareness of “what it means to be a good citizen and what their responsibilities were as citizens to help others” (p. 394). This study is significant because it focuses on incorporating a critical literacy lens at an early age so that as students begin to read/view and write/represent, they are always thinking critically about the texts they transact with, along with their place in the world.

Similarly, Simmons (2012) outlined how the popular *Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins (2008; 2009; 2010) was used to extend students’ reading of the texts to their reading of the world. The *Hunger Games* trilogy was used to encourage social action within the classroom environment and support students in thinking deeply about contemporary issues, such as hunger, modern slavery, and the sex trade. According to Simmons, the issues brought forward in the trilogy have the potential to act as a catalyst for encouraging students to discuss current issues facing humanity. Furthermore, contemporary texts such as these can be a springboard for “fostering social responsibility” (Simmons, 2012, p. 27) by encouraging students to work together to address local social justice issues. According to Simmons, by introducing texts that encourage social action, “[S]tudents can realize that to create change, they cannot just read about human misfortune and social calamity, lament its existence, and hope for change. They must act, or their hope is in vain” (p. 31).

While Simmons (2012) used young adult literature to encourage students to think critically and encourage social action, Downey (2005) encouraged middle school students to access and extend their multiliteracies and transact critically with nonfiction texts by having them create dramatic representations (tableaux) of the texts they read. Unlike Simmons (2012), the texts Downey used were non-fiction pieces aimed to elucidate social injustices, such as events surrounding the Holocaust or civil rights' movements. Downey described how students deconstructed the texts in order to better understand past historical social and political injustices and then reconstructed them to illustrate how these injustices might have been dealt with in a more ethical, socially just manner. Through their reconstruction of historical injustices, Downey (2005) acknowledged that students became "agents of change rather than helpless bystanders" because they critically discussed, analysed, and agreed upon more socially just solutions to the issues encountered in the historical narratives (p. 37).

In summary, a common theme prevalent in many of these studies (e.g. Borsheim & Petrone, 2006; Downey, 2005; Epstein, 2010; Gainer, 2010; Silvers, Shorey & Crafton, 2010; Vasquez, 2010) is the 'deconstruction' and subsequent 'reconstruction', or interpretation, of multimodal texts aimed at empowering students. Regardless of whether the texts are fiction or non-fiction, providing students with opportunities to examine multiple perspectives, enhance their sense of agency, and delve deeply and critically into diverse texts they have the potential to empower students to transact critically not just with the texts they encounter on a daily basis in school, but in many aspects of their lives. Incorporating a dialogic approach into classroom instruction that

aims to enhance adolescents' critical literacy seems a likely fit to enhance this process because of the common emphasis on enhancing deep thinking and understanding, and encouraging engagement. In the final section of this literature review I will examine some tenets of effective literacy instruction aimed at adolescents within the context of using diverse texts as a means of complementing the dialogic engagement and critical literacy processes within the classroom environment.

Effective Adolescent Literacy Instruction: Engagement, Diverse Texts and Choice

The New London Group (1996) argued that "literacy pedagogy must now account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies"(p. 61). In addition, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) outlined fifteen "critical components" that need to be incorporated into all literacy programs; on this list "text-based collaborative learning", "diverse texts", and "a technology component" all appear (p. 12). In this section, I will review some of the literature related to effective literacy instruction for adolescents. I will discuss some tenets of effective literacy instruction for adolescents, and make connections between these elements, a dialogic approach and critical literacy. I propose that classroom-based literacy pedagogy, which specifically focuses on using diverse, multimodal texts to spark discussions and enhance critical literacy, needs to explicitly incorporate specific elements of effective literacy instruction aimed at adolescents. In particular, literacy instruction must seek to engage and motivate students, provide adolescents with choices, and allow students to choose from a variety of diverse texts, including multimodal texts. The texts that are used and produced in the classroom serve as

catalysts for dialogic inquiry and are the tools that are needed to assist in the development of adolescents' critical literacy.

Engagement & Motivation

The number of students who are not engaged in learning is growing at every grade level and, in some cases, has reached “epidemic proportions” by high school (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006, p. 7). Therefore, any discussion on literacy education within middle school must address the issues of how best to engage and motivate adolescents. As it relates to dialogical discussions around student transactions with text, it is important to note that motivation is inextricably linked with reading engagement and comprehension – all are essential to the development of adolescent literacy (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Wigfield et al., 2008). Highly engaged readers use a simultaneous combination of comprehension strategies and intrinsic motivation to derive meaning from text; in contrast, less engaged readers demonstrate lower motivation and use fewer comprehension strategies (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Wigfield et al., 2008). There are many factors which can lead to increased engagement as students transact with text, specifically, ensuring student autonomy is valued, incorporating a diverse selection of reading materials, including multimodal texts, and ensuring that both texts and their subsequent tasks are authentic and meaningful to students' lives (Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Hall, Burns & Edwards, 2011).

Diverse Texts and Choice

Guthrie and Davis (2003) conducted a broad-based quantitative survey to determine why students become more disengaged from literacy activities, in particular reading, as they enter middle school. Under the auspices of a state-wide education department survey, Guthrie and Davis administered the survey to all of the students in Grades 3, 5 and 8 in Maryland, USA to determine what their motivations were for reading. As a result of their findings, they developed a Reading Engagement Model aimed at increasing adolescent engagement with literacy activities, especially in regards to reading. Within this framework, they identified six different features that should be present to increase student engagement in literacy instruction, specifically as it relates to reading. These features include: (1) ensuring knowledge, or content, goals are clear, (2) giving students authentic, real-world interactions, (3) providing an abundance of interesting texts, (4) supporting student choice and self-determination, (5) providing explicit strategy instruction, and (6) giving collaboration support so students can interact with each other to learn. This study is significant for the field of research in adolescent literacy because both the results of the study and the Reading Engagement Model are referenced in much of the research related to increasing adolescent engagement in literacy activities. In addition, this study is particularly important to a discussion related to using diverse texts and a dialogic approach to develop adolescents' critical literacy because it is very clear that providing students with a choice of diverse texts, encouraging authentic and meaningful activities, and supporting student-student

collaboration and interaction account for effective literacy instruction aimed at adolescents.

Providing students with a choice of diverse texts in literacy instruction has the potential to give students a greater sense of ownership and to be agentic in their own learning (Daniels, 2006; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Pitcher, Martinez, Dicembre, Fewster & McCormick, 2010; Sulkunen, 2013). In order to feel empowered and have a sense of agency over their own learning, middle school students need to be given choices that affect their learning. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), adolescents “seek to be in command of their environment, rather than be manipulated by powerful others” (p. 411). The ability to empower students and help adolescents develop a sense of agency with their interactions with the world is truly at the heart of this project.

I have described how incorporating diverse texts, providing students with choice, and striving to ensure students are engaged and motivated with literacy activities constitute three tenets of effective literacy instruction for adolescents. I have also outlined the principles of critical literacy pedagogy and the dialogic approach, and illustrated parallels between the two. The final section of this literature review will outline the connections between effective literacy instruction and diverse texts and illustrate how these can be used to enhance critical literacy.

Effective Literacy Instruction, Diverse Texts and Critical Literacy

Effective literacy instruction for adolescents seeks to engage students, provides opportunities for students to make choices that affect their learning, and enables

students to both use and create a variety of multimodal text forms. The instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three incorporates the use of diverse, multimodal texts – both the consumption/use of the texts as well as the production of student-created texts – therefore, I believe it is important to illustrate how using diverse texts is a component of effective literacy instruction and make parallels between the use of diverse texts and enhancing critical literacy in adolescents. Reading and creating diverse, multimodal texts are not the end goals of the instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three, but are rather a means to help enhance students' critical literacy practices and perspectives.

Incorporating a selection of diverse texts into literacy pedagogy aimed at enhancing critical literacy has several benefits. First, as noted, using diverse texts has the ability to increase adolescent engagement and motivation (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Pitcher et al., 2010; Marchand-Martella, Martella, Modderman, Petersen & Pan, 2013; Sulkunen, 2013). In a recent Canadian study, Cameron (2010) found that elementary-aged students were motivated and engaged with literacy activities when a broad selection of non-fiction, informational texts were available for them to read and discuss in a social setting (e.g. book clubs, class discussions) in the classroom environment. In addition, Marchand-Martella et al. (2013) discuss five key areas of effective adolescent literacy instruction; the use of diverse texts was identified as a key means for engaging and motivating adolescents in literacy instruction.

A second argument for using a diverse selection of texts has its roots in the concept of expanding notions of literacy and multiliteracies. Merely being able to read and write print-based texts is no longer sufficient in the twenty-first century

environment, and adolescents need to be proficient at analysing and creating an array of multimodal texts (Apkon, 2013; Alvermann, 2002; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2003, 2004; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Mills, 2009; New London Group, 1996; Sulkunen, 2013). In addition, Silvers, Shorey and Crafton (2010) found that incorporating a critical literacy perspective is an important element of a curriculum that uses multimodal tools and incorporates multiliteracies, and students must use critical literacy to effectively interact with multiple modes of text. Although many teachers still lack the resources, support or skills to incorporate multimodal and multimedia resources into the classroom, the shift to include new literacies into classroom instruction is occurring globally (Luke, 2002; Matthewman, Blight & Davies, 2004; Miller, 2007, 2008; Sulkunen, 2013; Tan & Guo, 2010).

In a longitudinal study in Singapore, Tan and Guo (2010) documented how multimodal critical literacy practices were incorporated into the curriculum for 14-year old Singaporean students. Students read and viewed a variety of diverse print and non-print texts, and then became producers as they created short films to demonstrate their critical understanding of the content studied. The students and teacher worked together to jointly construct meaning from the texts and created multimodal texts which illustrated their understanding and critical analysis. The researchers found that not only did students' critical multimedia literacy increase, but also the teacher's professional capacity at incorporating new multiliteracies pedagogy into the classroom was enhanced. Significantly, the teacher involved in the study underwent a paradigm shift to equate critical multimedia literacy as being equally important as more

'traditional' forms of literacy: "Alicia [the teacher] believed that the development of critical multimedia literacy could be conflated with critical literacy skills in print" (Tan & Guo, 2010, p. 323). This paradigm shift was a significant departure from the school's *status quo* and illustrates an important shift towards embracing multiliteracies and pedagogy that incorporates the use of multimodal resources.

Pitcher et al. (2010) conducted multiple case studies to identify the learning needs of adolescent readers and provide recommendations on how best to fulfill students' needs around literacy practices. Using a variety of techniques, such as administering reading assessments, analysing school-based literacy programs, and conducting in-depth interviews with student participants and their parents, the researchers found that several elements needed to be in place to better assist adolescents in their transactions with texts. Specifically, teachers need to provide explicit instruction of comprehension strategies, allow students to self-select their reading materials from a diverse set of texts, teach students how to critically think about text in English Language Arts and in other content areas, and utilise multimodal tools, including online digital resources. Within the context of this literature review, this study identified many of the elements which are present within the instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three.

Conclusion: Fostering the Growth of Active, Socially Responsible, Global Citizens

As findings from many of the studies reviewed in this literature review illustrate, there is a place in literacy instruction for the fusion of a dialogic approach, critical literacy pedagogy and multimodal texts. The dialogic approach and critical literacy

pedagogy have many common characteristics: they both value student-centred education; they recognize diverse perspectives and alternative realities; and they aim to instill within students a 'sense of agency' or personal responsibility. Echoing the words of Freire (1970; 1985), Wegerif (2013) suggests that a dialogic and critical literacy approach to education empowers students to "speak their own words and so to name the world in their own way" (p. 25). By empowering students with the tools to transact critically with text, engage in meaningful discussions centred on diverse texts, and then reconstruct or produce multimodal texts that reflect their contemporary sociopolitical and cultural realities, opportunities are provided to ensure students have the ability to become active agents of change in upholding democratic and socially just values. Rather than merely teaching students how to write a 'Five Paragraph Essay' or 'proper' paragraph, the research outlined in this literature review – and the subsequent practical implications and approaches that will be outlined in Chapter Three – encourage students to question, think, and critically interact with the world around them; in effect it fosters the growth of active, socially responsible, global citizens who are more effectively able to interact and interpret the multimodal and multimedia texts they encounter.

According to Roche (2011), encouraging students to be critically literate and voice their own opinions is "probably the most important aspect of education" (p. 336). In the bigger picture, as educators, ultimately our end goal is not merely to ensure students are literate, but it is to ensure students have the tools – such as the ability to express their ideas in conjunction with others and the ability to understand the

multiplicity and diversity of human thought – to enable them to be active, caring, conscientious, critical thinking individuals. Therefore, critical literacy and dialogic talk are not the end goals, but they provide a means to an end. As noted by Wells and Ball (2008): “Most importantly, the ultimate aims of a dialogic stance are to foster in each student the lifelong dispositions to be agentic in learning and to collaborate with others in seeking for understanding that enables effective and responsible action” (p. 183).

Lastly, in reviewing the literature on dialogic talk and critical literacy it is evident that there is a place for these two pedagogical approaches to merge in literacy education. Incorporating a multimodal aspect, which accesses adolescent and New Literacies and is an important component of literacy programs, is also important to consider when enacting critical literacy and dialogic principles and practices. Instilling these values into classroom practice helps to ensure that students are engaged in high-level thinking, actively analysing and constructing knowledge, and valuing the multiplicity of perspectives and diversity of voices found in the various texts they encounter. The New London Group (1996) highlighted the importance of multiliteracies pedagogy because “literacy educators and students must see themselves as active participants in social change, as learners and students who can be active designers – makers – of social futures” (p. 64). In addition, Assaf and Delaney (2013) note that incorporating critical literacy education is often seen as a “luxury” in schools when, in fact, it should be a “necessity” (p. 157). As educators, our ultimate goal is to encourage our students to be thoughtful, critical, caring, and active members of society.

Incorporating the tenets of effective literacy instruction for adolescents, and enhancing students' critical literacy through the use of diverse texts and a dialogic approach can help to make this goal a reality. If we want dominant, oppressive or unjust paradigms to change, then critical literacy pedagogy needs to occupy a space in mainstream classroom discourse. Therefore, critical literacy education needs to be embedded within all aspects of literacy education. Rather than viewing critical literacy education as one of many types of multiliteracies (e.g. linguistic, visual or spatial literacies), perhaps it should be the lens through which *all* literacy-based education is taught.

The middle years' unit outlined in Chapter Three specifically aims to embed the tenets of critical literacy pedagogy into classroom instructional practices. The research, theoretical, and conceptual approaches outlined in this literature review have informed the design of the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit, which aims to encourage students to use a dialogic approach and a critical literacy lens when transacting with diverse sets of text. I hope that the *Speaking Out* instructional unit not only enhances adolescents' critical literacy, but also empowers the students I teach to become active, socially responsible, global citizens.

CHAPTER 3 – SPEAKING OUT FOR CHANGE INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS

Adolescents encounter a multitude of multimodal messages on a daily basis, from trending videos on the Internet, to powerful images posted on social media sites, and even to the printed and visual texts plastered on t-shirts, found on traffic signs, or on the pages of classroom textbooks. In order to interact effectively in the 21st century, adolescents need to acquire literacy skills that enable them to comprehend and be critical of the messages they encounter. Literacy today reaches far beyond the abilities of merely being able to read and write. The students we teach need to be able to understand, interpret, consume, communicate, compute, challenge, create, produce, and think critically about the different messages and texts – visual, print and oral – that they transact with on a daily basis.

According to Mulhern and Gunding (2011), “access to information in multimedia and multimodal texts has exploded within the past decade and this has resulted in a need for students to learn a new set of skills” (p. 6). Adolescents must be equipped with literacy skills to enable them to critically interact with the multimodal texts they encounter, both in school and outside of the classroom environment. While we certainly want our students to be literate in multiple ways, I believe this achievement is not the ultimate aim of education, but merely a process or means to an end. Instead, we want our students to become lifelong learners – not just in formal settings, but in all aspects of their lives. We want them to be active, socially responsible global citizens, and have the knowledge and confidence to question stereotypes, challenge power

dynamics and discrimination, and treat others, the environment and themselves with respect. Finally, we want them to be empowered so that they will speak out when they encounter injustice and think critically about the choices they make. In order to achieve these aims, adolescents need to be taught literacy skills that will enable them to critically challenge, question, and explore alternatives to the complex messages encountered in the multimodal and multimedia texts around them. In effect, they need to be taught critical literacy, which led me to design an instructional unit aimed at enhancing adolescents' critical literacy and encouraging them to speak out for what they believe in.

***Speaking Out for Change* Instructional Unit for Middle Years**

At the heart of the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit is the notion that the purpose of education is to empower and equip students with the skills necessary to achieve their full potential and actively participate in society in a way that reflects the values of a socially responsible citizen (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011). I hope this unit will help enhance adolescents' critical literacy by providing students with the tools to question, analyse, discuss, "remix" (Alvermann, 2008, p. 10), and create new multimodal texts in a number of ways. First, using a dialogic – or dialogue-based – approach, students will read/view diverse texts and critically analyse these texts with their peers in small discussion groups. By asking critical questions and considering alternative perspectives to those put forward in the texts, I hope that students will develop a broadened understanding of the world and begin to think about and notice things that they may have taken for granted before. Finally, students will be

encouraged to ‘speak out’ through the production of multimodal resources in order to educate and inform others about contemporary social and environmental issues.

In designing this unit, I thought seriously about the students I teach and tailored many of the lessons, activities, and resources to suit them. I know what their strengths, challenges, and interests are, so I made sure I incorporated these aspects into this instructional unit. The sample texts that I have suggested for this resource (Appendix A) can be replaced with other diverse texts; what is most important is that they are interesting, engaging, and accessible for your own students. *Speaking Out* incorporates the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which takes into consideration the incredible diversity of personalities and abilities within the classroom, and seeks to ensure that students are offered multiple opportunities to access, demonstrate, and engage with their learning. As a result, although it is created specifically for my current students in mind, with some minor adaptations it can also be used by many other teachers and for many other groups of students when the overall aim is to enhance adolescents’ critical literacy.

A Definition of Critical Literacy

It is important to define what I mean by critical literacy. The definition I have developed, which has been influenced by academic reading and professional classroom experience, is that critical literacy is *‘the ability to ask deep questions, consider multiple perspectives, challenge dominant stereotypes, and take action against oppression or injustice’*. From a theoretical perspective, critical literacy is heavily influenced by the work of Freire (1970; 1985) whose ground breaking work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,

described how the marginalized, or ‘oppressed’ groups in society must be empowered in order to “liberate themselves” (1970, p. 28). To encourage students to develop critical literacy we ask them to infer meaning, question ideas, consider diverse perspectives, and identify values and bias (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). Critical literacy goes further than critical thinking because it places emphasis on student agency and aims to bring about a transformation – often in the form of social action – in the students we teach (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Banks, 2003; Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). I hope that the broadened understanding that students gain as they develop a more critical stance will encourage and empower them to undergo this transformation. Critical literacy encourages students to speak out and take a stand when they encounter values, issues or ideas that oppress or silence others. According to Anstey and Bull (2006):

... the concept of critical literacy goes beyond simply interrogating texts; it applies to all literate practices and involves taking action. If students apply critical literacy in these ways, they will be involved not only in the communication aspects of literate practice but in transformation. The concept of transformation is an important one. It refers to the fact that every time students participate in literate practices they are transformed in some way as they use knowledge, skills, strategies and ideas in new ways or in new contexts. In short, their literacy identities are transformed. By using critical literacy in all aspects of life, not only are students transformed, they also might possibly transform or influence community, economic or political life. (p. 38)

Therefore, critical literacy has the ability to empower and equip students with the skills needed to question mainstream ideas, develop deep understanding about issues, and garner a sense of agency over their own learning (Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011). When students use a critical lens in their viewing of the diverse texts they encounter daily, they can use their broadened understanding of the world to speak out against and act upon issues of injustice.

Critical Literacy, Dialogic Engagement and Diverse Texts

From a practical standpoint, the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit seeks to encourage critical literacy through a process of dialogic engagement, in other words, through the interactions and discussions with others. A dialogic approach is one that is student-centred, values diversity, and offers opportunities for students to explore ideas and collaboratively construct knowledge through a process of discussion (Bakhtin, 1984; Barnes, 2008). Vygotsky (1978) was a proponent of the purpose that talk has in enabling us to formulate new ideas, develop meaning, and learn from others with diverse sociocultural backgrounds. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education (2007) recommends that the 'oral language' competency (speaking and listening) constitute 25 - 35% of the time allotted for grade eight English language arts programs. Interestingly, however, research shows that authentic student-centered or student-to-student talk and discussion accounts for only a very small percentage of actual classroom learning (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013).

Classroom discussion, both in the form of small group and whole class discussions, is an important aspect of the *Speaking Out* instructional unit. This unit aims

to encourage, enable, and empower middle years' students to collaboratively construct meaning and deepen their understanding of contemporary issues through a process of critical discussion. Using a Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), students will select and view a variety of diverse texts (print, visual, and digital) and use these texts as a catalyst for small-group critical discussions. Students will use a graphic organiser (Appendix F) as a guide and will work together to talk about and ask questions to enable them to consider multiple perspectives. Much like a 'book club', this process has many different names, such as informational circles or inquiry circles (usually the term used for nonfiction, content area, poetry or informational texts) or literature circles (usually the term used for fictional texts and novels) (Brownlie, Fullerton & Schnellert, 2011). Although the *Speaking Out* unit provides a sample selection of diverse texts (Appendix A), there is no reason why fictional texts, particularly contemporary young adult literature, cannot be used (e.g. see Hayn & Kaplan, 2012; Johnson & Freedman, 2006).

Overview of the *Speaking Out* Unit

In *Speaking Out*, students will embark on an inquiry process to find out what inspires them to speak out for what they believe in. Throughout their dialogic inquiry process, many choices will be offered. Providing students with choices and offering them opportunities to discuss their learning not only can potentially engage and motivate students, but also incorporates principles of effective literacy instruction for adolescents (Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Marchand-Martella, Martella, Modderman, Petersen & Pan, 2013). In *Speaking Out*, students will choose from a diverse selection of

nonfiction texts that are linked by a common theme (e.g. contemporary social and environmental issues). Approximately 5-6 copies of at least 5 different texts should be offered; ultimately the texts should include a selection of print, visual, and multimedia forms (such as books or magazines, photographs, graphic novels/sequential art, video or images) and be accessible by students with diverse abilities. Students will read or view their chosen texts both independently and with a group. Using a critical literacy lens, they will seek to determine the perspective of the author or how the issue is being presented (including the worldview), ask deep questions, and challenge themselves to identify alternative perspectives to the one(s) portrayed in the text. Table 2 outlines possible questions students may ask in order to help them develop a more critical lens as they view the texts. By identifying alternative perspectives, students are encouraged to be cognizant that multiple realities, or truths, exist in the world. Through this 'deconstruction' process, it is hoped that students' critical literacy will be enhanced and they will have a better understanding of the different perspectives and complexities that surround contemporary issues.

Table 2**Questions to Promote Reading Diverse Texts with a Critical Stance**

Questions to Promote Reading Diverse Texts with a Critical Stance	
General questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In whose interest? • For what purpose? • Who benefits?
Print texts (e.g. books, newspapers, magazines, song lyrics, social media, websites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose viewpoint is expressed? • What does the author want us to think? • Whose voices are missing, silenced, or discounted? • How might an alternative perspective be represented? • How would an alternative perspective contribute to your understanding of the text from a critical stance? • How has this broadened understanding contributed to your worldview? • What action can you take on the basis of what you have learned?
Visual and audio texts (e.g. television, photographs, videos, infographics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is portrayed in the visual text? • Who or what is missing? • Who is silenced or discounted? • What might an alternative image be? • What might an alternative video look like? • How would this alternative view contribute to your understanding of the visual text from a critical stance? • What action might you take on the basis of what you have viewed?

McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2004). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader response. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(1), 52-62.

In *Speaking Out*, not only will students hopefully develop a deeper understanding of contemporary socio-political, cultural and environmental issues, but their broadened understanding of world issues will inspire them to take action on a specific issue. This transformative process will be in the form of the creation and production of multimodal resources (such as a Public Service Announcement, or PSA, film, photographic exhibition, infographic) which will highlight their understanding of

the issue and then be used to educate and inform others. Ideally, in order to ground their learning in authentic activities, at the end of this unit the student-created multimodal productions could be presented to an audience. The audience could consist of other classes or students in the school, neighbouring schools, parents and family members, community members, politicians, and civil society groups. For a culminating activity, I suggest holding a ‘Film and Idea Festival’ where students could showcase their multimodal productions.

In summary, the process which begins with discussions around diverse texts leads to enhanced critical literacy, which then leads to students creating and producing their own diverse texts about the issue of their inquiry. The use of different forms of technology will be interwoven throughout all stages of the process, and the principles of Universal Design for Learning will be present. The process itself is a cyclical one (Figure 2). The objective of presenting the student-produced diverse texts to an audience is not only authentic but also seeks to bring about a transformative process within the student.

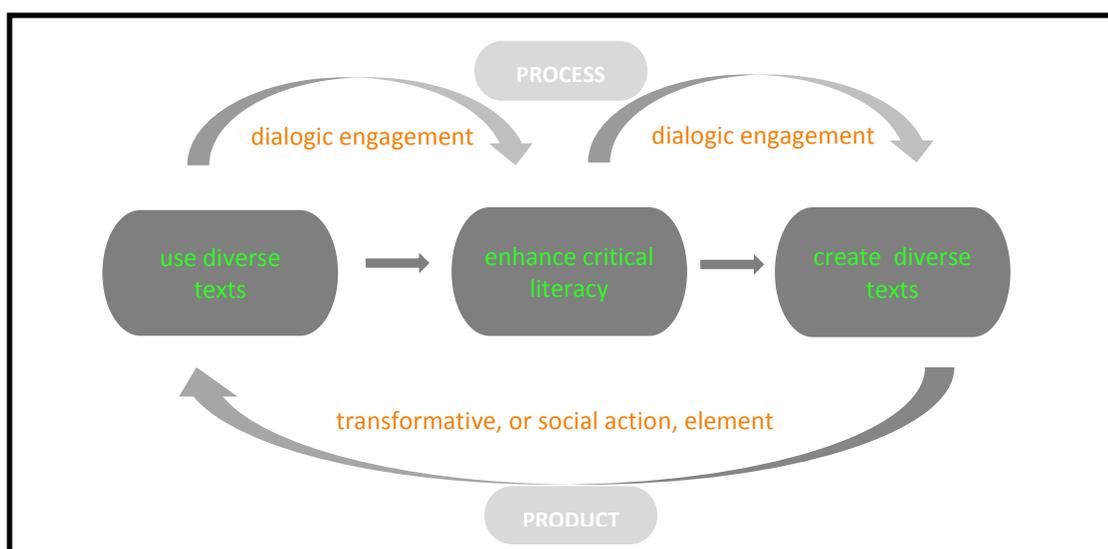


Figure 2. A Visual Representation of the Cyclical Process in *Speaking Out*. Created by J. Nixon (2014)

Universal Design for Learning

Speaking Out supports and encourages the incorporation of Universal Design for Learning principles. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a conceptual approach to learning that recognises that “every learner is as unique as their own fingerprint” (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012, p. 2). When the principles of Universal Design for Learning are applied to the design of instructional units, more students have equal opportunities to learn. Although the principles of UDL are now applied in the field of education, they are actually rooted in architecture and urban design. For example, when curb cuts were put into sidewalks to assist people in wheelchairs, it was discovered that many other people, such as those pushing strollers or grocery carts, pulling suitcases, roller bladers, and cyclists, also benefited. Therefore, in education, because each learner is unique – regardless of whether they are identified as having ‘special needs’ or not – the principles that are built into the design of instructional units actually support the learning of *all* the students. In other words, what is beneficial to a few, actually benefits the majority.

When UDL principles are incorporated into instructional design, multiple opportunities for students to access information, demonstrate their learning, and be engaged throughout the process must be put into place. UDL is truly about ‘multiples’: there needs to be multiple means for *representation*, in other words, information and content needs to be presented in different ways; multiple means of *expression and action*, to provide students with opportunities to express what and how they learn; and multiple means of *engagement*, to generate motivation and keep students interested in their learning (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012). For more information about incorporating

UDL principles into the design of instructional units, I recommend the following resources:

Centre for Applied Special Technology. (2012). *Transforming education through*

Universal Design for Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.cast.org/index.html>

Hall, T., Meyer, A., & Rose, D. (2012). An introduction to Universal Design for Learning:

Questions and answers. In T. Hall, A. Meyer & D. Rose (Eds.), *Universal Design for Learning in the Classroom* (1-8). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hall, T., Meyer, A., & Rose, D. (Eds.). (2012). *Universal design for learning in the*

classroom: Practical applications. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

How is Universal Design for Learning Incorporated into *Speaking Out*?

Speaking Out is a comprehensive instructional unit aimed at enhancing adolescents' critical literacy by providing them with opportunities to read diverse texts, discuss the texts in a critical manner, and then demonstrate their learning and their critical awareness through the creation/production of multimodal texts aimed to inform and educate others on contemporary issues. The framework for this instructional unit is provided in the *Speaking Out* Instructional Matrix (Table 6). However, in order to implement this instructional unit to its fullest potential, each teacher must have their own students unique learning needs, interests, strengths, and challenges in mind from the beginning. The design and framework for the *Speaking Out* unit already has incorporated many of the elements of UDL, specifically:

- information and content are presented in multiple ways, as seen with the inclusion of diverse multimodal texts and a dialogic approach. Students can

access the information in written text-based formats, as well as through visual images, videos, websites, and oral discussions;

- students can express and demonstrate their learning in very different ways and using diverse formats. Students are regularly presented with choices on how they wish to demonstrate their learning;
- using diverse texts, providing students with choices, and ensuring that the content and activities are authentic provides multiple opportunities for students to be interested and engaged in their learning.

For Further Reading: From Research to Theory and Practice

The principles and approaches outlined in the *Speaking Out* unit are grounded in research related to effective literacy instruction for adolescents, particularly as it relates to enhancing critical literacy through the use of a dialogic, or discussion-based, approach and using diverse texts. In this section, I recommend a range of resources that address the theoretical and conceptual approaches incorporated into this unit plan.

Resources on Critical Literacy

For further reading on critical literacy, I recommend the following articles:

Aukerman, M. (2012). "Why do you say yes to Pedro, but no to me?": Toward a critical literacy of dialogic engagement. *Theory into Practice*, 51, 42-48.

In this article, Aukerman critiques dominant critical literacy pedagogy and proposes an alternative approach for teaching critical literacy; specifically she calls for an orientation that views critical literacy as dialogic engagement. Her aim for using this

alternative approach – an approach which has been adopted in the *Speaking Out* unit – is to ‘decenter’ both the teacher and texts, so that neither is viewed as the sole authority in the classroom. She notes that critical literacy as dialogic engagement is powerful because it creates a space in the classroom for authentic dialogue; it values the multiplicity of voices and has the potential to enable students to develop a sense of agency over their own learning. This article is significant because it fills a gap in the literature which is often overlooked in relation to offering an alternative perspective of critical literacy pedagogy.

Mulhern, M., & Gunding, B. (2011). What’s critical about critical literacy? *English Quarterly*, 42(1-2), 6-23.

This article is an excellent introduction to critical literacy. The authors provide a thorough overview of the principles and practices of critical literacy, and give concrete examples of what critical literacy looks like in a typical classroom. Specific classroom activities aimed at enhancing students’ critical literacy are provided, making it an accessible and useful read for classroom educators. Mulhern and Gunding (2011) also make connections between critical literacy and the proliferation of digital and multimodal texts, and note that educators need to consciously incorporate digital tools and texts into the classroom environment in order to ensure students can effectively interact in the 21st century. What is particularly significant about this article is that it is written by two Canadian classroom-based educators (Peel School District in Ontario) and is published in a Canadian journal, making it especially relevant for other Canadian educators.

Luke, A., & Woods, A. (2009). Critical literacies in schools: A primer. *Voices from the Middle, 17*(2), 9-18.

This article is another excellent resource for classroom teachers wanting to learn more about critical literacy. Luke and Woods (2009) give a thorough overview of the roots of critical literacy and the many forms it takes in contemporary classrooms. The authors discuss some of the challenges that teaching critical literacy poses, especially for teachers beginning to implement this pedagogy into their classroom. Several realistic models of critical literacy are discussed and the authors provide links to lesson plans that incorporate critical literacy principles. This article includes an extensive reference list, which is an excellent resource for anyone wishing to learn more about critical literacy.

Resources on the Dialogic Approach

For further reading on the dialogic approach, and the benefits of using 'talk' to collaboratively construct meaning and understanding, I suggest these resources:

Wells, G., & Arauz, R. M. (2006). Dialogue in the classroom. *Journal of the Learning Sciences, 15*(3), 379-428.

Although this article is a few years old, I recommend it because it discusses the results of a Canadian-based study which aimed to identify strategic approaches that could be used to nurture a dialogue-based learning environment. In this large-scale action research study, the researchers found that an inquiry-based approach led to a more dialogic style of classroom engagement. In addition, the importance of teachers asking open-ended questions and becoming proficient with building upon ideas

presented by students were also seen as essential means of creating a classroom which emphasised the importance of talking for learning.

Barnes, D. (2008). Exploratory talk for learning. In N. Mercer & S. Hodgkinson (Eds.), *Exploratory talk in school* (pp. 1-15). London, UK: SAGE Publications, Ltd.

While I would recommend the entire book for anyone interested in learning more about the dialogic approach, Barnes (2008) offers an excellent overview on the importance of talking for learning. Approaching dialogism from a social constructivist view, the author outlines two kinds of talk, specifically, 'exploratory' and 'presentational', and illustrates how both have important and different roles to play in the development of meaning. This resource is valuable for classroom teachers as it offers insight into the practical implications of the dialogic approach.

Resources on Effective Literacy Instruction for Adolescents

For further reading on effective literacy instruction for adolescents, I suggest these articles:

Alvermann, D.E. (2008). Why bother theorizing adolescents' online literacies for classroom practice and research? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 8-19.

I included this article because Alvermann (2008) highlights the importance of tapping into adolescents' online and multimodal interests in order to ensure classroom literacy instruction is engaging, effective, and authentic. Based on her research in adolescent and New Literacies, the author illustrates how adolescents are literate in a multitude of ways, yet sometimes these proficiencies are not always accepted or

conducive to a classroom environment which may not value adolescents' online and multimodal literacy practices. Alvermann highlights the importance of students developing critical literacy skills in order to analyse diverse texts, including multimodal ones. I specifically chose this article to include here as it challenges 'traditional' assumptions of what it means to be literate in the 21st century.

Pitcher, S.M., Martinez, G., Dicembre, E. A., Fewster, D., & McCormick, M. K. (2010).

The literacy needs of adolescents in their own words. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(8), 636-645.

In this research article, the authors set out to identify the learning needs of adolescent readers and provide recommendations on how best to fulfill students' needs around literacy practices. The researchers found that several elements needed to be in place in order to best support adolescents as they engaged with texts. Specifically, teachers need to provide explicit instruction on comprehension strategies, allow students to self-select their reading materials from a diverse selection of texts, teach students how to critically think about text in both English Language Arts and other content areas, and utilise multimodal tools, including multimedia and online digital resources. This article is an informative read for anyone interested in the effective elements of adolescent literacy instruction.

Connections to the Curriculum

Speaking Out is intended for a middle years' humanities class. This unit specifically aligns to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2007) Grade 8 English Language Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes. However, there is no reason why – with

the inclusion of historical pieces about injustice – it could not be used as an integrated humanities unit to address the Prescribed Learning Outcomes from both Social Studies (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1997) and English Language Arts (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2007). If this was preferred, rather than use texts about contemporary global issues, incorporating texts about historical injustices would enable students to use these injustices as jumping off points for discussing contemporary social issues. In addition, *Speaking Out* could also be an excellent resource for an integrated Grade 6 Social Studies (BC Ministry of Education, 2006a) and English Language Arts Unit (BC Ministry of Education, 2006b), as the Prescribed Learning Outcomes for Grade 6 Social Studies (BC Ministry of Education, 2006a) focus on Canada and the world. For the purpose of this resource package, however, *Speaking Out* will be used as a stand-alone English Language Arts unit. Direct correlations are made to the Grade 8 English Language Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes (BC Ministry of Education, 2007), although it could also be adapted to fit the English Language Arts outcomes for Grades 5-7 (BC Ministry of Education, 2006b).

Grade 8 English Language Arts Outcomes

As noted above, *Speaking Out* is developed to align with the British Columbia Grade 8 English Language Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes (2007). Aspects of all three competencies – reading and viewing, writing and representing, and speaking and listening – are present within the *Speaking Out* unit. This unit is comprehensive and addresses many of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes in all of the English Language Arts competencies. Tables 3-5 outline the specific connections to the curriculum, along with

suggested achievement indicators described in the British Columbia Ministry of Education Grade 8 English Language Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes (2007).

Table 3

Oral Language Prescribed Learning Outcomes

Oral Language Prescribed Learning Outcomes and Suggested Achievement Indicators (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2007)	
It is expected that students will.....	Students fully meeting expectations will:
<p>A1 – interact and collaborate in pairs and groups to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the learning of self and others • explore experiences, ideas, and information • understand the perspectives of others • comprehend and respond to a variety of texts • create a variety of texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate with members of a group (e.g., listen and speak respectfully, ask questions, take turns, cooperate, disagree courteously) to achieve a common purpose (e.g., discuss social issues, compare characters, explore themes) • determine and distribute group roles and responsibilities (e.g., listen to and carry out instructions; take turns as leader, timekeeper, recorder, contributor, reporter) • express opinions and ideas and encourage the opinions and ideas of others (e.g., invite participation, acknowledge other perspectives) • demonstrate active nonverbal participation in group activities (e.g., physical proximity to group, eye contact, facial expression)
<p>A2 – express ideas and information in a variety of situations and forms to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore and respond • recall and describe • narrate and explain • persuade and support • engage and entertain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and describe purpose for speaking • sustain group and class discussions through relevant and thoughtful contributions (e.g., build on other students' ideas) • provide clear organizational cues when presenting or discussing (e.g., use transition words and phrases) • modify language, ideas, and information in relation to the needs and interests of the audience • present ideas, information, and emotions in an imaginative and relevant way (e.g., description, significant details)

<p>A3 – listen to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate ideas and information from a variety of texts, considering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose • messages • tone • structure • effects and impact • bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the purpose of the text, and the evidence used to support that purpose • identify persuasive techniques (e.g., statistics, real-life examples) • summarize and clarify ideas and information (e.g., take turns summarizing text with a partner, ask questions to clarify understanding) • describe the effects and impact of tone (e.g., identify words that create an emotional effect) • attend to organizational cues in text (e.g., transitions, emphasis) • recognize text-specific devices and elements (e.g., sound devices, setting) • make judgments about the effectiveness of the text (e.g., in relation to purpose, ideas, techniques) • identify and explain possible bias (e.g., “The presenter only gave positive examples to prove...”)
<p>A4 – select and use a range of strategies to interact and collaborate with others in pairs and groups, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting methods for working together effectively • listening actively • contributing ideas and recognizing the ideas of others • demonstrating awareness of diverse points of view • reaching consensus or agreeing to differ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choose ways for group members to achieve task requirements (e.g., checklists, timelines) • create and follow classroom guidelines for interacting (e.g. listen and speak respectfully, take turns, cooperate, disagree courteously) • ask questions to clarify views or ideas of others • extend ideas stated by others • suggest ways to include and relate different points of view (e.g. appoint spokespersons to represent different points of view) • seek out multiple points of view (e.g., brainstorm various perspectives on the topic, considering culture, age, ability)
<p>A10 – speak and listen to synthesize and extend thinking, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personalizing ideas and information • explaining relationships among ideas and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combine prior knowledge with newly acquired information and ideas • trace the development of own changing opinions • generate questions to enhance understanding, explore possibilities, and lead to further inquiry • defend a new idea with support • consider and suggest other outcomes or solutions • build on the ideas of others and voice new understandings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying new ideas and information • transforming existing ideas and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply a newly acquired idea, piece of information, or strategy to a new situation or task • transform ideas by expanding on them (e.g., suggest a new ending, continue a narrative)
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Table 4***Reading and Viewing Prescribed Learning Outcomes***

Reading and Viewing Prescribed Learning Outcomes and Suggested Achievement Indicators (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2007)	
<p>B2 – read, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of information and persuasive texts with some complexity of ideas and form, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articles and reports • biographies and autobiographies • textbooks, magazines, and newspapers • print and electronic reference material • advertising and promotional material • opinion-based material • student-generated material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine and state a purpose for reading (e.g., “I am looking for connections to my life in northern BC...,” “My partner and I need to find the main idea.”) • restate main ideas in own words • locate details relevant to reader’s purpose, including those provided in visual or graphic materials • make notes by creating categories that reflect the main ideas or topics • support inferences or interpretations with specific evidence from the text (e.g., “Deborah Ellis lets the women of Afghanistan tell their own stories. That way...,”) • use glossaries, tables of contents, indices, appendices, navigation bars, and search engines to locate specific information • find information from a variety of sources, including magazines, newspapers, web sites, electronic media, and anthologies
<p>B3 – view, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set a purpose for viewing (e.g., “I am looking for examples of co-operation in this documentary,” “I want to find out how climate relates to tornado activity.”) • explain how visual elements (e.g., line, texture,

<p>visual texts, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broadcast media • web sites • graphic novels • films and videos • photographs • art • visual components of print media • student-generated • material 	<p>formatting, layout, colour) create meaning (e.g., “All of the images of the flood showed how terrible it was for the people who live there.”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare information from more than one visual text on the same topic (e.g., pictures of traditional dress, paintings from the Enlightenment) • offer reasonable interpretations of the purpose of the visual text (e.g., “I think the artist is trying to say...,” “This blog is written to help students learn math.”) • identify visual content that affects the viewer’s response (e.g., “I really like the lighting in Karsh’s black and white portraits,” “All the graphs and diagrams made the report seem convincing.”) • make and justify inferences and predictions about visual text and about material that is implicit or absent (e.g., about what happened before/after a picture, about feelings of people in photographs)
<p>B9 – interpret and analyse ideas and information from texts, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making and supporting judgments • examining and comparing ideas and elements within and among texts • identifying points of view • identifying bias and contradictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make judgments about the text based on evidence (e.g., “The argument in this passage does not prove the author’s points. She should have considered...”) • recognize significant patterns in text (e.g., “In the film, the music gets scary every time the hero is in danger.”) • examine and compare ideas and information from a variety of texts (e.g., “In <i>The Outsiders</i>, Johnny’s struggle to survive is different from...”) • discuss a point of view presented in a text (e.g., “Kerry does not believe in...”) • identify and describe contradictions within texts (e.g., “The statistics in the pie graph don’t match those in the passage. If you look at the chart...”) • identify and evaluate assumptions implicit within texts (e.g., “The author is probably a teacher. She understands how busy students are.”)
<p>B10 – synthesize and extend thinking about texts, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personalizing ideas and information • explaining relationships among ideas and information • applying new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate new information into existing knowledge and beliefs (e.g., describe relationship between new and background knowledge) • combine perspectives relating to a text (e.g., combine own and others’ perspectives) • juxtapose and merge related ideas (e.g., describe the similarities between characters’ choices) • use key ideas and relevant details from texts to create representations/responses/artifacts (e.g., create a chart, web, or diagram that demonstrates connections)

and information • transforming existing ideas and information	between ideas presented and personal thinking) • consider developments extending beyond the text (e.g., suggest alternative and/or creative outcomes)
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Table 5***Writing and Representing Prescribed Learning Outcomes***

Writing and Representing Prescribed Learning Outcomes and Suggested Achievement	
Indicators	
(British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2007)	
C2 – write purposeful information texts that express ideas and information to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore and respond • record and describe • analyse and explain • persuade • engage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore and respond to ideas and information through various forms of information writing, including impromptu • write information text that accomplishes a clearly stated purpose (e.g., instructions to be followed; includes details to support a thesis) • use relevant details to express and justify a viewpoint • include details that anticipate and answer some of the reader’s questions • modify language in relation to the needs and interests of the audience • present ideas and information in a purposeful and relevant way (e.g., description, narration)
C4 – create thoughtful representations that communicate ideas and information to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore and respond • record and describe • explain and persuade • engage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate imaginative connections to personal feelings, experiences, and opinions • create representations that convey information and/or emotion for a specific purpose and audience • develop key ideas through details, images, and emotions • experiment with visual/artistic devices and forms to create impact and enhance communication

<p>C10 – write and represent to synthesize and extend thinking, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personalizing ideas and information • explaining relationships among ideas and information • applying new ideas and information • transforming existing ideas and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate new information into existing knowledge and beliefs (e.g., describe relationship between new and background knowledge) • combine perspectives relating to a text (e.g., combine own and others’ perspectives) • juxtapose and merge related ideas (e.g., describe the similarities between characters’ choices) • use key ideas and relevant details from texts to create representations/responses (e.g., create a chart, web, or diagram that demonstrates connections between ideas presented and personal thinking) • develop extensions or revisions of texts (e.g., suggest alternative and/or creative outcomes, integrate a different perspective)
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Establishing the Classroom Environment

Prior to commencing this unit, teachers should ensure students feel safe sharing and exploring their thinking and ideas. In addition, it is essential that students have had explicit instruction on how to talk and discuss ideas and thoughts in order to deepen their learning. This is paramount. Spend considerable time with students modeling effective dialogic conversations and providing feedback and support on how to have effective discussions. Keep in mind that most of the discussions the students will have in small groups and as a whole-class are exploratory in nature, rather than presentational, so students will be encouraged to explore ideas rather than present conclusive, polished arguments and thoughts (Barnes, 2008). This is talking to learn.

In addition, in order to design this unit to meet the needs of your students, I suggest you take the following steps in order to have a thorough understanding of the individual and class needs, interests, strengths, and challenges:

1. Student profile: Who Am I? (Appendix B)
2. Class Profile for Responsive Teaching (Appendix C)

Speaking Out Instructional Matrix and Lessons

What follows is a comprehensive overview of *Speaking Out*. Table 6 provides an instructional matrix, which outlines the learning and instructional components of this unit, and Table 7 offers an overview of the approximately 13-17 lessons outlined in this unit.

Table 6

Instructional Matrix: Speaking Out for Change Grade 8 English Language Arts Unit

<p>Goal To encourage the development of active, informed global citizens.</p>
<p>Evidence this goal has been achieved Students collaboratively create and produce multimodal projects that advocate and inform others about global issues (for example, students may choose to produce a PSA, film, website, blog, infographic, etc.)</p>
<p>Objectives <i>The students will be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask deep questions to gain a complex understanding of contemporary global issues • consider multiple perspectives and uncover bias in diverse, multimodal texts • use oral language (a dialogic approach) to constructively co-construct knowledge and understanding of global issues • create/produce multimodal texts aimed at informing and educating others • use a variety of technology and multimodal resources to support their learning

Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many adolescents are interested in bringing forth positive change in the world and are interested in social justice issues • Interacting with diverse multimodal messages is a part of daily life • The ability to think critically is essential in order to make informed decisions • Digital technology and multimodal tools provide increased opportunities for sharing knowledge and opinions
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of literacy is more than just the ability to read and write and includes ways to critically interact with multiple forms of text • Students need to be equipped with the skills to ask questions, consider multiple perspectives, discuss, and think critically about the texts they encounter • Talking (dialogic approach) enables students to share ideas, collaboratively construct knowledge, and deepen their understanding • Using diverse texts and providing choice to students offer opportunities to engage adolescents and constitute principles of effective literacy instruction
Thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking critical questions • Considering multiple perspectives • Synthesizing information
Essential Questions for students	<p>Skills question: <i>How can asking questions make me challenge my worldview so I gain a deeper understanding of what I am viewing?</i></p> <p>Big idea/content question: <i>How do my understandings of contemporary issues inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?</i></p>
Instructional strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book club format (information/ inquiry circles) • Use of non-fiction, multimodal forms of text • Dialogic approach (learning through discussion)
Assessment	<p>Assessment for learning (formative assessment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student profile 'Who Am I?' (Appendix B) • Class profile for responsive planning (Appendix C) • Group mind map: Contemporary global issues am I aware of

	<p>Assessment of learning (summative assessment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and Listening Assessment Rubric (Appendix G) • Mind Map Performance Task: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’ (Appendix D) • Final Performance Task: ‘Speak Out for Change’ Project (Appendix H)
Curriculum Connections	<p>This project addresses Prescribed Learning Outcomes for Grade 8 English Language Arts (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2007) as outlined in Tables 3, 4 and 5</p>
Unit Chronology	<p>This unit follows these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Use/view diverse texts</i> (reading and viewing with a critical lens) 2. <i>Dialogic discussion</i> in small groups and with whole class (enhance critical literacy) 3. <i>Creation/Production of multimodal texts</i> (Personal transformation and action element)
Instructional materials and learning resources	<p>Instructional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind Map Performance Task (Appendix D) • Mind Map Assessment Rubric (Appendix E) • ‘On the Flipside’ Graphic Organiser (Appendix F) • Speaking and Listening Assessment Rubric (Appendix G) • ‘Speak Out for Change’ Final Performance Task (Appendix H) <p>Learning resources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mind mapping resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The mind map book: How to use radiant thinking to maximize your brain’s untapped potential</i> (Buzan & Buzan, 1993) • Maximize the power of your brain video (Buzan, 2007). Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlabrWv25qQ • iMovie or other mind mapping app (free download) 2. Information circles resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selection of diverse, multimodal texts at different levels (see Appendix A for a sample list) 3. Technological resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on what resources are available, or dependent on school policies related to students

	<p>bringing their own devices, many technological resources can support this unit, such as iPhones, iPods, and other tablet devices. It is recommended that several computers or portable digital devices are available for student use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to digital cameras, microphones and computers for the 'Speak Out for Change' Final Project • Computer, access to Internet, and projector or interactive whiteboard (projector needed for most lessons)
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Table 7

Overview of Lessons: Speaking Out for Change

Lesson 1	
Lesson focus	Introductory Lesson: What does it mean to be critically aware?
Connect	<p>“Chalk Talk” (group mind map):</p> <p><i>What are some local and global issues I am aware of or interested in?</i></p> <p>Without speaking, students come to the large paper and write their initial thoughts and ideas. They are encouraged to add to others' ideas using words, images or symbols. Teacher to model this first. Afterwards, discuss, and extend ideas.</p>
Process	<p>Image analysis (See-Think-Wonder strategy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an image that relates to a local or global social issue. Ask students, <i>“What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?”</i> Do this several times with a variety of images; aim for images that juxtapose two issues or contradict each other. For example, an image promoting tourism in BC could be paired with an image showing poverty/homelessness in Victoria. Show each image separately. • To take the discussion further, ask students: <i>“What do you think is the message being portrayed? Why do you think that?”</i> Depending on the group, students may choose to write their ideas and thoughts on a post-it note to capture their thinking. • Students talk in small groups first (think-pair-share strategy)

	<p>and then share out with whole class. Emphasise the exploratory nature of this activity. There is no 'correct' response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat this process several times.
Transform/ Personalize	<p>What does it mean to be critically aware?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what students have just done is to think critically about the images presented Explain why it is important to apply a critical lens to the reading/viewing of texts Briefly give an overview of the <i>Speaking Out</i> unit and explain what their final project will be (keeping a goal in mind). Show a video clip of a young activist speaking out for what they believe in (e.g. Craig Kielburger, founder of 'Free the Children', or Hannah Taylor, founder of the 'Ladybug Foundation'), read excerpts from <i>Tell me why: How young people can change the world</i> (Walters, 2008), or show the TEDx video where Shiza Shahid discusses what inspired her to start volunteering for others when she was 14 years old. Lastly, have students do a 'quick write' to synthesize why they think it is important apply a critical lens to the reading/viewing of texts.
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large chart paper and markers Various images on a range of social, environmental or political issues (use images that contradict one another) Video clips of young activists, such as Craig Kielburger, founder of 'Free the Children', or Hannah Taylor, founder of the 'Ladybug Foundation', excerpts from the book, <i>Tell me why: How young people can change the world</i> (Walters, 2008) or the TEDx video with Shiza Shahid: http://www.upworthy.com/a-woman-who-is-changing-the-world-shares-how-she-learned-to-do-just-that?c=ufb1.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses from "Chalk Talk" to determine background knowledge and interest in local and global issues 'Quick write' responses to assess whether the students grasped the concept of being critically aware
Lesson 2	
Lesson focus	Modelling lesson: How can I read text with a critical lens?

<p>Connect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students read and view the text and image of the poem “The Blind Men and the Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) as an introduction to the importance of considering diverse perspectives. Discuss. • “What do I think I know about this topic?” – brainstorm ideas in a web, using images/symbols, or quick write (provide students with the choice of how to brainstorm)
<p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a “think aloud” to model how you go about reading/viewing the text with a critical lens. Complete the graphic organiser (Appendix F) with students. Provide students with time to talk about what they are thinking as you read/view together. Questions to focus on (as outlined on the graphic organiser): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Whose viewpoint is expressed? ➢ What does the author/creator want you to think? ➢ Why do they want you to think that? ➢ Do you agree or disagree with this perspective?
<p>Transform/ Personalize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to think about whether their thinking has changed on this topic as a result of asking critical questions. Model your own thinking and write it down on the graphic organiser. Highlight the perspective/point of view that is being portrayed in the text. • Have a whole class discussion to think and respond to the essential questions. Use chart paper to capture thinking that responds to the question: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’ (this activity will be added to at the end of each lesson). • Show them how to go about finding a text on the same subject that portrays another perspective. Share with them how you might go about finding one and suggest they can look for one for next class. Although this step is not mandatory, it provides a challenge for those students that need or want one.
<p>Materials and Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On the Flipside” graphic organiser (Appendix F) • Anchor text on a topic that most students can relate to (i.e. bullying, animal rights, etc.) • “The Blind Men and the Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) or a similar text.

Assessment	Formative assessment. Listen to their discussions and provide direct feedback.
Lesson 3	
Lesson focus	Modeling and Guided Practice: Asking questions to explore alternative perspectives
Connect	Have students recall the text read/viewed and discussed last class. Brainstorm possibilities for alternative perspectives on this topic.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce text #2. It covers the same topic as last class, but offers insights from another perspective. Same as last class, scaffold and model the process of reading/viewing the text while asking critical questions. Complete the “On the Flipside” graphic organiser (Appendix F). Using a gradual release of responsibility approach, model your thinking, and then provide more opportunities for students to explore and share their own thinking until they can do this step independently.
Transform/ Personalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about, discuss and share responses to this question: “What actions might you take on the basis of what you have learned?” (e.g. “I will try to look beyond reputations and find out why someone is acting like a bully; “I will treat others how I want to be treated”). • Have a whole class discussion to think and respond to the essential questions. Use chart paper to capture thinking that responds to the question: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On the Flipside” graphic organiser (Appendix F) • Anchor text #2 on the same topic as last class, however, it must illustrate an alternate perspective. Ideally, this second text is also in a different mode (i.e. video, song, etc.)
Assessment	Formative assessment. Listen to their discussions and provide direct and ongoing feedback.

Lesson 4	
Lesson focus	Introduction to information/inquiry circles: Introduce the texts
Connect	Using a “book talk” format introduce the text choices to the students. Without giving away the main details, share some points about each text so students will know if it is one they are interested in choosing. Depending on your class, you may want students to mark their top three choices on a piece of paper and then assign them their first piece of text to read/view. However with these short pieces of text, I find it easier to just have 5-6 copies of each available and immediately after the “book talk” I have students raise their hand if that is the text they are interested in choosing first (students may close their eyes/lower their heads if you are worried they will only choose the text based on what their friends choose).
Process	As we are still scaffolding the process, have students pair up or get into their text groups. They can read/view the text and complete the graphic organiser together. Be sure to emphasise the importance of discussion while they apply a critical lens to their interactions with the text.
Transform/ Personalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about, discuss and share responses to this question: “What actions might you take on the basis of what you have learned?” • Have a whole class discussion to think and respond to the essential questions. Each group will want to provide examples from their specific text. Encourage this process. • Use chart paper to capture thinking that responds to the question: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’ • Encourage students to challenge themselves to find another text on the same topic that portrays an alternative perspective. This is an optional homework assignment.
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 texts (“Text 1”) on a diversity of topics and at different levels (5-6 copies of each, but have others on hand for later). Aim to provide a diverse selection of

	<p>texts in different modes. Use information gained from Lesson 1 to build your texts sets so that they are geared towards your individual students' interests. For a sampling of texts, refer to Appendix A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "On the Flipside" graphic organiser Appendix F. • Specific technological resources that are needed for your class or for the multimodal texts (i.e. projector, computers, iPads, etc.).
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect the "On the Flipside" graphic organisers to provide immediate formative assessment and feedback to students. Hand them back next class. • 'Ticket out the door' – have students write one thing found interesting or useful and one thing they had trouble with or are wondering about (post-it note or small slip of paper). For example:
Lesson 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p>Ticket out the door Name: _____</p> <p>Something I found interesting/useful:</p> <p>Something I had trouble with or am wondering about:</p> </div>
Lesson focus	Exploring alternate perspectives
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with students your general feedback on the processes they undertook last class to read/view Text #1 with a critical lens. Provide feedback on areas they did very well with, and areas that can be improved on (general feedback). Address issues raised by the 'Ticket out the door' from last class. • Students meet with their groups to share the alternate texts they may have brought (teacher aims to give it a quick read first to ensure it is appropriate for the task at hand). • In their groups, students share their thoughts on potential alternate perspectives to "Text 1".
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students individually read/view the alternative text ("Text 2"). • Complete their graphic organiser on own or in pairs. • Meet with groups to discuss and share ideas and thoughts related to their topic and using a critical lens to read/view their text.

Transform/ Personalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about, discuss and share responses to this question: “What actions might you take on the basis of what you have learned. • Have a whole class discussion to think and respond to the essential questions. Each group will want to provide examples from their specific text. Encourage this process. • Use chart paper to capture thinking that responds to the question: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The corresponding 5-6 texts (“Text 2”) that offer an alternative perspective to “Text 1”. • “On the Flipside” graphic organiser Appendix F • Specific technological resources that are needed for your class or for the multimodal texts (i.e. projector, computers, iPads, etc.)
Assessment	Collect the “On the Flipside” graphic organisers to provide immediate formative assessment and feedback to students. Hand them back next class.
Lessons 6-10 (approximately)	
Lesson focus	Information/inquiry circles
Connect	<p>“Text 1”: Complete the “what do I think I know about this topic” on the graphic organiser.</p> <p>“Text 2”: Share alternative texts or meet with group to recap “Text 1” and share their thoughts on alternate perspectives.</p>
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students individually read/view the texts • Complete their graphic organiser on own • Meet with groups to discuss and share ideas and thoughts related to their topic and using a critical lens to read/view their text
Transform/ Personalize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about, discuss and share responses to this question: “What actions might you take on the basis of what you have learned?” • Have a whole class discussion to think and respond to

	<p>the essential questions. Each group will want to provide examples from their specific text. Encourage this process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use chart paper to capture thinking on a class mind map that responds to the question: ‘How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?’
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text sets of “Text 1” and “Text 2” (always have 5-6 copies of each title on hand) • “On the Flipside” graphic organiser Appendix F • Specific technological resources that are needed for your class or for the multimodal texts (i.e. projector, computers, iPads, etc.)
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and Listening Assessment Rubric (Appendix G) • Students to choose 2-3 of their completed graphic organisers for teacher to assess
Lessons 11-12	
Lesson focus	Mind mapping
Connect	“Brain dump” – what do I think the elements of an effective mind map are?
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show <i>Maximize the power of your brain</i> video (Buzan, 2007). • Show some examples from <i>The mind map book: How to use radiant thinking to maximize your brain’s untapped potential</i> (Buzan & Buzan, 1993) • Go over the criteria and the final mind map rubric (Appendix D-E)
Transform/ Personalize	Students are to create a mind map that addresses the essential question: <i>How do my new understandings of contemporary issues inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?</i>
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maximize the power of your brain</i> video (Buzan, 2007). Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlabrWv25qQ

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The mind map book: How to use radiant thinking to maximize your brain's untapped potential</i> (Buzan & Buzan, 1993) • Coloured pens, pencils and 11 x 17 paper • If using digital devices, download iMindmap or other app for students to use on the tablet • Mind Map Performance Task criteria (Appendix 4) and Assessment Rubric (Appendix 5)
Assessment	Completed mind maps (summative assessment)
Lessons 13-17 (approximately)	
Lesson focus	Creation of student-produced multimodal texts
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show examples of PSAs or other materials where people are advocating on a specific issue • Revisit the <i>Speaking Out for Change</i> Final Project. Go over the handout and rubric
Process	Students are to work on their own or collaboratively to create a multimodal resource that illustrates their worldview and beliefs on a specific issue. Ideally, the issue is one that has been discussed during the information/inquiry circles. Students are to advocate/take a strong position of this issue
Transform/ Personalize	Students to produce a multimodal creation that demonstrates their views on an issue, specifically it exemplifies how they are inspired to speak out for what they believe in
Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of multimodal tools for students to use to create/produce their projects (i.e. computers, cameras, smartphones, tablets, etc.) • Filmmaking software (i.e. iMovie, MovieMaker) • Access to the Internet and Web 2.0 tools, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Pictochart" Infographic creator <http://piktochart.com/> ➤ "Glogster" interactive poster <http://www.glogster.com/> ➤ "Prezi" Presentation and idea generator <http://prezi.com/>
Assessment	"Speaking Out" final project (Appendix 8)

Celebrating Students' Enhanced Critical Literacy: Film and Idea Festival

In order to celebrate students' deepened critical understanding of contemporary issues, set aside time for students to present their completed projects to an audience, at least one consisting of their peers. More authentically, and needing more time and organization, hold a "Film and Idea Festival" where students can present their projects to a much larger group, consisting of other students in their school and from neighbouring schools, parents, community groups, and members of the public. The goal of their final project is to inform and educate others about a specific social issue, so it is important a venue is provided for your students to share their work and their ideas. This festival will be a true celebration of all they have learnt and a testament to their enhanced critical literacy.

Summary

I hope you will find the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional resource a useful supplement to the instructional units you currently use with your students. I welcome any thoughts, ideas, or criticisms that you have about this unit and would be thrilled to receive your feedback. I sincerely hope that this instructional resource is successful at igniting a passion within your students to speak out for what they believe in.

In solidarity,

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CHAPTER 4 – REFLECTIONS

A Passion for Learning: My Journey into Graduate Studies

Like many other teachers, I am passionate about learning. It is this passion for learning – both my own and my interest in wanting to instill it within the middle years' students I teach – that inspires me as a teacher. Since becoming a teacher in 2005, I have sought ways to transform and develop my practice so that it continues to align with the shifting educational environment and evolving social climate. These changes are partly due to the influence of the Internet and digital technologies on society and culture. In addition, my practice has also transformed in order to address the evolving needs of the students I teach. I have been involved with district-wide collaborative inquiries, participated in professional book clubs, and regularly met with other teacher friends for dinner just so we could collaboratively plan instructional units and activities. I am a little obsessive about teaching and learning, but it is who I am. Being primarily a Humanities teacher, the majority of the professional development I have done over the years has focused on literacy. Therefore, it came as no surprise that when I was approached by a friend and former colleague and told about the *Language and Literacy Middle Years Cohort Program* at the University of Victoria, I swiftly applied. My journey into graduate studies had begun.

Now, almost two years later, as I reflect on the experiences, learning, and personal and professional transformations that have occurred since I began my Masters of Education program at the University of Victoria, I cannot help but feeling an

overwhelming sense of emotion. On one level, a feeling of elation is starting to build deep within me, as I get closer to the moment when I can proudly walk across the stage to collect my graduate degree. On another level, I feel an incredible sense of accomplishment, knowing that I worked hard to maintain academic integrity, while also balancing the multiple roles of mother to two small children, wife to a supportive – but busy – husband, and full-time middle years’ educator. Lastly, I also feel a sense of loss, as I realise that the relationships I have developed with my cohort and instructors will no longer share a common focus, and the task that has consumed so many of my thoughts, speech, and time is coming to an end. As someone who is passionate about learning, this final chapter in my graduate studies journey is truly bittersweet.

Fortunately, I have so many new learnings and ideas to bring with me as I begin the next phase of my journey that will take me away from the university community. In this chapter, I set out to summarise these learnings and ideas by synthesizing and making connections between the concepts outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two, the coursework I did at the university, and the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three. I will also discuss some possibilities for next steps after I complete graduate school. As I noted above, this reflective process signifies the end of my graduate studies journey; yet, it also represents the start of a new journey, where I am certain my passion for learning will continue to evolve.

Choosing a Topic: My Influences

Probably the most difficult aspect of this entire process for me was choosing a topic for my Masters of Education final project. As noted above, I am passionate about

learning and many of the people, ideas, and theories I was exposed to over the course of my graduate studies have inspired me and invoked within me an even greater desire to explore these literacy pedagogies further. In this section, I will briefly summarize some of the significant concepts, approaches and theories that have been influential in my decision to choose the topic for my final project, specifically, using a dialogic approach and diverse texts to enhance adolescents' critical literacy.

Instructional Design Influences

The coursework I did on instructional design helped me realise the importance of knowing my students and designing instructional units with their needs, interests, and strengths in mind (Carr-Chellman, 2011). Hattie's (2012) research provided me with practical epistemology on several practical interventions which can lead to more visible thinking and learning in the classroom. The readings and assignments I did for this course led me to become interested in the concepts of Universal Design for Learning and the inquiry approach. In addition, I reinforced my understanding that the design of units and lessons should be purposive and holistic, and that the end goals and objectives must be clearly in sight.

Reading/Viewing and Writing/Representing Influences

My learning around reading/viewing and writing/representing has forever changed me as a teacher and has broadened my view of what it means to be literate in our twenty-first century society. Prior to embarking on graduate studies, I was unaware that I held a narrow view of the concept of 'literacy'; I now realise that literacy means

much more than the ability to merely read and write, but is a process which encompasses a myriad of other competencies. Some of these other competencies and processes include: creating, viewing, representing, remixing, deconstructing, reconstructing, and producing a variety of texts. I was heavily influenced by Choo (2010a; 2010b) and Yenawine's (2005) notions on visual literacy, Jewitt and Kress's (2003) concept of multimodality, Rosenblatt's (1978; 1986; 1994) transactional theory, and Mills (2009; 2010) and Alvermann's (2002; 2008) notions on adolescent literacies and multimodalities. The ideas I garnered through my coursework on reading/viewing and writing/representing influenced the *Speaking Out* instructional unit, particularly the notions around multimodality and the idea that 'text' refers to more than just print texts, but also includes visual, auditory, gestural, performance, and screen modes (Bearne, 2009; Jewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Mills, 2009; 2010; New London Group, 1996). The concepts I learned related to the reading/viewing and writing/representing of diverse texts are not only incorporated into the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit, but I have also consciously made an effort to incorporate these concepts in my middle years' classroom.

Literacy and Technology Influences

The self-directed study I did related to iPad learning environments helped me to understand both the complexities and wonderment associated with the use of iPads and other digital tablet technology in the classroom environment. I became exposed to the notion of "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) and learned that a classroom does not need to be equipped with only one form of multimodal device, such as an iPad. Instead,

having a variety of multimodal and monomodal resources can lead to fulfilling the diversity of learning needs, interests, and strengths in the classroom. In addition, I also learned that technology is a means to an end, not an end in itself, and it can be used to enhance the curriculum outcomes.

The coursework and research I did on the connections between literacy and technology added to my knowledge of diverse texts, the importance of engagement for learning, and on the necessity of incorporating and valuing adolescent and New Literacies into classroom instruction (Alvermann, 2002; 2008; International Reading Association, 2009). I challenged my views and predisposition towards more 'traditional' notions of literacy instruction with inspiring writings about the benefits of New Literacies, such as game-based literacies (Buckingham & Burn, 2007; Gee, 2003; 2004; 2005). My view of literacy was once again broadened, influenced by position papers written by the International Reading Association (2009) and the National Council of Teachers of English (2008) on the importance of twenty-first century literacies.

Research Methods Influences

The coursework I did on qualitative research methods provided me with the tools to make sense of, analyse, synthesize and apply the results of the many research studies I would eventually read in order to create my Masters of Education project. Creswell's (2012) overview of five qualitative approaches helped me to decipher what was important in the research studies I would encounter as I conducted research for the literature review featured in Chapter Two. Without this course, I would not have had

the capacity to understand the significance of the results of many of the studies I read about.

Oracy Influences

Lastly, my coursework related to oral language led me to value the role that collaborative, dialogic talk has on learning. Alexander (2008), Barnes (2008), Delpit (1992), Gee (1989), Vygotsky (1962; 1978), and Wegerif (2013) opened my eyes to the relationships between talk, cognition, and culture and showed me that language and one's view of the world are inextricably linked. It was during this time that I realised how – like many teachers – my own classroom was a monologic environment where I did most of the talking. At that point I realised that my project would have a dialogic approach embedded within it. I also made a promise to myself to embrace dialogic teaching when I returned to work post-maternity leave. I am happy to share that, although it is a work in progress, I have successfully adopted a dialogic approach into my classroom instructional style since returning to work.

Oppression and Empowerment: My Interest in Critical Literacy

I was drawn to the concept, expressed by the National Council of Teachers of English (2008), that those who have access to digital, New Literacies would be society's 'producers' and continue to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the twenty-first century. Conversely, those without access would be the 'consumers' and become increasingly marginalised (Jacobs, 2012). From my learning about multimodalities and multiliteracies I already knew that literacy was much more than merely the ability to

read and write; now I was discovering that literacy was a social practice which could lead to oppression or emancipation, feeling powerful or powerless, or being an active producer or a passive consumer.

My personal and professional background in social activism and promoting the principles of human rights and democracy had fuelled within me a desire to elucidate the plight of marginalised peoples and encourage social action of those around me. In addition, it was around this same time that I read a qualitative ethnographic case study where marginalised middle school students from an urban American city were provided with the tools to enhance their critical literacy in order to examine the portrayal of visible minorities in Blockbuster Hollywood films (Gainer, 2010). This study inspired me to want to learn more about critical literacy; in fact, I was so moved by this study that I wrote to the researcher, who directed me to similar research studies on critical literacy. My interest in critical literacy had taken hold and I was particularly keen on the tenets of critical literacy which related to the empowerment of individuals and groups and the development of a sense of agency, or personal responsibility (Cridland-Hughes, 2012; Janks, 2014a; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011).

In summary, I have been influenced by many of the ideas, concepts, and theories that I have been exposed to whilst immersed in graduate studies at the University of Victoria and while conducting research for the literature review in Chapter Two. It is the culmination of these diverse perspectives, theories, and concepts that led to the development of the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit outlined in Chapter Three. More importantly, much of what I have learned has also found its way into my

classroom instructional strategies and continues to inform me on a daily basis. The next section will briefly outline where I see my journey going next.

Next Steps: Possibilities for the Future

I have many ideas for where my learning journey will take me upon completing my Masters of Education degree program. First and foremost I will implement the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit in my Grade 8 English Language Arts classes. I am excited to teach this unit and put my learning into practice. I applied, and successfully received, a social justice grant which I will use to gather resources, fund a graphic and media design workshop (to have professional graphic designers provide instruction on filmmaking and other graphic and media design strategies) and hold a 'Film and Idea Festival' at my school later this year. It will be exciting to see the multimodal resources that my students create which will highlight the social and environmental issues they are inspired to speak out about.

Furthermore, in speaking with colleagues, it seems very few have a clear understanding about the concepts of both critical literacy and the dialogic approach. I believe a plausible next step would be to create a workshop based on my project which will aim to expose teachers in my school district to the concepts and practical applications of critical literacy and the dialogic approach. Although I have a solid understanding about the theory and research behind these pedagogies, I would like to develop a more practical understanding prior to developing and facilitating a professional workshop. This practical understanding will only evolve as I become more

proficient at adopting the dialogic approach into my classroom instruction and as I explicitly strive to enhance my students' critical literacy.

Lastly, I have certainly not closed the door on post-graduate studies. Although a well-deserved break is needed at the moment, doing my Masters of Education degree has reinforced my awareness that I truly do have a passion for learning. Although it has been incredibly challenging, I have enjoyed the processes involved in researching and writing papers and I would like to do more of this in the future, either within academia or for teacher magazines or journals. In addition, perhaps the connections I have made at the university will enable me to collaborate with educational researchers in the coming years. As I noted previously, on the one hand my graduate studies journey is coming to an end; on the other hand, it may lead to many new opportunities and a chance to embark upon new journeys.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, as educators, ultimately our end goal is not merely to ensure students are literate, but is to ensure students have the tools to enable them to be active, caring, conscientious, creative, and critical individuals. The adolescents we teach need to be given the knowledge and skills to express their ideas in conjunction with others, ask deep, meaningful questions, and understand the multiplicity and diversity of human thought. Therefore, critical literacy and dialogic talk are not the end goals, but they do provide a means to an end. According to Janks (2014) the role of the teacher is to help students develop a social conscience and assist them in understanding the connections "between local and global, between now and the future, and between 'us'

and our constructed Others” (p. 350). I believe the *Speaking Out for Change* instructional unit is a step towards achieving these goals. By providing students with the tools to critically and collaboratively discuss and interact with the multimodal texts they encounter on a daily basis, hopefully they will be empowered to identify what they are passionate about and be inspired to speak out for what they believe in.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Sample Selection of Text Sets for *Speaking Out*

Issue	Text	Mode	Synopsis
Poverty and homelessness	Abbott, Z. (2005). <i>Perspectives on homelessness in Downtown Columbia: Downtown businesses feel the effects of homelessness</i> . Retrieved from: http://newsplex.sc.edu/showcase/homeless/narrative2005/website/business.htm	Website (visual and print)	In this commentary, Abbott describes the problems facing business owners in the downtown core of Columbia, OH. It outlines how homelessness is having an effect on business.
	Guy, S., Guy, S & Thome, J. (Producers). Guy, S. (Director). (2009). <i>Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with Eva Mendes</i> [video]. Vancouver, BC: 4Real	DVD (visual, auditory)	The 4Real video series are Canadian-made and created for students. This DVD gives insights into what it is like to live in poverty in Vancouver. It provides many perspectives and views from people living on the street or in poverty.
Animal rights	Cowperthwaite, G. (Director). (2013). <i>Blackfish</i> [Motion picture]. United States: Manny O Productions.	DVD or Netflix (visual, auditory)	This controversial documentary discusses the plight of orcas kept in captivity and used for entertainment purposes. It specifically looks at the life of the whale, Tilikum, who currently resides in SeaWorld, Orlando and has killed/injured several trainers.
	DuPré Pesmen, P., Stephens, F. (Producers) & Psihoyos, L. (Director). (2008). <i>The Cove</i> [Motion picture]. USA: Lionsgate.	DVD (visual, auditory)	This Academy Award winning documentary highlights the illegal capture of dolphins in a town in Japan. Using undercover footage it shows how people are slaughtering and capturing hundreds of dolphins every year. Those that are captured are sold to aquarium parks and for other recreational purposes (e.g. swimming with dolphins).
	Meredith, C. (2014). <i>Sochi winter Olympics: Stray dogs are being rounded up and slaughtered ahead of Russian games</i> . Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/01/sochi-winter-olympics-str_0_n_4715744.html?view=print&comm_ref=false	Online article (print text and images)	In this article published by The Huffington Post, Meredith (2014) explains how stray dogs on the streets of Sochi have been rounded up and killed ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympics. This article also provides views from the individual in charge of this action and provides explanation as to why it was necessary.
	Ocean Preservation Society. (2014). <i>Marine mammal captivity: The truth is in the facts an open letter from the informed American public</i> . Retrieved from http://www.opsociety.org/PressReleases/SeaWorldOpenLetterRebuttal-OPS.pdf	Letter (online, print text)	This letter was written by the producers of <i>The Cove</i> documentary. It is a response to the open letter sent by SeaWorld executives about the allegations made during the <i>Blackfish</i> film.
	SeaWorld. (2014). <i>The truth about Blackfish</i> . Retrieved from: http://SeaWorld.com/en/truth/truth-about-blackfish/	Website, with interactive and video links (visual, auditory, print text)	This website is a response to the film, <i>Blackfish</i> , and outlines SeaWorld's perspective and discusses why the documentary is not true. A short video is also linked to this site with interviews from current and former marine mammal trainers.
	SeaWorld Zoological Team. (2014). <i>The truth is in our parks and people: An open letter from SeaWorld's advocates</i> . Retrieved from http://SeaWorld.com/en/~/link.aspx?id=9D0C956E74134E4AA34626AD43CC1F79&z=z	Letter (online, print text)	This letter was written by the SeaWorld Zoological Team to refute claims made in the documentary, <i>Blackfish</i> . It outlines what SeaWorld does and does not do in response to allegations over inhumane conditions for marine mammals.
	Trotman, M. (n.d.). <i>Regional realities: Impact of stray dogs and cats on the community; Impact on economy, including tourism; Impact</i>	Online article (print text)	This article is for a higher-level reader and outlines the impacts that stray animals have on the community, the economy, and on other animals and the environment in Barbados. Written by a veterinarian, it provides

	<i>on livestock, wildlife and the environment</i> . Retrieved from http://www.hsi.org/assets/pdfs/regional_realities.pdf		compelling reasons why stray animals pose a problem.
Consumer choices	Aulakh, R. (2013). I got hired at a Bangladesh sweatshop: Meet my nine-year old boss. <i>Toronto Star</i> . Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com/news/world/clothesonyourback/2013/10/11/i_got_hired_at_a_bangladesh_sweatshop_meet_my_9yearold_boss.html	Online article and video (image, audio and print text)	Aulakh (2013) went undercover for the <i>Toronto Star</i> newspaper to investigate the working practices and conditions in a Bangladesh factory. She uncovered information about the workers – many of them children – and found it incredibly sad because the young workers themselves seemed happy and did not seem to know a life any better than the one they had.
	Canadian Labour Congress. (2013). <i>Sweatshops</i> . Retrieved from http://www.canadianlabour.ca/issues/sweatshops	Website (images, print and audio text)	The Canadian Labour Congress has created this website to educate people about overseas factories and child labour. The website provides examples and facts on the situation for workers overseas.
	Adbusters. (2013). <i>Nike shoe sweatshop</i> [Image file]. Retrieved from https://www.adbusters.org/content/nike-shoe-sweatshop	Image	This Adbusters image shows a Nike shoe with the word “sweatshop 83 cents” and “Nike \$250” written across it. It would be beneficial to have students view several Adbusters images on overseas factory worker conditions.
	CTV British Columbia. (2013). <i>Protesters storm The Bay in Vancouver over factory workers’ rights</i> . Retrieved from http://bc.ctvnews.ca/protesters-storm-the-bay-in-vancouver-over-factory-workers-rights-1.1560198	Online article (images and print text)	This article discusses how protesters in Vancouver held a rally in The Bay, Vancouver to protest for factory workers’ rights around the world. The Bay has not signed the Bangladesh Accord, and protesters wanted to put pressure on the company to sign this international document which aims to protect factory workers’ rights.
Environmental Issues	Debate.org. (2013). <i>Should plastic bags be banned?</i> Retrieved from http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-plastic-bags-be-banned-from-grocery-stores	Online debate website (print text)	This online debating website offers the pros and cons to why plastic bags should – or should not – be banned. Many different voices offer diverse opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of plastic bags. To provide an opportunity for authentic writing, it would also be interesting to have students comment on the site, outlining reasons to support their own opinion.
	Gillis, D. & Pacific Wild. (Producers). (2010). <i>Oil in Eden: The battle to protect Canada’s Pacific coast</i> . [Video file]. Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aO4s4P7eFk4	Youtube video	Produced by an environmental group, this video outlines the risks associated with the expansion of the Northern Gateway Pipeline in British Columbia. It looks at the issue from a global perspective and outlines why the pipeline is the defining environmental issue today.
	National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2014). <i>Images of change: Global climate change</i> . Retrieved from http://climate.nasa.gov/state_of_flux#Mirani_Dam_930x472.jpg	Website (images and print text)	NASA has put together a series of images showing how the Earth’s environment has changed over many years. Spanning several years, these before and after pictures show what parts of the planet looked like at one time and how these images have changed today.
	National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2014). <i>Global climate change: Vital signs of the planet</i> . Retrieved from http://climate.nasa.gov/effects	Website (images and print text)	This website produced by NASA has images and text to outline the impacts of global climate change in various countries around the world.
	Olgive, C. (2012). <i>BC’s huge gamble: Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline</i> . [Video file]. Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgvY6zBc3q4	Youtube video	From a protectionist and environmental perspective, this video take a critical look at the Northern Gateway Pipeline in British Columbia. Using footage and images, the video gives a history of Enbridge’s oil spills and juxtaposes this history against a backdrop of the British Columbia coastline and unique ecosystems.
	Reckas, T. (2012). <i>The plastics breakdown: An infographic</i> . Retrieved from http://www.oneworldocean.com/images/blog/OWOO_PlasticsInfographic_2012_b.jpg	Infographic (images, print text)	This infographic provides images and text to provide information on how plastic is used and broken down on the planet. The infographic has statistics and information related to the ‘One World One Ocean’ Campaign.

Sports and Resources	Kielburger, C., & Kielburger, M. (2014). Sochi: What \$50 billion could have accomplished. <i>Global Voices</i> , 8(21). Retrieved from http://www.weday.com/global-voices/sochi-what-50-billion-could-have-accomplished/	Digital article	This article summarizes the \$50 billion price tag of the 2014 Olympics in Sochi and suggests the money could have been spent on fulfilling social and environmental needs.
	Engineering Sport. (2014). <i>Why are the Olympics important?</i> Retrieved from http://engineeringsport.co.uk/2012/06/26/why-are-the-olympics-important/	Online article (visual and print)	Using a variety of visuals, such as graphs and infographics, the author takes a historical approach to explain why Olympic games continue to be important today.
	Leonsis, T. (2013). <i>The importance of the Olympics</i> . [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zj6AiuBHSSc	Youtube video	In this short video, Ted Leonsis, the owner of the Washington Capitals NHL Team discusses the importance of the Olympics on increasing nationalistic spirit and pride.
Environmental Issues	Debate.org. (2013). <i>Should plastic bags be banned?</i> Retrieved from http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-plastic-bags-be-banned-from-grocery-stores	Online debate website (print text)	This online debating website offers the pros and cons to why plastic bags should – or should not – be banned. Many different voices offer diverse opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of plastic bags. To provide an opportunity for authentic writing, it would also be interesting to have students comment on the site, outlining reasons to support their own opinion.
	Gillis, D. & Pacific Wild. (Producers). (2010). <i>Oil in Eden: The battle to protect Canada's Pacific coast</i> . [Video file]. Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aO4s4P7eFk4	Youtube video	Produced by an environmental group, this video outlines the risks associated with the expansion of the Northern Gateway Pipeline in British Columbia. It looks at the issue from a global perspective and outlines why the pipeline is the defining environmental issue today.
	National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2014). <i>Images of change: Global climate change</i> . Retrieved from http://climate.nasa.gov/state_of_flux#Mirani_Dam_930x472.jpg	Website (images and print text)	NASA has put together a series of images showing how the Earth's environment has changed over many years. Spanning several years, these before and after pictures show what parts of the planet looked like at one time and how these images have changed today.
	National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2014). <i>Global climate change: Vital signs of the planet</i> . Retrieved from http://climate.nasa.gov/effects	Website (images and print text)	This website produced by NASA has images and text to outline the impacts of global climate change in various countries around the world.
	Olgive, C. (2012). <i>BC's huge gamble: Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline</i> . [Video file]. Retrieved from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgvY6zBc3q4	Youtube video	From a protectionist and environmental perspective, this video take a critical look at the Northern Gateway Pipeline in British Columbia. Using footage and images, the video gives a history of Enbridge's oil spills and juxtaposes this history against a backdrop of the British Columbia coastline and unique ecosystems.
	Reckas, T. (2012). <i>The plastics breakdown: An infographic</i> . Retrieved from http://www.oneworldocean.com/images/blog/OWOO_PlasticsInfographic_2012_b.jpg	Infographic (images, print text)	This infographic provides images and text to provide information on how plastic is used and broken down on the planet. The infographic has statistics and information related to the 'One World One Ocean' Campaign.
	Power, Equality and Gender	Lee, A., & Moody, B. (2004). Everybody's fool. [Recorded by Evanescence]. On <i>Fallen</i> [Music Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u55fpsbzAfk&feature=kp	Music video (visual, audio and linguistic text)
Peters projection of the world map		Visual image	This map provides an alternative view of the world. It maintains the relative size of the continents, but distorts their shape (see www.diversophy.com/petersmap.htm).
Mercator projection of world map		Visual	This map is the most familiar view of the world. It

		image	maintains the shape of continents, but distorts their size. For example, Greenland is shown as the same size as Africa, yet, actually Africa is 14 times larger. As well, the Equator is shown 60% of the way down the map, which diminishes the importance of the Southern Hemisphere.
	Mohammed, D. (2013). <i>Qahera</i> . Retrieved from http://qahera.tumblr.com/post/68110255239	Online comic book/ sequential art (image and print text)	In the Qahera comic, Mohammed (2013) has created Egypt's first hijab-wearing female superhero. The comic debunks stereotypes in the West and the Islamic world of women, as it portrays a hijab-wearing Muslim woman as the heroine of the comic series. This online comic addresses issues related to violence and discrimination suffered by women, particularly since the 2011 protests/uprisings.
	Stamp out bullying (2014). <i>Poems about bullying</i> . Retrieved from http://www.stampoutbullying.co.uk/things_by_you/poems	Poems (print text)	The 'Stamp Out Bullying' website has several poems written by many different people about bullying. Various perspectives are portrayed in the different poems. All poems are in print text or audio form.
Education	British Broadcasting Corporation. (2013). <i>Pakistan's school for child workers</i> [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-23079143	Online video	This video and accompanying print-based description outline how an individual in a city in Pakistan has started a school to educate children who usually work in factories. The school is situated in a city park and illustrates how education is not necessarily a right that all children enjoy.
	Guerin, O. (2013). Malala Yousafzai: Battling for an education in Pakistan. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23268708	Online article (visual and print text)	In this article published by the BBC, the author discusses the plight of Malala Yousafzai, a young girl from Pakistan who was shot by the Taliban because she fought for the right to an education. She survived the attack and has gone on to be a champion of children's right to education.
	Kielburger, C., & Kielburger, M. (2014). Stemming the African brain drain. <i>Global Voices</i> , 8(19). Retrieved from http://www.wednesday.com/global-voices/stemming-the-african-brain-drain/	Online article (image and print text)	In this article, Kielburger and Kielburger (2014) critically discuss how Canada is helping to train engineering and medical professionals in developing countries, but is then 'stealing' them away to come and live in Canada. This is causing serious 'brain drain' in some developing countries, where medical and other professionals are in high demand.

Other useful resources:

- Adbusters < <https://www.adbusters.org/>>
- Banksy – graffiti art portraying social issues <<http://www.banksy.co.uk/>> or search for Banksy images

Appendix B. Student Profile



Student profile: Who Am I?

Words that describe me:	My favourite books/stories:	Things I like to do on my own:
Things I like to do with my friends:	Things I like to do with my family:	Things I'm very good at or interested in:
Things I'd like (or need) you to know about me:	My hopes and dreams for myself are:	The easiest way for me to show what I know is:
Things I'd like to get better at in this class are:	Who I live with:	My birthday is:
Shhhhhh....I'm afraid that/of:		
This is me!		

Adapted from Brownlie, F., Fullerton, C., & Schnellert, L. (2011). *It's all about thinking: Collaborating to support all learners*. Winnipeg, MB: Portage & Main Press.

Appendix C. Class Profile for Responsive Planning

Class Strengths – Curricular		Class Stretches – Curricular	
Class Strengths – Attitudes/Interests		Class Stretches – Attitudes/Interests	
Class Goals		Decisions	
Individual Concerns			
Medical	Learning	Language	

Adapted from Brownlie, F., Fullerton, C., & Schnellert, L. (2011). *It's all about thinking: Collaborating to support all learners*. Winnipeg, MB: Portage & Main Press.

Appendix D. Mind Map Performance Task

Mind Map Performance Task

Based on the texts you have read/viewed and your discussions during the information circles create a mind map which illustrates your ideas and thinking on contemporary issues.

Your mind map should include:

- Information related to the different social and environmental issues you have studied
- Connections to the different perspectives and complexities surrounding the contemporary issues
- Evidence from the texts you have read/viewed to support your ideas and connections

Remember your Mind Map must have the following parts:

- A central image that relates to the unit
- Big ideas form branches that connect to the central image (the issues)
- Key ideas form limbs off the branches—ideas move from most to least complex
- Symbols and words show a clear understanding of the content
- Clearly use text, colour, symbols and links to show connections between ideas

At the bottom of your mind map write a reflective piece that responds to our unit question:

'How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?'

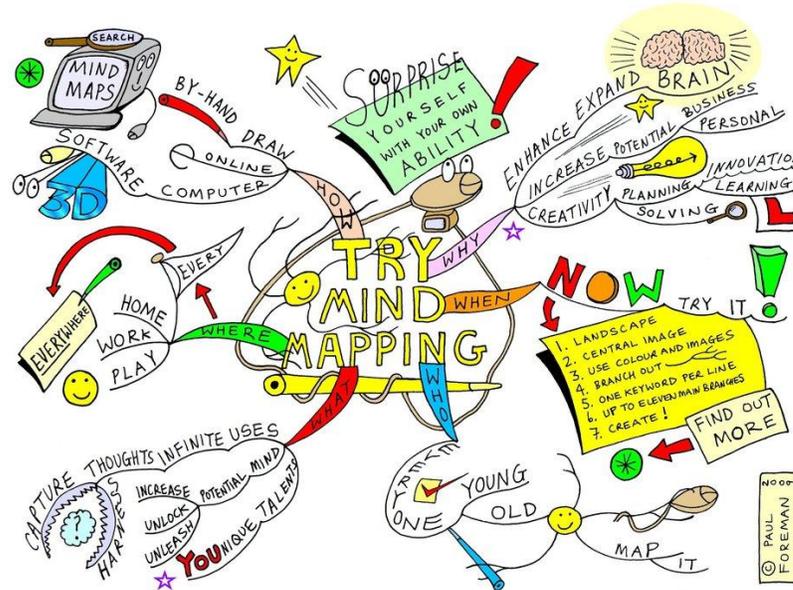


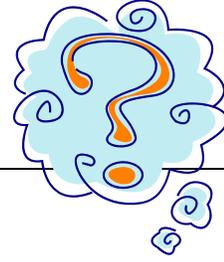
Image created by P. Foreman. Permission to use image granted on January 30, 2014

Appendix E. Mind Map Assessment Rubric

	Beyond there	You're there	You're getting there	Not there yet
MIND MAPPING PROCESS	<p>I clearly and accurately select and describe sophisticated &/or unique pieces of information that relate to the Mind Map</p> <p>I demonstrate flexibility, innovation &/or risk taking in my thinking</p> <p>I can think in multiple ways when I select and use specific pieces of information from multiple sources. (use and apply information in more than one manner)</p> <p>I actively seek out peer & teacher feedback</p>	<p>I can select and describe most important pieces of information that relate to the Mind Map</p> <p>I demonstrate logical & predictable thinking & take few risks</p> <p>I can think in some new & interesting ways when I select and use specific pieces of information from multiple sources (use and apply information in a slightly different manner)</p> <p>I use peer &/or teacher feedback to improve my work</p>	<p>I can select some specific pieces of information that relate to the Mind Map</p> <p>I demonstrate straight forward thinking; I have yet to take some risks</p> <p>I can think in concrete ways when I select and use pieces of information (paraphrasing texts)</p> <p>I use some feedback from my peers &/or teacher</p>	<p>I can select a few important pieces of information that relates to the Mind Map</p> <p>I'm not really thinking on my own yet; I need guidance from the teacher</p> <p>I use one source to show all of my thinking; I generally copy other peoples' ideas</p> <p>I need evidence of using feedback</p>
MIND MAPPING PRODUCT	<p>I demonstrate complete and in depth understanding of concepts through analyzing and synthesizing; I do this independently</p> <p>Extensions of key ideas (limbs) show a deep understanding of the main ideas; multiple and insightful details have been included; relevant connections are included.</p> <p>I demonstrate innovation & flexibility with my use of text, colour, symbols & links that clarify & highlight connections in this Mind Map</p>	<p>I demonstrate solid understanding and application of concepts; I can do this on my own with little or no assistance</p> <p>All extensions show clear understanding – 2-3 limbs off a branch; most relevant and supporting details have been included & make sense.</p> <p>I demonstrate a good use of text, colour, symbols & links that help to clarify & highlight connections in most parts of this Mind Map</p>	<p>I demonstrate basic understanding of the concepts; I might require some teacher or peer assistance to do this</p> <p>Most key ideas show extensions – 2 limbs off a branch; some supporting details have been included & most make sense</p> <p>I demonstrate a basic use of text, colour, symbols & links that help clarify & highlight some connections in this Mind Map</p>	<p>I demonstrate partial understanding of the concepts; I require teacher or peer assistance to do this</p> <p>Some key ideas show extensions – 1 or 2 limbs off a branch; a few supporting details have been included</p> <p>I need more evidence of using text, colour, symbols & links that help clarify & highlight connections in this Mind Map</p>

Created by L. Clarke, J. Nixon, & R. Rasmussen (2012). Adapted by J. Nixon (2014).

Appendix F. Graphic Organiser



**ON THE FLIPSIDE
Graphic Organiser (double-sided)**

Text #1.	Topic/Issue:	
Text:	Author:	
Connect: What do you think you know about this topic?(draw, write, web, list)		
ONE SIDE	ON THE FLIP SIDE (ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES)	
Whose viewpoint is expressed?	Who might think differently about this issue?	What would their perspective be?
What does the author/creator want us to think?		
What do they want you to think that?	Do I think the same as before? Has my thinking changed?	
Do you agree or disagree with this perspective?		



Challenge: find a text (written or visual) that portrays an alternative perspective to share with your group for next class.

Text #2.		
Text:		Author:
ONE SIDE	TEXT 1 vs TEXT 2 (compare facts, arguments and opinions)	
Whose viewpoint is expressed?	Perspective 1	Perspective 2
What does the author/creator want us to think?		
What do they want you to think that?		
Do you agree or disagree with this perspective?		
What action(s) might you take on the basis of what you have learned?		

Appendix G. Speaking and Listening Rubric (Grade 8)

	Beyond there (4)	You're there (3)	Getting there (2)	Not there yet (1)
<p>STRATEGIES makes connections; asks questions; uses a critical lens; works in collaboration; comes prepared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I make insightful connections to prior knowledge and beliefs, and synthesize information and ideas in a unique way I ask questions to explore alternative perspectives which lead to further inquiry; I build upon others' ideas; I do this on my own I demonstrate leadership in my interactions with others; I encourage others to extend their thinking I am prepared for all small group discussions and bring alternative texts for my group to read/view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I make appropriate connections to prior knowledge and beliefs, and synthesize information and ideas I ask questions to explore alternative perspectives; I strive to build upon others' ideas; I do this with little support I contribute to group discussions in a positive way; I am supportive of others I am prepared for all small group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I make some connections to prior knowledge and beliefs and am starting to synthesize ideas I ask some questions to explore alternative perspectives; I attempt to build upon others' ideas, but require some support I contribute to group discussions in a positive way and sometimes share my opinions and ideas I am prepared for most small group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have difficulty making connections to prior knowledge and beliefs on my own I can ask some questions to identify alternative perspectives, but require support I do not or rarely contribute to group discussions; I have trouble sharing my opinions or ideas I am regularly not prepared for small group discussions
<p>EXCHANGING IDEAS & INFORMATION explores and responds; recalls and describes; persuades and supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I express my views effectively, and provide multiple forms of evidence I am aware of my audience and adjust how I speak and exchange ideas accordingly; I do this effortlessly My language, ideas, and arguments are sophisticated and persuasive; I build upon others' ideas and take the discussion to a higher level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I express my views effectively, and provide supporting evidence I am aware of my audience and can adjust how I speak and exchange ideas My language, ideas, and arguments are clear and concise; I build upon others' ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I sometimes express my views, but must provide more supporting evidence I am usually aware of my audience but need support to adjust how I speak and exchange ideas My language, ideas, and arguments are usually clear and related to the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can express my views with support I am not yet aware of my audience and do not adjust how I speak and share ideas My language, ideas, and arguments are sometimes unclear, unrelated to the topic, or do not make sense
<p>LISTENING paraphrases opinions and views; transforms ideas; demonstrates appropriate interactions (makes eye contact, does not interrupt, displays interest in what the speaker is saying)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can paraphrase opinions and views in a sophisticated manner and add my own ideas I am acutely aware when my ideas and thinking are transformed or influenced due to my interactions with others; I can effectively synthesize and make connections between my ideas and others I listen respectfully, encourage others to listen, and always demonstrate appropriate interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can paraphrase opinions and views in an effective manner My ideas and thinking may be influenced by my interactions with others and I can make connections between my ideas and others I listen respectfully and demonstrate appropriate interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can sometimes paraphrase opinions and views My ideas and thinking are often influenced by my interactions with others; I sometimes can make connections between my ideas and others I usually listen respectfully and demonstrate appropriate interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can sometimes paraphrase opinions and views with support My ideas and thinking are often influenced by my interactions with others, but I make little connections between my ideas and others I need to work on listening respectfully and demonstrating appropriate interactions

Adapted from British Columbia Ministry of Education (2006b)

Appendix H. Final Performance Task

How do my new understandings inspire me to speak out for what I believe in?

'Speaking Out for Change': Final Performance Task



Over the past few weeks you have learned about, discussed, and thought critically about many contemporary social and environmental issues. Hopefully some of these issues have inspired you to take a stand and speak out for what you believe in!

Your task is to create a persuasive resource that can be used to educate and inform others about a social or environmental issue that you feel strongly about. Here's what you need to do:

1. Decide upon an issue which inspires you to speak out for what you believe in.
2. Clearly define your perspective on the issue. What is your view of this issue? What do you want to persuade people to do?
3. Gather resources and conduct research to learn more about your issue. Use the diverse texts from our information circles as a jumping off point.
4. Determine what format your resource is going to be. Aim for something that is engaging, interesting and has a combination of images, words and audio. Some ideas include: a Public Service Announcement (PSA), film, website, infographic, photography exhibit or interactive display.

Features	Beyond there (4)	You're there (3)	Getting there (2)	Not there yet (1)
Research	Extensive research on the topic/issue is evident; multiple sources have been used and cited in a reference list.	Research on the topic/issue is evident; more than two sources have been used and cited in a reference list.	Some research on the topic/issue is evident; at least one source has been used, but may not be cited in a reference list.	Little or no research on the topic/issue is evident; there is no reference list.
Content	Covers topic in-depth with extensive supporting details and examples. Insightful and critical connections are made, multiple perspectives on the issue are portrayed and subject knowledge is excellent. The topic/issue is presented in a sophisticated and unique way.	Covers topic in-depth with some supporting details and examples. Connections are made, at least two perspectives on the issue are portrayed and subject knowledge is very good. The topic/issue is presented clearly and shows evidence of original thought.	Covers topic with minimal supporting details and examples. Some connections are made and the perspective of the student is clear. There is evidence of subject knowledge. The topic/issue is presented clearly, but attempts are made to be original.	Covers the topic but there are inconsistencies or gaps. Very few, if any, logical connections are made. The perspective of the student is unclear. Little subject knowledge is evident. The topic/issue is unclear and may be use others' ideas.
Audience	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the potential viewer and uses sophisticated vocabulary and arguments.	Demonstrates a general understanding of the potential viewer and uses vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience.	Demonstrates some understanding of the potential viewer and uses arguments appropriate for that audience.	It is not clear who the author is writing for.
Persuasive impact	The project is thought-provoking, convincing and leaves a lasting impact with the viewer. Arguments are highly persuasive and the project is highly educative. Editing is exemplary and quality level high.	The project is thought-provoking and convincing. Arguments are persuasive and the project informs the viewer. Editing is very well done.	The project is interesting and somewhat convincing. Arguments are mostly clear and the project aims to inform the viewer. More editing could have been done.	The project has many gaps and inconsistencies. Arguments are unclear and there is little evidence of trying to persuade the viewer. More editing is required.

Created by J. Nixon (2014)