

REMIXING THE CLASSICS IN AN ONLINE STUDENT LOUNGE: THE POTENTIAL FOR
PARTICIPATION AND PRACTICE USING A PEDAGOGY OF MULTILITERACIES

by

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(Under the Direction of Donna E. Alvermann)

ABSTRACT

This research used a qualitative case study approach to examine the manner in which teachers and students perceived the enactment of pedagogy of multiliteracies in an online environment. Teachers employed lesson plans using a digital platform to assist students' meaning making while reading the canonical play, William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597). Students used the remix concept to create relevant learning experiences while interacting in an online student lounge. There were nineteen participants including two teachers and seventeen students involved in this study. Data sources included semi-structured interviews conducted via a group interview approach over the course of ten weeks as well as classroom observations, artifacts, and online transcripts. The teachers' literacy instruction was examined, and their knowledge and beliefs were noted as they attempted to enact pedagogy of multiliteracies in their literacy instruction. Students interacted in the virtual space by remixing the canon. This activity in the virtual space positioned students to engage in opportunities to read across modes, which helped them determine deeper meanings as well as create new

meanings of a classic text in the classroom. Key findings from this study assert that teachers experience changes in identities as instructors in the new space as they experimented with online learning tools. Additionally, the teachers became more reflective on their definitions of a text. These results suggest that adolescent students are able to develop their own meaning making of canonical texts when they are allowed to use multimodal literacies to remix the texts for their own use. The participatory environment allowed students to learn and acquire a sense of equity as they interacted among their peers.

INDEX WORDS: multiliteracies, multimodal texts, adolescents, web 2.0, participatory culture, remix

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DEDICATION

To the ninth grade students and teachers at Mount Oak High School who were willing to travel with me on this research journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Background and Rationale	6
Statement of Purpose	8
Research Questions.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	12
Summary	16
2 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	18
Background.....	20
A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies	20
New Literacy Studies and the Studies of New Literacies.....	22
The Canon	26
The Remix.....	29
Multiliteracies, Web 2.0 Ethos, and Participatory Culture	32

3	METHODOLOGY	38
	Site Selection and Description	38
	Two Classroom Environments in One Virtual Space	44
	Subjectivity Statement	52
	Role of the Researcher	54
	Case Study Design	55
	Data Collection	57
	Data Analysis	64
4	FINDINGS	74
	Teachers' Multiliteracies Perspectives	74
	Students' Multiliteracies Perspectives	84
5	IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH.....	98
	Implications for Practice	99
	Implications for Future Research.....	113
	Summary	115
	REFERENCES	119
	APPENDICES	
	A INITIAL INTERVIEW GUIDES	136
	B RECRUITMENT FLYER.....	140
	C EXAMPLE OF FIELD NOTES	141
	D EXAMPLE OF INITIAL CODING OF TRANSCRIPTS.....	142
	E PARADOXICAL QUOTES ASSIGNMENT	143

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Components of Multiliteracies Pedagogy.....	15
Table 2: List of Ninth Grade Participants	43
Table 3: Unit Lessons for Romeo and Juliet.....	47
Table 4: Data Sources	62
Table 5: From Codes to Themes.....	67

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: The Interconnected Nature of Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, Web 2.0 Ethos, And Participatory Culture	33
Figure 3.1: Mr. James Loomis' Classroom.....	45
Figure 3.2: Ms. Victoria Carmichael's Classroom	45
Figure 3.3: Screenshot of the Haiku Learning Management System Page.....	46
Figure 4.1: Excerpt of Student Dialogue in Online Lounge.....	88
Figure 4.2: Rap Battle from Tybalt, Mercutio, and Romeo's Fight	91
Figure 4.3: Tumblr picture found on a designated Romeo and Juliet page	96

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term “multiliteracies” has been somewhat problematic for me as a researcher and a practitioner for a number of reasons. As I often explain to my colleagues, the term “multiliteracies” does not simply mean teaching with multiple literacies; nor does it mean providing multiple resources for students to choose from, as if more choices equated to more effective classroom engagement. When K-12 teachers ask me what I am studying in graduate school, I usually hesitate before responding because of how difficult it is to explain this concept. And when I do attempt to explain multiliteracies in detail, I am most often met with quizzical looks of confusion. As a result, I typically respond by saying, “English education.” However, as I have recently been pegged to present more teacher professional development at my school, I find myself sharing my definition of multiliteracies with teachers. Sometimes I feel like I am the lone savior rescuing my school from being left behind in the quagmire of lecture-based teaching, print-only textbooks, and the same worksheets from twenty years ago.

So, what does this term—multiliteracies—mean? Most teachers I have encountered think it is a concept we use in the classroom if the visual, audio, gestural, and spatial modes of meaning are enacted. The term encapsulates a theorized view of “literacies,” but I consider this view from the conceptual cues of James Gee’s scholarship that literacy is not considered a singular construct (Gee, 1990). Individuals maintain multiple literacies relative to their environment (both physical and social). This has been my explanation to the staff at my school. As the library media specialist, I hoped they would concur, become more willing to think

expansively about “literacy,” and begin challenging how we can adapt teaching for the urban youth we serve.

A pedagogy of multiliteracies provides a framework for my research interests, and I understand that the “problematic” term, in my opinion, needs the theoretical underpinnings assigned to it joined in a cohesive union with the practicality of everyday learning in the classroom. When I enrolled in the Doctoral Seminar course at the University of Georgia in 2008, the class read an article about how clinical research could be applied in a practitioner setting to have an effect on teaching and learning in the K-12 sector (Bulterman-Bos, 2008). My intent for this research is to hopefully help legitimated theory and practical teaching to stop pretending to be in a blissful marriage at a holiday cocktail party, only to resort back to sitting far apart in the car on the way home, not even talking to each other. This is how I felt when I read inspired articles related to pedagogical applications and “informed” theories but then talked to teachers who simply felt it was too much to ask them to try these same tasks that were successful for other teachers, especially when necessary under the current education policy requirements of Race To The Top (Georgia Department of Education, 2014) and in the climate of standardized testing. A blissful co-existence and collaboration can occur, even if it does not quite create a “honeymoon phase.” Many of the tips Bulterman-Bos (2008) indicated may prove useful for researchers and practitioners to consider as inquiry proceeds in the area of multiliteracies.

Statement of the Problem

The position statement of the National Council of Teachers of English’s Executive Committee (2008) states that twenty-first century literacies demand that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. Yet, many of the literacy tasks adolescents engage in at school emphasize a model of literacy that is less than

engaging while reading traditional texts that may be viewed as non-relatable or even irrelevant to young urban students. The hegemony that privileges a traditional print classroom is still very present in contemporary U.S. educational culture (Giroux, 1983), although there is a plethora of new literacies and technological tools available for teachers and students to expand the notion of literacy and literacy practices.

Lankshear and Knobel (2011) posited that new literacies presented to students must demonstrate “the efficacy of any and every literacy that is taught compulsorily” (p. 207). Theorists, researchers, and practitioners need to make certain they are effectively utilizing new literacies without allowing them to be viewed and used as “mere” tools by “adapting them to familiar routines” (p. 191) in our classrooms. From my experiences and observations as a classroom teacher, this adaptation of mere tools is often evident when teachers employ what they deem to be new literacy practices. Rather than progressing toward “a fuller understanding and fluency with doing and being in ways that are recognized as proficient relative to socially constructed and maintained ways of ‘being in the world’” (p. 190), teachers often think the “new” pertains to solely integrating technology. This superficial approach allows schools (i.e., county districts, school boards, and administrations) to think they are becoming a twenty-first century, cutting-edge school. The binary of literacy definitions—between multiliteracies as expanding and the traditional notion of literacy as remaining static—is very distinct when one ponders and considers how stakeholders in power positions often seem resistant to change in curricular policy and education reform. Transformative change requires a different mindset—a native mindset rather than an outsider mindset. However, those in power who determine the belief system and ideology of the school system or structure do not necessarily know how to

efficaciously proceed toward full acknowledgment of the need to design curriculum with a native mindset or how to view new forms of literacy as legitimate and valuable for students.

In my teaching experience, my instructional goal was always to provide valuable learning opportunities. However, determining what is valuable, engaging, and relevant to my students has, at times, eluded me. One of the most daunting questions I ever asked myself regarding the urban adolescents I taught was, “How do I get them to read the assigned classroom novels?” Even the most avid readers of young adult literature and graphic novels often do not read the required texts, citing them as boring or irrelevant. Teachers have grappled with this issue, more often than not wondering “whether the difficulties of convincing students to stick with canonized texts, in spite of dated plots and settings or challenging syntax, was really worth all the trouble” (Ostenson & Gleason-Sutton, 2011, p, 37). However, canon texts in the curriculum still serve a literary purpose that can be relevant for adolescents, and some schools have even added young adult literature, such as Collins’ (2008) *The Hunger Games*, to the reading repertoire of their English curriculum. Allowing students to remix, or repurpose, the canonical texts mandated by a school district affords them a toolbox to create something new by re-appropriating it for their own purposes. Students telling their own stories or creating their own meanings of assigned novels and plays situates them with digital and multimodal tools they can use to develop their own meaning making skills both inside and outside the classroom.

In examining and implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy, teachers need to be aware of students’ personal motivations for reading and writing outside of the classroom, which, in turn, may potentially help students make meaningful connections with the novels they study. In an effort to make class more “dynamic and non-linear,” educators necessarily need to give attention to both the digital and non-digital tools students use at home and find innovative ways to

incorporate those tools in school. As a parent of two teenagers whose at-home, literacy practices consist of playing online, simulation games (e.g., *The Sims*, Madden NFL 2000, etc.), reading and writing on fan blogs as well as various entertainment sites, reading *Entertainment Weekly* magazine, watching television, drawing favorite graphic novel characters, sketching outlines of dance choreography, and reading the most recent and popular young adult literature (usually some type of series), I gleaned that a large majority of their literacy practices are not print-centric. My son plays video games simultaneously with his friend who lives a few blocks away and my daughter debates on a blog about the inherent racism she perceives in the all-white casting of the movie *The Last Airbender* (Shyamalan, 2010), whose main characters are of Inuit descent. Their use of digital tools, media, gaming, and online affinity spaces interests me because it is what they care about doing in their leisure time.

As instructional leaders, teachers should also care enough about students' home literacies to bring them into the classroom. Although there has been ample research on students' out-of-school literacy practices, the implementation of these practices for formal schooling, and the use of online literacies (e.g., Alvermann, 2002; Knobel & Lankshear, 2006; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005), literacy research remains limited in the United States with regards to enacting a multiliteracies pedagogy. This pedagogy may potentially generate opportunities for urban, often marginalized, adolescents to determine their own instructional outcomes as relevant to their lived worlds and to the world in which they will eventually become "global citizens" (New London Group, 2000).

This existing research urges a student-centered pedagogy, which seems pedagogically viable as education policy moves toward teacher evaluations conducted by students. Yet, it may also be read as advancing towards a pedagogy of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996). To be a multiliterate student is to be both cognitively and socially literate with print, electronic, and

live texts. It also means being strategic; that is to say, a multiliterate student is able to recognize what is required in a given context, examine what is already known, and then, if necessary, modify that knowledge to develop a strategy that suits the context and situation. One must, therefore, be a problem solver, a strategic thinker, and an active and informed citizen (Anstey & Bull, 2006). Students need to become increasingly multiliterate in relation to the plethora of technology surrounding them. Even within this digital environment, as I argue in this dissertation, students can become better problem solvers and strategic thinkers by reading classic texts and understanding how the texts are relevant to their lives.

Background and Rationale

As a former classroom teacher, I struggled to get my students excited about anything that had to do with school and learning. A few years ago, when I was a middle school Language Arts teacher, our school embarked upon planning Field Day for each grade level as a way to spark and promote school spirit. As I showed my students a teacher-created PowerPoint that demonstrated the games we would play, the rules of the games, and the ultimate rewards, I thought to myself, “Now this will really get them excited!” But they just sat there—with no emotion—as I excitedly spoke about the events. And when I finished my “presentation” a small yet significant group of influential students in my homeroom barked back: “Who picked these games? They seem real lame. Is this going to be inside or outside?” Students began muttering and grumbling, and the discontent seemed to spread and infect everyone in the classroom. I immediately gave an impassioned speech. Littered with many famous quotes we wrote about in the “Quote of the Week” section of our journals that year, I fervently expressed my desire to win as a team! But the students were still. They were not moved by my urgent plea. Finally, I leveled with my students. I said, “I like to win, and I hate to lose! I am a competitor and I want you to be one,

also. If not, you will accept mediocrity. If you don't want to succeed, don't participate on my team!" From that point on, they were excited about Field Day.

It was only when I was truthful and explicit in my reason to participate in Field Day that my students responded to my pleas. This was the apathetic, disinterested, and disengaged attitude and behavior that I encountered on a regular basis—thus, my constant aggravation. More than anything, my students tended to be very passive about reading and literacy. Their disaffection and retreat from literacy led to mediocre reading comprehension, which ultimately prevented them from gaining subject matter and world knowledge (Guthrie, 2004). In an effort to engender active participation in learning, I allowed my students to develop and construct meaning in my Language Arts classroom by using a multiliteracies approach. This approach seemed to promote motivation, albeit extrinsic, and a participatory environment of engagement.

The majority of my students at that time were either Black or Hispanic, which is important to acknowledge because the marginalization that occurs with students of diverse backgrounds can become heightened when lesson plans and curricular materials tend to emphasize White, Euro-centric experiences, values, and norms. But when teachers acknowledge this potential for marginalization, especially among English language learners and minority students, teachers can begin move toward literacies that engage and include every individual student. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), corporate publishers could easily become the literacy and pedagogy experts of tomorrow if we continue to let them make videos and multimedia for our students. Teachers need to personalize instruction for their students as well as facilitate engagement with technologies they may otherwise be incapable of accessing. History reveals that the more affluent are usually the first to purchase new technologies. One way to lessen this participation and digital gap may be to tap into the multimodal way students

read and respond to classic literature. Making meaning of texts through the semiotics of images, auditory experiences, and tactile projects, to name but a few of the various modes involved when students engage with digital texts outside the classroom, indicates a rationale for viewing the concept of literacy through a theoretic lens of *multiliteracies* and for making strides to incorporate this view in teacher instruction.

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) indicated that the modes of representation learners use when demonstrating multiliteracies are linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial. Intentional combinations of these modes in a curriculum may be thought as multimodal design. A multimodal approach “differs from inquiry learning in that it emphasizes different sequences for different learners and areas of knowledge. Student diversity and multiple ways of thinking and learning are paramount in this approach” (Ryan, 2008, p. 192). Student-centered assignments allow students to use the multimodality of images, moving text, and audio in various non-print-centric media (e.g., MovieMaker, Wikis, blogs, and Voicethread) to make meaning and enhance their learning as they use digital tools that engage them. When authentic learning, explicit instruction, and multiliteracies are combined in a lesson unit plan, students can actively engage to enhance their identities through individual and group exchanges as well as construct deeper meaning by reading and writing with electronic “text.” It is essential that our students be able to read, write, and construct texts in multiple genres as well as express themselves through multiple modes that go beyond print text.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ and ninth grade students’ perceptions of (re)creating, participating, and meaning making in a virtual space while interacting with classic texts. Lankshear and Knobel (2007) posited that literacy practices are best understood by

exploring the environments in which they occur. Thus, we can concur that language (i.e., words, texts, literacy) gives “meaning to contexts and, dialectically, contexts give meaning to language” (p. 2). In other words, meaning making involves dialectic contexts and diverse spaces that shape and define students’ academic identities as well as their relationship to diverse contexts and space. Texts should be fluid, nonlinear, and collaborative in nature, rather than static, linear, and individually created (Curwood & Cowell, 2011).

Research Questions

The following research questions reflect the goals and theoretical framework of my study. These questions guided my inquiry throughout the process of conducting this research. They were intended to serve as a helpful reference for the primary topics and issues I wished to address.

1. What are two secondary English teachers’ perceptions of integrating a multiliteracies pedagogy to support teaching canonical texts?
2. What are high school students’ perceptions of interacting in an online student lounge to support the reading of canonical texts in two ninth grade English classrooms?
3. How does the use of the remix concept develop high school students’ meaning making of canonical texts?

Definition of Terms

Classroom practices: The ways teachers make sense of what they do, including their interactions with students and instructional design. Classroom practices involve attitudes, feelings, values, and social relationships that work to regulate who produces or accesses textual content, at what point, and for what purpose (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1995).

Digital literacies: Referent for those literacies that have emerged in the post-typographic era (Reinking, 2008). Digital literacies are socially situated practices supported by skills, strategies, and stances that enable the representation and understanding of ideas using a range of modalities enabled by digital tools (O'Brian & Scharber, 2008 p.67).

Literacy events: "Any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Brice Heath, 1983, p. 93). They are "observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them. These events stress "the situated nature of literacy, which always exists in a social context" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8).

Literacy practices: Socially recognized and patterned ways of using texts and technologies to get things done in the world (Street, 1984; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). They involve not only knowing how to read and write a particular script but also how to apply this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

Metalanguages: Language for describing language, linguistic processes, and the dissemination of literacies.

Multiliteracies: From an educational standpoint, the concept of multiliteracies refers to how people must adapt to the changing nature of communication in a digital age. The concept also refers to what students must be taught in order to live successfully in a contemporary context where productivity depends on keeping up with technology.

Multimodality: Referent for the simultaneous reading, processing and/or producing, and interacting with various modes of print, image, movement, graphic, animation, sound, music, and gesture. Insofar as they can be considered a symbol system for communicating meaning, these

modes, as well as language, are often referred to as different semiotic resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Multimodal Texts: Those texts that have more than one mode, such as print and image or print, image, sound, and movement. A multimodal text is often a digital text but can be a book, such as picture book, information text, or graphic text. Multimodal texts require the processing of more than one mode and the recognition of the interconnections between modes. This process is different from the linear reading of print-based texts.

Multimodal literacy: Referent for the meaning making that occurs at different levels through reading, viewing, understanding, responding to, producing, and interacting with multimodal texts and multimodal communication (Kress & Jewitt, 2003). It may include listening, talking, and dramatizing as well as writing, designing, and producing such texts.

New literacies: A term that reflects the belief in an intimate relationship between technology and literacy practices, and that rapid advancements in information and communication technologies have radically changed the literacy practices needed to be successful in contemporary society (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

Print-based texts: Paper-based texts in which alphabetic letters and words are the primary carriers of meaning (Kress, 2003). The construction of these texts is the primary focus of classroom reading and writing instruction (Bearne, 2005).

Remix: The process of combining, rearranging, or reframing found media (e.g., video, images, sounds, graphics, text, etc.) to create something different, a new text that inherently changes, alters, or re-appropriates the original (Lessig, 2008).

Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: An expression of communication that encourages the engagement with multiple literacy methods – linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal – to learn and communicate. “Multiliteracies creates a different kind of pedagogy: one in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2002, p.5)

The Canon: Literary works that have come to be considered standard or traditionally included in the classroom and published textbooks. These works are thought to be suitable for admiration and study due to their literary merit.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical construct of multiliteracies will serve as the overarching concept to frame this study. The multiliteracies theory of learning was created in 1996 by a group of ten scholars—known as the New London Group, and who were also associated with the New Literacy Studies. These scholars collaborated on a seminal work, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* (New London Group, 1996), from which the term “multiliteracies” came to refer to two major aspects of language use. The first is a variable of meaning making in different cultural, social, or domain-specific contexts. This means that communication and representation of meaning today increasingly requires that learners are able to figure out differences in patterns of meaning from one context to another. These differences arise as the consequence of any number of factors, including culture, gender, life experience, subject matter, social or subject domain, and the like. Every meaning exchange is cross-cultural to a certain degree (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

The second aspect of language use the term “multiliteracies” refers to is related, in part, to the characteristics of new information and communications media. Meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal—written-linguistic modes of meaning increasingly interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial patterns of meaning. This increase of multimodal meaning making indicates a need to extend the range of literacy pedagogy to avoid undue privileging of alphabetical representations as well as bring multimodal representations, particularly those typical of the new, digital media into the classroom. This makes multiliteracies pedagogy all the more engaging for its apparent connections with today’s communications milieu.

Multiliteracies engage students in a process of designing that socially situates literacy learning. The New London Group’s theory of multiliteracies proposed that students construct meaning by designing—meaning that accounts for both consumption and production of text as literate practice. The New London Group decided “to treat any semiotic activity, including using language to produce or consume texts, as a matter of Design involving three elements: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned” (1996, p. 20). This theory implied that all texts are somehow intertextual and involve a continuum of transformation, which can be likened to the concept of remixing texts. *Available Designs* (or available patterns of meaning, including grammar and orders of discourse), *Designing* (the work you do when you make meaning, or how you appropriate and re-voice and transform Available Designs), and *creating the Redesigned* (how, through the act of Designing, the world and the person are transformed, which is never a “transmission” or the same as the original meaning) can all be applied to remixing classic texts, as well as other texts (New London Group, 1996).

Teachers using a pedagogy of multiliteracies provide students with opportunities to work as part of learning communities that utilize explicit metalanguages as they draw from multiple modes of meaning (e.g., linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal elements combined in the Available Designs) to describe the patterns behind meaning (Cole & Pullen, 2010). I chose this particular theory for this research because its concepts derive from serving a diverse demographic of students and work to build students' interest and engagement with a variety of texts (Jacobs, 2012).

The New London Group (2000) argued that effective literacy pedagogy is a complex integration of four components embedded in cultural, social, and material contexts, as the foundation of a four-component pedagogy: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice. *Situated Practice* involves learners in authentic and meaningful practices based on learners' experiences. *Overt Instruction* refers to the active intervention on the part of the teacher and other experts to scaffold learning, the process of which enables the learner to acquire metalanguage—the language to understand and describe the discourse of learned practice. *Critical Framing* focuses on helping learners put their mastery and understanding of practice into the context of the historical, political, cultural, social, and ideological systems. Finally, *Transformed Practice* reflects a pedagogical way for students to demonstrate how they can reflectively carry out new practices steeped in their own goals and values (Ryan, 2008).

The four components of multiliteracies pedagogy are designed to be fluid and non-linear, as they are not necessarily sequential but interwoven to capitalize on different ways of student learning and knowing (Henderson & Exley, 2012). This approach gives teachers a greater range of options in planning a variety of learning activities that make the teaching and learning

engaging and relevant. This theory of multiliteracies proposes that literacy instruction, situated in a socially dynamic and multimodal context, is marked by the collaborative nature of textual production and interpretation. In 2005, the New London Group updated the four components to translate them into more recognizable pedagogical acts or “knowledge processes” of “Experiencing,” “Conceptualizing,” “Analyzing,” and “Applying” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005).

Table1: *Components of Multiliteracies Pedagogy.*

Pedagogical Orientations – 1996 Multiliteracies curriculum orientation	Formulation Knowledge Processes – 2006 Reformulation Learning by Design
Situated Practice	Experiencing ... the Known ... the New
Overt Instruction	Conceptualizing ... by Naming ... with Theory
Critical Framing	Analyzing ... Functionally ... Critically
Transformed Practice	Applying ... Appropriately ... Creatively

Note: Adapted from Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). “Multiliteracies”: New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4(3), 164-195.

The *Learning by Design* model “acknowledges student differences, interests, prior knowledge and skills as valuable resources for teaching and encourages teachers to plan learning experiences accordingly” (Willis, 2009). Teachers and students are called to cast themselves in new collaborative roles within communities of learners that transcend the classroom through the inclusion of professional peers, outside experts and members of the broader community (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). Multiliteracies projects entail long-term learning goals, the collapse of traditional curriculum divisions, and the construction of complex types of texts commensurate with community text practices. They also seek to promote substantive learning by engaging

students as active investigators within authentic learning contexts. Such enterprises are designed with specific purposes and target audiences in mind (Willis, 2009). In this study, I examine how teachers and students perceive the non-linear nature of a pedagogy of multiliteracies and the multimodal learning that occurs in an online learning environment.

Summary

The digital turn—an allusion to Gee’s (2000) “social turn” in literacy research—is a consequence of globalization and the growing range of technologies for communication. Research in new literacies has similarly reflected the changing emphasis from research on print-based reading and writing practices to include new textual practices that are mediated by digital technologies. Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic (2000) observed the beginnings of this shift and their review of case studies shows a steady output of research in this important and changing field. Researchers began to open the door to considering practices outside of the classroom that involve visual, gestural, and other forms of “texts” due to concerns with how sweeping changes in our society affect literacy (Alvermann, 2012; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). Proponents of the “new literacies” argued that readers must now be prepared to interpret multimedia texts that incorporate print, visual, and verbal modes (e.g., Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999; Elkins & Luke, 1999; Hagood, 2000). Other researchers examined literacy in the context of cultures, and noted that disconnect can occur when the literacy practices of a community differ from those promoted in schools (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Heath, 1983). The work of the New London Group (e.g., 1996; 200) exemplified this expansion of literacy research, as the group consisted of researchers and theorists from fields as diverse as linguistics, literacy pedagogy, and media literacy studies. Moreover, these diverse scholars came together to develop both a theoretical base and a

pedagogy of multiliteracies broader than language alone, allowing for variation in cultures and contexts.

In my search for ways to enact a pedagogy of multiliteracies in the K-12 classroom, this study looked at students' perceptions of using a digital interface while reading William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597). In this chapter, I presented the background and/or current problem underlying my investigation into the theoretical concept of multiliteracies, provided an overview of the research problem, stated the research questions, defined the operational terms, and articulated the significance of the study. The following chapter presents a review of the literature pertinent to the study of perceptions as they relate to reading the canon and using an online environment to interact with the canon.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In the following review, I examine the literature I found particularly relevant as I prepared to study multiliteracies and its juxtaposition to the new “technical stuff” and the new “ethos stuff” of new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007), membership in a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009), and the use of the canon in the classroom. The purpose of this review is to explore research that contributed to the theoretical framework and design of the present study. Specifically, I discuss research in the pedagogy of multiliteracies and review research of two underlying concepts guiding my design. These concepts inform my goals, questions, and methodology (Maxwell, 2005) for this study. The two concepts that are connected with multiliteracies are *new literacies*—specifically the new “technical stuff” (addressing the remix concept) and the new “ethos stuff” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007)—and the *affiliation* in a participatory culture (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robinson, & Weigel, 2009) through the production and distribution of texts (Jacobs, 2012). I explain how these concepts explicitly intersect with my study’s purpose and goals as an exploration of teachers’ and students’ perceptions of (re)creating, participating, and meaning making in an online student lounge.

Finally, I examine teachers’ use of classic texts in a new literacies (multiliteracies being a specific strand of new literacies) classroom environment and argue how these studies have been beneficial in demonstrating the relevance of continuing to teach the canon in the secondary English curriculum. I then conclude with an explanation of why this present study is needed. I

offer a rationale for this pedagogical multiliteracies study with an inclusive treatment that examines the nexus of participatory culture, the new literacies “ethos stuff,” and canon texts.

To further illustrate the nexus and interconnectedness of the above three concepts to multiliteracies, I will first review “juxtaposition.” The term is used to describe a literary technique that places two ideas, places, or characters side by side in a narrative or poem, primarily for some form of comparison or contrast. This technique can also be used to create a sense of dramatic irony or suspense, a rhetorical effect, or to further refine a heroine’s characterization.

So, why would one juxtapose? As a teacher, I believe paralleling concepts and ideas in a juxtaposition allows students to more critically view and analyze the texts presented to them in class. But even more crucial than their classroom experiences, this ability to critically view and analyze situations helps students live successfully as human beings in everyday society. This literary method illustrates the importance of not only examining similarities or differences, but also understanding the interconnectedness of concepts, places, and characters. For example, Tybalt and Romeo are characters in *Romeo and Juliet* who are presented as hot-tempered, love-sick, and respectful, and the contrast and parallels in the play is how Shakespeare developed his characterization and those elements are needed for movement of the plot to yield the unfolding turn of events and complexities that occur to keep the reader interested. In this study, I will illustrate how the contrasts and parallels of remixing classic literature, participating in a collaborative environment, and using the “new ethos” concept relate to a pedagogy of multiliteracies, as well as the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of these elements used in the classroom.

Background

Gee (2012) stated, “the ideological model attempts to understand literacy in terms of concrete social practices and to theorize it in terms of the ideologies in which different literacies are embedded” (p. 76). These literacies are not only implicitly entrenched in cultural and social contexts, but also in power and authority relationships. By arguing that no literacy theory is objective or neutral, Street (1995) seemed to understand that being overt about the “ideological model” will drive literacy studies in new directions, including that of the concept of multiple literacies. Multiliteracies is critical “in challenging the autonomous model” (Street, 1995, p.134). Identifying and recognizing multiple literacies in the educational system will potentially further democratize the educational process and contribute to greater equality and opportunity. Ultimately, it may lead to the creation of a teaching/learning model built on the “practices” of multiple and social literacies that are currently marginalized.

New Literacy Studies can be considered philoprogenitive, creating literacies that are both new and familiar—multiliteracies, digital literacies, emerging technologies, and twenty-first century literacies. In the *Handbook of New Literacies Research*, Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, and Leu (2008) noted that all these terms are used to refer to related phenomena in the new literacies family. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2011), in order for the New Literacy Studies to continue to play an important role in relation to literacy education in the coming years, it will be compulsory for its scholars to pay collective attention to the “new” literacies, a strand of which is multiliteracies.

A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

The New London Group (1996) gave the theoretical overview of the term “multiliteracies” by maintaining that the use of multiliteracies approaches to pedagogy will

enable students to achieve two goals for literacy learning: “creating access to the evolving language of work, power, and community, and fostering the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures and achieve success through fulfilling employment” (p. 77). A metalanguage of “designs of meaning” is discussed in depth below to help the reader understand how the new literacies are taken up in this work.

In reviewing a case study of a multiliteracies classroom, Giampapa (2010) examined the pedagogical choices enacted by the teacher with a group of linguistically diverse students. Emphasis was given to critical literacy as a way to help students gain knowledge of the multiliteracies curriculum. In Giampapa’s (2010) study, the instructor developed opportunities for students to access academic literacies through the creation of multimodal, dual-language “identity texts” (p. 409). In these texts, students examined what their native language meant to them and what it meant to be a second language learner. Walsh (2010) and Danzak (2011) also used a multiliteracies approach to support literacy development of elementary aged students. Danzak’s study engaged students in creating graphic novels that told their stories of immigration. In Walsh’s study, multiple classes and teachers interacted with a variety of topics that were approached from a multiliteracies perspective and displayed how students’ language and literacy practices evolved during class projects.

These three case studies (i.e., Giampapa, 2010; Walsh, 2010; Danzak, 2011) not only developed students’ academic literacies, but also their ability to use and understand multimodality. Walsh (2010), in particular, cited that using multiliteracies was successful and “the result of the teachers planning with a holistic approach so that there was a continuum in the development of print and digital literacy practiced” (p. 225). In Mills’ (2009) work on incorporating film, she focused on using the *functional* to lead to the *critical*—an essential

element of multiliteracies—by explicitly teaching the qualities of a variety of genres and text structures and taking into account that explanations can be static and embedded within context. She argued that explicit teaching is necessary so “teachers can focus the students’ attention on the function of multimodal elements and how they are used to represent the world and position viewers for certain social purposes” (Mills, 2009, p. 36).

New Literacy Studies and the Studies of New Literacies

New Literacy Studies (NLS) has been defined specifically as an interdisciplinary field devoted to studying language, learning and literacy in an integrated way, in a way that involves the full range of cognitive, social and cultural contexts (Gee, 2004). The research developed on NLS over the last 20 years offers specific and detailed ethnographic evidence about the way in which people learn about, and with, the written word, both in and outside of formal educational settings. When examining practices at a specific point in time, it is clear that literacy practices come from somewhere. They exist within cultural contexts and are built up from existing practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2005).

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2011), there is an “interesting ambiguity and tension” in the idea of “new literacy studies” (p. 184). From one standpoint, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) refers to a new way of looking at literacy—a sociocultural approach to literacy. From another standpoint, “new literacy studies” refers to studies of new forms of literacy. There appears to be an evident divide between teacher education in language and literacy and two key trends in language and literacy research: the prominence of “The New Literacy Studies” and recent surge in “studies of new literacies” associated with new media, information communications technologies (ICT), and web 2.0.

The New Literacy Studies, or NLS, represents multiple strands of sociocultural research that emerged in the 1980s as part of a “social turn” from a focus on individual cognition toward an emphasis on literacy as social practice in language and literacy studies (Gee, 1999; Cushman 2001). For sociocultural scholars, NLS offered a necessary alternative to the cognitive and psycholinguistic studies that dominated language and literacy education between the 1960s and 1980s previously discussed in this chapter. Prior to the social turn, reading and writing research primarily examined linguistic phenomena “on the page” or cognitive processes “in the head” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Dressman, 2007; Gee, 2009; Brass & Burns, 2011). Often in opposition to these psycholinguistic traditions, NLS posited that language and literacy did “not just reside in people’s heads as a set of skills to be learned, nor . . . reside on paper, captured as texts to be analyzed” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 3). Rather, from a sociocultural perspective, language and literacy were fundamentally social practices situated in particular social, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts.

NLS saw literacy as something people did inside society, not in their heads. It argued that literacy was not primarily a mental phenomenon, but, rather, a sociocultural one. Literacy was deemed a social and cultural achievement—ways of participating in social and cultural groups—not just a mental achievement. Thus, literacy needed to be understood and studied in its full range of contexts—not just cognitive processes, but social, cultural, historical, and institutional processes as well (Gee, 2009).

At its core, sociocultural research foregrounds how the meanings and uses of literacy are situated in particular communities, patterned by sociopolitical relationships, and invested with particular norms and values. As Gee (2009) noted, people do not simply read and write in general rather, they read and write specific sorts of texts in specific ways that are situated in

specific contexts and shaped by culturally patterned ways of knowing, being, and doing. Thus, it is misleading to make universal claims about “literacy” and its cognitive consequences because literate practice assumes different shapes, meanings, and values in different contexts, such as a youth zine culture, online chat spaces, feminist reading groups, or different religious ceremonies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

Another trend in the research literature on language and literacy has been the emergence of “studies of new literacies,” such as fan fiction, blogging, digital composing, social media, and on-line gaming (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Following the publication of the New London Group’s (1996) influential treatise on multiliteracies, language and literacy researchers have increasingly documented how literate practices in contemporary personal, social, civic, and economic life are influenced by increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, multimodality, and the proliferation of new media and digital technologies (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). This line of research has complicated simplistic notions of literacy and expanded inquiry in the field well beyond its traditional focus on typographic texts and school-based forms of literacy.

The “New Literacy Studies” and “studies of new literacies” may or may not intersect in contemporary research (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). For example, NLS made an important contribution by documenting diverse literacy practices across contexts; however, until recently, a considerable majority of sociocultural research has emphasized print-based forms of literacy—not the social practices associated with popular culture, new media, and web 2.0. At the same time, some studies of new literacies have adopted traditional modes of linguistic or cognitive analysis that overlook much of what is “new” about “new literacies” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Leu, 2008; Tierney, 2009). For Lankshear and Knobel (2006), the most generative lines of

contemporary research employ sociocultural methodologies—NLS—towards the study of new literacies. By approaching new literacies as social practices, scholars and practitioners can recognize the qualitatively different social norms and relationships that shape and are shaped by contemporary configurations of literate practice:

The more a literacy practice privileges participation over publishing, distributed expertise over centralized expertise, collective intelligence over individualized possessive intelligence, collaboration over individuated authorship, dispersion over scarcity, sharing over ownership, experimentation over “normalization”, innovation and evolution over stability and fixity, creative-innovative rule breaking over generic purity and policing, Phase 2 automation over Phase I automation, relationship over information broadcast, and so on, the more we should regard it as a “new” literacy. (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 60)

The “New Literacy Studies” and “studies of new literacies” have clearly influenced language and literacy research in important ways. In contrast, teacher education in reading, literacy, and English language arts has maintained a cognitive focus on reading and writing processes, essayist forms of literacy, and traditional, print-based texts (Rowell, Kosnick, & Beck, 2008; Street, 2005). Given this disconnect in language and literacy education, some scholars have pushed for teacher education courses to adopt sociocultural orientations and account for the diversity of language and literacy practices that constitute early twenty-first century personal, social, civic, and economic life (Larson, 2005; Street, 2005; Rowell, Kosnick, & Beck, 2008).

The Canon

In one of the first courses I took in this doctoral program, the idea of who decides what texts are considered classic and worthy to be studied and who decides which are not became a topic of discussion. As classmates philosophized, I sat quietly, listened, and quickly decided that I would not contribute to this conversation. . I was, at the time, working as a middle school Language Arts teacher. I knew that classics would always be taught, even though we had now sprinkled in a bit of popular young adult fare as supplemental reading to show students that we did care about their interests.

As a high school teenager, I did not read many of the classic texts that were assigned because I was not interested in them. I was more attracted to 1980s contemporary adult fiction like Irving's (1982) *The World According to Garp* than *The Great Gatsby* or *Sherlock Holmes*. In fact, I don't even remember which specific canonical texts were assigned. I gladly relied on the Cliff Notes version to any and every piece of literature that was listed on any of my high school syllabi. In spite of this, I did quite well in high school, graduating second in my class. It was only when I attended college and majored in English that I became enamored with classic texts. So what happened? Was I more mature and able to appreciate the literature? To be honest, it was because my professor made the plays—the tragedies and the comedies—of Shakespeare come alive through his earnest desire for everyone to read this playwright's work and enjoy it to the fullest. He engaged his class with his delivery—it was not his recitation of soliloquys, but his innate ability to relate Shakespeare and his thematic ideas to the real world, to my world!

Is this the answer to how we can get our digital natives, who cannot go ten minutes in class without checking their cell phones, to fall in love with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*? In

Ostenson and Gleason-Sutton's (2011) article on making the classics matter to adolescents, they approached their study by framing a new approach to reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, by asking essential questions that were open-ended with multiple answers. One such question was, "What is worth risking everything for" (p. 38)? These questions allowed students to collaboratively explore issues they cared about. Students also created multimedia projects where they used images and music, as well as other modes, to (re)create their own understandings of the literary texts. This project not only tapped into their personal interests in using digital texts, it also encouraged them to engage in multimodal learning through "rigorous thinking about the characters and themes of the novel" (p. 38).

Teachers allowing students the opportunity to create projects in ways that are meaningful to them, while still requiring close reading of the texts, can increase the relevance of canonical texts to students' lives. That is, if the classroom instruction is authentic and based on what is happening in students' out-of-school realities. Placing importance and focus on students' real worlds may bring new meaning to academic literacies, if teachers are able to highlight how students can be "producers, designers, and members of vibrant online and offline communities" (Jacobs, 2012, p. 101).

Teachers are more than aware of the need for culturally relevant, academic instruction to connect the realities of their students' lives to course content, as well as make it worthwhile for the students (Alvermann, 2010; Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012). A significant aspect of this research is the emphasis on how classics are used to guide our students to "critically engage with the complexities of the social and cultural world(s) they inhabit today" (Hassett & Spike, 2010, p. 7). Why teach the classics? According to Calvino (1999), there are two reasons: 1) power and identity; and 2) identity and self-representation. These two reasons are inseparably tied to New

Literacy Studies and resonate with Gee's (2012) assertion that literacy is not considered a single idea. And being literate in new literacy studies is not a "single identity to possess because the social and cultural contexts in which communication occurs can be multiple" (Hassett & Spike, 2010, p. 8). Gee (1996) elucidated the concept of socially situated identities through a well-known and humorous example. Gee's example involved a professor who walked into a biker bar and asked, "May I have a match for my cigarette?" Rather than speaking in the lingo of the bar—"Gotta match?"—the professor's language reflected multiple socially situated identities. Although Gee's example is rather humorous, it offers a lesson worthy of our full consideration when exploring the relevance of classic literature in our socioeconomically stratified and linguistically diverse society.

In terms of identity politics, issues of power, and the construction of the self through social practices, students' interaction with social media is fluid and ever changing. But characteristics of classic literature can still resonate with today's adolescents insofar as it can define and speak to them (Hassett & Spike, 2010). In classrooms where instructors teach literacy standards, there is always a component of making meaning out of texts. Students need a chance to discover meaning from texts, even if the texts do not initially interest them. Incorporating identity and agency into conversations about literature is extremely important for many students at the high school level. Although it may be difficult to grasp, students can relate to texts that are required in the classroom when they are infused with relevance for their daily lives. Students can learn from such conversations if they are given opportunities to discuss why they can or cannot identify with a text. Moreover, students and teachers can learn from each other through these conversations. There are a variety of approaches to classic texts within certain "themes" or "topics," which I will discuss further in my research findings.

The Remix

Although it is not a new concept, the remix is the art of recreating a new idea from a form that has already been created. The notion of the remix has recently gained popularity in mainstream sources ranging from video games to newspaper columns. It is even a common element of television commercials for airline tickets, fried chicken, and soft drinks. All these examples draw on a concept that originated in hip hop culture and refers to the creative blending of materials from different sources (Mahiri, 2004). Lessig (as cited in Lankshear and Knobel, (2011) made the analogy between students' writing and the remix because, in both writing and remixing, the "writers" draw on texts of multiple authors to inform their work. This happens when learners take "words and texts and the tools of pen and pencil to make new texts, or to remix text" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 106). In other words, we draw on what we know—including the work of others—and rework this knowledge creatively each time we express something in this world. Whether in school and out of school, young people are increasingly engaging in these literacy practices, especially with increased access to digital tools for mixing still and moving images, print texts, and sound to create multimodal texts.

In a literary remix, particularly the canon since it relates to the present study, students focus on intertextual connections to build understandings of literature situated in particular social, cultural, and historical contexts. Students create multimodal texts to communicate their understandings of ideas that stem from their own research. The multimodal texts incorporate visual-pictorial, audio, and typographic print so students can communicate understandings of ideas and realities around specific pieces of literature they studied. In Gainer and Lapp's (2010) study, urban youth, after reading works from Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, inferred links between the racism and racial profiling of the 1920s and the same issues of today. Students

engaged with the ideas and writings of Hughes and Hurston as they discussed their works, made connections to their own life experiences, and conducted further research on the authors and the 1920s. The students created comic strips through an online site called Comic Creator to interact and learn more about the works of the authors. Such an assignment has the potential to expand students' understandings of race, history, society, and their participation as members of that society.

Remixing can be viewed as a critical social literacy practice within popular culture. Adolescents use the remix concept while engaged in social media sites such as Snapchat, Vine, Instagram, and Twitter. Content is created or appropriated from existing stories and then reorganized to generate new texts for a variety of purposes (e.g., individual pleasure, collaboration with peers or affinity groups, etc.). Remixes are becoming popular among students engaged in a new kind of social activism, who subvert traditional stories as a form of political commentary. Memes, which act as a cultural idea or symbol, can be transmitted from one idea to another. These popular forms of remix typically involve a good dose of irony, satire, or humor and are commonly circulated on social media websites. Students and adults have appropriated images for remixes. For example, a photo of Kermit the Frog, originally used in a Lipton tea advertisement, has been appropriated, reworked, and remixed into various other contexts where Kermit appears to be thinking or commenting on common everyday occurrences or relevant, trending popular culture issues. According to Thomas (2011), remixes are not just videos or memes that might go viral; rather, "they have the power to change perspectives, thoughts or behaviors" (p. 222). This potential of remixes may result in similar transformations in classroom contexts. They can generate a similar level of engagement students enjoy in their out-of-school

literacies, without codifying for rigid didactic purposes or standards-based instruction that may actually encroach upon students' autonomous capacities to create purpose, value, and meaning.

Another form of remix that has been used in the classroom is what Lankshear and Knobel (2011) called "culture jamming." Culture jamming is an engagement strategy for students who want to gain the "maximum attention with minimum resources or inputs" (Lankshear & Knobel, p. 229). A common strategy of *adbusters.org*, culture jamming is a process that targets "worthy media events and advertising, cultural practices, and overbloated corporate globalization with knife-sharp critiques in the form of parodies" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 201). Using this new literacies form of remix, is even more meaningful when teaching to students who deal with inequities in their daily lives. Teachers can easily illustrate how having little or no resources is not always a negative. One critique may be the usurpation of another's established idea or advertisement to make it one's own is not an ideally creative activity for students; however, in our contemporary sociocultural context there are many teachable moments to point out the many allusions and intertextualities available to inform students' literacy practices.

Students love literature "remixes." *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Austen & Grahame-Smith, 2009), for example, takes a satirical look at a classic novel (and this particular remix is soon to be a major motion picture). I like to think of remixes as a closer relative of "culture jamming," which can also take a satirical or ironic look at ads. When looking for images of "culture jamming" on Google, I came across a picture of a FedEx, look-a-like, stand-alone service center that read "FedUp with excess." Similar activities are potentially fruitful for adolescents with a wry sense of humor. Students' awareness of social commentary, business strategies, and political overtures ultimately help increase their literacy achievement because they are becoming readers and writers of the world. When students produce and not just

consume images, and when students create concepts that require them to dig deeper than the surface, they increase their abilities to articulate the complexity of socially situated and multimodal meanings. Although this requires much more effort than they would initially suppose, it is a tactile way for students to adopt some critical stances about global literacy. There has been an influx of new literacies related to information and communications technologies (ITCs) in the last few years, which may be a reason for teacher reticence to implement these new technologies and literacies with students. I intentionally separated examples of “new literacies” from NLS in an attempt to distinguish the two terms. The practices I mentioned were highlighted due to the wide range of cultural politics these new literacies tend to adopt as an active or critical stance (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Trying to implement the latest and greatest gadget or technological tool can be overwhelming, and it is questionable whether or not new online and technologically enhanced literacies produce any *new* insights for literacies and social practices. However, e-zines, memes, blogs, fanfiction, scenariating, multimediate, etc., are widely researched with the findings being published in peer reviewed journals and presented in conferences. Yet, the impact on local teaching in K-12 public schools remains unclear.

Multiliteracies, Web 2.0 Ethos, and Participatory Culture

When considering possible topics to research for this study, I intentionally looked for topics I could immerse myself in every day—topics I would want to revisit over and over again. Ultimately, I sought a topic that would simultaneously be infinite in possibilities and highly focused on phenomena that I could participate in, observe, and analyze. I found those qualities in researching a pedagogy of multiliteracies juxtaposed with the concepts of participatory culture and the new “ethos stuff” of Web 2.0 (Jacobs, 2012). In an effort to further clarify this

juxtaposition, I will briefly discuss some of the relevant literature as well as depict a graphic representation of the interconnectedness of this theory and these concepts (see Figure 1 below).

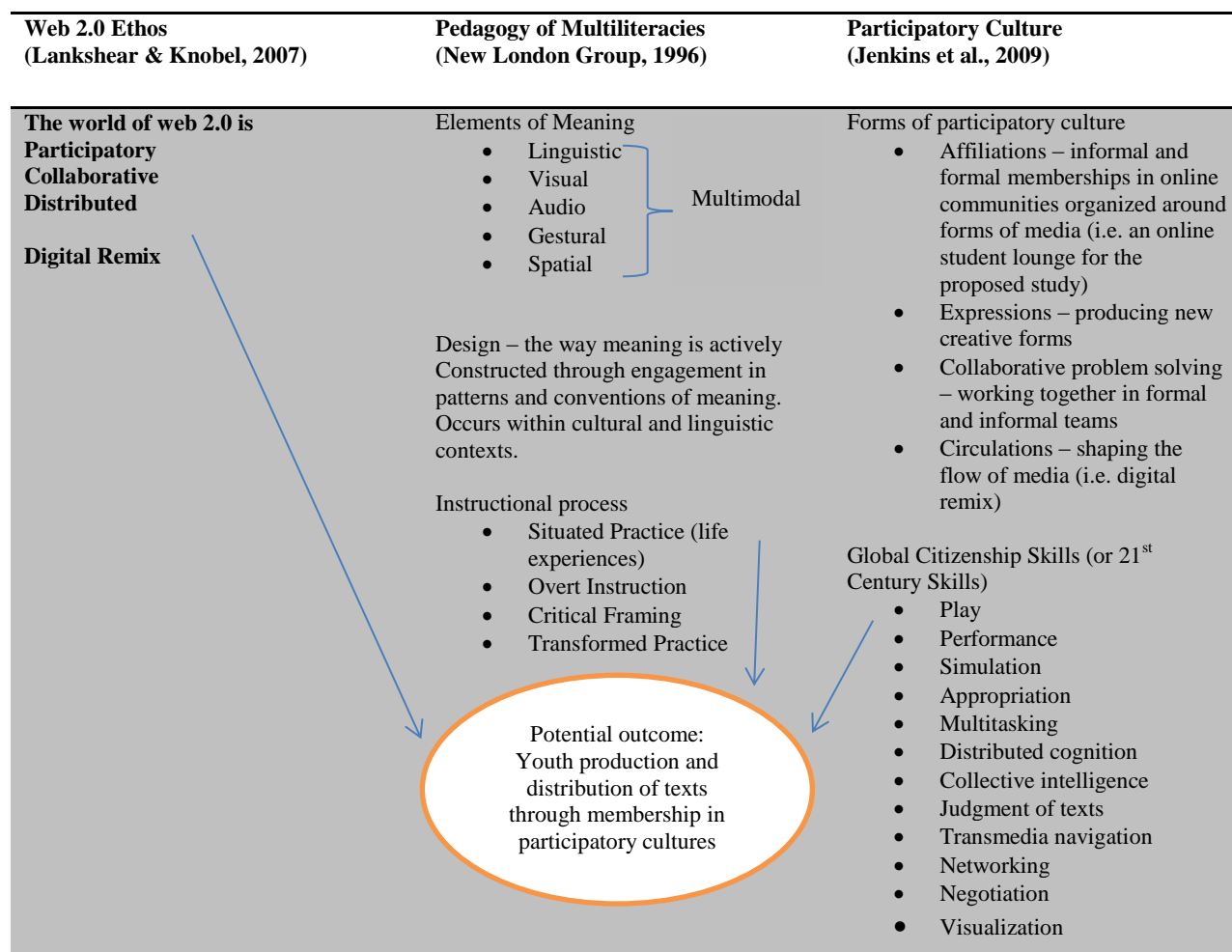


Figure 1. The Interconnected Nature of Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, Web 2.0 Ethos, and Participatory Culture.

Jenkins and his academic collaborators (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison, 2009) offered the following characteristics and description a participatory culture:

[A participatory culture has] relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is

passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another. (p. 3)

By considering the concept of production, which occurs within a community and the idea that one's contributions matter, we can turn attention to the pedagogy of multiliteracies' concept of design. The six elements of design (linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal) are used within cultural and linguistic contexts. The goal is not to reproduce what has come before but to (re)design or (re)create new meaning. It is within designs taught and learned through situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice that "students may be able to move from being consumers of texts to producers, thus becoming members of a participatory culture" (Jacobs, 2012, p. 100).

Chandler-Olcott and Mahar's (2003) study of middle-school aged girls' practices with technology through the lens of the New London Group's pedagogical framework (Cope & Kalantzis, 2002) gives insight into multiliteracies as their research revealed observations of two 12-year-old girls' uses of information and communication technologies in their everyday lives. Their study aimed to obtain insights into the participants' meaning making processes, their communities of practice, and their digital tool use in relation to developing and negotiating identity. With respect to the participants themselves, they shared a common, active interest in animé (animated Japanese cartoons), though they expressed this interest in different ways. The girls came from different socioeconomic backgrounds and had different access to online digital resources, spaces, and relationships. This Web 2.0 affinity space promoted a participatory culture, which, again, highlights how these concepts are related.

The findings of Chandler-Olcott and Mahar's (2003) study demonstrated how an ongoing, online mentorship played an important role in these two girls' tech-savviness. Additionally, both girls appeared to create richer social lives online than they did at school. In terms of internet access, dial-up service connections for both girls—irrespective of their families' socioeconomic status—limited their full participation, to some degree, in multimedia interconnectivity with peers. This study took place in Australia and explored the students' out-of-school literacies. Thus, a critique could be levelled at this study's limitations to inform classroom instruction and a pedagogy of multiliteracies, as it occurred outside of the classroom.

When Lankshear and Knobel (2011) stated that new literacies involve different “ethos stuff” than that which is typically associated with conventional literacies, they meant that new literacies are more “participatory,” “collaborative,” and “distributed” in nature than conventional literacies. That is, they are less “published,” “individuated,” and “author-centric” than conventional literacies. They are also less “expert-dominated” than conventional literacies. The rules and norms that govern new literacies are more fluid and less abiding than those typically associated with established literacies. We understand this difference in “ethos,” between conventional and new literacies, in terms of a much larger historical and social phenomenon that involves a “fracturing of space” and the emergence of an accompanying new mindset. For example, Britannica Online is more authoritative in nature than Wikipedia. This is due, in part, to Wikipedia's more collaborative ethos—an ethos where different individuals with a shared interest in a particular subject may post new updates and contribute information to Internet consumers. Wikipedia is more collaborative than Britannica Online, just as a blog (Web 2.0) is collaborative than a personal webpage (Web 1.0). In terms of ethos, Web 2.0 celebrates

inclusion, mass participation, and distributed expertise. It reaches out to “all-of-the-Web,” regardless of distinction (Anderson, 2006).

Yet, the use of ethos, participatory culture, and multiliteracies is still very limited in classroom instruction and not necessarily viewed as intertwined to the authentic, real world instruction desired in our schools. Many of the studies related to a pedagogy of multiliteracies took place outside the classroom; however, this is a burgeoning field of inquiry, and I remain hopeful that my study may begin to fill this gap.

Although tools for communication, information sharing, and text production are rapidly multiplying in our increasingly diverse world, the official discourse of education remains very narrowly focuses on measurable, high stakes tests and Common Core State Standards. This narrow focus directly conflicts with the social reality of our globalized, information-based society. Moreover, it narrows and limits—to our own peril—what is considered acceptable literacy learning. The end result: Students with access to digital practices outside of the classroom become producers; those students without access become marginalized as consumers. When students’ opportunities for participation are limited, it leaves them at risk of becoming what Gee (2000) referred to as “backwater” or disposable employees!

Participatory culture can provide inclusive access and membership, in socially relevant and meaningful ways, for students to potentially enact a sense of agency in their social, authentic, (virtual) spaces for learning. As Mills (2009) recognized, “texts are viewed as sites where culture is produced or reproduced” (p. 3). I believe this is a critical element of multiliteracies that cannot be over emphasized.

Pressure is not placed upon any one particular student who may not want to contribute to a class discussion, because not every member *needs* to participate. For example, a student who

knows her/his input and opinion is valued most likely feels comfortable participating and collaborating whenever she/he decides to enact membership within the group. The community to which the student belongs should provide “strong incentives for creative expression and active participation” (Jenkins, 2009, p. 6). Furthermore, every child should have opportunities for self-expression through sounds, images, words, and other multimodal ways. Doing so may potentially change the way a child views himself as well as the work of others.

This element of a participatory environment is worthy of further examination and is of relevance to the present study, because of its close kinship to a pedagogy of multiliteracies as a student centered and situated practice where variables, given the context, may change greatly with different classrooms. A pedagogy of multiliteracies ensures differentiated curriculum by focusing on each student and allowing individualized development through multiliterate, multilayered, and multimodal learning (Cara, 2009).

Summary

In this section, I explored the available research pertaining to integration of multiliteracies within literacy instruction. In examining each of these studies, I highlighted what we currently understand about the pedagogy of multiliteracies while simultaneously emphasizing the need for my particular study to further inform the field. The discussed concepts related to multiliteracies such as participatory culture, the remix, and the canon as it related directly to the study. In the following chapter, I discuss the methodology used within my study focusing specifically on methods of data collection and analysis used to design, conduct, and report on this study. I provide a description of my research site, participants, and explain the process of data collection for my case study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of Mount Oak High School (all names of places and people are pseudonyms), the school setting for this descriptive case study. I will provide general information about Mount Oak High School, the community, and the process of selecting this school for this research. I will then continue with a detailed description and explanation of each data collection method used for this case study, including participant observation, collection of documents and artifacts, and interviewing. I will also include specific details about the data sources I used to develop this account of a pedagogy of multiliteracies in two classroom environments. Finally, I will review the data analysis process, resulting in a detailed account of the research methodology used for this study.

Site Selection, Participants, and Description

The school site was chosen due to its convenience. Mount Oak High School is where I, the teacher-researcher, am employed as the school library media specialist. I chose to work with ninth grade teachers and students because I am familiar with the students. They migrated to Mount Oak from the middle school where I was previously employed as a parent instructional support coordinator. Both schools are directly across the street from each other with a walking path between them for easy access.

In addition, ninth grade is a transitional year as students move from middle to high school. I wanted to examine the interactions of students being placed in a new environment. I also believed these students would be familiar with most of their peers, and felt this familiarity would possibly play an integral role in creating a participatory culture in the classroom. I was

also personally interested in observing how ninth grade teachers approached a new unit with students who were transitioning to high school.

Mount Oak High School is located in the northeast area of a suburb of a major metropolitan city. It has an enrollment of approximately 1,925 students, of which 64% are Black, 11% are White, 13% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian, and 9% are Multiracial. The community has seen a continual change in the last ten years from a predominately White school to a predominately Black school. Sixty-seven percent of the students receive free or reduced school lunch. As a Title I school, Mount Oak receives additional funds from the federal government to ensure students have the same resources as other schools in higher socioeconomic communities.

The school has consistently met state requirements for standardized testing and academics. Two summers prior to this study, all teachers in the district were required to attend a two-day technology seminar designed to assist them in integrating technology in their instruction. This was a new initiative of the school system, and it focused on increasing all teachers' proficiency and comfort level with technology use in the classroom. The rationale was that digital tools can enhance their teaching and facilitate greater engagement with students. Although a multiliteracies pedagogy was not discussed directly, this workshop provided me with some initial insights into the teachers' thoughts and perceptions regarding technology and digital tools, which may have also influenced my teacher participants' perceptions related to enacting a multiliteracies pedagogy. The workshop's purpose was to introduce to teachers various ways to engage students with different modes of communication. Digital tools such as wikis, blogs, and VoiceThread were highlighted to present differentiated instruction. Both of the teachers in this study attended the workshop and had employed one or more new digital tools in their

classrooms. The teachers were chosen for the study due to their being open to teaching with new tools and because they were familiar with me as a teacher in our schools' cluster.

James. The first teacher identified as a White male who was interested in exploring new literacy practices. James, replaced me, as the Language Arts teacher on a team of three other teachers four years earlier when I left the district for another position. He and I never met before I asked him to participate in this study, but he was referred to me as a potential participant from one of our mutual, former teacher-teammates at the middle school where I was previously employed. James, originally from the northern United States, taught freshman Language Arts for the majority of his 19 years as a teacher and athletic coach in Georgia and Massachusetts. He has a daughter who graduated last year from Mount Oak High School. James had, in the past, used a variety of digital tools in his classroom (e.g., blogs, wikis, etc.). And although he has a commanding presence, he always creates a welcoming academic environment with his witty banter, storytelling, and convivial style of teaching.

James, one of the few male teachers in the English Language Arts (ELA) department, wears a tie, dress shirt, and slacks each day. His teaching style is reminiscent of a college professor I encountered during my undergraduate years—teacher centered and lecture based instruction, yet quite interactive and engaging because he relates to students by using slang and informal language to find a common ground with them. During our interview, he shared that he had also been in a graduate program and was a strong proponent of research-based and instruction in his teaching. As a result, he was very inviting and cooperative in any and all collaboration with me. Although he admitted that he did not integrate digital technologies in his current teaching, besides the daily PowerPoint, he had done so in the past, but now felt that with all of the initiatives our school was embarking upon, such as career academies and a new

International Baccalaureate Program, there were now more meetings and less time for planning. The ninth grade teachers met each Monday to discuss units and upcoming assessments. These meetings helped ensure they were all collectively organized in their lessons; however, there were also times when the meetings disallowed teacher spontaneity, generally resulting in just following the “script” of resources and lessons shared from year to year. Ultimately, James felt that though this type of unified planning of lessons was useful, it also reinforced and continued traditional, teacher directed literacy instruction. In spite of teacher complaints and challenges regarding some of the lessons and dated material, the monotonous teaching continued to permeate how literacy instruction was implemented in the classrooms.

Victoria. The second teacher who participated in this study, Victoria, identified as a White female and non-native to the United States. She grew up on a farm in Scotland and has experience as a teacher in both the United Kingdom and the United States. She was a book club sponsor at Mount Oak High School and rarely integrated multiliteracies in her classroom. She and I had met prior to this study, as Victoria once volunteered to speak at a workshop I organized for parents of rising ninth grade students at the middle school where I was previously employed. She teaches gifted and English Language Learners Language Arts classes. She also has a daughter who attends another high school in the same district. Victoria is vivacious and attempted to engage her students in discussion on a daily basis.

Growing up on a farm in Scotland, Victoria was the first person in her family to finish high school and attend college. In her early 50's and small in stature, she is a gifted and English to Speakers of Other Languages ESOL (ESOL) educator. Based on my interviews with her, I found that she strongly believes in equity in education and is interested in social justice issues. She initially felt as though she was not an appropriate fit for this study because she had no idea

how to implement a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Nevertheless, she was eager to learn about incorporating some of the components in her literacy instructional practices. She values the teaching of the canon being taught in schools, but also believes students should have some choice in reading selections. The canon, in her opinion, provides opportunities for students to “dig deeper for nuggets of gold” as they decipher complexities they might not otherwise discover through lighter fare. She is a strong proponent of young adult literature and feels there is a place for all types of texts. Of the many students Victoria teaches in her various classes, her gifted students were those involved in this study. Similarly, James’ college prep students were those I observed and taught during this research.

My prior experience as a Language Arts teacher and broad knowledge of the curriculum informed my decision to work with the particular subject of English/Language Arts. I wanted to have a sizable comfort level as I engaged with what I expected to be massive amounts of data to collate, code, and decipher. My subjectivities were apparent as I explained to all of my participants how I personally felt classic literature deserves a space in our twenty-first century classrooms. In addition, the participants were well aware of my research interests in digital literacies, my affinity for using online environments, and my experience as a classroom teacher and library media specialist. My students primarily used blogs to interact and respond to literature in the past.

The students that were selected were ninth grade students in both of the teachers’ classes for a specific class period. I initially asked teachers to select a diverse group of students based on ethnicity and gender to make certain we had a wide variety of perspectives, but realized that would be limiting the pool of participants. We decided that it would be best to invite all students from both classes to participate. After several conversations, the teachers and I agreed that I

should speak with the classes and fully explain the study to pique their interest. I showed them a previous blog that I used with students when I was a Language Arts teacher and at the middle school so they could visually see what activities they would be participating in if they decided to become a part of the study. All students in both classes were invited to participate in this study. Letters and flyers (see Appendix B) explaining the study and its potential benefits were given to the students to take home to parents. There were nine females and eight males between the ages of 14-15 who participated from the two separate ninth grade Language Arts classes. Ten of the students were enrolled in Victoria's gifted/honor class and seven of the students were enrolled in James' college prep class.

Table 2

List of Ninth Grade Participants.

Student Participant	Age, Ethnicity, Gender	9th Grade Teacher's Class
Jennifer	14, Asian Female	Victoria – Gifted
Abby	15, Multiracial Female	Victoria – Gifted
Janelle	15, Black Female	Victoria – Gifted
Bryan	14, White Male	Victoria – Gifted
Evelyn	15, White Female	Victoria – Gifted
Tejah	14, Black Female	Victoria – Gifted
Ramon	15, Black Male	Victoria – Gifted
Rayna	14, White Female	Victoria – Gifted
Jamal	15, Black Male	Victoria – Gifted
Tedro	14, Hispanic Male	Victoria – Gifted

Alejandro	15, Hispanic Male	James – College Prep
Jordan	13, Black Female	James – College Prep
Alex	14, Asian Male	James – College Prep
Mikhail	14, Black Male	James – College Prep
Maja	14, Bosnian Female	James – College Prep
Steven	14, Black Male	James – College Prep
D’asia	15, Black Female	James – College Prep

Two Classroom Environments in One Virtual Space

To give a thorough description of the setting, I will present a brief background of the two teacher-participants’ classroom environments. As stated previously in this chapter, I observed both James’ and Victoria’s classrooms three to four times per week. Both teachers had first period planning, which is when the grade level meetings occurred once per week. I attended three meetings, prior to conducting this study, where the ninth grade teachers discussed and prepared the upcoming unit on Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*. Both teachers have a combined 20 years of experience teaching this play. They were very familiar with the play and had set lesson plans that the group of ninth grade teachers developed. These lessons plans were stored on the school’s shared drive for all teachers to access the handouts, links, and PowerPoint presentations to be used for the nine-week unit. I observed each of the two classrooms equally 3-5 times per week for 10 weeks, and met with the teachers to review the theoretical lens of multiliteracies.

On each observation day, I visited Victoria’s class during second period and James’ class during third period. Traditional literacy practices were evident in each class as they employed

their own teaching styles. Both asked open-ended questions as they attempted to garner student interaction and check for understanding of concepts such as the figurative language used in the play. Table 5 illustrates the entire unit both teachers used, as well as all what the other ninth grade teachers taught.



Figure 3.1 Mr. James Loomis' class



Figure 3.2 Ms. Victoria Carmichael's class

I reviewed the lesson plans each week prior to them being taught and provided suggestions to James and Victoria about how the lesson could be incorporated in, or supported by, the online lounge. In my role as a library media specialist, I provide curriculum based suggestions and resources for all content areas. For example, I send a bi-weekly newsletter via

email to teachers with links to how to incorporate digital tools in their instruction, I offer to collaborate with teachers on upcoming lessons, and I review the curriculum standards to assist in the development of the collection in the library. James and Victoria decided how they thought it best to teach in the classroom and in the lounge. The teachers used Haiku LMS as the online platform for the students to interact. On the days, the students engage in the online lounge, I would bring a laptop cart of 30 laptops for the students to use transporting them from Victoria's second period around a quick hallway corner to James' room. I reserved a laptop cart for the entire 10 week period to ensure the availability of the laptops.

I display a screenshot of the lounge, Figure 3.3, for a visual of how the virtual space looked. The screenshot is that of a lesson during the sixth week of the unit on *Romeo and Juliet* on paraphrasing paradoxical quotes (Appendix E). It is a small cropped shot of the page to keep anonymity of the students who were posting and using their real names. Students who were not participants in the study, but were in Victoria and James' classes also posted in the online lounge.

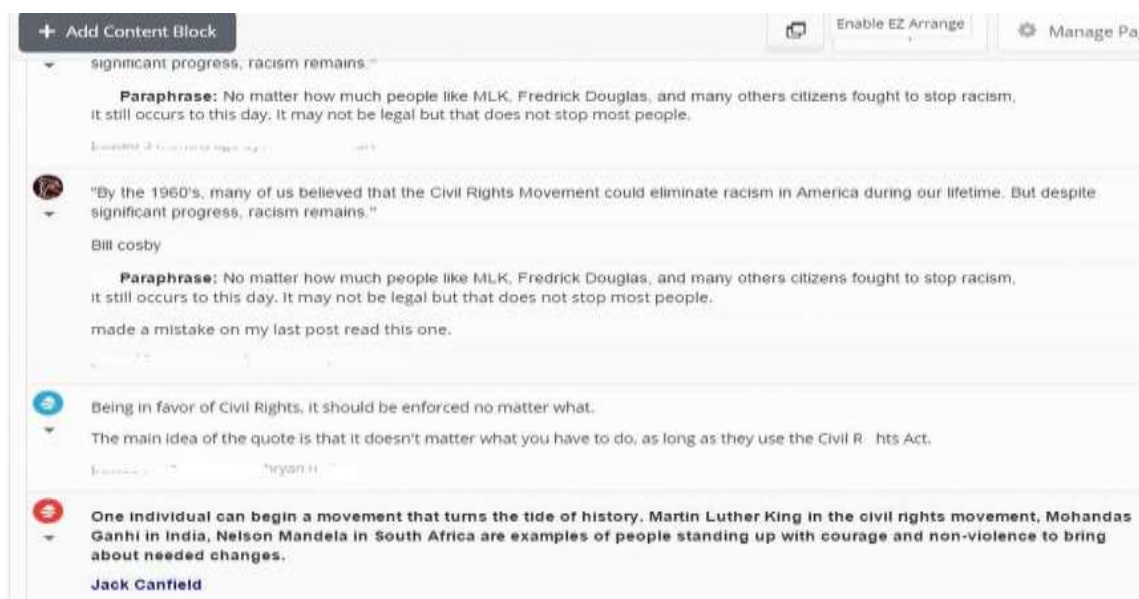
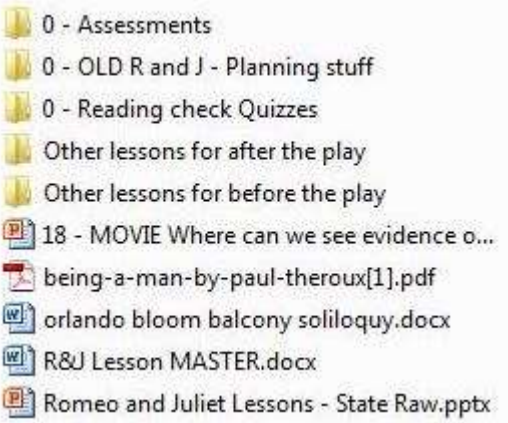













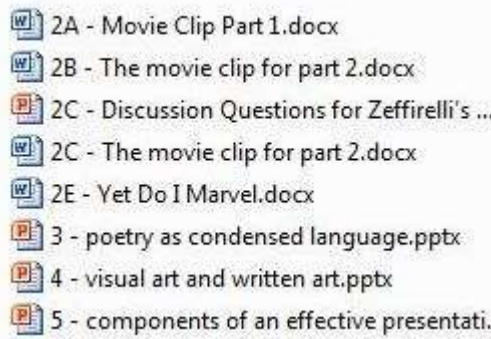
Figure 3.3 Screenshot of the Haiku Learning Management System Page



















This online lounge allows teachers to create classroom pages, add and organize content blocks, change layouts, and publish whenever they are ready. Teachers and students were able to embed content from YouTube, Google Docs, Maps, Skype and dozens of other third-party services, as well as create their own content. Haiku was ideal for two teachers to use collaboratively as it allowed teachers, if they wanted, to share resources, such as class rosters and class pages. There 53 students created sign-ons; 31 in James' class and 22 in Victoria's class. There were 17 students who participated in the study. As a result, I have either typed the students' interactions in a chart or in a blocked dialogue style when presenting or illustrating student conversations making certain to only present data findings from the 17 students involved in the study. The specific lessons the students were taught for ten week study are listed in Table 5 below. The lessons were unified and taught by all the ninth grade teachers at Mount Oak High School.


























Table 5





















Unit Lessons for Romeo and Juliet




















Pre-Planning for <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (two week period)	Attended grade and content level meetings; provided input and suggestions as library media specialist and as researcher; emailed and met face-to-face with two teacher-participants to acclimate them to a pedagogy of multiliteracies  <ul style="list-style-type: none">  0 - Assessments  0 - OLD R and J - Planning stuff  0 - Reading check Quizzes  Other lessons for after the play  Other lessons for before the play  18 - MOVIE Where can we see evidence o...  being-a-man-by-paul-theroux[1].pdf  orlando bloom balcony soliloquy.docx  R&J Lesson MASTER.docx  Romeo and Juliet Lessons - State Raw.pptx
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Week One	Mon	TBD
	Tue	TBD
	Wed	Shakespeare Introduction – KWL
	Thu	How does the structure of a sonnet impact its meaning?
	Fri	How does the structure of a poem impact its meaning?
	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 - ACT SUMMARRIES.ppt 0 - Romeo and Juliet - quizzes.ppt 0 - Tragedy+ .ppt 1 - Introduction to Shakespeare BEST INT.. 1 - Pyramus and Thisbe.ppt 1 - THE VENDETTA.ppt 1A - Sonnets.pptx 1A - Poetry Analysis twkd pr lwj.docx 1A - TPCASTT Form for copies.pptx 1A- TP-CAST Poetry Analysis.ppt 1B - eplicate poems.pptx 1B - literary terms for sonnet quest.ppt 1B - Scorn Not the Sonnet.docx 	
Week Two	Mon	Romeo and Juliet Movie (YouTube clip)
	Tue	Romeo and Juliet Movie (YouTube clip)
	Wed	Romeo and Juliet Movie
	Thu	TP-CASTT Sonnets in Pairs
	Fri	How is poetry an example condensed language?
	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2A - Movie Clip Part 1.docx 2B - The movie clip for part 2.docx 2C - Discussion Questions for Zeffirelli's ... 2C - The movie clip for part 2.docx 2E - Yet Do I Marvel.docx 3 - poetry as condensed language.pptx 4 - visual art and written art.pptx 5 - components of an effective presentati... 	
Week Three	Mon	No School – MLK
	Tue	What is the role of the prologue in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet?
	Wed	Review for Sonnets Quest
	Thu	Sonnets - Common Assessment
	Fri	How can literary terms be used to find and communicate meaning in visual

		art?
		 3A - MLK Day - Off.docx  3B - TPCASTT and the Prologue student ...  3B - TPCASTT and the Prologue.docx  3B - Why are Shakespearean sonnets con...  3C - Review for Quiz using seven ages of ...  3D - KEY Quiz on Sonnets.docx  3E - visual art and written art.pptx
Week Four	Mon	What are some of the major motifs explored through Shakespeare's writing?
	Tue	How does Shakespeare use characterization to forward the theme of his play?
	Wed	How does Shakespeare use characterization to forward the theme of his play?
	Thu	How does Shakespeare use figurative language to establish the context for tragedy?
	Fri	How does the play Romeo and Juliet provide evidence that Shakespeare was a master pupil of human nature?
		 4A - Introducing RandJ and Journal Writi...  4A - Literary Devices R&J 2014 pr lwj.pptx  4B - Act I Scenes 1-2-3 Characterization.p...  4B - Scene Analysis Form Act I Scene 2.d...  4B - Scene Analysis Form BLANK.docx  4C - ACT I Scene 4 AllusionsB.pptx  4C - Queen Mab Allusions.docx  4C - Rome o and Juliet Scenes from Acts ...  4D - ACT II Characterization Symbolism a...  4D - Scene Analysis Form Act II Scene 3.d...  4E - Quotes about time - romeo and julie...
Week Five	Mon	Review for Fig Language Common Assessment
	Tue	Act I and II Figurative Language CA
	Wed	Decisions, Decisions -WTL – In-class Writing - Day 1
	Thu	Decisions, Decisions -WTL – In-class Writing - Day 2
	Fri	<i>SPACE FOR OVERFLOW/ENRICHMENT /RETEACHING</i>

	 5A - Review for Act I and II Figurative Lan...  5B - Act I and II Figurative Language CA....  5B - KEY - Act I and II Figurative Languag...  5C - Decisions, Decisions -WTL - Inclass ...  5C - Essay planning guide.docx  5D - Decisions, Decisions -WTL - Inclass ...  5D -Analysis Essay Outline.doc  5E - Pyramus and Thisbe Reading Inform...  5E - Pyramus and Thisbe Story and love l...  5E - Pyramus and Thisbe.ppt	
Week Six	Mon	How could things have been different?
	Tue	What elements of Act III make it the Climax of the tragedy?
	Wed	How does Shakespeare use Dramatic Irony to enhance the dialogue and events of Act IV
	Thu	How does Shakespeare effectively use soliloquy, dramatic irony and situational irony to enhance the impact of the play's tragic ending?
	Fri	Differences between a Monologue Passage and Review Unit 2 AKS?
	 6A - Drastic Decisions Worksheet.docx  6A - Epic Paradox.png  6A - How could things have been differe...  6A - Paradoxical Quotes.docx  6B - New Irony lwj(2).ppt  6B - Scene Analysis Form Act III Scene 2....  6B - Tragic Events.docx  6B- What events lead to the tragedy.pptx  6C - Who is the main Tragic Agent of Ro...  6C - Who is to blame - Tragic Agent Flo...  6D - Examples of contradictions in Rome...  6D - How is irony used to enhance the i...  6E - Oxymoron Activity - Picture.png  6E - oxymoron.jpg  comic relief newer one.pptx	
Week Seven	Mon	Review for Common Assessment # 3
	Tue	Common Assessment # 3
	Wed	In-Class Writing - Who is to Blame? – Day 1
	Thu	In-Class Writing - Who is to Blame? – Day 2
	Fri	SPACE FOR OVERFLOW/ENRICHMENT/RETEACHING

	 7A - Review Act IV and Speeches and Co...  7A - Review for Act IV Speeches and Con...  7A - Speeches and Contradictions Literar...  7B - Act IV Speeches and Contradictions ...  7B - KEY - Act IV Speeches and Contradic...  7C - In-Class Writing - Who is to Blame - ...  7C - Who is to blame sample essay.docx  7C -Analysis Essay Outline.doc  7D - In-Class Writing - Who is to Blame - ...  7E - Differences between a Monologue P...  7E - KEY - Differences between a Monolo...	
Week Eight	Mon	FOIL Characters Reading Information/Outlining a Paragraph
	Tue	Review for the Reading Information Quest
	Wed	Practice Quest Reading Information
	Thu	Reading Information Common Assessment
	Fri	SPACE FOR OVERFLOW/ENRICHMENT/RETEACHING
	 Other documents  8A - FOIL Characters.doc  8A - Foil.doc  8A - Outlining a Paragraph - More than J...  8B - Review for the Reading Information ...  8C - KEY - Practice Quest -Elizabethan Th...  8C - Practice Quest -Elizabethan Theatre...  8D - KEY - Reading Information Commo...  8D - Reading Information Common Asse...	
Week Nine	Mon	Romeo and Juliet DBQ – Day 1
	Tue	Romeo and Juliet DBQ – Day 2
	Wed	Review for the Unit 3 – Romeo and Juliet Test
	Thu	Review for the Unit 3 – Romeo and Juliet Test
	Fri	Unit 3 – Romeo and Juliet Test

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  9C -FINAL Unit 1 Test 2012-2013  Other stuff  9A - DBQ Essay Planning Document.docx  9A - DBQ Teen Decision Making and The...  9A - KEY - Teen Decision Making Comm...  9A - Rubric LA9 2014.xlsx  9A - Teen Brain - DBQ EXAMPLE.docx  9A - Teen Decision Making Common Ass...  9A - The Teen Brain youtube link.docx  9B - DBQ Teen Decision Making and The ...  9C - Figurative Language Review - Group...  9C - Glossary of Unit 3 Terms.doc  9C - KEY - Figurative Language Review - ...  9C - Timeline Video.mp4  9D - KEY Unit 3 STUDY GUIDE- Reading Li...  9D - Macbeth - Class Activity Final Test r...  9D - Unit 3 STUDY GUIDE- Reading Litera...  9E - KEY Romeo and Juliet FINAL TEST - ...  9E - Romeo and Juliet FINAL TEST - Sprin...
Week Ten	Post <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ; Pre <i>Ayn Rand</i> ; Continued participation in the online student lounge

Subjectivity Statement

I want students to enjoy reading and writing, but it is often difficult to cultivate this trait with adolescents as I have witnessed student apathy toward literacy. In my position as a library media specialist who promotes literacy on a daily basis, I am interested in what reading and writing activities students engage in outside of school, so I can tap into those interests in the classroom, and hopefully help them bring in those interests, such as video games, fan sites, blogs, and interactive websites to the classroom. As a former classroom teacher, I could relate to the students I taught, because I also attended school in an area with a varied and diverse student population. In my teaching, I tried to examine the valuable cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) students bring forth in the classroom and illuminate it for pedagogical purposes.

Digital literacies influence the lives of the students I interact with at my current high school, where I am employed as a library media specialist. My life is also influenced by new literacies, both personally and professionally. Personally, I use online news aggregators such as Feedly to access my favorite blogs and websites on a daily basis, and I am engaged on various social media platforms. In my professional position, I promote literacy. But I am actively promoting literacy that is not just print-centric. In my library, for example, students are able to review books on an online blog and check out e-books that can be easily downloaded to an electronic device. I am always trying to find ways to expand what constitutes reading and writing for my students. Therefore, I am interested in the theory of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) and how it can redefine pedagogical practices in the K-12 environment.

In addition, remixing has become a central concept in students' everyday social lives, specifically appearing in various forms of social media via memes and videos. Students are involved in remixing the original music compositions that they hear on the radio to new beats and lyrics and they are using popular culture events to create humorous pictures with captions (memes) to further develop new meanings for them and their peers. My students and I talk about the latest memes and pop culture topics as I incorporate them in my research lessons with classes that visit the library. Students come into the library each day and ask me if I like the latest songs by their favorite rappers or singers or my opinion about the latest fashion craze, because they know of my interest in popular culture. As part of my daily lessons, I have used rap lyrics to locate extended metaphors and allusions, and had students complete readers' responses on a classroom blog rather than on paper. Digital technologies quickly became my primary, rather than secondary, texts in class. The students I taught tended to formulate their

inquiry from a different perspective, and I liked exploring the validity of their literacies and how it can inform instruction and learning.

Adolescents' meaning making and comprehension strategies, particularly through use of semiotic images, interest me because I learned most of my extended vocabulary and comprehension skills with visual texts such as comic books and picture books. I have found that my Black and Hispanic students are quite interested in visual texts, such as comics and videos. I want to use these types of visual texts alongside canonical texts to explore intertextuality. I have found that most of my students respond and engage more with visual texts when they are reluctant readers. I am also a visual learner, and I contemplate if I can relate my affinity for multiliteracies with their new literacies' interests based on the fact that I am Black as most of my Black students seem to respond in a more engaged manner when presented with multimodal texts in the classroom. I want students to attain power and self-efficacy, as well as explore identity, through reading with semiotic images as a focus.

My research may be limited because other teachers in K-12 education may not universally accept my views for pedagogical purposes. Comics, videos, songs, and Instagram are not necessarily viewed as literary in nature by a large majority of educators, and many do not realize the value in "seeing" a text as a student reads. It is important for me to be aware that although some students may enjoy using some of the elements of multiliteracies to navigate their learning or to use outside of school for their own pleasure, they may not necessarily be engaged if they feel as if their interests are being appropriated for academic purposes.

Role of the Researcher

I assumed the role of observer-participant in this research study with an emphasis on the role of observer. I observed ninth grade students and two teachers in an English Language Arts (ELA) classroom three to five days per week for a 45-50 minute time block. I observed and

documented the classroom activities. During the observations, I was careful not to initiate interactions with the students and sat quietly taking notes. I was usually present and seated in the classroom when the students arrived. The students were comfortable with my presence as they knew me in my role as the school's library media specialist, as well as my role as a parent instructional support coordinator at the middle school most of them attended the previous year.

When I was specifically asked a question by the teacher, I expanded my role as a participant. I engaged in conversations and answered questions when asked by the students and asked questions of my own. These questions were posed to gain more insight into the teachers and students perceptions during literacy events. However, my primary role was to observe and I selectively participated with the students only when I felt my data would be richer because of my participation. For example, because I chose the online platform the students used as their lounge, the teachers asked me to introduce it to the students and help them create accounts.

I realized my presence influenced what happened in the classroom because of my participation and interaction with the students. The consequences of my presence are acknowledged and noted as much as possible in my field notes as I sought to hold myself accountable for my participation throughout the study. I was aware of my positioning within this research as a middle class, middle-aged, Black woman. I embodied the roles of teacher, researcher, mother of adolescents, observer, and learner. I noted that these roles were present in what I was able to see in the classroom and how I interpreted the data collected.

Case Study Design

A qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather through a variety of lenses that allow for multiple facets of

the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) the researcher wants to explore contextual conditions because of their relevance to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the researcher wishes to examine real-world context—especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. A case study approach allowed for the reporting of situated activities in a natural context. This method provided the opportunity for the researcher to provide “thick-description” to convey the context of a classroom setting. A case study is a naturalistic method used to discover insight and understanding from the perspective of those being studied (Stake, 1995). Naturalistic inquiry takes place in the natural setting of the phenomenon under study. Case study research understands that it is impossible to separate the phenomenon from the context in which it takes place

In qualitative case studies, the researcher’s purpose is not merely to organize data but to identify and gain analytic insight into the dimensions and dynamics of the phenomenon being studied (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). The primary goal, therefore, is to understand how the phenomenon matters from the perspective of participants in the case. The process is inductive, grounded in the collected data; specifically, these data include field notes on people’s actions in particular contexts, interview transcripts of people’s reflective talk, and various artifacts relevant to the case (e.g., online blogs, video journals, etc.). As pieces of data are organized and compared, and interrelationships are examined, the researcher uncovers new spaces—new questions—in the developing portrait of the case. New questions may take shape, and throughout this process, the researcher is organizing and analyzing.

Case study research was a perfect match to a multiliteracies theoretical framework because it takes situated practice into account. Case study research also understands the researcher to be an instrument within the research study. As no researcher can be neutral or objective within the research process, qualitative case study research foregrounds the role of the researcher not only in the collection of data, but also in the interpretation, analysis, and writing up of that data (Merriam, 1998).

Case studies focus on the discovery, insight, and understanding that can be gained from investigating and observing “meaning in context.” As the researcher, I conducted a case study that sought to use this gained discovery, insight, or understanding to make contributions to the field of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996; Mills, 2009; Waller, 2013). This case study attempts to influence practice-based audiences, such as teachers, students, principals, and other educators.

During the initial stages of organizing the research, I attended several of the ninth grade Language Arts teachers’ planning meetings. The department met each week on Mondays during the first academic period of the day. They planned entire units together for their students in a collaborative environment. Although I was initially hesitant to attend the meetings, I was welcomed and allowed to offer my insights into the lessons that were being planned.

Data Collection

Data sources included field notes from classroom observations that occurred three to four times per week, semi-structured interviews, instructional artifacts, and online discussion transcripts. I was given permission to observe each day of the study by my principal in order complete my research.

Interviews

Because this study attempted to elicit participants' perceptions, it was important that their words be used. Interviews were the most appropriate means for collecting this data because the information can only be obtained through the participants' sharing knowledge. There are many advantages to using interviews for data collection. The most significant benefit is the opportunity to gather data from participants, in their own words, through face-to-face conversations (Seidman, 2006). This enables the interviewer to establish rapport with the respondents and makes it possible for the interviewer to observe as well as listen. Unlike many other data collection techniques, during an interview the interviewer can probe for more information on certain topics when necessary, allowing more complex questions to be asked. Interviews also give researchers the opportunity to correct misconceptions and misunderstandings and to clarify inadequate, vague responses.

Before conducting this study, the participants and I engaged in an introductory interview-discussion in which I was forthcoming about my bias for studying multiliteracies theory. Participants were interviewed before we used our texts (e.g., online student lounge/blogs, *Romeo and Juliet*, and/or any other supplementary material), while we used our texts, and after we finished reading our texts. This before-during-and-after format was significant to understanding participants' perceptions. It allowed me to gain a better knowledge of the perceptions that influence readers' thoughts prior to, during, and after reading canonical literature and participating in an online lounge. The group interviews for the students were audio-recorded and transcribed, and, at the end of the research study, these audio-recordings were destroyed. Participants either self-selected a pseudonym or were assigned one to afford a reasonable measure of confidentiality. On average, these group interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes.

I used a semi-structured interview process and I used an interview guide with questions to ask, although I did ask some questions that were not on the guide. Seidman (2006) recommended the researcher take the initiative to recruit participants and formally explain the purpose of the project. As I stated earlier, participants were made aware that they did not have to answer questions if they felt uncomfortable, and, that, at any time, they could remove themselves from the study. As I approached interviewing my participants, I was guided by Maxwell (2005), who posited that research questions “formulate what you want to understand; your *interview* questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (p. 92).

Online Student Lounge Transcripts

Students used an online space to interact with each other. The space allowed the participants a virtual lounge, to respond to literature, discuss the texts they were reading with each other, post multimodal responses, remix the text, and answer questions I and the teachers posed to them. Participants were observed as they discussed the texts they were reading, whether reading silently or collaboratively, and as they were participating in the online environment about texts. The Haiku Learning Management System (LMS) was decided upon to use for this research after I reviewed a number of online platforms. Initially, I tried to decide in a collaborative manner with the teachers whose classes I observed; however, they felt it was more beneficial for me to decide what online lounge would be best to allow me to get the results I was looking for, in terms of having a research project that was successful. As a classroom teacher, on Haiku, one can host up to five different classrooms, each with different rosters of students. However, for this case study, I used one online classroom for both ninth grade classes to interact with each other, rather than having two distinct classes. The online student lounge transcripts were intended to be an additional tool that examined the perceptions of each participant, and I

thought it would be interesting to observe the dynamics of the two classes who do not normally interact by creating a participatory environment.

As the research progressed, I found that the Haiku LMS was very limited in terms of the information that students were able to upload—it was my intention to allow students to upload videos, attach photos, and other multimodal artifacts. Haiku was limited in allowing students to do more than interact and respond to questions. After two weeks, of using Haiku, James suggested the class use another online lounge—his Wikispace page that he created some years ago but had forgotten about. It was still active, but dormant. This online lounge was very similar to Haiku, with very few differences. However, Victoria opposed to moving to a new online platform, so James and Victoria gave me authorized access to the students. They decided it was better to give the students the ownership needed for the students to interact more freely and uninhibited. However, both online spaces did not give students the ownership that I felt would create a pedagogy of multiliteracies. The students were still able to respond to the texts and questions posed to them with the opportunity to provide enhanced collaborative engagement. The lounge did offer the case study participants some degree of ownership and flexibility to control and offer their multimodal literacy perceptions and experiences, when they felt inclined to do so. This is a critical component when trying to capture perception, because perceptions are rarely ever stationary and more likely to be fluid and spontaneous (The New London Group, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). Essentially, the online lounge allowed participants to encounter and engage in participatory spontaneous interactions outside of the interviews. To observe the most realistic perceptions in this study, it was critical to capture as many perceptual moments as possible. The flexibility and immediate availability of the online lounge was ideal to help secure better results in capturing those perceptions, especially allowing for time, space, and

opportunity to observe those perceptions as they occurred. In addition to perceptions, the teachers were able to purposefully facilitate a variety of in-class and online discussions to determine if the participants were comprehending the texts they were reading and how the situated learning environment affected their understanding.

Video journals were planned at the onset of the research study, but, due to time constraints, it was not feasible to conduct the reality television show style “confessionals” where students would be able to discuss how they felt about the classroom discussions and activities in which they were engaging in on a daily basis. These time constraints, in particular, were two “ice storms” that prohibited the schools from opening, resulting in a loss of instructional time for students and observational time for me.

Observations

Classroom observations were done three to four times per week throughout the 10-week study to gauge the perceptions of the teachers and students and detail what instructional methods the educators used. The 70 classroom observations (35 observations each for James and Victoria’s classes) ranged from 40 to 50 minutes per observation. My intent was to view the dialogic interaction between students and teachers. A summary of the research questions and the types of data collected for each appears in Table 3 below.

Artifacts and Documents

I examined the two teachers’ instructional plans for the classrooms that enacted a pedagogy of multiliteracies, as well as how to apply those lessons to theoretical understandings to make practical connections of how using multiliteracies affected teachers’ classroom practice. Other artifacts were also reviewed and analyzed, such as additional handouts, students’ assignments, the physical text of *Romeo and Juliet*, and other materials deemed appropriate for

examination, specifically multimodal artifacts, like videos, music, poetry, which were to be embedded and uploaded into the online student lounge.

Table 4

Data Sources

7 Online Student Transcripts
17 Students and 2 Teachers
70 Field notes from Classroom Observations (35 class visits for each class) Audio recorded with Audacity software
Artifacts and Documents (e.g. handouts, the text of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , PowerPoint presentations, multimodal materials)
Audio recorded Interviews (Audacity – computer recording software)

A mountaineer's adage states an experienced climber begins lunch immediately after finishing breakfast, and continues eating lunch as long as he or she is awake, stopping briefly to eat supper (Manning, 1960). According to Maxwell (2005), in the same way, the "experienced qualitative researcher begins data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation, and continues to analyze the data as long as he or she is working on the research, stopping briefly to write reports and papers" (p. 95). With this in mind, as an initial step, I transcribed each interview within two days after they occurred and reviewed my field notes after each class. I used an abductive process, the combination of inductive and deductive analysis, (listed earlier in this chapter) to read and reread the material/data collected on a continual basis identifying and coding important themes (e.g., students' frustrations with technology or

traditional texts) and thinking about these themes through reflective consideration to best consider how to describe them.

I created opportunities to check for validity in my research by examining my research biases, by using member checks, and by using a triangulation strategy (Patton, 2002). This data triangulation enabled me to use the variety of sources to compare and contrast the data from interviews and online lounge transcripts with that from the classroom observations. Notations were made throughout the process and two column memoing was considered to be effective during the observations and the interviews (Creswell, 2007). My weekly memos (see appendix) served as a regular space for thinking about research questions, preliminary analytic insights, and general reflection. In addition to providing a subjectivity statement, these weekly memos served as a time to think reflexively about my role as a researcher, and at times, and instructor. These memos kept data collection and analysis close to the research questions, allowing me to explore emerging ideas about what was happening in the classroom regarding literacies and helped me maintain a reflexive stance as a researcher. The memos maintained a basis for developing specific interview questions that could be used to probe specific aspects of the classroom instruction and how it interfaced with different aspects of multiliteracies.

I conducted analysis, reflection, and writing continually on a weekly basis to allow for adaptation of instruction and other changes that needed to take place in terms of students' literacy practices in the classroom, as well as to have a focused sense of the data that would have been most useful in completing the ongoing writing of the chapters of the study. To supplement my observations and interviews, I audio-recorded eight 30-45 minute teacher lessons with the Audacity software on my computer and kept a self-reflective journal, in addition to memoing, to make notes during classroom observations.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis allows researchers to develop meaning out of data and to transform data into findings (Merriam, 1998). It involves “working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 147). Data analysis often naturally occurs in the data collection process because of the interactive nature of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). When I talked to the teachers, examined online discussions, and reviewed field notes, ideas about directions for analysis occurred to me, and insights developed in my mind. Examination of increasingly accumulated online discussions and uploaded material created by students, as well as interview transcriptions, allowed me to identify initial patterns, themes, and interpretations to reveal the analytical possibilities. These were written into memos, which informed later data analysis. In an effort to not rush to conclusions at this stage, I purposely sought to allow openness in the inquiry. Analytic insights that occurred in this data collection stage improved not only the quality of the collected data, but also the data analysis in the next phase (Patton, 2002).

Organization of the Data

The collected data were voluminous. Adequate organization of the data was needed to serve the goals of the study. First, all the online transcripts and audio-recorded transcripts were saved in date labeled folders on flash drives and on a computer hard drive to protect against loss of data. Any paper documents were also photocopied for the same reason. These back-up files were appropriately labeled with short descriptions and stored for safekeeping.

Four folders were used to organize data. Two folders were labeled with each teacher’s pseudonym and the third folder was labeled “Online Participants” for the students. The data

collected on participants were saved in these folders. Victoria and James' individual folders included the interview data, teacher assignments and handouts, email files, and face-to-face pre-note taking sheets. The students' online participants folder contained interview transcripts, online transcripts, and field notes on specific students. In short, each participant's folder consisted of all the information about that particular participant. The procedure resulted in the generation of comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each participant. The remaining one folder was labeled as "Course Materials." Documents created by the teachers for in-class assignments, sample works, and other documents related to how the online lounge was implemented to support students' learning were included in this folder. Although the files in this folder were not directly used as data, they were representative of the setting of the online course and the elements designed and implemented by the teachers' to support students' multiliteracies learning. These files set the contexts for understanding the students' perspectives of interacting online while reading the canon.

I initially analyzed participants' data individually. For each teacher and student participant, I divided his/her data into five parts: (a) personal background, (b) selecting a topic, (c) generating questions, (d) exploring and responding to relevant information, and (e) presenting findings. These five parts were sequentially analyzed. I then analyzed both the teachers' and students' data collectively. It was often difficult to fully analyze each student because some students did not provide substantial participation in the online lounge or in the group interviews. Therefore, I examined some transcripts holistically to identify themes and categories.

Inductive and Deductive Approach

Generally speaking, there are three different approaches for data analysis. One is inductive, which involves "discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one's data" (Patton, 2002, p.453). This approach often emphasizes findings being grounded in data instead of some predetermined

theoretical framework (Schwandt, 1997). A deductive approach refers to generating theories, hypotheses, or propositions that were confirmed or disconfirmed by the data (Patton, 2002). , 1978).

I used a combination of inductive and deductive approach to guide my data analysis. Specifically, I emphasized using inductive analysis during the earlier stages of my data analysis (i.e., during open coding and categorizing) to ensure the codes and categories were developed from the data. Then, I utilized the deductive approach when I used relevant literature to provide nuances and bring focus to the data analysis. The deductive approach provided a general sense of reference and direction, as well as a frame in which to organize data to make sure the research goals could be fulfilled and research questions could be answered.

Open Coding

The first phase of my analysis process was to open code the transcripts. Coding involves making links between the original raw data with the researcher's theoretical conceptions by attaching labels or tags to chunks of data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In the early stage of coding, an "open" approach, or open coding, was used to underscore the importance of being open to data and their meanings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach often transpired in two steps: first, data were broken down into discrete events and objects; and then names were given to label those events and objects.

I read the data at least twice to gain a holistic picture of my data (Giorgi, 1997). While I read through the data, I highlighted parts that seemed significant or relevant to my research focus. I read through the data repeatedly to break down the text into manageable and meaningful text segments to which codes could be applied. This was done on the basis of theoretical notions guiding the research questions and striking issues that arose in the text. This process of reading data and highlighting significant parts with colored highlighters enabled me to differentiate among and clarify units of analysis, which were the "smallest piece[s] of information about something that can stand by [themselves]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). I then coded the transcription in a line-by-line

manner (Charmaz, 2002). This was a process of searching for patterns and concepts that my data covered (Ezzy, 2002). In the margins of my data, I labeled the units of analysis. When I finished this, I had many codes listed in the margins of my transcripts (See Appendix D). I typed them into a separate document, and produced a list of open codes. The result of this step of my analysis was a list of substantive codes generated from first-hand data for each participant group.

The result was a list of codes, which is also called a “master list” (Merriam, 1998, p. 181) or “coding schemes” (Bogdan & Biklen 2003, p. 161). A master list is “a primary outline or classification system reflecting the recurring regularities or patterns” (Merriam, 1998, p. 181). The generation of a master list is usually influenced by research questions, particular concerns, a theoretical approach, and academic disciplines (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Ultimately, this analysis led to thematic portrayals of online teaching and learning experiences and perceptions for all participants in my attempt to illuminate and answer the three primary research questions.

Table 5

From Codes to Themes (sample of themes discovered from teachers’ interview transcripts)

<i>Data Extract</i>	<i>Initial Codes (Step 1)</i>	<i>Items Discussed</i>	<i>Categorizing (Focused Coding) (Step 2)</i>
I look to develop more as a teacher in my daily lessons that I conduct with my students. I am willing to try new things , use more digital tools . I would like to be an expert in my students’ eyes, but I may be a novice or a student as we move forward to using the online space. I can elect to join in with the students or just be more of an observer of what’s going on in the lounge . I can take on multiple roles in the online space - more	Technology Integration Attitude Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School provides technology • Teachers learning new approaches • Comfort zones are stretched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of confidence • Gain new knowledge • Personal reasons • Time constraint • Roles as facilitator • Teach inferior

than I usually can in the regular face-to-face class. I like that about facilitating in an virtual space.			
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<i>Describing Participants' Overall Perceptions (Step 3)</i>	<i>Comparing Participants' Data to Identify Themes and Generate Conclusions (Step 4)</i>	<i>Overarching Themes</i>
<p>James – Knows that the teaching profession is constantly changing but feels it is even more pressing in the age of technology. Multiliteracies is a new term for him and he would like to embrace the pedagogy, but thinks that it needs to be introduced on a district wide level to affect change in teaching. Wants to incorporate more multimodal tools. Sometimes feels antiquated in his methods, but struggles with how students will view his expertise using digital tools. Wants to spend more time learning tools and strategies that will be effective. Questions how new vs. old combat or complement each other – new teachers vs. veteran teachers</p> <p>Victoria – Feels that pedagogy of multiliteracies will be beneficial to gifted students and ESOL students. Wants to tap into the various modes of communication to help students learn and comprehend better. States that she feels helpless sometimes when she can't just teach the old fashioned way and prior to second interview was reluctant in using a lot of digital tools. Wants to use a few effective tools that promote multimodality – does not want to get overwhelmed with “gadgets”. Intimidated at times with technology – assumes her students are more knowledgeable. Feels like she will need assistance with online space. Ponders how she will impact learning in this space in which she is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Revisited categories -Reviewed relationships of all collected data -Determined redundancies and discard generalized information that did not impact the research -Decided hierarchy of categories and developing themes -Searched for overall patterns and themes 	<p>Teacher Identity in New Spaces</p>

uncomfortable with, but still willing to try.		
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Step 2 Categorizing Codes to Identify Themes

The second step I took to code this part of my data was categorizing. Categorizing involves reducing and presenting the data in a more concise and abstract way by grouping parts together (Moustakas, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When I examined the open codes I created in the previous step, I compared the open codes piece-by-piece for similarities and differences as they related to the students' and teachers' perceptions of the four components of multiliteracies: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practices. I then clustered recurring regularities and removed overlapping or repetitive statements. By sorting out redundancies and fitting codes together, I developed a list of categorized codes that were more abstract than the open codes to represent the phenomena to identify themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

According to Guba (1978), there are two criteria for categorizing: *internal homogeneity* and *external heterogeneity*. The former criteria concerns how well, and how meaningfully, data belongs in a category. The latter concerns the extent to which distinctions between categories are clear. To meet these criteria, I worked back and forth between data and category systems to verify the classification of categories and accuracy of data placement. The result of this step was a category list developed from the transcribed data gathered from group interviews, the online lounge, and class activities.

Step 3 Describing

According to Patton (2002), it is important to focus initially on understanding the individual case. To do so, I had to carefully write up the case. Thus, the third step was to construct description based on the categories identified in step 2. I went back to the analysis results from the previous two steps and glanced at the transcription again, asking myself which were the important themes that represented participants' experiences at this step of the research. I tried to develop my description to accurately reflect the participants' experiences.

These three steps, open coding, categorizing, and describing, were repeated until all of the participants' data were analyzed. As a researcher, I found this process to be the most manageable; and it allowed me to determine how to best use the research strategies I acquired from my qualitative classes and limited research experiences. Once this step of my analysis was complete, I constructed a description of the participants' overall perceptions and experiences, mainly around the three research questions and special issues identified from the results of previous steps in the analysis. For example, one of the students' felt that it was more fun to interact with another class in a virtual space, but wished it could have included even more classes to seem as though they were interacting like they would on social media. Another student felt as though we needed to use the space more in class to receive more educational and social benefits for students who, in his opinion, generally had short attention spans. The above procedures were repeated until all participants' qualitative data were analyzed individually and collectively.

Step 4 Comparing Participants' Data to Identify Themes and Generate Conclusions

For this step, I began to search for patterns and themes. The analysis steps were centered on answering the three main research questions. At first, the data and analysis documents related to all participants' interview responses, classroom observations, and online transcripts were isolated. I reread the relevant case descriptions to gain a more complete picture of the participants' perceptions and experiences. Throughout the process on open coding and analyzing the data, I used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to compare the differences and commonalities between categories, both among the two teachers and 17 participants. Reading each line or sentence, I asked myself, "What is this about?" and "How does it differ from the preceding or following statements?" This particular detailed work kept me focused on the data themselves rather than on theoretical concepts (Charmaz 1990). This approach is like interviewing the text and is similar to

the ethnographic interviewing style that Spradley (1979) talked about using with his research participants.

Researchers compare pairs of texts by asking "How is this text different from the preceding text?" and "What kinds of things are mentioned in both?" Asking hypothetical questions like, "Is this interview response from Victoria different from James because she is a woman instead of a man?" as she began to describe her home life and how it paralleled with her role as a teacher and a mother. For instance James and Victoria both had similarities in wanting to provide a nurturing environment for their students, but the classroom strategies were different. Once I reached a shared meaning and perceptions of these participants' experiences I identified a new theme or pattern. I completed this process through cycles of referring back to data, categories, descriptions, and comparisons among them.

During this process, if I identified any discrepancy (e.g., a piece of qualitative data that did not seem to support the newly created categories), I reexamined the relationship between categories and themes and the overall structure of the themes. I would generate new categories, discard old categories, or combine them with other categories. In addition, at times I needed to rearrange the hierarchy among the categories to best represent the phenomenon thematically which allowed me to conduct thoughtful examination through constant comparison between themes, categories, and data. Then, I wrote a description for each category. I repeatedly conducted this procedure until all the remaining qualitative data were analyzed to find answer to the three research questions.

Credibility, Generalization, and Limitations of My Study

One important issue related to a qualitative study is its credibility. Following some of the suggestions from Patton (2002), I employed the following strategies to improve the credibility of my study. First, once any round of interviews was complete, I immediately transcribed them. After I transcribed them, I listened to the audio files again to compare my transcriptions and

audio-recordings. Any errors I identified were marked and corrected in the transcripts. This step helped ensure my transcripts accurately captured what both the interviewer and interviewees said.

Second, I combined multiple data sources—interviews, online transcripts, and documents—in this study. Different data sources not only revealed different aspects of the phenomenon under investigation, but also provided chances to crosscheck the consistency of information derived from different venues. For example, I always compared what participants wrote in their online posts with what they said in class and the interviews. Crosschecking contributed to the verification of the consistency of the overall pattern across different data sources. Thus, it helped improve the credibility of my study. Third, after data collection and analysis, member checks were completed with the teacher and student. If there was any disagreement between a member checker and myself, I discussed the matter with the member checker until we reached consensus.

Finally, because the researcher was the instrument in this qualitative study, my educational background, work experiences and beliefs about learning and teaching played a role in the design, implementation, and conclusion of this research. I address this issue in my subjectivity statement, which appears earlier in this chapter, so readers of this study can make their own judgment on how these issues influence its credibility.

Many scholars caution against generalizing qualitative findings to other contexts. The primary reason for this caution is that qualitative studies are context relevant (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Following Patton's (2002) suggestion, I provided extensive descriptions of the study's context and detailed process of data collection and analysis, as well as numerous quotes

to support my findings. Following this process can help other people make a professional judgment about applying the findings of this study to other, similar contexts.

As with any research, there were some limitations. One limitation of this study relates to my decision to focus solely on two classroom teachers and their group of ninth grade students. Limiting the participants within my study narrowed the opportunities for some of the findings. A study with limited scope in terms of participants and within the context of one school may have had some impact on the results. Even with this limitation, however, the data collected in the process of my research is sufficient enough to uncover some answers to my research questions, while leaving opportunity for the development of enhanced research projects related to my points of inquiry in the future

Another limitation was the technological learning curve James and Victoria encountered with the new online management system that was used for the study. The teachers and students used the Haiku LMS after I researched the various platforms that were available and that had been previously successful with teachers and student use. Haiku received favorable reviews; however, initially the teachers in the study did not have time to learn about all of the features of Haiku. After two weeks, James spent a weekend learning how to maximize the use of the system and was able to alleviate some of the barriers by giving students more rights and access to the system.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the findings of this study in relation to the three research questions upon which this study was based. This qualitative approach was grounded in a case study approach that allowed me to describe the perceptions of two teachers and 17 students. These descriptions helped explore participants' perceptions to gain insights into how a pedagogy of multiliteracies may be enacted in a classroom. Using an interview protocol, I sought salient responses from selected participants to help answer my research questions. I also reviewed artifacts, online transcripts, and field notes of my observations to identify themes of this research. Chapter 1 presented a rationale for this study. Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature and highlighted studies on multiliteracies and the canon in secondary settings. Chapter 3 outlined the study's methodology, which included a discussion of instrumentation, data collection, sources, and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings from this study, and includes a discussion of participants' overall perceptions in relation to the theory of multiliteracies in the context of a ninth grade classroom. This chapter will be presented in two sections. The first section will discuss findings related to the teachers involved in this study, particularly in the context of the online lounge. The second section will discuss findings related to the students, with emphasis given to the themes identified from my data analysis.

Teachers' Multiliteracies Perspectives

Based on the teacher interviews, classroom discussion, and classroom observation field notes, the potentials of using new teaching practices to engage students was a primary motivator

for these two teachers' involvement. As James described, one of the reasons he wanted to teach students in a virtual environment was

[to] delve into a new arena of teaching to expand my teaching repertoire that will ultimately allow me to step outside of my comfort zone to provide students with what they want and need, not necessarily what I want to give them in terms of instruction.

Victoria remarked that one of her teacher responsibilities was to

learn new ways to teach, especially to my ESOL students. I want to be able to adapt this online lounge to those students who have linguistic differences from my gifted students. Maybe adapting my teaching will allow me to incorporate more digital tools with all of my students.

James expressed a desire to experience the multimodal learning, to be in a position, as a teacher, to do more than

the PowerPoint instruction that I do each year with Romeo and Juliet. I need to really get involved with this pedagogy as my instruction has gotten somewhat stagnant in the past few years using the same resources that all of us [ninth grade teachers] use.

The two teachers perceived this new way of teaching the canon as exciting and refreshing, even though they were somewhat reticent because of a potential learning curve. Although I anticipated that Victoria and James would have different motives for teaching in an online environment, I was surprised to find they were equally divided between being obliged to teach for various reasons and wanting to explore teaching in the online, technological environment.

I identified two recurring themes related to the first research question that sought to explore the perceptions of integrating a pedagogy of multiliteracies to support teaching canonical

texts. These themes were identified as *teacher identity in new spaces* and *reconceptualization of text*.

Teacher Identity in New Spaces

During the analysis of the data, one of the recurring themes I identified centered on how the two teachers, Victoria and James, assumed various identities while facilitating in the online lounge. Teacher identity can be defined as a sense of teacher-self that results from a productive combination of key personal and professional subjectivities as well as identity positions and beliefs (Alsup, 2006). Such a combination can lead to an effective and well-motivated conception of a teacher-self that considers both institutional demands and personal priorities. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) defined teacher identity as a dialogical construct whereby a teacher engages in an “ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple ‘I’ positions in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained” (p. 315).

James noted that implementing and facilitating the online course, as a supplemental tool with the canon, was quite beneficial to his teaching effectiveness. He was able to upload all of the handouts for students to use without having to print the assignments. When James indicated his desire to have all the handouts in one place rather than having to deal with the hassle of putting in orders to have them copied, my first reaction was that this defeated the purpose of moving away from print-based texts and undermined our attempt to enact multimodal learning if we were going to use worksheets. James mentioned, however, that in addition to being able to plan courses in advance he also had

the ability to have good quality discussions with the students online by creating opportunities for maintaining personal communications with the students. Having access

to the students after hours is an awesome way to support them if they want to pose a question to me or their peers when they are at home.

James was able to extend his teaching role to an out-of-school context due to the mutual, trusting relationship he developed with his students. James was able to navigate his extended role to build his self-efficacy as he ventured into a new space that was different from his didactic role in the classroom. He expressed that he felt more like “a colleague with the students in some ways” as he learned what is important in helping “them make sense of *Romeo and Juliet*.” He seemed to find this role comforting because, as he noted, he wanted to find ways to make the students feel like they were more in control.

Baxter (2012) argued that the existence of “resistance discourses,” or discourses that challenge the status quo, were essential to the development of “feelings of self-salience, personal efficacy and confidence” among online instructors (p. 9). James indicated a sense of confidence because he was able to allow students, who took various roles in the lounge, a certain level of power while still maintaining an authoritative role as a co-creator and stand-by viewer to the interactions in the online space.

Victoria felt that, with my “guidance in the digital space,” she had her own “private professional development to possibly improve pedagogy skills” that she may or may not have been employing. Victoria noted that she felt more confident to move forward with introducing the online component to the students after she, James, and I met to learn how to establish an account and have students use Haiku LMS. Her identity as a knowledgeable literacy teacher initially superseded her identity in the online environment because she preferred James to handle most of the technological aspects of the course. During the first few weeks, Victoria allowed James to direct the lounge’s activities. However, as the weeks passed, she noticed how the

student interaction was becoming more and more interesting. Students began to allude to social and political issues that were occurring at the time, such as an upstate New York vendor refusing an order for a same-sex wedding. Victoria's identity was very much tied to her social activism. As I observed her class and as I became social media friends with her, I realized her political and social views leaned to the left. Yet, I was not aware of how or if her opinions were evident in her classroom when she talked to students about social issues.

Victoria shared with me that, although she had strong liberal views, she attempted to keep a neutral stance in an effort to have her students provide their opinions without influence or judgement. However, she wanted to become more involved in the issue that Alejandro, an openly gay student, posed in the discussion lounge, concerning the vendor refusing to provide flowers for a same sex marriage. To get additional feedback from the other students in both classes, Victoria decided to pose more questions to get the students to participate and discuss in a more expansive manner. This online conversation ventured into the topic of how the love scenes between Romeo and Juliet would possibly be different or similar if they were between Romeo and Alejandro. Victoria's identity as a social activist for the "often oppressed and marginalized" outside the classroom helped her to effectively navigate the digital conversation. According to Gee (2000), being recognized as a certain type of person in a given context is what is meant by identity. In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their "internal states" (Gee, 2000, p. 1) but to their performances in society. As Victoria summarized, "[I] could perform in certain ways, in my opinion, in the lounge that I may not have otherwise in the classroom." She felt she could present multiple identities of herself depending on the context of the conversation she and her students were engaged in while interacting in the lounge.

Throughout the remaining weeks, Victoria became more involved in conversations by providing “what if” and “imagine that” questions. In the classroom, Victoria was very interested in her students’ stances on all types of topics. But she was aware that not all of the students were willing to share in a face-to-face environment. Victoria offered this description of how she perceived her interactions with students in the online student lounge:

[It affords a] rare and unique insight into some of my quieter students who never want me to call upon them in class. I am loving how the students’ personalities are emerging as they take more and more ownership of their own learning. I see their little personalities and they see more of mine in a more normal, human way (laughs) and not just as their teacher.

In an interaction with her students and James’ students, who may or may not have known her, she could be as liberal or as conservative as she wanted by becoming a problem poser, which in turn helped them look at topics with a more critical stance.

In an exchange from the online lounge, Victoria and a few of the student participants discussed how the love scenes could have been different if they did not involve a heterosexual couple:

Victoria: So what is all of this about love scenes?

Checkboom101: The question was posed how could it have been different? It would have been different if it were two men in love? Romeo and Alejandro would not have been able to get catering or flowers delivered from Cook’s Flowers. You know they don’t deliver to gay weddings.

Victoria: What would you do to change that?

Rayna500: I would shut them down with a quickness.

Victoria: You have no power to do this. Do you?

Rayna500: Yes, we could start a grassroots effort. Right? That's what it's called.



Checkboom101:

Got this from the meme

maker online.

Victoria: Ha, funny. I saw that before on one of my sites I like to go to.

Barry: My brother put that on his twitter. He is gay.

Vikvik: You know it is kinda true. It ain't you, why you care.

Victoria: In class tomorrow and on here now, if you want. Think about how same-sex marriage affects you personally and society. Now, some of you can write it on a piece of paper too for us to discuss if you don't want to share aloud.

Although Victoria was the teacher, her identity seemed to change with her humor and self-disclosure regarding the type of websites she peruses. This particular interaction allowed not only her students to become more comfortable with her as she presented a much more casual and affable identity than she did in the classroom, but also students she did not teach. In a compulsory turn, she ended the conversation with an assignment for students to complete for class discussion on the next day.

Reconceptualization of Text

The second theme I identified was teachers' *reconceptualization of text*. Prior to the study, in one of our early meetings, both teachers had singular definitions of what they considered to be a "text." James noted that it "is what we read on the page," whereas Victoria described it as "the written words that students read." The online lounge created extended spaces for the participating teachers to engage with the theories and practices of multiliteracies, as well as critically reflect on their literacy practices and pedagogies. For example, James reflected about the variety of texts we used in this unit during the third interview. He said,

[I felt I had] more control over the learning environment and also having the students be able to direct some of their learning by remixing and repurposing based on whatever they like to do outside of class. This is their text. I read some of the articles on multiliteracies and we all have a very narrow view on this. I am including myself. We need more teachers to reconsider that the textbook is not the only text.

James' reflection allowed him the opportunity to explore the connection between his pedagogical decisions and how he previously viewed texts in his classroom. Although he had given students the opportunity to share and discuss multimodal artifacts in the lounge, he had not previously considered them to be texts. As the study progressed, James mentioned in class one day, "Everything is a text. Do you agree? But first, what is a text?" Student discussion ensued and one of his students spoke up in a singing voice, "Everything is everything, what is meant to be will be." Immediately another student started with more lyrics and then another shouted, "Lauryn Hill! I love that song." James promptly invited her to bring her CD or download the mP3 for all to hear the song and then decide or debate its meaning in relation to a text. These students' ability to intertwine everything into everything lends credence to teachers

embracing adolescents' out-of-school literacies as valid for informing academic literacy instruction (Alvermann, 2012; Hagood, 2008; Hull & Schultz, 2001).

One of our students, Ramon, decided to upload a video she found on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl8AgZh5HMM>) where another student had created a mashup of the play and the popular, young adult, dystopian novel *Divergent* (Roth, 2011) that had been adapted into a motion picture in 2014 during the time of this study. It was a highly anticipated adaptation and was widely promoted by me, the library media specialist, within the school and the library media center. Several students had read the novel and were able to provide further commentary.

James noted how the two classes collaborating online added another dynamic to the overall literacy events. This dynamic further highlighted to James that the social habits of students outside the classroom are rooted in literacy. For example, many of the students who read the novel *Divergent* (2011) also extended their interactions with the physical text by writing blog posts on one of the movie's websites. In addition some of them discussed writing fanfiction and having each other review it to get feedback before writing the next chapter. The same group of students extending their treatment of the text by creating a Tumblr account of pictures that personify the book to them. James remarked that, in essence, this highlighted the many forms a text can take, "depending on the specific multimodal elements that are present and how our students decide to use them for their benefit in understanding" the particular mode that are using at any given time.

In one of our after-class discussions, Victoria likewise mentioned that the "text is more than the print edition of the book, or the e-book version for that matter." She continued,

Common Core, with all of its critics, does allow us flexibility to interpret texts and they have words in there like plural texts so I am thinking they are not just thinking about the printed books. They make mention of visual representations and using multimedia. We know as teachers we need to think of the word “text” differently but we are not focused on that each day.

In my last interview with Victoria, she contemplated what constitutes a text and how texts inform her literacy practices as a teacher. She felt somewhat remorseful that she may have been dismissive about what were valuable literacies in her students’ social and academic lives. She discussed ways she could differentiate and redefine her literacy practices and be less judgmental about what the students enjoy doing with images and music. She asserted, “We need to let them know it is of value, which I seldom do. We need to honor, if you will, their literacies. I wonder if they even know they are creating texts.”

Both Victoria and James noted how their classroom practices may have limited the opportunities for students to make meaning of the canon in previous years when texts, such as *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Anthem*, were taught. Students should be able to use and critically analyze a wide variety of texts to develop certain meaning making strategies that are beneficial to them.

James noted how effective a number of students were at responding verbally in class, but when asked to turn the responses into an essay written on paper they suddenly developed writer’s block. As he explained in our last interview,

I want them to write their response in a formal manner because I know they have to know how to do this. Sometimes, though, we need to let them respond in a variety of ways to

differentiate instruction for our students, but also so we give credence to what their literacies are or what they are interpreting to be their literacies or text.

With regard to the use of multimodal representations, Kress (2000) argued that “it is now impossible to make sense of texts, even of their linguistic parts alone, without having a clear idea of what these other features might be contributing to the meaning of a text” (p. 337). In other words, meaning making is not dependent on just one mode or system, but also reliant upon all the interactions established between a broader range of semiotic modes represented, such as spatial and visual representations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Expanding notions of what is considered a text or what counts as literacy is vital for educators, parents, and policymakers to rethink pedagogy. Multimodal representations should be considered when discussing texts and assigning lessons. Those lessons that are “community-based, cross-curricular and connected to students’ complex textual lives” (Ryan, 2008, p. 191) make them authentic for the students.

Students’ Multiliteracies Perspectives

Each year, there are specific classic texts that the school requires teachers to teach and students to read. The canon debate is opened every so often by teachers while pre-planning literature units of study. I witnessed this debate in the Language Arts department meeting. Some teachers felt there were merits to reading literature that has stood the test of time, while others wanted to introduce newer, young adult literature that has begun to make an appearance as valued literature in some classrooms.

Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* has been taught since I was in high school, as a part of the curriculum, and, because it is a love story with universal themes, it offers students the ability to provide literary analysis on varying levels of cognitive ability. Because most students can relate to having strong, loving emotions for another human being, this classic text has been used

as a part of the ninth grade required reading each year at Mount Oak; however, the archaic language can often inhibit student engagement and understanding. The lesson plans were designed by the grade level teachers to allow for extensive classroom discussion of the play. The intention was to aid students' understanding of figurative, Shakespearean language.

In planning meetings, teachers noted that literary texts still needed to be taught because they have a deep and profound impact on students' thinking and meaning making of the world. For example, one teacher contended that "students gain analysis skills when they pour over the dialogue and descriptions of Juliet". From my teaching experience, as well as James' and Victoria's, we noted in one of the planning meetings that, if Collins' (2008) *Hunger Games* had been the text, there would still be some students who simply would not read it. They would watch the movie or read the Cliff Notes, and offer what they learned from those sources to answer questions in class or pass the test at the end of the unit. So, although classic text use was highlighted in this research, we understood that reading viewed as compulsory will not motivate some students to read. For this unit, James and Victoria used the online lounge activities with the pre-planned lessons listed in Table 6 above. The teachers wanted to make the lounge more informal so students would interact with the play and participate in the discussions more. The third and fourth themes I identified, a *sense of equity* and *spaces for informal learning*, related to the second and third research questions. The second research question was, "What are high school students' perceptions of interacting in an online student lounge to support the reading of canonical texts in two ninth grade English classrooms?" And the third research question was, "How does the use of the remix concept develop high school students' meaning making of canonical texts?" I used these questions to solicit ninth grade students' perceptions of participating in an online environment while reading *Romeo and Juliet*.

Sense of equity

During group interviews, students consistently remarked that they felt as though they were equal with their peers and teachers in some of their interactions. Students were given the ability to not only engage with their class but also with another ninth grade class of students. The lounge was purposely introduced as an informal hangout to supplement reading the play. The students' perceptions of participating in the lounge were varied but positive. Reyna, one of the student participants, noted that she loved the sense of a shared space to communicate and share ideas and thoughts. Another student, Bryan, liked the idea of everyone having to participate, stating, "sometimes there are students who get away without talking the entire class period. They may be shy or something, but in the lounge, you don't have to be shy or afraid to talk."

The students were able to create, maintain, and participate in the virtual space that enabled dialogue and exchange among group members. This community that the students established lent itself to an opportunity for all students' voices to be heard and for the input and expressions to be valued without fear of judgement or marginalization. There was an overall perception of equity in the space where they dwelled, even if a few students sometimes tended to type more than others or stated strong emotions about a particular topic. Because of this perceived equal opportunity to share, Maja, one of Victoria's students, felt as though she had a certain level of anonymity, where she wasn't discounted by the girls in class because of how she wore her hair or her clothes—which she felt happened before in face-to-face classroom discussions. In the lounge she was more comfortable with peer interactions. Maja, who tended to speak very rarely in class, was an active member of the lounge. In one of our interviews, Maja expressed that she experienced heightened understanding of some of the topics presented by

students in both of James and Victoria's classes, and that she had more time to think and respond thoughtfully. She selected the online moniker "Aspen101," and she seemed to participate in most lounge discussions (see Figure 4.1). Maja's discussions, highlighted in bolded red below, display how she took an active role in participating with the other students. She shared her pseudonym with me when she visited the library to check out a book. She was excited that no one was aware of who she was yet.

Although social media thrives on users uploading images to identify themselves, in this instance it was an advantage for the students to not have that option in the lounge. Although icons were an option, the teachers decided to not allow profile photos, due primarily to time constraints. Another factor influencing that decision was the teachers' desire to interact without immediately knowing who the students were. Nonetheless, the online lounge afforded teachers the ability to see to whom each online moniker belonged, if they changed their minds. The lack of student images changed the way students interacted with each other because they were less concerned about whom they were interacting with in their community.

In spite of this perceived equity, students were not necessarily treated equally in the space. Some students tended to exhibit more power by dominating a conversation or taking on a leadership role to complete an assignment. However, in the last group interview, the majority of students was pleased to have the opportunity to interact without judgment, as well as have additional access outside of class to work on assignments.

Students who interacted in the online space created authentic conversations with each other enabling them the opportunity to provide feedback in an open manner. This environment that implicitly promoted equity of voice and identity, allowed students to place an emphasis on

their own individual experiences while at the same time sharing “different perspectives in a more horizontal communication approach” (Kreutz, 2009, p. 29).

Yes, it has to have it– ask Mr. Loomis or Ms. Carmicheal – they know and have said it in class over and over – Amir
Plus we have learned this since like 6 th grade..duh - Glory
No, we haven't – at least I don't remember it – JJ
Next! – Aspen101
Only use Scene IV remember– loomischiapet3
Find alliteration – Kimmie2foine
“Here are the beetles brows shall blush for me – line 32” – There you go Triple b's - AAAGogirl
Beetles, brows,blush – yep – alliteration - Ariel
But what does that line really mean – somebody Google it really quick bwahh –Aspen101
I don't even know – this.language.right.here.the.death.of.me - Shashae
Yeah, it's kinda hard, but Loomis will tell us – look it up and try to figure it out though cause he gonna ask us in class and our group needs to be on point – Kimmie2foine
Who is going to research it for next class – we have to present it – loomischiapet3
I will look it up in a minute and try to post it - jassyfire
Allusion next – Aspen101
I like this one. Remember in class this is the one where we talked about current love songs or how Mr. Loomis like the Police song ‘wrapped around your finger’ – lots of allusions in there – greek mythology stuff - jassyfire
Back on topic – Aspen101
I am on topic – THANK YOU VERY MUCH- trying to help yall remember what allusion is - jassyfire
I have my notes, haha – but thanks - Amir
Ok, how about u remember when he said something about cupid – that's referring to the roman god – or greek – can't remember – find the line for me Amir - JJ
It's ‘you are a lover, borrow cupids wings and soar with them above a common bound – tadah! AAAGogirl
What line is that? We have to show it for the teacher - Amir
17 and 18 - AAAGogirl
Let's go to scene V - jassyfire
No, that is not our role – that's jeremiah's group – they are working on that – just scene iv for now – Aspen101
That's enough – he said only get a few since everybody presenting tomorrow - AAAGogirl
Now what visual are we going to have -Amir
I like for us to show the youtube screenshot of the cartoon video -Shaeshae
That's good – anybody else have suggestions - JJ
Let's just do that one, then the next time we can appoint someone to do it or assign it – Kimmie2foine
Just put the 2 people's names who found the video – the others can get credit next time as the researcher – that's what Mr. Loomis said - Amir

Figure 4.1 Excerpt of Student Dialogue in Online Lounge

Students frequently pointed out, both in group interviews and class discussions, that having the ability to sign into the online lounge twenty-four hours per day was one of the features they liked most. Students were also offered the use of laptops before or after school in the media center, in case they did not have a computer to use at home. Rayna stated that having access to the lounge any time was a big plus because she could type her responses after she had time to read some of the other students' posts. This gave her more time to decide how she wanted to answer. She mentioned that she did not always think of a quick response like some of the others. The lounge was always open to student revisions, extensions, and elaborations, rather than sealed and closed from others' continuous contributions. Having access at all times also contributed to a sense of equity because all were offered the affordances to succeed at various tasks in the virtual, shared space, which also fostered a participatory culture for the students.

Spaces for Informal learning

Formal learning consists of a strategic desired outcome with the curriculum being mapped in a very structured manner (Eaton, 2012). This type of learning usually is designed by an instructor who has more control over the learning experiences of the student. For purposes of this research, informal learning was viewed as learning when there is more flexibility in the way content is both created and consumed. Gee (2003) argues that affinity spaces such as the online student lounge offer powerful leaning opportunities because they are sustained by common endeavors that bridge differences in age, class, race, gender, and educational level. Students can participate in various ways according to their skills and interests depending on peer-to-peer teaching with each participant constantly motivated to acquire new knowledge or refine their existing skills, and because they allow each participant to feel like an expert while tapping the expertise of others.

Anyone involved in the teaching and learning process can create resources and more content can be developed or used by those who are participating in the community. Those participating in the community of learners begin to share information, create ideas, and remix texts to appeal to the needs of the learners. The students' interactions allow them to become more comfortable with one another as they all contribute. This type of informal learning occurred during the study, specifically when students created and shared in the virtual space.

The students in this study indicated that, overall, the use of images, songs, video, and other multimedia in the lounge was a social practice of communication that created spaces for informal learning. This fourth theme—*spaces for informal learning*—elucidates students' need for, what one of them termed, "recreational learning," which is learning that is not compulsory in nature. When further asked about "recreational learning," the student responded, "We don't have recess and we don't all have gym class; this is when we come together and sort of relax."

The teachers gave students the freedom to remix whatever part of the play that needed updating for the classes to comprehend complex language or scenes. The students were to explore texts visually, musically, and kinesthetically in class and online. Stating in group interviews that they looked forward to coming to class, particularly on days they knew they would interact in the virtual space, students felt that the participatory and collaborative nature of the lounge fostered motivation. For those students who previously did not find the canon accessible, they were able to make meaning of the texts in new ways and were able to perform their individual and collective understandings of the text in engaging mediums. One student, Alex, who always wanted me to listen to the rap mp3s that he downloaded, was able to socially construct his own meaning out of one particular scene when Romeo seemed to be at odds with

his friends. He penned a rap battle to fully describe what action was occurring as well as uploaded an image (Figure 4.2) to visually show the action taking place in the scene.



Mercutio, I warned you not to mess with me

But nah, you just can't see

That is just not me to fight

I am a lover get it right

All these family problems just gotta go

I don't know why you frontin' in front of the beaus

Wait, wait, wait, Tybalt

This is all your fault

Or maybe it is all just a misunderstanding

But in the end of this, I'll still be standing

Figure 4.2 Rap Battle from Tybalt, Mercutio, and Romeo's Fight

The rap as well as students' informal sharing and collaborating addresses the third research question that asked how the use of the remix concept develops high school students' meaning making of canonical texts. Students' online transcripts indicated their use of slang or

popular culture references gave them freedom to express themselves with the belief that their interactions with peers were casual and informal. Stevens (2006) posited that informal learning is “how we actually learn in real life as distinguished from how many people think we learn in the course of more formal learning” (p. 2). According to Cross (2003), we discover how to do our jobs through informal learning by observing others, asking the person in the next cubicle, calling the help desk, and networking to develop mentors.

To further examine informal learning, Livingstone (2011) contends that adults use the internet for different reasons than adolescents. The internet may mean the world wide web for adults, whereas for youth, it means snapchats, Instagram, and twitter – and “here they are already content producers” (p. 10). The communication and entertainment focused activities are driving emerging media literacy. Through such uses, children are most engaged– multi-tasking, becoming proficient at navigation and maneuver so as to win, judging their participation and that of others, etc. In terms of personal development, identity, expression and their social consequences– participation, social capital, civic culture- these are the activities that serve to network today’s younger generation.

Using data from the last group interview where we discussed one of the final assignments concerning who was to blame for the tragic end of Romeo and Juliet, I determined that students developed their own meaning making skills. The process of meaning making is not universal for everyone. It is how one moves toward deeper meanings by enlarging one’s experience base and improving one’s mental skills (Ansbacher, 2002). The varied activities and processes that students take active roles in develop their meaning making at that particular time or in a particular context. For example students in the online lounge assist and aid one another in finding various forms of figurative language, which helps develop meaning making skills. Thus,

from my analysis, meaning making can be a collective effort. This form of informal learning that occurred in the lounge was experimental. Informal learning communities can evolve to respond to short-term needs and temporary interests, whereas the institutions supporting public education have remained little changed despite decades of school reform. According to Jenkins (2006) students can move in and out of informal learning communities. This is usually not the case for the more static, more conservative nature of formal education.

Consider how for example, teachers aid students' meaning making by facilitating a conducive environment or by implementing a tool that fosters interactions that offer a sense of equal partnership and of a community of learners. This participatory culture of learning holds the possibility of developing skills and competencies that not only hold value with the present day workforce, but also allow for diversified cultural expression, creative expression, and opportunities for civic engagement (Jenkins, 2009). The students involved in this study used a virtual collaborative learning environment, this "affinity space," (Gee, 2003), to engage in experimental learning and knowledge sharing in collaboration with others, rather than the conservative, solitary, and regimented learning environments of formal school education (Jenkins, 2009).

In my last group interview with the students, Steven, a student in James' college prep class, talked about how the online lounge allowed him to feel like he was not really at school completing a graded assignment. But at the same time he expressed frustration with the overall unit on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Collins: Now I've watched you guys discussing a lot of thing in class and online while reading the play. What types of learning has taken place while you are interacting online.

Steven: I really don't know if we have been learning the right thing for Mr. Loomis, but it has been kinda cool that we are doing some things that the other classes haven't done.

Collins: Yes, I can imagine. Do you think it helps the students learn differently?

Steven: Uhhh.....hmmm. I am not sure what you are asking, but what I do know is I like getting on the computer every day in class. I know when I see you coming in the class we are going to get to talk to each other online. I like talking to my other friends in the other class. I wish we could this with all of our classes, man! What? Dude would be good every day.

Steven smiles and rubs his hands together.

Collins: Good, glad you are getting enjoyment. I know that I have observed you in class during most of your unit on *Romeo and Juliet*. But I have missed a few things in class. I know that Mr. Loomis usually discusses a certain act and scene before you all go online to write about it.

Steven: I don't know. Uhh...yeah, let's see. Well, although I like being online, ya know it is like being in the comfort of your home talking to one of your friends online except on here at school, we have to be all reflective and stuff and answer the questions that are posted. But it's been cool to find pictures, music, and videos to upload. I just hated that you couldn't see it immediately. We have to wait for Mr. Loomis to put it up, but we usually get to see what everyone posted the next day, so it's not so bad.

Steven pauses and looks to me as though I should say something.

Collins: I have seen some of the pictures that you have posted. You are really getting into completing the assignments. Is any of it helping you comprehend all that is occurring in the play?

Steven: Sometimes, but the problem is we have been reading bits and pieces of the play and they be expecting us to like read the stuff we are missing in class later at home, but most of us ain't doing that. They really should just let us have more time to read the play. That's

how they did with *To Kill A Mockingbird* too. It's crazy. They want us to get all deep and discuss the book or the play or whatever, but half the time we don't read it straight through. But you know what? It's all good 'cause we still get to hang out online and just be kinda free with our thoughts. I really feel like I am at home when we get the laptops out – it seems like we are hanging out with our friends.

Informal learning activities enhanced the overall class environment, according to Tejah, a student in Victoria's class. As she explained,

I am understanding the play more because I feel like there is no real grade attached to it so I am not as stressed and worried about what kind of grade I am going to get. I like it when we are able to either answer the prompts or bring something that we want to put in the lounge to discuss. I go home, look up some pictures or music to try to go along with what we did in class. I didn't think I would enjoy reading this play. My sister said it was kinda boring last year, but I don't think so.

Within their informal learning spaces, students were active in remixing media of all types: they (re)wrote the play in short scenes while creating music accompaniments with some of the songs they liked or that were popular during this period, all while making their meaning of the experience. Some of them edited together video mashups on YouTube, made pictorial collages on their smartphone apps, re-contextualized symbols and icons of popular media through internet memes, and participated in communities of digital curating that reframed found

content, such as Tumblr (Figure 4.3) and Pinterest.

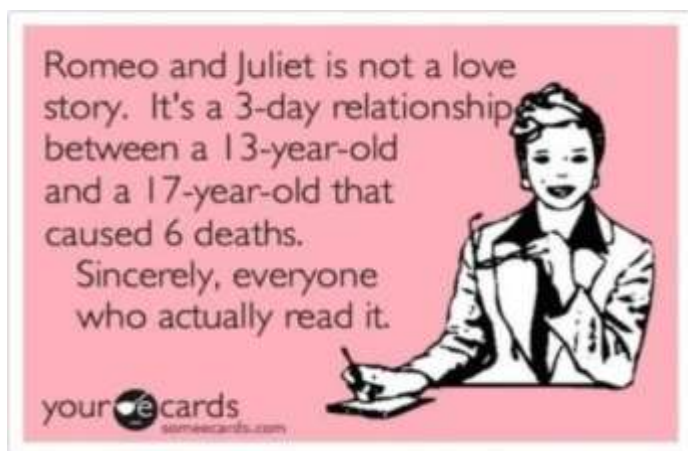


Figure 4.3. Tumblr picture found on a designated Romeo and Juliet page

The language of the tools that allow for *multimodal authorship* have become part of the digital vernacular, suggesting that “more people can create in this way, which means that many more do” (Lessig, 2008, p. 71). The remixers, as *multimodal authors*, use their own perspectives, experiences, and knowledges to make meaning by reforming the socially situated grammar of understanding connected to the original text, because they exercise a choice in *how* they remix and *why*. As Gee (2004) noted, “[it] is not about conveying neutral or ‘objective’ information; rather is it about communicating perspectives on experience and action in the world, often in contrast to alternative and competing perspectives” (p. 53).

In summary, four overarching themes were identified as I researched student and teacher perceptions of integrating a pedagogy of multiliteracies to support the reading of *Romeo and Juliet*. The themes associated with teacher perspectives included *teacher identity in new spaces* and the *reconceptualization of text*. The themes associated with students’ perspectives included a *sense of equity* while participating in the online lounge and having *new spaces for informal learning*. These last two, student-associated themes were I identified from group interviews, online transcripts, and classroom observations.

James, Victoria, the students, and I advanced the theory and practice of multiliteracies by employing the use of multimodality and remixing in their teaching and learning. James and Victoria negotiated their multiple identities as they expanded their roles in the online lounge. They also became more contemplative about the expanded notion of text, which they had not fully explored previously in their teaching practices.

In chapter 5, I will conclude with suggestions as to how my research fits into the larger discussion of the pedagogy of multiliteracies and the use of multimodal texts within the field of teaching. I will make recommendations related to how future research may be designed in order to further our understanding of effective multiliteracies integration in the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to solicit teacher and student perceptions of the enacting of the multiliteracies perspective in the secondary classroom. I was especially drawn to the multimodality of communication to envision how it would be expressed and validated as legitimate forms of literacy as students remixed *Romeo and Juliet* in an online student lounge. I sought the perceptions of ninth grade students in an honors and college prep English Language Arts class as well as those of their teachers to illustrate the varied modes of literacy as they interacted with the assigned classic text.

My research questions directed me to examine not only the perception of multimodal communication in the online environment, but also to critically examine how teachers approached the pedagogy of multiliteracies with a classic text and how the students made the remix concept focal to developing their own meaning making. In observing the classrooms of Victoria and James, as well as through interviews, I dutifully attended to the teachers' literacy instruction, noting their beliefs, their understanding of the school's literacy instruction, and their response to a multiliteracies perspective. As a researcher and observer, I, at times, internally questioned the approaches of both teachers as I tried to guide them to use the concepts of multiliteracies. It was at times difficult when such a pedagogy was unfamiliar to either of them, in that it was not taught during their pre-service days nor were they exposed to multiliteracies in current staff developments.

The teachers involved in the study had limited knowledge of the theoretical and practical concepts of multiliteracies; therefore, I chose to analyze data using a combination of inductive and deductive analyses to present an accurate account of the teachers' and students' beliefs and perspectives. Given these data as they relate to the concept of multiliteracies, I will suggest several implications for practice and future research while highlighting the overarching themes I identified during the study. This chapter is divided into two parts. First, I discuss implications for practice. In the second section, I focus on future research and discuss possible paths for subsequent studies.

Before suggesting these implications, I acknowledge and recognize that this case study only described two classrooms in one school out of many educational institutions throughout the country. This case study, although small in the number of participants, suggests the potential of studying how the pedagogy of multiliteracies can provide opportunities for new approaches for secondary literacy instruction. Similarly structured studies in different school settings would strengthen and expand the implications presented here.

Implications for Practice

Anstey and Bull (2006) defined a multiliterate person as one who is flexible and strategic and can understand and use literacy and literate practices with a range of texts and technologies; in socially responsible ways; in a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse world; and to fully participate in life as an active and informed citizen. (p. 55)

This study was reflective of a pedagogical change in what it means to be a teacher of literacy in a multiliterate world. James and Victoria, the teachers involved in this study, enacted this pedagogy of multiliteracies, allowing their students to author, develop, and use multimodal texts.

I reflect on how to advance the notion and pedagogy of multiliteracies in light of my research. In this section, I consider and reflect how my study can inform practice.

The Fluidity of Teacher Identity

My findings (in relation to teacher perceptions) highlighted teachers' innate ability to perform varying identities as they situated themselves in a different context. Scholars have studied and noted how youth compose identities and situate self in online worlds (Black, 2007; Davies, 2006; Thomas, 2007). Similar to the students, James and Victoria discovered that they also composed identities other than that of the teacher while interacting in the online student lounge. At times, they exhibited their social media selves as they engaged in informal conversations about how they were remixing and interpreting the play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Yet on other occasions, they became silent observers and allowed students to make meaning of questions they had or of Juliet's character in relation to popular songs.

From my experience in the classroom and through my teacher observations, some teachers tend to take an authoritative role most of the time in the classroom. And sometimes this is rightfully so. Teachers must maintain a certain level of classroom management. It is interesting, however, that when power and identity shifts, there are broader opportunities, from this research experience, for teachers to move fluidly from one role or identity to another (e.g., from facilitator to peer, etc.). James and Victoria were able to witness the manifestation of identity shifts in the classroom as they engaged in the virtual space, and, from their perspectives, these shifts were most salient when opportunities were presented to alter the authority dynamics within the online environment where the students wielded more capital based on their digital knowledge.

Considering a framework of multiliteracies, for this particular study, I found Cummins' (2005) stance on identity investment to be central to understanding teachers' identity negotiation. As he posited, researchers should recognize that any effective and inclusive pedagogy needs to view the interactions that occur with teachers, students, peers, and parents as carving out interpersonal spaces in which knowledge is generated and exchanged, and identities are negotiated. Learning can be enhanced when such interactions capitalize on cognitive engagement and identity investment. The underlying principles for the development of a multiliteracies pedagogy draw from the concepts that were highlighted above and that connect multilingual practices, identities (of teachers and students), and the multimodal forms of meaning making that students are engaged in across diverse spaces as central to development of students' range of literacies within school contexts (Giampapa, 2010).

The teachers involved in this study co-created spaces with their students where their online communication became textual, multimodal vehicles through which they tackled critical discussions on identity, language, race, and difference. These spaces were discussed in relation to the findings presented in Chapter 4. James and Victoria's identities were affirmed in their classrooms and challenged the mainstream curriculum. From my classroom observations, teachers had a choice in how they could exert their authority in a classroom, yet they were willing to become less dominant and allowed students to be more central figures in the lounge to advance the overall instruction. In enacting a multiliteracies pedagogy, the choices teachers make in interacting with their students can be strategic and deliberate in implementing instruction so as to allow students to become more empowered and increasingly take ownership of their learning. In this study, teachers allowed this shift in power while interacting in the online lounge with students, which ultimately created opportunities for James and Victoria to

examine the fluid nature of their identities. They became aware of the shifting nature of their identities in how they interacted in a less formal, virtual space in comparison to how they may have led instruction in a more formal daily lesson in a physical setting.

In preparing future and current classroom practitioners, teacher education programs should re-design both undergraduate and graduate curricula to make multiliteracies a regular part of pedagogical and research practices. In doing so, these programs should create opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to explore, question, and interrogate the varying nature and fluidity of identities when enacting a pedagogy of multiliteracies. In addition, schools and other educational institutions need to place emphasis on creating professional development courses which discuss how shifts in agency and identity complement teachers' abilities as they teach students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Professional development should not focus only on technological knowledge, but should also include authentic literacy practices and opportunities for teachers to learn how to support student design of multimodal texts (Miller, 2008). In their study of literacy learning and technology in twenty classrooms, Lankshear and Knobel (2003) found problems with teachers appropriating new technologies for "schoolish practices" (p. 67) that were very unlike authentic social practices for meaningful purposes in the world. In part, teachers had not experienced uses of technology that were socially meaningful in their own lives, so they focused on the operational aspects of technologies, adapting them to status quo teaching practices. With traditional mindsets about knowledge—like teacher as the final knowledge authority—technology integration was largely "reduced to teaching [students] how to drive the new technologies," (p. 31), instead of expanding possibilities with new literacy practices for communicative purposes.

This study allowed teachers to merge aspects of their lives outside of the classroom, in particular Victoria's social media life, with their roles as authority figures in class to transform the digital tool into a more authentic experience for them and their students. Identity and positions of power were fluid and transferable depending on the tasks the teachers and students were performing in the online lounge. In an effort to impart change in the use of technology by teachers, practitioners must be cognizant of the opportunities that are present in exploring new literacies as a social construct that will yield the global citizens that a multiliterate world needs. Importance should be placed on how literacy and literacies affect everyday life across all curriculum subjects in professional development courses. This approach could relate personally to teachers and their lives which could assist them to feel a greater connection and develop some form of authenticity to academic tasks, if they decide to use technological resources in their instruction.

Similar to delving into students' out of school interests and literacies, as teachers move forward in developing their pedagogical practices, they must also consider their out of school interests and literacies and bring them into the classroom when trying to incorporate multiliteracies. Authentic practice will be meaningful to practitioners, and that authenticity and sincerity will transfer to the students. Lankshear and Knobel (2003) argued that teachers need *experiences as insiders* in new literacies as social practices to prompt a change in mindset more congruent with "digital epistemologies" (p. 172). Again, Victoria and James socially situated themselves along with their students, sometimes relating to them as peers, by acknowledging the constantly changing nature of their roles during the study.

According to Alsup (2006), during novice teachers' inductive years, it is vital to nurture and support every aspect of the development process, and the negotiation between personal and

private personas is an integral part of such development. These personas shift continuously and teachers embraced and acknowledged the fluidity, just as they students did to express and acknowledge their performances of identity.

Reconceptualized Texts

In examining the two teachers' perspectives of what constitutes texts for students as they reimagined or reconceptualized the idea of text, I seek for teachers to consider employing a pedagogy of multiliteracies along with intertextuality to engage students with the canon in particular. Although, I did not mention it explicitly in my findings, a certain level of intertextuality was discussed in the physical classrooms and the online lounge when James and Victoria assigned lessons related to *Romeo and Juliet*. In some discussions, from time to time, students mentioned similar themes to Meyer's (2005) *Twilight* or another young adult, romance novel. However, in addition to complementary young adult novels, students were heavily influenced by popular culture and alluded to songs, food, graphic novels, and commercials. They even created memes to draw parallels between popular culture and the text, unknowingly aiding their meaning making. In addition to alluding to these various forms of textual representation, they often found ways to remix with these items that James and Victoria began to align with *Romeo and Juliet* and reconceptualize them as text.

Digital technologies have altered the very nature of the texts that people encounter in their everyday lives (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Luke & Elkins, 1998; Tyner, 1998). These changes have had significant consequences for how we think about literacy in relation to youth. Young people increasingly consume multimodal texts that incorporate graphic arts, music, and cinematic forms as well as print (Kirst, 2000; Kress, 1997; New London Group, 1996). These

texts open new possibilities for expression at the same time they demand new types of communicative competencies of both consumers and producers.

Conceptualizing what is meant by multiliteracies or digital literacies and to envision what new literacies might look like in secondary English classrooms has taken shape with the teachers involved in this study as they now incorporate more multimodal texts in their instruction. For classroom practice, teachers should examine how popular culture, multiple forms of representation of texts, and the design of multimodal, multi-genre texts aid in student engagement and learning. Teachers need to acknowledge and contend with the emergent nature of reconceptualizing what is “text.” When educators examine texts other than those that are print-centric, it can be difficult to determine what skills and knowledge secondary students need to develop in order to become multiliterate consumers and producers of these new texts that are visual, auidial, and gestural in nature. How do we provide opportunities for pre-service English teachers to adapt future instruction to a more expanded view of literacy and texts?

As our technological tools and conceptions of texts are changing, traditional notions of literacy as reading and writing printed texts retain their primacy in K-12 schools. Because schools are the institutions that give credence to competency in our society, English educators must prepare teachers who can ensure that their students master both traditional texts *and* the new texts that are increasingly important to participating proactively in our information and technology rich society.

As students created memes, downloaded YouTube videos, or expressed their emotions with emoticons while composing in the online student lounge, this virtual space of “texts” embodied the students’ use of multimodalities as a means to interpret the often difficult language and underlying themes in *Romeo and Juliet*. Recognizing that literacy cannot be divorced from

its social context has meant acknowledging that current literacy practices almost invariably involve reading written texts in association with other sign systems, such as images and sounds (Duncum, 2004). In the past, the dominant view of literacy was that it was primarily a cognitive act, involving the mental processes of reading and writing. Now, with rapid technological changes, texts (as well as identities) are viewed as more dynamic with constant shifts in meaning depending upon the social, historical, or political meaning the composer of the text presents to his audience.

Baker (2010) supported the dynamic process of reconceptualizing language and texts by reiterating the concept of design in multiliteracies theory, noting literacy education is increasingly multimodal, recognizing any meaning making activity as a matter of design. These designs are semantic webs that are dynamic in meaning and structure. Written language is becoming more closely intertwined with other modes, such as the layout of an online lounge, icons used in text messaging, and the juxtaposition of attaching images to social media sites. This multimodal communication of meaning is a critical dimension of the ongoing reconceptualization of literacy and texts that has led to the construct of multiliteracies (New London Group, 2000; Unsworth, 2001). Therefore, educators and policymakers should explore the broadening definition of what is considered to be a text, particularly as more curriculum standards are created to include a pedagogy of multiliteracies to ensure that teachers and students understand there can be multiple representations and definitions of a text.

Equity in Online Spaces

A sense of equity was a theme I identified as significant in students' perceptions. This finding clearly indicated equity as a vital and important issue to students as they navigate new spaces and incorporate elements of multiliteracies. Equity, I observed, was a motivator to

perform, share, and collaborate, when barriers are removed, such as access for students, and the online environment is welcoming and nurturing of a student-driven collaborative.

Students in this study seemed to enjoy the sense of community derived from feeling they all could share equally with one another in the online lounge. They also enjoyed having a space for informal learning. These ideas necessitate revisiting participatory culture and how it is juxtaposed with web 2.0 ethos and multiliteracies as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Figure 1). The elements of the virtual lounge and participatory culture, web 2.0 ethos, and multiliteracies collide when a community of learners are invited to engage in meaningful learning practices .

Martin and Noakes' (2012) recent study sought to determine how an e-learning course using a Learning Management System (LMS) could embody the web 2.0 ethos. The scholars reflected that tension exists between two opposing views of the LMS. The first is the widely held view that, even with the addition of Web 2.0 tools, an LMS (similar to the online student lounge used in my study) remained essentially an electronic replication of existing practice. This existing traditional practice generally only provides students with opportunities for formal learning with specific, pre-determined, academic outcomes, which is definitely needed and expected for teacher evaluations and student assessments.

The results of the study offered a view that emphasizes the transformative potential of an LMS-mediated learning when informed by Web 2.0 and new "ethos stuff" (see Figure 1). Lankshear and Knobel (2007) referred to new "ethos stuff" as the non-technological aspects of new literacy practices that are "more 'participatory,' 'collaborative,' and 'distributed' in nature than conventional literacies" (p. 7). However, there remains an immense tension between these literacy practices as traditionally taught. There is a struggle to support student engagement in participatory meaning making sites, such as a virtual lounge, where "structures seem so at odds

with the highly individualistic attitude contemporary schooling has inherited” (Jenkins, 2013, p. 194).

I can contend with the above statement that there is a tension as my current school system in which I am employed as a Library media specialist has implemented an LMS that teachers and students use. It has taken the place of teacher websites and requires passwords for students (and parents) to access. Mount Oak has even recently been lauded for having a high percentage of usage of the LMS. Currently students use it to retrieve assignments, submit school work via a dropbox, and watch multimedia posted by their teachers. Although there are discussion areas within the LMS to employ a virtual space similar to the online lounge used in my study, teachers have yet to delve into that component just yet as they are trying to get acclimated to using this digital tool which sometimes appears counterintuitive to their traditional teaching. I will seek to advance the theory of multiliteracies in my role as a teacher and collaborator by trying to create opportunities to be involved with the professional learning the teachers are involved in as it relates to the LMS. I will have the opportunity to introduce Safari Montage, an open platform to deliver digital curriculum to teachers and students. After I receive training, I will assist teachers in embedding this digital repository into their LMS pages. The possibilities are present for me, in my professional role, to encourage a pedagogy of multiliteracies with this impactful implementation.

Multiliteracies acknowledge the diverse forms of literacy practice required for work and leisure, citizenship and community participation, personal growth and cultural expression. In addition to negotiation skills, students can become empowered if they are able to read the world and then read the word as Freire (1970) contended. Students must not only learn to read and write, but also how they as individuals play a larger societal role.

The students in James' and Victoria's classes perceived a certain sense of community in their online space, which could ultimately aid in the advancing of their social equity in the "real" or offline world. Harrell's (2009) empirical study of students in virtual worlds presented the notion that, just as science fiction often offers a commentary on our contemporary society here on earth, the alternative spaces created by game worlds or social network sites allow young people to gain some critical distance, potentially to open up discussions about racial profiling, stereotyping, and discrimination. Similarly, the students I worked with in this study discussed topics of gender discrimination and police brutality in our virtual space.

As students felt a common equality in their online community, they were able to feel more comfortable bringing forward tools for discussion. Veeragoudar Harrell (2009) stated that both students and educators can explore their own capacity to represent themselves. Students can become knowledgeable, critical participants and take action in multiple ways. They can seek to challenge ideologies being discussed or by producing remixes or new compositions because they understand and feel empowered to do so by their equal standing with the other members in the community.

Spaces for Informal Learning

Another theme that I identified from my findings centered on creating spaces for students to be involved in an informal learning process. Students' informal and formal learning practices with classmates, friends, and families allow them to practice and understand the value of classroom activities within a community of learners. Teachers can potentially help students understand and learn multiple perspectives of their classmates and teachers.

Creating informal spaces for learning acknowledges the need for both informal and formal learning environments for students. Why do we need informal learning spaces? As I

illustrated in Chapter 4, informal learning is learning that is not compulsory in nature. One of the students in James' class stated that in high school, they "don't have recess and we don't all have gym class; this is when we come together and sort of relax". A relaxing environment is conducive to learning and students need a balance of instruction that welcomes informal learning opportunities. Recent studies show a correlation in games and students' outside interests to various benefits in adolescents' informal learning (Gee, 2008; Peppler & Kafai, 2010). Informal learning opportunities bring new insights into the more formal institutions of schools and libraries. More often than not, adolescents are deprived of those most effective learning media and digital tools and practices as they step inside the academic zones.

Is there a need to assess informal learning? Jacobs (2013) argued that there is a need for changing assessment methods of evolving multiliteracies practices. Acknowledging that assessing multiliteracies presents new challenges and the guiding principles are about ways of knowing rather than using a set of cognitive skills, Jacobs concluded that the core of a multiliteracies assessment approach is teacher observation of student engagement. Informal learning and student engagement can easily be conflated to a tool of teaching that cannot be assessed. Although there needs to be some measurement of student learning by testing students' knowledge, it can be rationalized that students who are participating in critical discussions and asking questions to further their understanding of canonized texts, in an online lounge, are still learning the required skills to be global citizens beyond secondary school.

Alvermann (2009) offered the idea that "online and offline literacies are not polar opposites; thus, to reify distinctions between them serves mainly to limit understandings of how each informs the other" (p. 16). Thus, it can be argued that informal learning in an online space complements the more formal learning of classroom literacies. Vadeboncoeur's (2005) review

of research on informal learning suggested we should be more concerned with how a particular context contributes to learning when trying to determine what serves as learning in formal and informal contexts. Learning, according to Vadeboncoeur (2005), is “increased participation in social and discursive practices, more complex forms of participation and identity positions, and independent action” (p. 264).

Cooper, Lockyer, & Brown (2013) contended that educators need to provide students with learning experiences that are meaningful in order to achieve multiliteracies focused learning outcomes. The activities that the students engaged in as a group kept them highly motivated to continue reading *Romeo and Juliet* offline while in class. The informal space of the online student lounge became an entry point for meaningful discussions that allowed the students and teachers to reflect on and articulate thoughts and ideas around a variety of topics.

Enacting a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Cope and Kalantzis (2000b) captured the essence of multiliteracies when they described it as creating a different way of learning or coming to know “in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes” (p. 5). Cope and Kalantzis (2000a) indicated that these various modes of representation that learners access include linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial, with combinations of these as a multimodal design. This statement alone should interest teachers who want to provide a space for the often marginalized students who do not learn like the majority of students.

By enacting a pedagogy of multiliteracies, teachers can instruct students in ways that help them realize, comprehend, and respect diverse knowledge perspectives (i.e., different, dynamic, and conflicting ideas). Different views of critical framing are crucial for globally minded

twenty-first century students to include their experiences concerning family, friends, popular culture, social media, and language in the process of making text. Teachers can encourage students to notice and analyze practices of communicating meaningful ideas in schools and communities.

For multiliteracies to have purpose and affect every day, classroom teaching, efforts must be made to create a space for “problem posing” when presenting a “text.” Freire (1970) coined “problem posing” as a way to encourage teachers to promote student questioning of existing knowledge, rather than presenting all subject matter as immutable and universal in scope. This is similar to the response to literature that Knobel (2011) referred to when she insisted the alternative responses to texts (other than classroom discussion) “can show students that meaning making and response to literature lie within themselves rather than within the teacher” (p. 69).

Moving toward a pedagogy of multiliteracies, teachers should have some understanding that students’ background knowledge can also enrich the multiliteracies classroom. Such enrichment can come by intentionally using youths’ real life experiences to create meaningful classroom activities within a community of learners (Jacob, 2012; Mills, 2009; New London Group, 1996; Newman, 2002). In my research, having an online writing space helped teachers and students promote online and offline collaboration, necessitating the need for student and teacher negotiation. In our global society, this participatory culture concept requires negotiation. It requires students use their collective intelligence to support each other. Jenkins (2009) asserted that it is increasingly important to master the practice of negotiation. Students today are more likely to “encounter a range of communities whose values, beliefs, and ways of thinking, acting, and speaking are unfamiliar” (McWilliams, 2014).

In Chapter 1, I stated that my intent for my study is to help legitimated theory and practical teaching to stop pretending to be in a blissful marriage at a holiday cocktail party, only to resort back to sitting far apart in the car on the way home, not even talking to each other. A blissful co-existence and collaboration can occur if practitioners begin to seek to implement some of the ideas presented by theorists and researchers, such as enacting a pedagogy of multiliteracies. It is very likely that teachers who employ multimodality in their classrooms will find that a multiliteracies pedagogical framework actually allows opportunities for meaningful context—and every effort should be made to connect school experiences with students’ out-of-school experiences (Alvermann, 2004; Hagood, Alvermann, & Heron-Hruby, 2010; Hull & Schultz, 2002). Theory at work matters and can be quite impactful. Teacher education and professional development programs should continue to reiterate this notion by presenting the blissful collaborations (or collisions) that are occurring in classrooms based on research such as this study.

Implications for Future Research

In suggesting that future studies begin to look across cases to determine if the multiliteracies experiences of youths and classroom teachers are representative of a larger population, I call on researchers to challenge their definition of the larger phenomenon. Within my study, I limited my exploration by choosing only students in the ninth grade from two classrooms. As the United States becomes increasingly more ethnically and linguistically diverse, as my students in this study were, researchers must give focused consideration to the highly individualized needs of these learners who need differentiation and creativity in instruction.

Findings from this study underscore research of others who have cited the benefits of using multiliteracies to increase access to text and to create globalized citizens of our students (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Mills, 2009). My findings also support claims that teachers can use technology or digital texts to differentiate and accommodate for varied learning styles and abilities (Hobgood & Ormsby, 2011). However, future studies should explore effective uses of comprehensive access to technology-based literacy supports on specific culturally diverse groups of learners. As researchers look for ways to meet the particular needs of the continuously growing ethnically and linguistically diverse populations within the United States, they should also go one step further. I recommend that future studies also investigate the particular ways teachers may choose to use technology to encourage intercultural sensitivity among students in order to develop a global awareness, preparing them for a world that is increasingly connected through technological advances.

As literacy researchers attempt to move policy and practice towards a pedagogy of multiliteracies, I suggest research approaches that are strongly compatible to language and literacy research, such as formative and design experiments, which are “grounded in making a difference in the real world” and “accommodate the complexities of instructional practice and . . . directly inform day-to-day practice” (Reinking & Bradley, 2008, p. 33). This approach to inquiry is well suited for research activities that seek to investigate instructional interventions (e.g., differentiation in instruction) within and across authentic contexts. In retrospect, I would have embarked upon this approach or a participatory action research approach had I been situated in a classroom as a teacher or a literacy coach. A generative design experiment has the characteristics of being goal-oriented, adaptive and iterative, and transformative, with is commensurable with research aims to affect policy and pedagogical change.

Saye and Bush (2002) conducted a two-year study that investigated the potential of hypermedia resources and scaffolding as a support for problem based social studies and critical reasoning. Saye and Bush's research sought to inform problem-based curriculum development and new pedagogical opportunities that affected a large group of students and teacher. The goal was ultimately to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Bradley & Reinking, 2011). Evidence-based research can inform practice with results based in longitudinal studies with a large sample group, which differs significantly from my 10-week study of 19 participants. Comparing varying studies, conducted with various methods and approaches, can assist teachers who want to make transformative changes to their pedagogies.

Summary

As I come to the close of this dissertation, I feel encouraged to offer a few final thoughts on the insights I have gained from conducting this research. After I complete my doctoral program, I seek to collaborate more with teachers in my school as well as initiate professional development programs related to integrating a multiliteracies perspective. My goal is to create a culture of participation for students to use multimodal texts in their meaning making.

I plan to continue researching the literacy lives of students in my capacity as a literacy and language practitioner and researcher in meaningful ways. Prior to implementing this qualitative case study, I took a sense of pride in my commitment to seeing that the Mount Oak high school students in the literacy classrooms were given the greatest possible opportunity to experience success in their learning outcomes. In reflection, I see that the field will certainly benefit from others having an educational outlook that values participation in continuous professional learning. Throughout this study, I came to realize that the two participating teachers

possessed a great and infinite ability to make a curricular change. And this ability manifested as a higher level of student engagement.

In closing, I contend that students will be global citizens in the twenty-first century if they have innovative teachers—like James and Victoria—who teach beyond their comfort level, ensuring students have an environment that invites all to feel free to learn. The overarching themes that I identified from the findings of my research compel me to look more closely at what it means for adolescents to evolve into global citizens as it relates to multiliteracies theory. A deconstruction of the term requires me, and hopefully educators, to trouble the term; not merely oversimplifying it as it used in the educational vernacular. Global citizenship requires students to become engaged in community to participate fully in social, economic, and political issues ; to be flexible in their learning, understanding that shifts occur regularly and continually as their defining technologies changes; and to become producers and authors of new re-workings and remixes of original works to adapt to the frequent changes in new literacies.

Pairing the concept of students engaging in remix culture with traditional texts needs attention also in my reflections of this study. Mills (2005) asserted that “historically valued texts are not representative of the kaleidoscope of texts and literacies that children encounter in society” (p. 106). She further notes that the canon excludes certain texts such as picture books, science fiction, and romance novels. This exclusion negates the influence of popular culture on adolescents, leaving a “significant number of gendered representations and stereotypes unopposed and unquestioned” (p. 106). Knowing the marginalization that exists when teachers only value the canon piqued my interest in using multiliteracies theory in a classroom in which the canon was taught, in this particular case, *Romeo and Juliet*. A pedagogy of multiliteracies provides opportunity for the critique cited above. Academics and practitioners alike may not

admit it openly, but there are elitist attitudes that pervade in literacy teaching which continue to subjugate marginalized students' out of school literacies as inferior.

There is space for both traditional and new texts, however Mills (2005) warns that the selection of texts for teaching multiliteracies needs to be done reflectively and critically, as the failure to do so will result in the reproduction of dominant cultural values that place a hierarchy on the canon. I attempted to introduce remixing to the students so they could perform acts of authorship that pushed against the print and canon based dominance of a play such as, *Romeo and Juliet*. Remix culture was the appropriate approach to use in this study as studying Shakespeare lends itself to discussion of how the words and works of the playwright have been remixed and repurposed throughout the decades via music, images, and film. The intersection of the orientations of the remix, the canon, and multiliteracies theory created a study with potential for teacher practice and student participation.

The integration of teaching multiliteracies has the above mentioned potential to adapt new ideas and overcome the limitations of traditional learning approaches because it necessarily requires an embrace of new (and sometimes digital) literacies. Teaching multiliteracies opens new pedagogical practices that create opportunities for future literacy teaching and learning. Moreover, students learn to collaborate by sharing their thoughts with others in online spaces where they can engage in different forms or modes (e.g., texts, video, image, rhymes, and poetry) of learning processes. Consequently, we can expect students to become more confident and knowledgeable in their learning contexts through participatory and collaborative practices akin to the students in this study. From this study's findings and conclusions, I am enthusiastic, in my future research, to continue to explore multiliteracies theory and pedagogical approaches that will hopefully enable me, other ELA educators, and literacy researchers to better prepare

adolescents to live, learn, and work in a more multimodal and digitally navigated world.

Literacy educators have an exciting opportunity in this exploration by continuing to question and further expand the theoretical boundaries of enacting a pedagogy of multiliteracies.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Teacher Interview Guide

1. First, can you tell me a little about your teaching experience?
2. How did you become interested in teaching?
3. What was the process you went through to develop this particular unit?
4. What particular concerns did you have when you initially started this unit?
5. Describe a typical lesson in your class?
6. What do you know about multiliteracies in the classroom?
7. Based on your response about multiliteracies, how do you think you may have incorporated this pedagogy into your teaching?
8. Have your students been able to utilize Web 2.0 tools in your classes previously?
9. Have you used classroom blogs in particular in the past with your classes?
10. If so, how has this complemented or detracted from the course?
11. What has been your experience in teaching classic texts?
12. How have students responded to reading these classic texts?
13. How have you devised lessons to tackle challenging texts with your students in the past?
14. What types of projects have your students participated in previously that required collaboration?
15. What have been the most rewarding aspects of teaching this unit?
16. How do you assess what students are learning?
17. What specific academic benefits have you or your students experienced from implementing this unit of study?

18. Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to express that we may not have already discussed?
19. In what ways do you think students literate behaviors have changed through the use of an online student lounge in the classroom?
20. How has having an online discussion about the classic text affected how meaning is inferred by students?

Student Interview Guide

Interview 1:

1. First, can you tell me a little about what you like to read outside of school?
2. What types of activities are you interested in or involved in outside of school?
3. How do you feel about the assigned texts you are being assigned to read?
4. What particular concerns did you have about reading this text?
5. What types of classroom activities would you like to be involved in while reading this text?
6. Describe a typical lesson you would like to do that involves using the computers or laptops in class?
7. How often have you collaborated with your classmates on projects previously?
8. What are some of the limitations to collaborating with your peers?
9. Have you used classroom blogs in particular in the past in your classes?
10. If so, what were the benefits of interacting online versus face to face in class?

Interview 2:

1. What have been the most rewarding aspects of this unit so far?
2. How have you understood the text as you read and interact with your peers in an online student lounge?
3. What have been some of the benefits of interacting online versus face to face in class?
4. What type of discussions have you enjoyed in the online student lounge?
5. How have you been able to participate in this unit using classic texts and an online student lounge?

Interview 3:

1. What have been the most rewarding aspects of this unit?
2. How were you able to understand *Romeo and Juliet* as you read and interact with your peers in an online student lounge?

3. What were the benefits of interacting online versus face to face in class?
4. What type of discussions did you enjoy in the online student lounge?
5. How were you able to participate in this unit in the online student lounge?
6. How do you feel now about reading *Romeo and Juliet* in class?
7. Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to express that we may not have already discussed?

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT FLYER

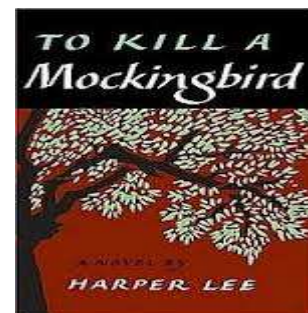
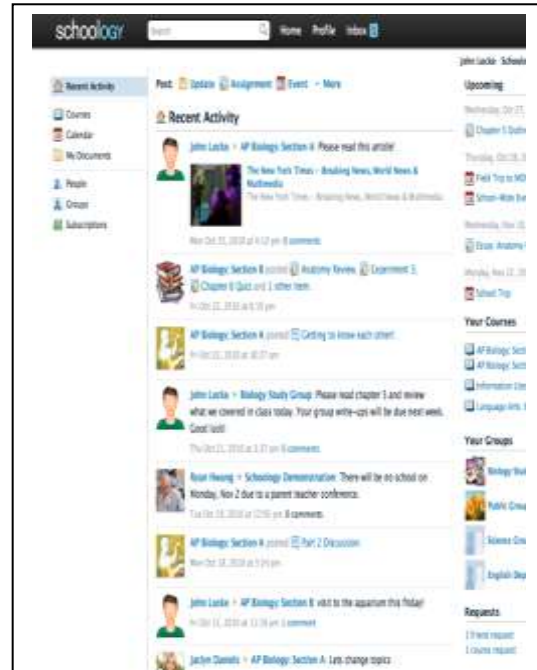
Calling 9th Grade

Students in Ms. Carmichael and
Mr. Loomis' classes!!

We are inviting you to participate in
a research study conducted by Media
Specialist, Ms. Collins -

So what do you have to do to
participate?

1. Participate in a video journal to
share your thoughts about
reading a class novel that is
considered classic literature
2. Allow Ms. Collins to observe you
in class discussions and what you
write about in an online student
lounge
3. Participate in 3 short interviews



APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF FIELD NOTES

<p>Tedro –remember me from the middle school and helping his mom with info on GED class – mannerable and respectful to Victoria – her helper</p>	
<p>Reconstruction of Dialogue – mostly read from the book.</p> <p>Victoria mentioned I was observing today. Students seemed to respond favorably as most know me from the middle school. Some voiced that they did not want to read out of the book. One questioned why they can't read the entire play – seems like they jump around a lot – Victoria explains that they don't have enough time in class.</p>	<p>Comfort level is there – hopefully this will assist in getting students perceptions.</p> <p>Students don't take textbooks home nor do they get a personal copy of the play to read on their own. Do they have to take the initiative to seek it out on their own? Will attend 9th grade LA meeting to see how this is discussed or will ask Victoria and James.</p> <p>How can students appreciate the text with no continuity in the reading – bits and pieces – will get clarity. Note that <i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i> was treated similarly – aligned it with Scottsboro Boys trials and the depression – trying to kill two birds with one stone? Trying to get it all in?</p>
<p>Physical Setting -Victoria's classroom – desk in front but to the side in the corner – student desks are situated in a way that they all are directed to the front although in different angles, Her desk very cluttered but room is neat for the students.</p>	<p>ESOL students just left – smaller group – larger gifted group creates a very different dynamic – Bryan boisterous- friendly – ultimately seeking attention? Always talking – review to see if he is behaving in the same manner in the lounge .</p>
<p>Accounts of particular events -Took the class at least 10 minutes to get settled down – excited about an upcoming fieldtrip – Victoria explain quickly some details about what the class was doing today</p>	

<p>Description of Activities - Reviewing Act II, Scene II – famous balcony scene – students read aloud from the original text. Victoria breaks in every so often to read or display the modern text that she projects on the board with the LCD projector. Students think they know what is going to happen from watching shows like <i>Boy Meets World</i> or <i>Fresh Prince of Bel Air</i> or <i>Victorious</i></p>	<p>To help her students understand the "old hitherto language (Bryan)", teacher makes an effort to aid the understanding – mostly just read – no true discussion today – but promises to do so tomorrow – will they remember what they read? Look for techniques to trigger that background and current knowledge of what the students know thus far about the play and this scene. Could bring in allusions to current events in their lives or pop culture stuff – will interject tomorrow if this comes up – will allow the non-linear learning</p>

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF INITIAL CODING OF TRANSCRIPTS

Initial code: — w/notes

unified lesson plans

46 R: I have my doubts she will want to do it - we kind of want to stay in line with the other
 47 9th grade classes. She might think it will be too much work. We just got the hang of this
 48 Haiku so our comfort level is just to let them post to each other and have their voices
 49 heard and maybe be able to develop their own comprehension with the intermingling
 50 with their friend. I know they like because it is kind of informal. They told me they feel
 51 like that are on Twitter a little. You know just getting to talk about what they want to a
 52 degree when responding to what I post. Let's stick with the prompts. It's been rough.
 53 We have already missed three instructional days. I want to help you out but we are
 54 dealing with specific lessons that we really need to get cranked out. And don't get me
 55 wrong, I know we can use the same assignments and handouts that we use in class in the
 56 lounge. Some of it, maybe we could give them homework. Like the vocabulary and the
 57 figurative language exercises.

58 I: Do you think you will transform their learning or conceptualize your teaching
 59 differently if you used this multiliteracies pedagogy in your classroom? Could you
 60 make it a part of your teaching philosophy?
 61
 62 R: I don't know. It is too easy to say yes in a blanket statement. But you look at some of our
 63 students. Some are more outspoken than others but you see Amira, even though she is not
 64 a part of the study. She is my little quiet Muslim girl who come in my room to pray in
 65 the morning and she never says more than three words with this riotous group I have here
 66 in class, but she has gotten a lot of keyboard confidence. Loving every minute of that.
 67 So, it's transformative in that it can create a place for her and other students that I may
 68 marginalize without intending to or you know...just, just now they can all be on the same
 69 footing in terms of who gets to talk more than the others. Angelyne, I tell you, I do like
 70 this type of learning and we better get used to it since the county will be mandating us to
 71 use with our students as our webpage. We will have D2L or eClass - whatever they are
 72 calling it today, but I know it will serve as our webpage. I see it has the same elements as
 73 Haiku and my wikispace I used last year with my kids. So yes, I could use the
 74 multiliteracies - I just need to learn more about it. Yeah, yeah, I know you have told me
 75 all about it, but it is almost as though we need some PD on it - the different teaching
 76 theories that would be good using the online technology so teachers can better apply the
 77 tech stuff to the teaching stuff. Sometimes the kids get engage with all of this because
 78 they think it is play time or free time.

81 I: How can you integrate the digital tools so the students see it as a learning
 82 environment where you want them to interact with the text or analyze the questions
 83 or reflect more deeply?
 84 R: Remind them that we are in school. No, just kidding. Keep it around on a consistent
 85 basis. The problem is although we have lots of tools tech-wise, I can't hog the laptops
 86 from the other teachers. You won't let me Ms. Librarian (smiles) have them in the room
 87 everyday, so it could be a good tool for homework, but then again, all the students don't
 88 have smartphones or computers like we think. So, I would have to give them a window of
 89 a few days or a week to do something in the lounge that might take place outside of the

90

Handwritten annotations:

- lounge casual feel (lines 49-51)
- agency (lines 48-50)
- teacher work load (lines 47-49)
- unified lesson plans (lines 47-49)
- time constraints (lines 54-56)
- access (lines 57-59)
- non-transformative? or yes! (lines 58-60)
- look for a participant (lines 63-65)
- not in study (lines 64-66)
- school controlling tech (lines 67-69)
- getting new digital tool (lines 70-72)
- online or using computer (lines 73-75)
- teachers learning (lines 76-78)
- teachers practicing (lines 77-79)
- lounge casual feel (lines 78-80)
- tech integration (lines 81-83)
- having access (lines 84-86)
- consistent (lines 85-87)
- 2nd iteration (lines 88-90)
- 3rd iteration (lines 88-90)

APPENDIX E

PARADOXICAL QUOTES ASSIGNMENT

Paradoxical Quotes

Directions: Sign up for haikulearning.com using the directions on my webpage. Then, choose the paradoxical quotes that you find interesting. 1. Type the quote into the comments box. 2. Paraphrase the quote. 3. Explain what you think the quote means. 4. Tell us whether you agree or disagree with the quote. 5. Explain why. 6. Finally, when you are through making your post – comment on posts by others, sharing your thoughts about their posts (please comment on at least three other posts).

“Seek freedom and become captive of your desires. Seek discipline and find your liberty.”

— Frank Herbert

“If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?”

— George Carlin

“We live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities.”

— Oscar Wilde

“Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

“Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment.”

— Rita Mae Brown, Alma Mater

“There are two tragedies in life. One is to lose your heart's desire. The other is to gain it.”

— George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

“It's weird not to be weird.”

— John Lennon

“Religion. It's given people hope in a world torn apart by religion.”

— Jon Stewart

“Procrastinate now, don't put it off.”

— Ellen DeGeneres

“In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. “

— Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*

“Don't believe anything you read.”

— Douglas Adams

“Life is a preparation for the future; and the best preparation for the future is to live as if there were none.”

— Albert Einstein

“I am Dead, but it's not so bad. I've learned to live with it.”

— Isaac Marion, *Warm Bodies*