

Multiliteracies in Early Childhood Education: Engagement and Meaning-Making
in Primary Classrooms

by

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Bachelor of Education, University of Victoria, 1997

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Abstract

A multiliteracies focus in primary classes is significant for young children, as it allows them opportunities to express their knowledge in unlimited ways. This project explores the findings from a review of current literature related to social, cultural, and linguistic implications of multiliteracies pedagogy in early childhood education settings. I review numerous research studies whose focus on multiliteracies intertwines with aspects of society, family, culture, and language in new and unique ways. In doing so, I take into consideration the ongoing transformation of the British Columbia Language Arts curriculum (2016), the importance of utilizing students' funds of knowledge, and explore multiliteracies practices in early childhood educational settings around the world.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Traditionally, literacy has been viewed through the lens of the reader and writer. In the education systems of our Western world, when one refers to literacy, typically visions of books and the written word come to mind (Street, 2003). The medium of print has been valued above all others, and it has been assumed that in order to be considered literate, one must be able to read, write, and speak fluently (Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010; Flewitt, 2013). This educational model does not take into account the myriad other ways that one can express knowledge and understanding, nor does it acknowledge the diverse learning needs and experiences of young children (Larson, 2006). A transformational shift in beliefs about literacy is currently taking place in British Columbia, and is being supported by policy makers and implemented by educators. In the fall of 2016, the B.C. Language Arts Curriculum now reflects the understanding that stories and other texts can be shared in a variety of ways, and that they help us to learn about and connect with self, family, culture, and community. Personalized learning lies at the heart of the new curriculum, and creates new and meaningful ways of providing literacy education to children in the primary grades (BC Ministry of Education, 2016).

Moving away from the previously-held focus on literacy, which is largely print-based or reliant on verbal acuity (Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010), to the inclusion of various communication methods, one begins to recognize the child as agentic, and capable of making meaning in a variety of ways. Children are allowed to draw on their personal funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1990) to express their ideas in ways that make the most sense to them and are most relevant to their own life experiences, and are therefore situated as resourceful teachers and

learners in the classroom. Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) described the funds of knowledge approach as one which uses the skills, strategies, and information which underpin daily functioning of households, as well as children's development and personal well-being. When children engage in experiences with their families, cultures and communities, and express their feelings about those experiences in meaningful ways, their interests are stimulated and they are motivated to actively participate in learning (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). The New London Group (1996) coined the term *multiliteracies* to "capture the increasingly complex range of multimodal practices required to comprehend, manage, create and communicate knowledge" (Taylor, Bernhard, Garg & Cummins, 2008, p. 274). As teachers of young children come to understand this, the narrow focus on monolingual, monocultural print-based literacy (Taylor et al., 2008) in schools widens to embrace multiliteracies pedagogy. Teachers who follow this philosophy aim to construct innovative classroom communities that engage all of their students in an increased variety of literacy-based experiences (Flewitt, 2013; Narey, 2009). Such practices are multimodal, imaginative, cognitively challenging, and inclusive. Kress and Selander (2011) stated that today's generation learns new things in a very different manner from those of previous generations. Modern ways of "communicating and sharing information" (p. 265) therefore must change too. Binder (2011) stated that "the concept of multiple literacies can allow teachers to access the rich repertoire of children's pictorial language, leading to new ways of understanding their experiences as well as their making meaning through symbolic representation" (p. 367). Taking into account the hundred languages of children (Malaguzzi, 1998), it is crucial that early childhood educators strive not to focus solely on traditional print language. Instead, it must be our goal to support the various means by which young children can

demonstrate their knowledge, acquire critical thinking skills and be open to new perspectives and ways of knowing, to become lifelong learners (Narey, 2009).

In this capstone project, I aim to share research that has explored the various multiliteracies that children use to express themselves, as well as to communicate and represent their knowledge. The following questions will guide this project and literature review: 1) What are the benefits of a multiliteracies pedagogy for young children?; and, 2) How can children's engagement with multiliteracies be supported by teachers, administrators and families? I will therefore examine the literature that addresses how a multiliteracies pedagogy is utilized in primary classrooms.

Rationale

I have been able to read- fluently, and with skill,- for as long as I can remember. It was never something that I struggled with, as it always came naturally to me. Books have been my constant companion from early childhood, and they have brought me great joy throughout the years. As a kindergarten teacher, I have made it my mission to share the love I have for reading and writing with the children in my class. But as I have progressed through my journey in graduate studies, I have learned that there is far more to literacy than print. I have grown to understand that children are agentic and bring their own unique funds of knowledge and areas of passion to school. I have learned that there are numerous additional ways for children to express their knowledge and understanding than simply through print. I consider the children in my class and I ask myself, "How can I help all of these children to succeed and thrive? How can I enable and empower the ones who struggle with print literacy but have so much knowledge to share?"

My first significant exposure to the concept of multimodal learning, and indeed a subsequent source of inspiration, came in a master's level course on curriculum, when we were introduced to the work of Dr. Elliot Eisner of the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Eisner was a firm believer in the important role the arts can, and should, play in the education of children. He lamented the lack of arts in the school curriculum and wrote extensively on the subject. In his *10 Lessons the Arts Teach*, Eisner (2002) wrote that the benefits of art-based education include teaching children the value of seeing things from multiple perspectives, of using creative problem-solving skills, and of making judgements that are qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. Each of these messages connects to a multiliteracies pedagogical perspective, particularly the understanding that “the limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition” (Eisner, 2002, p. 1). These words have stayed with me throughout my graduate studies. Inspired by Eisner, I have become increasingly interested in students' multiple ways of knowing, and in the numerous methods of representing understanding that become possible when a teacher creates and fosters a learning environment that supports multiliteracies. Over the past several months, I have been exposed to many innovative studies and practices in early childhood education that have strengthened my belief in authentic, multiliteracies-based teaching and learning, often with a focus on art and imagery as modes of meaning-making. The following project will highlight a rich body of research that I am hoping to incorporate into my teaching practice, and encourage others to do the same.

Theoretical Frameworks

This project will be framed by three different theories: social semiotics (Kress 1997; Jewitt 2008); sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 1998); and, multiliteracies (New

London Group, 1996). These theories work together to create a cohesive means of developing a well-rounded literacy curriculum in early childhood educational settings.

Social Semiotics

Social semiotics (Kress, 1997, 2000, 2011) demands a more extensive outlook on literacy than “traditional language-based approaches” (Kendrick & McKay, 2009, p. 55), as semiotics can provide and create opportunities for different forms of expression. It is a system of signs and symbols which work together to produce “texts” which in turn communicate new and varied ideas, perhaps taking the form of written words, music, visual art, or movement (Crafton, Silvers & Brennan, 2009).

Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan (2009) added that semiotic theory increases our understanding of literacy and the exchange of ideas by allowing written and verbal language to work in conjunction with other semiotic expressions. For example, children’s use of drawings to represent knowledge is a semiotic activity that has potential for enhancing communication (Kendrick & McKay, 2009) in a social, interactive classroom environment. Likewise, the incorporation of digital technology enables children to symbolize thoughts through image, movement, and sound. Kress (1988) emphasized that language and communication are social processes, open to interpretation by the participants. Taking this into consideration, one recognizes the value in allowing students to incorporate their many ways of knowing into the literacy curriculum.

Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory acknowledges that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the formation of knowledge and understanding. Learning is an active process

made meaningful by interaction and communication with others. The ability to foster this learning environment requires that one pay attention to how cultures make choices to develop certain modes of expression (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1999/2006, as cited in Early, Kendrick, & Potts, 2015). Children learn through connecting and communicating with each other, and with the adults in their lives guiding their participation in events, through multiple modes of expression. In essence, they are learning as apprentices alongside their teachers, as well as the more experienced members of their family and community. Vygotsky (1986) posited that young learners observe and participate in the formation of knowledge by watching others, and over time, through both play and language, they further develop these experiences into meaningful concepts. Sociocultural theory influences multiliteracies pedagogy in early childhood classrooms because it creates a space for collaborative meaning making (Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005).

Multiliteracies

Over the past twenty years, a developing body of research has focused on a multiliteracies approach to communication. This approach has enabled educators to understand that literacy is multimodal, and considers different perspectives through critical thinking (Crafton, Silvers & Brennan, 2009). The New London Group (1996) developed multiliteracies as a pedagogical approach that strove to make classroom teaching and learning more inclusive of cultural, communicative, linguistic, artistic, and technologically diverse modes of expression. Kress (2005) posited that literacy is multimodal and that children must learn to navigate multiple literacies in order to succeed in the 21st century. Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) argued that in the early years, as children explore their words through a range of expressive modes, it is imperative for educators to take a broad view of literacies as modes of communication. Multiliteracies pedagogy takes into consideration multiple ways of making meaning for young learners, and

values the use of diverse modes of expression. These are strengthened by children's social interactions, be they with one another, the teacher, their families, or their community (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

Significance

A multiliteracies focus in primary classes is significant for young children, as it allows them opportunities to express their knowledge in unlimited ways. They are encouraged and supported in using their "one hundred languages" to share with the classroom community what they have learned and why it is important to them. In order to move further away from the traditional and hegemonic definitions of literacy teaching in early childhood classrooms (Simon, 2011), educators need to focus on a multiliteracies pedagogy. Encouraging multiple ways of meaning-making ensures that all learners have opportunities to express themselves in a variety of ways. Multiliteracies practice supports the fundamental beliefs of the Reggio Emilia approach, that recognizes that knowledge is constructed through social and cultural settings (Hill, Stremmel & Fu, 2005) and that children learn best through a variety of multimodal approaches (Hesterman, 2013). Multiliteracies pedagogy acknowledges the social and cultural aspects of learning, and promotes the hundred languages of children, including those encompassed by art, music, movement, and digital technology, to name a few modes of expression. Allowing children to draw on their personal funds of knowledge creates a rich and meaningful learning environment for both students and teachers. The inclusion of powerful imagery and arts-based education in a multiliteracies approach substantiates the significance of imagery as a "universal language" (Binder, 2011, p. 369) and enables young learners to connect with others and the world around them. Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) posited that early childhood educators need to take a more

comprehensive view of literacy as a means of communication and meaning-making in order to notice, support, and expand children's favoured modes of expression. Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan (2009) stated that the multiliteracies classroom of today needs to include "a focus on community and social practices, [and] on multimodal means of representing and constructing meaning" (p. 35).

Project Overview

In Chapter One, I explained how traditional views of literacy are shifting and discussed the potential impact of a multiliteracies pedagogy on young children's learning. I stated my rationale for choosing this topic and the researchers who have influenced my interest in this topic. I also described the theoretical frameworks that shape my project. In the next chapter, I explore this further by providing a more detailed analysis of the theoretical frameworks on which the project is based, and review the prominent literature in the field. I intend to explore several research studies in early childhood settings where a multiliteracies approach was used, and consider ways in which to incorporate these and other approaches into my own practice. In Chapter Three, I summarize the implications of the project and share my professional development workshop for primary teachers interested in implementing multiliteracies pedagogical practices in their classrooms. The final chapter will include my personal reflections on the project and on my master's journey as a whole in transforming my philosophy of early childhood teaching. It will include suggestions for extending the research and recommendations for future practice.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

In this chapter, I further explore the following theories: social semiotics (Kress, 1997); sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978); and multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) – all of which frame this project. I discuss prominent research in early childhood literacies in relation to these theoretical frameworks, and describe the ways in which these theories frame the studies included in the literature review. For my capstone project, I explore the social, cultural, and linguistic implications of multiliteracies pedagogy in early childhood education. I also review numerous research studies whose focus on multiliteracies intertwines with aspects of society, family, culture, and language in new and unique ways. In doing so, I take into consideration the ongoing transformation of the British Columbia Language Arts curriculum (2016), the importance of utilizing students' funds of knowledge, and explore multiliteracies practices in early childhood educational settings around the world.

Expansion of Theories

Social Semiotics (Kress, 1997, 2000, 2010, 2011, 2012) is the study of symbolic signs and meaning-making. It considers the ways that actions made upon signs can affect their meaning. Social semiotics transcends language barriers, and does not require one to possess extensive understanding of printed text in order to comprehend implied meaning. Social semiotics argues that each person's understanding of a given topic is dependent on their prior experiences, and builds upon these experiences. In today's education system, there is increasing interest in exploring the role that semiotic modes or sign systems play in classroom communication and children's literacy development (Jewitt, 2008). A multiliteracies approach

that incorporates a variety of sign and symbol systems provides an alternative to traditional print-based literacies, and gives children new ways to create and express meaning (Kendrick & McKay, 2009). Kress (2010) posited that the landscape of contemporary communication can no longer assume that language does “all the significant semiotic work” (Flewitt, 2013, p. 11). In his work, Kress (2012) explained that meaning-making arises from significant interactions between individuals having similar experiences, and such interactions lead to the development of a community. The blend of modes in multimodal ensembles differs and is dependent upon the needs of the community and builds upon the previous interactions and understandings of its members.

Sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978) focuses on the understanding that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the formation of knowledge and understanding. As with social semiotics, intellectual processes are considered social in origin (Flewitt, 2013). Learning is an active process made meaningful by interaction and communication with others. Sociocultural theory helps us to think about how children learn in connection with others, how they construct understanding of language, and how their culture, along with other ways of knowing, shapes their view of the world (Falchi, Axelrod, & Genishi, 2014). Taking Vygotsky’s theory, which had its basis in language, and expanding upon it, scholars today are exploring how language is used as a tool for expression of psychological and cultural understanding, and furthering their research to investigate how “embodied modes (gaze, gesture, movement, and talk, etc.) are integral to meaning-making” (Flewitt, 2013, p. 4). Communities are continually developing and changing, and in doing so, the ways that social and cultural understandings are expressed change too. A sociocultural framework is used to enable one to think about the ways in which children construct their understanding of language and of their cultural ways of

knowing (Falchi et al., 2014). Guided participation (Rogoff, 1990), an integral element of sociocultural theory, is the process by which educators assist children in learning how to communicate and interact with peers, using multiple modes. Implementing this method enables children to develop critical thinking skills through interaction with an experienced adult and with one another.

Multiliteracies theory (New London Group, 1999) encompasses multiple ways of expression. The New London Group (1996) developed multiliteracies as a theory that informs pedagogy and that strives to make classroom teaching and learning more inclusive of cultural, communicative, linguistic, artistic and technologically diverse modes of expression. Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) believed that early childhood educators needed to take a broader view of literacies as a means of “communication, conceptualization, and meaning-making” (p. 338), in order to notice, support, and expand children’s preferred modes of communication. Currently, the use of texts and modes of communication is changing rapidly. Multiliteracies pedagogy focuses on various modes of communicating and the ways in which meaning is represented (Falchi et al, 2014), in ways that take into account these rapid changes.

Review of the Literature

Purnell, Ali, Begum, and Carter (2007) wrote about the challenges teachers encounter in meeting the needs of a progressively diverse student population. Implementing a culturally responsive, multiliteracies-focused curriculum that allows for students’ multiple ways of knowing and expression helps teachers meet those needs more effectively. The following studies illustrate the ways in which these needs can be met in terms of social and cultural contexts, and

explores the connections between multiliteracies pedagogy, the revised B.C. curriculum and a funds of knowledge perspective in both Canadian and global contexts.

Curricular Transformations

The curriculum in British Columbia has been undergoing a significant transformation over the past two years, and in the fall of 2016, that curriculum is being implemented in classrooms across the province. The Learning Standards and Flexible Learning Environments document (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) states that “BC’s renewed provincial curriculum places learners at the centre of the learning landscape, and encourages motivation, curiosity, and active engagement” and also promotes creative approaches to teaching which take into account the place and culture of learners. The revised curriculum supports inquiry-based learning that focuses on “real-world” issues, which makes learning more relevant to students’ own experiences. The Primary Language Arts Curriculum (2016) is conducive to a multiliteracies approach and considers learners’ funds of knowledge, as can be seen in the following *Curricular Competencies* statements: “Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected individually and collaboratively to: i) use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning; ii) engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers to develop understanding of self, identity, and community; iii) recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity; and, iv) exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding.” The following studies illustrate possible ways in which these learning standards might be implemented, and provide thought-provoking designs for multiliteracies practice in BC primary classrooms.

Lotherington, Holland, Sotoudeh, and Zentena (2008) conducted an ongoing coordinated action research project with kindergarten and first grade students at a culturally and linguistically-diverse elementary school in Toronto. University researchers and teachers worked together to build multiliteracies pedagogies in the primary grades. Three early primary teachers, and a researcher from York University, endeavoured to “learn about, through and from stories” (p. 129), in an attempt to be culturally and linguistically-responsive to the school community. Narrative accounts were provided by the teachers regarding the creation of multiple, multilingual retellings of classic children’s stories, with the help of their young students. These were followed up by commentary and analysis provided by the university researcher. Over three years, using a project-based model, the teachers each chose a story and allowed the literacy curriculum for their class to emerge from the story. They included a variety of multimodal story-telling tools, and actively encouraged family involvement. Both parents and multilingual educational assistants translated students’ stories into numerous languages (e.g. Cantonese, Farsi, Japanese, and Yoruba). Children were encouraged to bring their “lived experiences” (p. 140) into their classroom experience which enabled students and families to feel that their funds of knowledge were valued and worthwhile. Lotherington et al. (2008) wrote that the success of the action research project was indicative of “a growing respect for the multilingual-capital of the school” (p. 140). They observed a change in students’ and families’ attitudes towards their home language, noting increased pride and motivation.

Silvers, Shorey, and Crafton (2010) conducted a qualitative research study in Chicago, in a first grade classroom of 25 children. 60% of the class was Caucasian, while the remaining 40% was made up of other ethnicities, including Asian and Hispanic. English was the first language of all the students, though many of them also spoke a second language. The project began with an

inquiry into the events of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, and is discussed in detail in the article. Silvers et al. (2010) described a classroom situation and analysis to demonstrate how the teacher scaffolded discussions among the students to raise important questions, allow for alternative perspectives to be explored, and to “encourage multimodal responses to help students construct meaning” (p. 381). Bringing a critical, social justice perspective to the study, two researchers, as well as the teacher-researcher, reflected together, discussed classroom events, shared narratives and observations, and collected anecdotal data. Professional conversations were recorded and transcribed, as were whole-class and small-group discussions. Discourse analysis (Gee, 1999) was used to analyze segments of the transcripts.

As they researched, they became aware of the recurring themes of multiliteracies and community building that emphasized the “sociocultural dimension of learning” (p. 386), as well as the overarching theme of critical literacy, in which readers examine a text reflectively to foster deeper comprehension. Regardless of their varying backgrounds and languages, the children in the class were united in their desire to learn about the Katrina disaster and to make a difference in some way. They came to see themselves as caring citizens as they shared their knowledge with the school through multiple modes (e.g. a learning wall outside the classroom, student-authored stories, reports, and illustrations, and the creation of a “peace table”), and sought ways to right the social injustices evident in the reporting of the story. Through judicious and precise framing, the teacher was able to “open up space in the curriculum for supporting and designing critical connections to everyday life, student experiences and the world beyond the classroom” (p. 405). This in turn enabled student growth and social consciousness despite their young age. Silvers et al. (2010) stated that their research depicted the importance of implementing various semiotic systems which supported student inquiry. Their multiliteracies curriculum provided

opportunities for children to think critically and taught them that everyone is capable of acquiring the understanding and bravery required to create positive change.

McKee and Heydon (2015) conducted an exploratory case study in a rural community situated in a small town in southern Ontario. The *Intergenerational Digital Literacies Project* focused on the interaction between kindergarten-aged children and seniors living at a nearby seniors home. The goal of the project was to improve the children's academic achievement and foster positive, meaningful connections within the community. The children and seniors worked together through a series of multimodal projects, which incorporated reading, writing, art, music and digital technology, to create intergenerational, digital storybooks. The project documented opportunities for the acquisition of print-literacy skills for children, and provided occasions for them to practice these skills in multiple modes. In addition to thirteen kindergarten students and seven seniors from a nearby seniors home, participants also included two teachers, the school principal, and the authors of the article. McKee and Heydon collaborated with the teachers to create lesson plans, and provided resources and support throughout the study. Qualitative data were collected over the course of four months through multiple sources, including photos of artefacts created during sessions, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and notes transcribed from audio and video recordings. Member checks were conducted and anything that was unclear was clarified by the researchers and other participants. The findings from the research project indicated that intergenerational relationships and the affordance of multimodal literacy learning supported the meaning-making process. In addition, they suggested that there was a reciprocal relationship between multiliteracies and dialogue, clearly supporting the need for the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing and expressing understanding.

Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan (2009) conducted a research study with grade one students in a multiethnic Chicago neighbourhood, in order to explore the ways in which the visual arts can be integrated into inquiry-based literacy learning. Crafton and Silvers acted as participant observers in Brennan's primary classroom, and the three worked together to encourage students to think critically and to take a social-justice perspective on local issues in their community. On a weekly basis, the researchers worked collaboratively to explore and implement a multiliteracies curriculum. By focusing on social issues through daily read-alouds, Brennan enabled her students to develop critical thinking skills. She taught her students how to critique texts and encouraged them to discuss them from a variety of perspectives. The study describes how she used a newspaper cover story to introduce her class to the plight of an elderly local woman who was about to lose her home to development. The children then responded to the article using a variety of modes of expression, from discussions, letters and drawings to digital slideshows and dramatic presentations, as they sought a solution to "Grandma Ruth's" predicament. They decided to write a letter to her, reaching out through the author of the newspaper article, and were pleased to receive a reply. Due to the researchers finding meaningful ways to integrate literacy with multiple sign systems, the children in the classroom were given the opportunity to experiment with a variety of modes of expression in authentic, real-world situations.

Binder and Kotsopoulos (2011) conducted a qualitative research study that examined the ways in which young children developed multimodal narratives. The study took place at an early-learning centre on the campus of a Canadian university. The participants were 12 junior and senior kindergarten students of varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their parents were all affiliated with the university in some way, either as employees or students. Binder and Kotsopoulos were participant-observers, and data were collected over a three-month

period. Data sources included children's artwork, photography, interview notes, and audio and video recordings. Their research confirmed that utilizing the visual arts as a form of literacy can be a means for student expression of ideas and understanding. The research indicated how young children's use of multimodal literacy narratives enabled them to explore their understanding of what was important to them, and to consider how they fit in as a member of a classroom literacy community. The children used needles and thread to stitch personal quilt squares, and then attached them to others' squares in order to create a class quilt. These were accompanied by a recording of each child reading aloud their own "I Am" poetry. Binder and Kotsopoulos (2011) assumed that by enacting multimodal expressions of understanding, students would feel validated and empowered and that ultimately their relationships to self, others and the world would be transformed. They stated that "multiple forms of literacy broaden, extend and transform the traditional use of literacy" (p. 341) to encompass any forms which express the learner's meaning. Their in-depth study emerged from and built upon children's interests and strengths and created a deepened sense of purpose for learning.

Funds of Knowledge

The *funds of knowledge* approach takes into account that families and communities provide a valuable resource for teaching and learning (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). Through their lived experiences and cultural and family practices, children come to school with diverse and worthwhile backgrounds on which to build. The following research studies explored multiliteracies' practices that utilized the funds of knowledge approach to create meaningful literacy learning experiences.

Taylor, Berhard, Garg, and Cummins (2008) embarked on a qualitative research study with a class of 27 kindergarten children in an ethnically-diverse Toronto elementary school. By inviting parents of kindergarten students to become partners in their children's creation of "dual language identity texts" (p. 269), the study sought to support and record the transformation of a traditional early elementary classroom pedagogy based primarily in print-literacy to one which encompassed multicultural multiliteracies. The researchers conducted twice-weekly classroom visits over the course of six months, in order to support the teacher, observe students, and collect data. Data collection included video ethnography of parent-teacher meetings, classroom interactions, focus-groups, and individual interviews. The research team triangulated their data and discovered that patterns and themes emerged for each child. Students authored multimodal texts which combined photographs and illustrations chosen by students and their families, and which allowed them to depict elements of their lives which were both personally and culturally relevant. The students were situated as cultural and linguistic experts who accessed their personal funds of knowledge. Families collaborated by providing photos and translating children's writing into their home language. Each child's book was then bound and shared as a "classroom multiliteracy resource" (p. 279), and was also made into an e-book to share with family abroad. The project focused on who children are and what they can do, rather than viewing their ethnic diversity from a deficit perspective. It provided opportunities for children to develop strong identity and biliteracy. The inclusion of multiliteracies practices allowed children to build upon their prior knowledge. Moving from the current idea of literacy as "monolingual, monomodal, textual" (p. 289) towards a practice that recognizes multiple ways of knowing proved critical to students' success.

Falchi, Axelrod, and Genishi (2014) collected data through a five-year ethnographic study of multilingual children situated in their early childhood classrooms. Falchi et al. (2014) used both sociocultural and multimodal literacy theories to frame their research project. The study took place in New York City, first at a Head Start centre and then at a nearby dual-language public school. In addition to English and Spanish, the children also spoke Mixteco, an Indigenous language of southwestern and south-central Mexico (p. 349). A small group of children were observed from the time of their enrollment in the Head Start program as 3 year olds, through to the end of second grade. Data collection was achieved through classroom observation and follow-up interviews, as well as through the collection of children's artefacts. Two researchers observed and took field notes for eight months of each school year throughout the duration of the study, interacting with the teacher and students as and when appropriate. The focus of the study was on children's language use and social interactions. The teaching practices utilized at the Head Start program were play-based and child-centred; the students were given agency to make choices regarding their activities and which language they spoke (p. 350).

The teaching practices utilized in the primary grades at the public school were notably different, as the curriculum focused on the balanced literacy¹ (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) approach to literacy instruction. Falchi et al. (2014) observed that the children were able to develop their own interests on occasion, and both students and teachers "exercised agency" (p. 352) by occasionally moving away from the prescriptive discourse of the balanced literacy program and drawing on the students' personal funds of knowledge. They concluded that students come to school with vast repertoires of personal, cultural, and linguistic experience. In addition, they

¹ A balanced literacy approach utilizes multiple strategies, including modelled reading, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading with the goal of having students reach proficiency at grade level (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

noted that teachers who allow for diverse language and literacy practices, and attend to children's meaning-making, contribute to inclusive school cultures.

Worthington and van Oers (2015) conducted a qualitative research case study which focused on pretend play, meaning-making and multiple literacies, at an inner city nursery school in southwest England. The aim of the study was to explore aspects of young children's multimodal meaning-making, as well as to investigate the scope and nature of the literacies they used at home to communicate in real and imagined situations. The nursery school in the study placed emphasis on children's self-initiated play and participation in a diverse range of literacies, and whose staff were continually seeking professional development opportunities through participation in research and graduate studies. Worthington and van Oers (2015) stated that their study conceived of "literacy as everyday social-communicative practice" (p. 3) and they supported Gutierrez and Rogoff's (2003) statement that "cultural ways of knowing show how children's experiences and interests may prepare them for knowing how to engage in particular forms of language and literacy activities" (p. 23). Data collected for the study came from a variety of sources, including children's writing and drawings, field notes, written transcripts of informal interviews with parents, and photographs of the children engaging in pretend play and literacy events. The researchers visited the homes of the nursery school children to observe their play activities, and the teachers at the school kept daily written and photographic documentation which gave rich descriptions of the students' play. They observed children creating texts which included drawings, persuasive letters, open and closed signs, maps, cheques, and receipts.

The findings from these data sources show that children's pretend play practices are rich sites of literacy, and that children's communication and meaning-making is influenced by their funds of knowledge, the cultural and social literacy practices in their home environment.

Additionally, the researchers concluded that a high ratio of qualified and educated staff influences the quality of children's play and literacy experiences. They recommended that educators and policy makers acknowledge the need for developing a multimodal perspective of literacy, appreciating children's existing knowledge and supporting emergent literacies in meaningful social situations.

Heydon, Crocker, and Zhang (2014) used ethnographic tools to conduct a case study into the development of classroom literacy curricula which takes into account children's personal interests and funds of knowledge. They asked the question: "How are classroom kindergarten literacy curricula in a childcare site produced, and what part, if any, do children's interests and funds of knowledge play?" (p. 6). Heydon and Crocker acted as participant-observers in the kindergarten program of an early learning centre in Ontario as the new literacy curriculum was being developed. Data were collected through field notes, photography, informal observations, audio-recordings, interviews, and participant observation of literacy events. Member check interviews were conducted and feedback was sought throughout the duration of the study. Twenty children attended the early learning centre's kindergarten program, and came from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (e.g. Arabic, English, First Nations and Spanish). As some children had fee-paying spots and others were subsidized, there was diversity of socioeconomic status as well. The pedagogical strategy of Read-Aloud² (p. 14) was used as a provocation that aligned with students' knowledge and areas of interest, and therefore led to new literacy-based learning experiences such as multimodal collages and literacy-related artwork. The emergent curriculum was developed through a recursive process of provocation of children's

² Read-Aloud is a pedagogical approach whereby the teacher reads aloud a book which is above children's independent reading level and does not show them the words. It models proficient reading skills and allows exposure to books which may be of high interest but would otherwise be inaccessible to students (Heydon, Crocker & Zhang, 2014).

thinking and was shaped by the children's funds of knowledge. As with the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the children were situated as "capable, intelligent and insightful" members of the classroom community (p. 28). The literacy program utilized a multiliteracies pedagogy, allowing children to choose personally appropriate means of communication and providing opportunities for them to experiment with a variety of modes of expression. In conclusion, Heydon, Crocker, and Zhang (2014) revealed that the extensive literacy learning possibilities of the study are indicative of the innovative educational advances of the Ontario school system.

Globalization

As has been acknowledged in the revised BC Curriculum, our world is becoming increasingly globalized and interconnected. The drive towards meaningful multiliteracies practice extends beyond North American settings. In the following section, I summarize a range of diverse research studies conducted in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Iceland.

In Australia, Hill (2010) conducted a collaborative teacher-researcher project to investigate the ways in which young children understood and worked with multiliteracies both at home and at school. Hill worked as a university researcher alongside teacher-researchers as they explored 4- to 8-year-old children's multimodal funds of knowledge practices in their home environment, and then applied their findings to the developing school curriculum. The goal of the study was to "understand how children use new forms of literacy and to develop a shared discourse about the ways to use new literacies in the early years of school" (Hill, 2010, p. 316). The study was conducted from a sociocultural perspective, describing young children as active, social learners, and drew on the work of Kress (1997), as the children involved made meaning

across a range of semiotic modalities. Twenty-five teacher-researchers worked on the project, and each randomly selected two focus children from their group to ensure opportunities for rich, detailed description of each child's learning. Children were observed confidently interacting with digital technologies in their homes and the homes of friends and relatives, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location within their Australian state.

After conducting the home visits, teacher-researchers met and collaborated to develop a pedagogical framework called the *Multiliteracies Map* (p. 322) which would be used to chart the complexity of children's learning. It was then used as a guide for teachers to explore ways to incorporate new literacy practices into their classrooms. In the third phase of the study, the teacher-researchers implemented their new understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy in their classrooms. They developed inquiry-based projects with their students and combined these with explicit lessons around how to use new literacies. The unique opportunity for practicing teachers to take on the role of researchers, supported by both the Australian government and the university, enabled positive learning and collaboration to occur. Hill (2010) emphasized the significance of this opportunity when she stated that "as literacy continues to change and new technologies are invented, participatory research projects where students share their knowledge from home and the community may continue to inform educators for future learning" (p. 337).

Einarsdottir, Dockett, and Perry (2009) explored the use of drawing as a multimodal tool for young children's expression of meaning and understanding. In both Iceland and Australia, they conducted studies which asked children to describe their experiences of preschool and primary school through drawings. Utilizing one-to-one interviews, whole-class, and small group activities, the researchers engaged with children through drawing and talk. Einarsdottir et al. (2009) argued that using drawing as a means of expression allowed for: time to co-construct

meaning; the provision of materials familiar to children; and, a context where children have control over the ways in which they engage. Drawings provided researchers and educators with insight into children's perspectives of their lives both in and out of the classroom. Having children reflect on past experiences and share feelings about them through their drawings was a successful endeavour overall, and positioned them as competent communicators. The children's narrative throughout the drawing process provided insight into their construction of meaning and was important for the researchers, as it made clear each child's intention. Einarsdottir et al. (2009) noted that it is important for educators to view children's drawing as a process of meaning-making and expression, and that they make a conscious decision not to focus on the drawing product. They concluded their study with the reminder that drawing provides another means with which people can communicate.

In England, Wolfe and Flewitt (2010) explored the ways in which new literacy practices influenced children's learning, as well as their development as "literate beings" (p. 387). The government-funded ethnographic study, *Multimodal Literacies in the Early Years*, investigated the ways in which 3- and 4-year-old children developed their literacy skills and knowledge both at home and at preschool. While a transition was being made towards recognizing the importance of social practices in literacy development in England's public school system, Wolfe and Flewitt argued that there remained a continued emphasis in the early years on print-based learning and approaches which favoured cognitive processes. The multimodal literacies project arose from the desire to strengthen the transition to social, multimodal literacy practices in the classroom which incorporated new technologies. Data for the project were collected in the homes of ten children, as well as in a nursery school in a relatively affluent London suburb. Methods of data collection included: questionnaires regarding children's use of new and more traditional technologies for

parents and nursery staff, literacy assessment tools, video case studies of each child (filmed in the home and in the school), field notes, and informal interviews with practitioners and parents. One important outcome of the study was the opportunity to investigate the intersection between children's literacy practices at home and at the school, as well as the gaps between them. Wolfe and Flewitt (2010) argued that by using a diverse array of modes (such as language, gaze, movement and gesture), young children demonstrate their awareness and understanding of multiple learning activities (e.g. completing puzzles, working on computers, playing games, reading books) and their cognition is therefore improved as a result of interactions with adults who model these processes for them. They posited that primary educators would benefit from making the most of these overlaps, and incorporating multimodal means of expression, particularly those which encompass new technology, into their classroom literacy practices.

Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) conducted a case study on multiliteracies in a New Zealand kindergarten classroom. This action research project involved two teachers, research associates from the university, and sixty 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten students, as well as their parents. The families at the preschool were predominantly of high socioeconomic status. The research questions for the project focused on multimodal communicative competence in early childhood educational settings, the ways in which multimodal literacies act together from the individual to the community level, and the role played by places, people, and practices in facilitating children's use of multimodal literacy. The data collected included: six case studies which drew on documentation by the teachers (student portfolios, video recordings of children's literacies over an 18-month period), recordings and analysis of classroom activities focused on evidence of multiliteracies, and informal interviews and dialogues with children, their parents, teachers and researchers. A focus on families' funds of knowledge was evident throughout the study, as the

team considered them when interpreting the data, discussing the families' values and experiences. At the conclusion of the action research project, the research team determined that there was a need to take a broad view of communication in early childhood settings. Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) argued that the boundaries between traditional and non-traditional literacies should be permeable, and that a sociocultural view which allows for social, cultural and literacy practices to intertwine is fundamental to young children's literacy development.

Summary

It is evident that research relating to early childhood literacy can be viewed through a global lens, as issues of family, culture, language, and social justice are relevant and valid in educational settings worldwide. Multiliteracies pedagogies create opportunities for rich, meaningful experiences for learners of all ages. Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) argued that it is beneficial to broaden modes of expression and communication amongst early learners, their teachers and families, and to make meaningful connections between the home, school and community. By taking a sociocultural perspective – one which recognizes the interconnectedness of social, cultural and literary practices – it is possible to focus on the varied facets of literacy which can be implemented in early childhood educational settings.

This chapter summarized the findings from a review of the literature related to social, cultural, and linguistic implications of multiliteracies pedagogy in early childhood education settings. I explored the theoretical frameworks supporting my project, and illustrated the ways in which they have been applied to multiliteracies practice in numerous North American and global settings. In the aforementioned studies, connections can be made to the revised Language Arts curriculum in British Columbia and to funds of knowledge practices. For example, oral, written,

visual and digital texts were used as a means for students to express their knowledge. Students worked collaboratively, activated their prior experiences and funds of knowledge to create multimodal texts, and came to understand themselves, their families and communities in rich and meaningful ways. Within the new curriculum there are endless significant possibilities to implement multiliteracies pedagogy in our primary classrooms. Additionally, all of the studies have illustrated the powerful learning that emerges from incorporating a funds of knowledge approach with multiliteracies pedagogical practices.

In the next chapter, I explore the implications of a multiliteracies approach for students, parents, educators, and policy makers, and suggest ways to incorporate this pedagogical approach in the kindergarten classroom. I describe a workshop I have developed for primary teachers as a tool for including multiliteracies practice in their classrooms, offering suggestions for providing students with opportunities to communicate their knowledge and understanding in multiple ways. In Chapter 4, I reflect on the project and on my master's journey in transforming my philosophy of early childhood teaching. I include suggestions for extending the research in multiliteracies and make recommendations for future practice.

Chapter Three: Connections to Practice

As a follow-up to the review of the theories and literature supporting the use of multiliteracies pedagogy and practice in early childhood classrooms, this chapter explores how a multiliteracies approach is significant for teachers, administrators, and families. I continue to be guided by the following questions: 1) What are the benefits of a multiliteracies pedagogy for young children?; and, 2) How can children's engagement with multiliteracies be supported by teachers, administrators, and families? With these questions in mind, I connect the reviewed literature from Chapter Two to the context of current classroom practices, and provide practical multiliteracies-based suggestions for supporting literacy engagement and development in young children. This chapter includes a description of a professional development workshop (Appendix A) for primary teachers, which provides activities, strategies, and approaches to multimodal literacy learning that are informed by the research literature. I advocate for a multiliteracies based approach in the primary grades, one which takes into account students' diverse funds of knowledge and one which incorporates multiple means of expression.

Rowell, Kosnik, and Beck (2008) stated that "promoting multiliteracies pedagogy should be a central goal of teacher education" (p. 109) in order to ensure that the diverse sociocultural needs of children are met through a variety of language forms. As discussed in the previous chapter, current classroom practices in British Columbia are beginning to reflect these beliefs. The revised Language Arts curriculum is conducive to a multiliteracies approach and considers the important role that students' funds of knowledge can, and should, play in their literacy learning.

The research studies reviewed in the Curricular Transformations section of Chapter Two illustrated the ways in which BC's *Curricular Competencies* goals might be met through

multimodal literacy practices in primary classrooms. The strategies and practices described in this section indicated that children's language and literacy development can be enriched through multiliteracies practice. Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching led to students' increased pride in their work and motivation to participate, and enhanced family involvement in children's education (Lotherington, et al., 2008). The multiliteracies approaches used by both Silvers et al. (2010) and Crafton et al. (2009) were instrumental in community-building, as well as in the development of the students' ability to develop a critical, social-justice standpoint from which to view current events. Heydon and McKee (2015) explored the value of intergenerational collaboration in literacy learning, and emphasized the need for a reciprocal relationship between multiliteracies and dialogue to promote students' expressions of understanding. Binder and Kotsopoulos (2011) described a research study which examined young children's multimodal narratives and the role that the visual arts played in helping them to express their ideas regarding things which were of personal importance or significance. The revised British Columbia Language Arts Curriculum (2016) provides teachers with a framework which not only allows, but encourages, them to incorporate these, and other, multiliteracies practices into their classrooms.

The Funds of Knowledge section of Chapter Two illustrated the role of family and community as valuable resources for teaching and learning in multiliteracies classrooms. Students thrived when situated as experts (Falchi et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2008) and developed a strong sense of identity within their peer groups. Falchi et al. (2014) argued that when educators allowed for these diverse language and literacy practices, school cultures naturally became more inclusive. In their study at an inner-city school, Worthington and van Oers (2015) explored pretend play, meaning-making and multiliteracies. The results of their research pointed

to the importance of qualified, well-educated teachers supporting emergent literacies in meaningful social situations. Similar to the Reggio Emilia philosophy of childhood learning, these studies emphasized that children are capable and competent, valued their funds of knowledge, and allowed them to choose diverse and personally appropriate means of communicating their understanding of a variety of topics (Heydon et al., 2014).

Finally, the Globalization section of Chapter Two explored a range of studies in multiliteracies around the world. From North America, to Australia and New Zealand, to Iceland and the United Kingdom, early childhood educators have recognized the need for multiliteracies pedagogy and practice in classrooms. Each of the studies described illustrated the necessity of taking a broad view of communication in early childhood settings. They explored digital technology and literacies (Hill, 2010), investigated the important connections between the home and school (Einarsdottir et al., 2009; Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010; Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010), and looked at the visual arts and its role in children's expressions of understanding (Einarsdottir et al., 2009). Every study considered literacy learning from a sociocultural perspective, and as Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) described in their research, viewed the lines of traditional and non-traditional literacy as permeable.

Taking into consideration the many important findings illustrated in the reviewed literature from Chapter Two, it is evident that implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy in the primary classroom can provide young learners with significant benefits. Based on the review of the literature, and reflecting on my own primary teaching practice, I look at the implications for stakeholders and then propose a variety of strategies to inform educators, administrators, and families on some effective ways to incorporate multiliteracies practices into young children's literacy learning and overall classroom experience.

My Current Practice

I have been an elementary school teacher for twenty years, and have spent the majority of that time teaching in primary classrooms. For the past seven years, I have worked exclusively with kindergarten and first grade students. Through this practice, I have observed the diverse range of skills, abilities, and experiences with which young children come to school. As a result of my immersion in graduate studies in early childhood education, I have come to the startling realization that, earlier in my career, I regarded my students from the standpoint of a deficit model. Rather than considering children's funds of knowledge and encouraging them to express their understandings in different ways, I looked only at what they were not able to do, and based my planning around that. However, the more that I worked with young children, the more I learned that each of them had something valuable to offer. In my graduate studies, I have become increasingly aware of and interested in students' multiple ways of knowing, and in the numerous methods of representing understanding that become possible when a teacher creates and fosters a learning environment that supports multiliteracies. My belief in the value of authentic, multiliteracies-based teaching and learning has been reinforced by the rich body of research literature in that area.

Engaging Young Learners

Ask any teacher and he or she will tell you that, in order for children to learn best, one needs to draw them in, engage their curiosity, and keep them interested. Hesterman (2013) supported this statement, arguing that multiliteracies pedagogy has the potential to foster young children's development and well-being, that it strengthens their sense of identity, helps them to

feel connected to the world around them, and increases both their involvement in learning, and their confidence when communicating their understanding in their preferred modes.

In the reviewed literature, the teachers engaged young learners in a variety of ways. Many of these can be meaningfully integrated into primary classrooms here in British Columbia.

Creating visual narratives with personal artifacts, like the quilt squares and “I Am” poetry in Binder and Kotsopoulos’ (2011) study, would allow children to understand and communicate in non-traditional ways, as well as to develop and express personal identity in a range of modes. Young children sometimes struggle to explain their thoughts, particularly through the printed word. The use of drawings and other forms of imagery reduces this difficulty and gives them a powerful voice with which to more confidently express themselves. In my kindergarten class last year, I attempted to give my students a stronger voice using the mode of photography. Each of them was given the digital camera and invited to take photos around the school, both indoors and out. We projected the three pictures they chose as their favourites onto the screen, and I gave them a microphone. They were then invited to tell their peers a bit about the photos, and to explain what was special about each one. Having an image to share was a powerful thing. The children had so much to divulge, and took great pride in sharing both the photos and their thoughts about them. The conversations we had were rich and meaningful, more so than any traditional “show and tell” activity I’ve ever led.

Encouraging them to share of themselves and their personal funds of knowledge is a simple way to actively engage our students. Culturally responsive, family-based literacy activities can reach young learners and engage their interest with meaningful, real-world connections. The dual-language text idea, in which children compose a story orally and their teachers and families transcribe (and sometimes translate) it, is a powerful example of this. I was

inspired by Taylor, Bernhard, Garg, and Cummins' (2008) qualitative case study which described kindergarten children's creation of Dual Language Identity Texts, and wanted to begin to incorporate something culturally responsive into my own classroom practice. I invited a parent to visit our classroom and share some of his Venezuelan heritage with the children. We learned Spanish words and phrases, and together we prepared arepas, a traditional food made with corn flour, and tried them with various fillings. Every single student, even the notoriously fussy ones, took a bite! After the visit, I invited the class to find ways to express their feelings about the experience. Some of them made cards to thank the parent for sharing with us. Others drew pictures to illustrate the steps of the recipe we had prepared. One suggested that we count to six in Spanish every day at calendar time. The child whose family came in to lead this activity was highly motivated by this experience, and I was pleased to observe the children talking to each other about their own backgrounds and traditions. The following week, a child in my class whose parents came from the Philippines brought me a tray of spring rolls that he and his mom had made, and drew a picture in his journal about preparing them. The dramatic play centre became a bakery where arepas were being prepared, pictured on handmade menus, and sold to customers. One visit from one family sparked so much engagement in such a variety of ways.

Multiliteracies pedagogy invites children to engage in making meaning through their preferred modes of expression. It motivates and inspires children to participate, and to develop their range of expressive skills. It neither limits nor defines literacy purely as printed text.

Implications for Teachers

With a firm understanding of the many benefits of implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy in one's practice, educators who wish to do so may need to make some changes to the

traditional way they teach. Multiliteracies pedagogy gives teachers opportunities to reflect critically on how their teaching approach supports different styles of learning (Hesterman, 2013), and may prompt them to adapt that approach according to the needs and abilities of the children they teach. While it may be challenging at first, it is imperative that we choose not to favour certain semiotic modes over others (Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010), but rather open ourselves to methods we may not have tried before. To foster children's confident use of multiple modes of expression, it is critical for teachers to model various means of expression in their literacy teaching. We must demonstrate and allow children to use a variety of semiotic modes, such as drawing, painting, photography, movement, music, and drama, as well as new forms of technology. To support the flow of meaning-making between home and school (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005), it is important that teachers get to know students and their families on an individual basis. When we allow children's work to intersect across sites, and move between home and school, we facilitate "learning spaces that can then be opened up further" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, p. 7). The field of literacy becomes stronger and richer as a result.

The Role of Administration

Administrators who support multiliteracies pedagogy can do so by creating a "home within the school" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, p. 93), one where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and sharing their knowledge, not just with classmates, but the broader school community as well. The school administration in Silvers, Shorey and Crafton's (2010) study of "The Hurricane Group" invited the children to share their knowledge and insights with the rest of the school through multiple modes of expression. This allowed greater learning to take place, across a range of spaces, and provoked further inquiry.

In their research, Haggerty and Mitchell (2010) remind us of the “usefulness of broadening modalities of communication amongst children, families and teachers, and between home, kindergarten and the community” (p. 338). I am fortunate to work with a principal who is consistently supportive of the teaching team at our school. He works hard to ensure that teachers have what they need to do the best job they can with their students, and believes strongly in an inclusive approach to teaching and learning. He consistently reaches out to the families of our students, and has helped to create a very positive working and learning environment between home and school. He also supports teachers and students by creating space in his schedule to invite children to work with him in their preferred modes. A child who is struggling to succeed in the classroom can take a break and connect with a different adult, one-on-one.

Hesterman (2013) illustrated the importance of teachers being given time to access support and input from colleagues who are also interested in early childhood multiliteracies, and information technology. Administrators need to provide the time and space for collaborative planning amongst staff, and must find the resources for teachers and students to access up-to-date digital technology. An administrator who can think creatively to allow time for like-minded colleagues to collaborate is supporting social constructivism and the professional growth of his or her staff, and is helping to prevent “motivation burn out” (Hesterman, 2013, p. 164)

Implications for Families of Young Children

Families are children’s first teachers, and as such should be involved in their learning from the time that they start school. Taylor et al. (2008) illustrated the value of involving families in children’s classroom learning. Their work showed the “unique roles family members can play as partners in children’s multiliteracies development, within a curriculum and school

environment centred in the... multiple communities of practice intersecting in students' life pathways" (p. 289). A multiliteracies-based practice which not only acknowledges but honours the diversity of cultures, languages, traditions, and experiences of its students and their families can help to create an inclusive, supportive classroom environment in which everyone is welcome. Larson (2006) argued that as young children learn to use "school-based language" (p. 320), they integrate this knowledge with the language and literacy customs they carry from their home lives. Broadening our focus beyond the walls of the school to the homes of our students can help to bridge the disconnect between the two, and make children's literacy learning experiences more relevant and meaningful. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) reinforced the necessity for the involvement of families in children's literacy learning when they stated, "We need to examine what literacy activities our students are engaging with out of school and consider how we can form bridges to support students within school. This will give us the opportunity to think more clearly about what literacy is being supported where" (p. 70). The implication is clear: by inviting students' families into classrooms, and by respecting the diverse cultural, linguistic, and literacy practices of students and their families outside of the classroom, the benefits for learning are significant.

Implications for Policy Makers

Pahl and Rowsell (2005) wrote that teachers' quality multiliteracies practices need to be "lifted from the micro contexts [of their classrooms] to the macro contexts of government curricula" (p.6). Thankfully, this is now the case in British Columbia's public schools. The Primary Language Arts Curriculum (2016) is now conducive to a multiliteracies pedagogical practice, and considers children's funds of knowledge as significant contributors to their learning

and expression of understanding. The *Curricular Competencies* statements that follow are indicative of multiliteracies approaches to learning: “Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected individually and collaboratively to: i) use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning; ii) engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers to develop understanding of self, identity, and community; iii) recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity; and, iv) exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding.”

It is heartening to see that current policy makers are aware of the importance of children’s funds of knowledge and understand that they must be allowed to use multiple modes of expression. Moving forward, one hopes that the Ministry of Education will continue to take the experiences of those on “the front lines” of education into account, and that those who write and revise curriculum will seek to incorporate the input and feedback received from teachers and students.

Professional Development Workshop: Multiliteracies Practices in the Primary Classroom

Inspired by what I have learned from my review of the literature, I have designed a workshop to encourage educators to incorporate multiliteracies pedagogy into their classroom practice. The goal of the workshop is to share with primary teachers the benefits of multiliteracies practices, and to provide them with some strategies for integrating them into their classroom routines. I include suggestions for providing their students with opportunities to communicate their knowledge and understanding in multiple ways, thereby meeting many of the goals of the revised Language Arts curriculum. A detailed version of the PowerPoint presentation is included in this project (Appendix A) as a resource for educators.

Outline of Proposed Workshop

In part one of the workshop, I will begin with a warm up/personal reflection activity that will get the participants thinking about their usual preferred methods of teaching literacy skills in their classrooms. We will share these ideas briefly with one another. Next, I will define and describe the terms multiliteracies and funds of knowledge. I will then share some of the research literature regarding the benefits of incorporating multiliteracies pedagogical practices into primary classrooms and connect these ideas to the new curriculum. I will be inviting the teachers in attendance to contribute their ideas and experiences throughout my presentation. In part two of the workshop, I will introduce some strategies and activities that illustrate multiliteracies pedagogy in practice. I will then ask the participants to work in groups to look at the revised Language Arts curriculum and brainstorm ways that multiliteracies corresponds with the curricular goals. Finally, each small group will have an opportunity to share with the entire group some things they'd like to try upon their return to the classroom. I will conclude with this quote from Elliot Eisner (2002): "The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition." Participants will receive a handout of strategies and ideas (Appendix B) to take away from the presentation.

Summary

In this chapter, I connected the reviewed literature to ideas regarding the implementation of multiliteracies practices in primary classrooms. I explored the implications for everyone involved— students and their families, teachers, administration, and policy makers— when taking a multiliteracies pedagogical approach. I provided some examples from my own primary teaching experience in which multiliteracies practice engaged and benefited my students. Finally, I introduced and briefly outlined the format of a professional development workshop I have

designed on multiliteracies in the primary classroom (see Appendix A). Its purpose is to educate and inspire teachers of young children to incorporate multiliteracies into their daily practice. In the following chapter, I offer my personal reflections on the project and on my master's journey as a whole in transforming my philosophy of early childhood teaching. I also include suggestions for extending the research, and make recommendations for future practice.

Chapter Four: Reflections and Conclusions

The literature on multiliteracies has provided valuable pedagogical insights to the field of early childhood education. The New London Group (2000) asserted that a multiliteracies pedagogical approach should be a continuous process of design and redesign, in order to motivate student engagement, and to meet children's interests and needs during learning. This process was evident throughout the research literature, along with several other common threads. For example, it was revealed that a multiliteracies approach can have a positive impact in school communities, such as: helping to build stronger school and classroom communities (McKee & Heydon, 2015); supporting the development of critical thinking skills (Silvers, Shorey, & Crafton, 2010); facilitating funds of knowledge approaches which strengthen engagement of students and their families in the learning process (Falchi et al., 2014; Lotherington et al., 2008); and, empowering children to make meaning and express understanding in multiple ways. The literature also illustrated that multiliteracies approaches are relevant and beneficial in both Canadian and global educational settings (Einarsdottir & Perry, 2009; Hill, 2010; Worthington & van Oers, 2015). Such practices are multimodal, imaginative, cognitively challenging, and inclusive.

In this concluding chapter, I reflect on my personal experiences teaching literacy in primary classrooms, and the ways in which my thinking has shifted in regards to young children's literacy learning based on the findings of the research literature and my own classroom practices. In doing so, I revisit the questions I asked in the first chapter of this project: 1) What are the benefits of a multiliteracies pedagogy for young children?; and, 2) How can children's engagement with multiliteracies be supported by teachers, administrators, and

families? I share my hopes for my own teaching practice, and the goals I have for sharing my project with others. Finally, I suggest directions for further research in multiliteracies.

Personal Experiences

As stated in Chapter One, I have always been an avid reader. When I began teaching, I made it a priority to share my love of books and reading with my students, even spending a few years as a teacher-librarian before settling into my current role as a kindergarten teacher. While I still love to read to my students, it has been through this journey in graduate studies that I have broadened my literacy teaching goals to extend beyond the traditional medium of print. With the understanding that children are agentic beings who bring to school with them their own unique funds of knowledge and areas of passion, I have delved into exploring the research literature around multiliteracies pedagogy and amassed numerous ideas for implementation in the classroom.

I have begun to use some of the multiliteracies strategies I've come across, and I am excited about this new direction. Over the past year, I have encouraged my students to express themselves through photographs that they have taken of people, places, and things that are important to them. I have moved from a model where children copy words off the board into their journals, to one where they share personal experiences that they have illustrated by acting them out with a peer. Student journals are becoming "thought books" where I sit with the children as they draw and tell me their stories, and we focus on the process of expression rather than on the end results. I have been working hard to incorporate students' funds of knowledge into our classroom experience as well. Families have been invited in to share their cultural traditions, stories, games, and foods, with great success. As a result of these invitations and

subsequent classroom visits, the students have been engaged in learning about their classmates' life experiences outside of school, and have made personal connections to each other. To introduce intergenerational learning in my classroom, I invited one of my students' grandparents to join us for monthly storytelling sessions and observed the excitement on the part of both the children and elder. This year, the Roots of Empathy³ program is also a part of our classroom learning. A multiliteracies philosophy plays a significant role in this program: concepts are introduced through literature to create interest and promote discussion, students draw and paint to express their thoughts, and they become adept at reading the body language and facial expressions of themselves and others.

Each of these learning experiences has been manageable and enjoyable for both me and my students, and has shown me the unique opportunities that a multiliteracies approach can create for young learners. My practice is gradually transforming into one where learning is more personally relevant and meaningful to each child.

Educating Educators

Based on my investigation of a multiliteracies approach to teaching and learning, I have been inspired to share my developing knowledge on this topic with friends and colleagues. The literature review in this project outlined the many ways that a multiliteracies approach can benefit young children and increase their engagement in learning. The studies illustrated the value of encouraging students' multiple ways of knowing, and demonstrated numerous methods of representing understanding that become possible when a teacher created and fostered a

³ Roots of Empathy is an international school based program that promotes building peaceful, caring, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. One of its main goals is to foster the development of emotional literacy, where children learn to care for one another, their world, and their future. A neighbourhood infant and parent visit the classroom every three weeks for the duration of a school year. The students observe the baby's development and learn to label his or her feelings, and learn to identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others. (rootsofempathy.org)

learning environment that supported a multiliteracies approach. The revised primary British Columbia Language Arts curriculum (2016) supports a multiliteracies approach. It encourages the use of learners' funds of knowledge in meaning-making, stating that learners can use prior knowledge and personal experience to make meaning, and that everyone has a unique story to share. Teachers can draw on the statements from the Curricular Competencies document (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) to develop lessons that enable students to utilize prior knowledge, and which promotes a creative and culturally-responsive pedagogical approach. Larson (2006) stated that shifting one's teaching to a multiliteracies perspective also gives educators occasions to "more fully understand, authentically use, and participate in the language and literacy practices children bring with them to the classroom" (p. 325).

I hope that educators who have read this project and who attend my multiliteracies workshop will be motivated to try some of the ideas I share from the research literature, and that they will generate further ideas in discussion with colleagues during the group session. I advise educators to start small, making manageable changes to their literacy teaching practice, to find time to discuss and collaborate with colleagues, and to seek the support of school administration in gathering the resources (e.g. iPads, digital cameras, art supplies) necessary for a multiliteracies approach to successfully occur. It is important for educators to look at literacy learning as sociocultural in nature, as it enables one to think about the ways in which children construct their understanding of language through their cultural ways of knowing (Falchi et al., 2014). Finally, I challenge myself and other primary teachers to think about the ways in which we can provide children with meaningful, engaging, and enriching multimodal learning experiences that consider their funds of knowledge.

Areas for Further Research

There has been a growing body of research on multiliteracies pedagogy since the turn of the century. As technology has rapidly advanced over the past two decades, so too has the information available regarding “new literacies” (New London Group, 1996; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). As the reviewed literature indicated, Canadian and global studies about multiliteracies teaching practices and their benefits are plentiful (Heydon, Crocker & Zhang, 2014; Hill, 2010; Lotherington, Holland, Sotoudeh & Zentena, 2008; McKee & Heydon, 2015; Silvers, Shorey & Crafton, 2010). They are rich sources of information that provide educators with insight into a variety of multiliteracies strategies and experiences that have proved to provide powerful learning opportunities for young children. However, I believe there is an area of research that has yet to be addressed in relation to how early childhood educators can become exposed to, learn about, and then implement a multiliteracies approach in their classrooms. Rowsell, Kosnik, and Beck (2008) wrote about the importance of fostering a multiliteracies pedagogy through preservice teacher education, arguing that a lack of clarity and sufficient depth regarding the nature of multiliteracies pedagogy made it difficult for new teachers to implement such an approach in their classrooms. I would also be curious to read about the role that professional development opportunities and mentor teachers might play in helping interested teachers develop multiliteracies approaches to learning in classrooms. Silvers, Shorey, and Crafton (2010) concluded that there is a need for further research in “early childhood classrooms to better understand ways of expanding narrow views of literacy to include digital technologies, the arts, and other multimodal means of constructing meaning” (p. 405). Provided with this information, teachers will be better suited to meet the diverse needs of young learners.

Conclusion

Based on the research, it is evident that children can benefit from learning in multiliteracies-based classroom environments, as this provides them with opportunities to express their knowledge in unlimited ways. When students are encouraged to make meaning through the modes which suit them best, to construct their understanding in social and cultural settings (Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005), and to draw on their own rich, personal funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), they begin to authentically connect with one another and with the world around them. As Pahl and Rowsell (2006) stated, “children use literacy to make meaning and to explore the constraints and possibilities of their worlds. Meanings, however, are inscribed within practices and these practices shape meanings and identities” (p.139).

As we move away from traditional, hegemonic print-centric ways of viewing and teaching literacy, towards the myriad other means of self-expression and communication, a multiliteracies pedagogy becomes increasingly relevant to educators and students. With the revised British Columbia school curriculum in place, teachers in the province have been given an opportunity to take a closer look at the ways in which they teach literacy to young children and to make profound changes. Now encouraged to move beyond a traditional one-size-fits-all reading program to more personalized learning approaches, teachers can work together with children to share stories and other texts in a variety of ways, to learn about and connect with self, family, culture, and community, and to encourage children to use their preferred modes of communication to express what they know. Our goal for our students should be to support the various ways they can demonstrate their knowledge, to help them to acquire and use critical thinking skills, and lead them along their path to becoming lifelong learners. It is my hope that the teachers of young children in this province will embrace the opportunity to transform their

teaching practices by working together with colleagues, administrators, students, and families to implement a multiliteracies approach in every classroom, thereby building a teaching and learning framework which focuses on the needs of students, and not relying on the narrow models of literacy learning implemented in early childhood classrooms of the past (Pahl & Rowsell, 2006). In doing so, we will truly be moving in the right direction.

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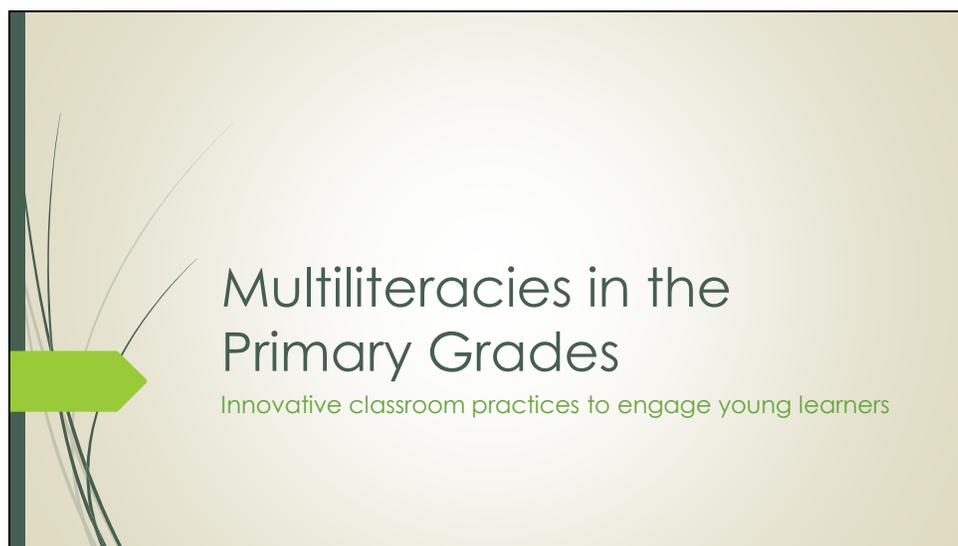
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Appendix A

Slide 1



Slide 2

The slide features a light beige background with a green arrow pointing right at the top left. The title 'Workshop Goals' is in a green font. Below it is a bulleted list of three goals. At the bottom center is an illustration of three stylized figures in business attire carrying large, colorful puzzle pieces (red, yellow, and blue) that form a large arrow pointing right.

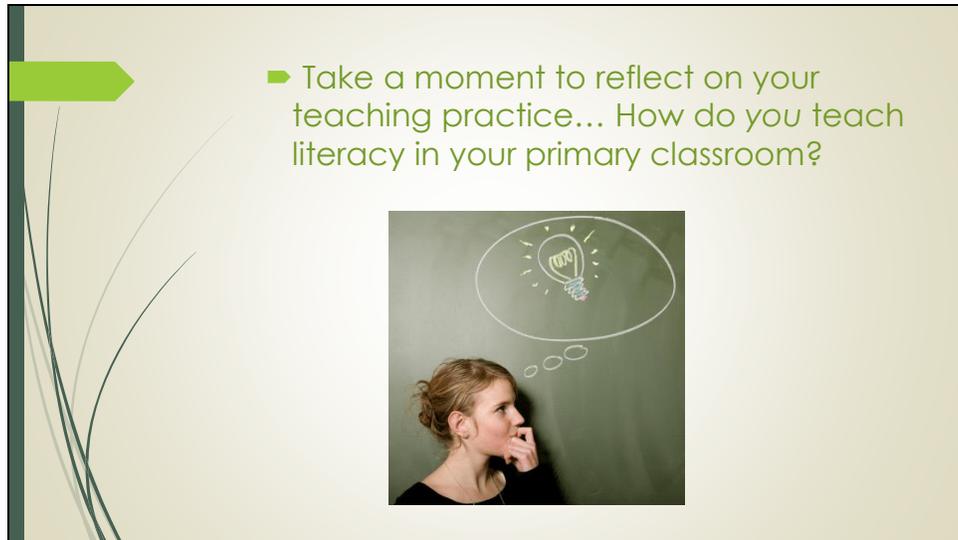
Workshop Goals

- Gain an understanding of the terms **Multiliteracies** and **Funds of Knowledge**
- Discover the benefits of implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy in your classroom practice
- Explore practical strategies and activities for supporting literacy engagement and development in young children



Welcome participants, introduce myself (I teach K, am a recent graduate in the M.Ed. In Early Childhood Education program at UVic) and share the goals of today's workshop/presentation. Go around the room and have each person briefly introduce him/herself and what their current teaching assignment is.

Slide 3

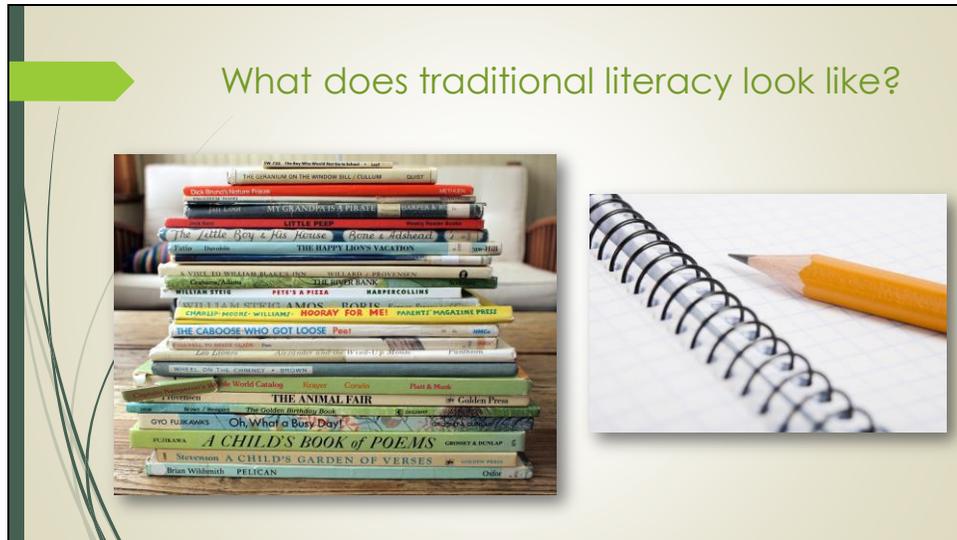


► Take a moment to reflect on your teaching practice... How do you teach literacy in your primary classroom?



At each table, participants will find post-it notes and pencils. Ask teachers to consider their own classroom practice, and after a couple of minutes, to jot down a list of three things they regularly incorporate into their literacy teaching. Invite participants to turn to a neighbour and share their “tried and true” methods. Ask for volunteers to name the activities/programs. Note that many (perhaps the majority) of these practices are print-based, ie. Jolly Phonics, Guided Reading, Home Reading Program, Words Their Way, writing in journals, weekly spelling tests, etc.

Slide 4

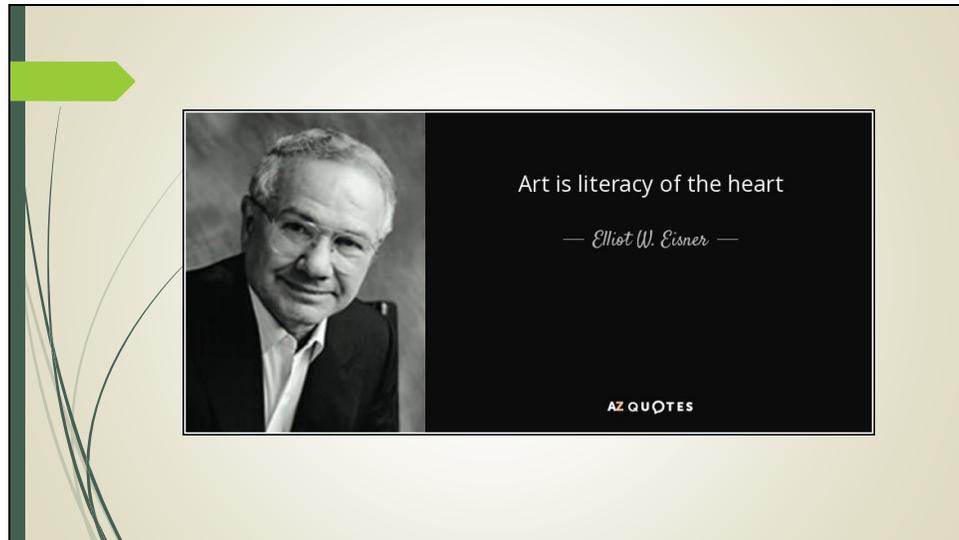


What comes to mind when you hear the word literacy? – books, paper, pencils

These likely coincide with the examples that people gave for the previous reflection activity, emphasizing reading and writing.

Traditional views of literacy are print-based/focus on mainly on written language. But where does this leave the children who struggle with print literacy? How can we enable and empower young learners who are not yet able to share their knowledge through this medium? This is where multiliteracies comes in.

Slide 5



For me, the journey to multiliteracies began in my first graduate level course- a class on curriculum theory- where we were introduced to the work of Dr. Elliot Eisner, of the Stanford Graduate School of Education.

Eisner wrote *10 Lessons the Arts Teach* (2002) which stated that the benefits of arts-based education include teaching children the value of:

- seeing things from multiple perspectives
- Using creative problem-solving skills
- Making judgements which are qualitative rather than quantitative

He said that the arts teach children that problems have more than one solution and questions have more than one answer.

He also said that the limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.

Inspired by Eisner, I became increasingly interested in students' multiple ways of knowing, and in the numerous methods of representing understanding that become possible when a teacher creates and fosters a learning environment that supports multiliteracies. This capstone project is the end result of my graduate school journey but is also just a stepping stone in my teaching career as I continue to learn and grow along with my students. I am opening myself up to all the possibilities that multiliteracies-based practice creates.

Slide 6



I have based my project on three interconnected theoretical frameworks.

Social semiotics (Kress) - gives children the chance to use different forms of expression

- signs and symbols work together to produce new types of “text”- can take the form of written words, music, movement, visual arts
- written and verbal language work in conjunction with other means of expression
- language and communication are social processes- meaning-making arises from interactions between people who are having similar experiences... thus, creating a sense of community

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, Rogoff)- social interaction plays a fundamental role in the formation of knowledge and understanding

- learning is an active process made more meaningful by interaction and communication with others
- this framework enables us to think about the ways in which children construct understanding of language and of cultural ways of knowing (indigenous cultures, immigrant and refugee families, etc.)

Multiliteracies (New London Group)- takes into consideration multiple ways of making meaning, values the use of diverse modes of expression

- early childhood educators should take a broader view of literacy as a means of “communication, conceptualization and meaning-making” in order to notice, support and expands kids’ preferred modes of communication

Slide 7

What is a Multiliteracies Pedagogy?



- a pedagogical approach that strives to make classroom teaching and learning more inclusive of cultural, communicative, linguistic, artistic, and technologically diverse modes of expression

We are expanding beyond traditional print-based literacy to focus on various modes of meaning-making and communication, and the ways in which meaning can be represented (Falchi et al., 2014, p. 338). Multiliteracies pedagogy takes into account the rapidly developing world of technology and the changing landscape of how we communicate with one another.

Slide 8



The Hundred Languages of Children (Malaguzzi, 1998): comes from the Reggio Emilia approach, recognizes that there are numerous different ways that children can express thoughts, feelings, experiences, knowledge

A multiliteracies focus in primary classes is significant for young children, as it allows them opportunities to express their knowledge in unlimited ways. They are encouraged and supported in using their “one hundred languages” to share with the classroom community what they have learned and why it is important to them.

Slide 9



The slide features a light beige background with a dark green vertical bar on the left side. A green arrow points to the right from the top of this bar. The title "Funds of Knowledge" is written in a green font. Below the title, there are two bullet points, each preceded by a green square. The first bullet point discusses the "funds of knowledge" approach and cites Esteban-Guitart & Moll (2014). The second bullet point describes how children's lived experiences and cultural/family practices provide diverse and worthwhile backgrounds for learning.

Funds of Knowledge

- The *funds of knowledge* approach takes into account that families and communities provide a valuable resource for teaching and learning (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014).
- Through their lived experiences and cultural and family practices, children come to school with diverse and worthwhile backgrounds on which to build.

Ask for a volunteer to read these statements aloud.

Slide 10



Multiliteracies practice takes into account children's funds of knowledge.

Focuses on who children are and what they can do.

Students come to school with vast repertoires of personal, cultural, and linguistic experience- let's make the most of it!

Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) argued that "cultural ways of knowing show how children's experiences and interests may prepare them for knowing how to engage in particular forms of language and literacy activities" (p. 23)

Slide 11



Benefits of multiliteracies practice in primary classrooms

- Critical thinking
- Increased family involvement
- Deeper comprehension achieved
- Community building



Teachers face many challenges as they work to meet the needs of a progressively diverse student population. Implementing a culturally responsive, multiliteracies-focused curriculum that allows for students' multiple ways of knowing and expression can help teachers to meet those needs more effectively.

The research points to significant benefits:

- Increased family involvement
- Growing respect for multilingual, multicultural capital of schools
- Increased pride and motivation
- An emphasis on community-building and sociocultural dimensions of learning
- Critical literacy skills developed= students examining a text reflectively, which leads to deeper comprehension
- Students made critical connections to their everyday life experiences and the “world beyond the classroom” (Silvers, Shorey & Crafton, 2010, p. 405)
- Enabled student growth and social consciousness, even as early as grade one
- The visual arts as a form of literacy can be a powerful means for student expression of ideas and understanding

Slide 12



- Students are situated as capable, intelligent and insightful contributors to their literacy learning
- Ethnic diversity seen as a strength, not a deficit
- Increased feelings of success
- Students given agency to make positive choices
- Inclusive school cultures
- Pretend play is a rich site of literacy learning

**Funds of Knowledge and Multiliteracies:**

Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) stated that “cultural ways of knowing show how children’s experiences and interests may prepare them for knowing how to engage in particular forms of language and literacy activities” (p. 23)

Literacy is seen as “everyday social-communicative practice” (Worthington & van Oers, 2015, p. 3)

Go through the list on the slide, invite participants to read them aloud (maintains their engagement!)

Slide 13



Global Connections

- Children are viewed as active, social learners and confident users of technology
- When students share knowledge from home and their community, educators gain insight for future teaching and learning
- Co-construction of meaning is valued
- Role of people and place is significant



I explored the literature on multiliteracies beyond North American studies- in countries such as the United Kingdom, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand

Australia- collaborative teacher-research projects investigate the ways that children understand and work with multiliteracies both at home and school; development of the Multiliteracies Map (guide for teachers to explore ways to incorporate new lit practices in their classrooms)

New Zealand- focus on multimodal communicative competence in ECE settings; role played by people, places and practices in facilitating children's use of multimodal literacy practice

Iceland- the use of drawing as a tool for expression of understanding, educators should use it as a process for meaning-making (not focus on end product)

United Kingdom- encouraged home visits, regular professional development of teacher- by using a diverse array of modes, young children are able to demonstrate their awareness and understanding of multiple learning activities (ie. completing puzzles, working on computers, playing games, reading books etc)

The takeaway message is this: Boundaries between traditional and non-traditional literacies should be permeable AND a sociocultural view allows for social, cultural and literacy practices to intertwine (Haggerty & Mitchell, 2010)

Slide 14

Some ideas to try in your classroom

- Photographic "Show and Tell"
- "Thoughts Book" (using art and imagery)
- Dual language stories
- Personal quilt squares/class quilt
- Soundscape poetry
- Learning wall/table
- Intergenerational digital storybooks
- Dramatic play writing
- Oral storytelling
- Map-making
- Cultural suitcase (artefacts)



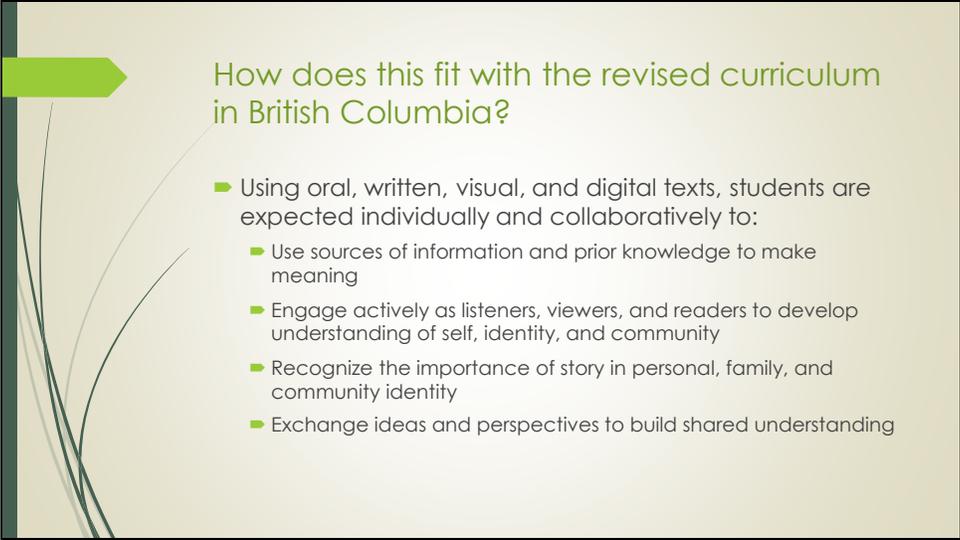
Briefly share some of the ideas presented in the lit review

Slide 15



Flewitt (2013) stated that “Even if early education settings remain print-centric, research evidence has shown that young children use their imagination to include new technologies in their play... These studies constitute a growing body of research which has begun to highlight the need to broaden traditional concepts of reading and writing, to acknowledge the multimodal nature of young children’s interaction with diverse texts and to develop a pedagogy that links homes and early years schooling” (p. 6)

Slide 16



How does this fit with the revised curriculum in British Columbia?

- ▶ Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected individually and collaboratively to:
 - ▶ Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning
 - ▶ Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers to develop understanding of self, identity, and community
 - ▶ Recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity
 - ▶ Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding

1. Invite participants to read aloud each of the points on the slide (this activates engagement and keeps them listening/connected)

2. The Language Arts curriculum now reflects the understanding that stories and other texts can be shared in a variety of ways, and that they can help us to learn about and connect with self, family, culture and community.

Personalized learning is at the heart of the revised curriculum- encouraging student motivation, curiosity, and active engagement (as we saw/heard about in the research studies I introduced)

Slide 17

Exploring connections between multiliteracies practices and the revised curriculum in BC

A photograph of a female teacher with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, sitting on the floor in a classroom. She is holding an open book and looking down at it. Around her are several young children, mostly of preschool or kindergarten age, sitting on small wooden chairs. They are all looking towards the teacher. The classroom background shows shelves with books and other educational materials. The slide has a light green background with a dark green arrow pointing right on the left side and some faint, abstract line art.

Now it's time to put all of the elements together- multiliteracies, funds of knowledge, our experience of teaching primary children AND the revised curriculum! They fit together nicely, as you will soon see.

Slide 18

A presentation slide with a light beige background. On the left side, there is a vertical dark green bar with a green arrow pointing right. The title "Group activity" is written in a green font. Below the title, there is a green bullet point followed by a paragraph of text.

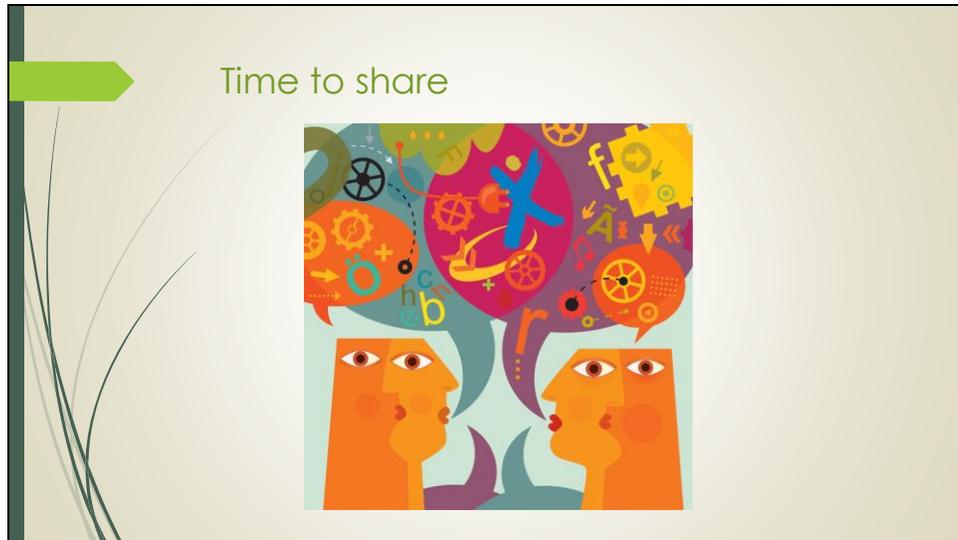
Group activity

- Using the Language Arts Core Competencies from the BC revised curriculum and what you have learned about multiliteracies today, I invite you to engage in a discussion with the other members of your group. Consider the ways in which you envision incorporating students' funds of knowledge into your teaching practices. Be prepared to share your ideas... Feel free to get creative!

Provide each group with a Curriculum Package to look through and the sheet of ideas (Appendix B) discussed so far. Invite them to take 15 minutes to look through the document and brainstorm some ways they can envision implementing multiliteracies practices/funds of knowledge in the classroom. Provide chart paper, markers, post-it notes...

LEAVE THIS SLIDE UP DURING THE WORKING PERIOD FOR TEACHERS TO REFER BACK TO

Slide 19



Ask for volunteers from each group to share their ideas with all participants. Remind everyone that there is a section of the handout on which to take notes/draw quick sketches etc. to help them remember activities they would like to try.

Slide 20



Multiliteracies pedagogy can support children in: developing a strong sense of identity and well-being; feeling connected to their world; and becoming confident and involved learners who can communicate effectively using their preferred “languages” of communication. - Hesterman (2013)

Slide 21

What questions do you still have?



A young child with brown hair is looking through a magnifying glass. The child's face is partially visible through the lens, which is held up to their eye. The background shows a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green grass and a blue sky. The slide has a light beige background with a green arrow pointing right and some faint, thin lines on the left side.

Slide 22

"The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition."

- Dr. Elliot Eisner

A photograph showing three children painting a large mural on a wooden wall. The mural is colorful and abstract, featuring a large red shape in the center. The children are wearing aprons and are focused on their work. The background shows a wooden structure and some greenery.

Thank everyone for coming and leave them with this quote.

Slide 23

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Appendix B: Workshop Handout

Multiliteracies/Funds of Knowledge Ideas to Try in the Primary Classroom

- Story workshop with provocations/props
- Plasticine/playdough stories
- Class books- writing collaboratively
- Dual language literacy texts/family books
- My “Thoughts” Book – journal to express thoughts and ideas in multiple ways
- Collage to express feelings
- Story Quilts- squares to represent parts of story
- Identity Quilts- each student makes a square to represent self/family
- Record read-alouds for other children to listen to/follow along with
- Use photos/art/imagery to stimulate creative writing ideas
- Learning/Inquiry Table- display the things we are curious about
- Family recipes book
- Integrate movement into story time
- Use interactive picture books (ie. Tap the Magic Tree, Press Here) and wordless books to spark interest
- Support communication through the use of stories and manipulatives (ie. puppets, storyboards, toys)
- Shoebox project (fill with personal artefacts to provide motivation for writing/storytelling)
- Storysacks (containing a book + play items and artefacts that relate to the story)
- Home literacy backpacks (containing paper, pencils, crayons etc. with which to write a story at home)
- Fill your classroom library with all forms of literacy: books, magazines, comics, trading cards, flyers, menus
- Make “home alphabets”- drawings and artefacts brought from home
- Make “home world” maps
- Use disposable cameras to capture “home reading moments”

