MULTIMODAL CLOSE READING AS CURRENCY: 
TRANSMEDIATING POETIC LANGUAGE 
THROUGH ARTISTIC DESIGN

by

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ABSTRACT

This Master’s thesis explores the use of artistic design in a senior high school English class to teach the stylistic analysis of poetry. As a reflective, critical inquiry into my own classroom practice, this paper follows primarily the methodology of teacher research. A less prominent but equally important methodology is the autobiographical living inquiry of a/r/tography.

My research features a poetry project for an English 12 class in a fine arts mini-school. Students conducted a close reading of a poem and then communicated their interpretation and analysis by creating an original artistic work in a non-textual mode. The students also articulated their own process of design. By exploring parallels between the poem and their artistic work, they developed a descriptive metalanguage to analyze the rhetorical connections between different modes of communication.

This paper draws on the research areas of multiliteracies pedagogy and aesthetic education to investigate the implications of transmediating poetic texts. The study of the classroom project is framed within my overarching inquiry into the value of teaching literary close reading in an age when literacy educators face increasing obligations to prepare students for the world of the globalized knowledge economy. I use the notion of currency, both as monetary worth and as fluidity, to argue that the stylistic analysis of literature—which is usually not perceived as utilitarian—can indeed be useful outside the English language arts classroom. A project in which students explore literary close reading through multimodal design can help them develop critical and creative skills that do have value and can therefore be considered currency in the students’ social and economic futures.
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DEDICATION

To my parents, who made the courageous decision to start a new life in Canada with their three young children. Mom and Dad, your strength and love are immeasurable. I wish I could say this in your own language.

And to Brad, whose unconditional love and support kept me grounded every day. I could not ask for a better partner.
1. INTRODUCTION

On Language and Luggage

This thesis marks a junction, a point of reflection in an ongoing journey. The luggage I carry consists of the multiple roles I play on a daily basis and the values I hold as a teacher, a researcher, and, though crushed all too often under the weight of the other roles, an artist. As often happens, luggage can become cluttered and heavy—sometimes too heavy to maintain. Every once in a while we have to sort through what we’ve been carrying with us, reassess the value of the contents, and then decide what to keep, what to let go, what to repack.

Luggage. Value. Currency. As navigators through a constantly changing world, we may value something at one stage of our journey that may not remain as necessary, relevant, or useful later on. We might take the value of our currency for granted and not even realize that the market has shifted.

So here I attempt to make sense of that shift. The market I face is the world outside my classroom, the rapidly evolving knowledge economy for which I, as an English teacher, am supposed to prepare my students. The form of currency that I am reassessing is literary close reading, particularly in relation to the languages of the arts. My Master’s thesis explores the use of artistic design in a senior high school English class to teach the stylistic analysis of poetry. As a reflective, critical inquiry into my own classroom practice, this paper follows primarily the methodology of teacher research.

My inquiry features a project that I designed for my English 12 class in a fine arts mini-school, a project that has been an important component of my course for seven years. Students conduct a close reading of a poem, and then communicate their interpretation and analysis by creating an original artistic work in whatever mode(s) they prefer. Though
there are subtle differences between close reading and stylistic analysis (see Abrams & Harpham, 2005; Durant & Fabb, 1990; Lodge, 1988a), in the classroom and in this paper I use these terms synonymously to refer to the study of how language functions in a literary text (Leech, 1969). The stylistic features of language include diction, syntax, structure, figurative and sound devices, and imagery. As a rich medium of expression, literary language creates worlds that are alive with images of colour and light, the sounds of voice and music, and even the movements of gesture and dance. It only makes sense that students have the opportunity to respond critically to literature through modes other than the written word. In addition to making a new product, students explore and articulate their own process of design. They explain how aspects of their artistic work reflect stylistic elements in the poem. By drawing these explicit parallels, students develop a descriptive metalanguage to analyze the rhetorical connections between different modes of communication.

At the heart of both the classroom project and this research paper is my fervent belief that literature is an art, and the arts are forms of language. One’s close reading of a poem can be redesigned and translated into the language of another art. This is by no means a literal translation; it would be too simplistic to equate this with the conventional process of translating one verbal text wholesale into another verbal, but linguistically different, text. The type of translation I am exploring is the re-designing and re-presenting of ideas from the written word into another mode—in other words, transmediation. Even with conventional translations, which are rarely word-for-word, some nuances may inevitably be lost, but conversely, others may be gained. It is here, in the dynamic process of transmediation, where the translator of the arts combines critical thinking with creative risk-taking: digging one’s hands deep into the thick tangle of stylistic techniques that may
or may not cross over harmoniously from one mode into another; confronting the
trepidation and uncertainty of that cross-over; and reveling in the exhilaration of producing
original work.

The participants in the classroom research were all members of a fine arts mini-
school. They earned entry into the program on the strength of their interest and skill in the
fine and performing arts, whether in band, strings, drama, or the visual or media arts. The
level of talent in the program is remarkable, which is why many consider the mini-school to
be a gifted enrichment program. When the students participated in the study, they had
already demonstrated strengths in their chosen fields and an aptitude for creative thinking.
In the poetry project, the students used the skills and talents they already carried with them
to transport ideas from one language domain into another. The image of luggage is a fitting
way to conceptualize this multimodal process of transmediation.

The first time I applied the term luggage explicitly in a pedagogical context was in a
graduate course called *A/R/Tography research: Writing one’s life through art and text*
(Irwin & Kind, 2005; see also Irwin, 2004). We as students were introduced to
a/r/tography as an emerging methodology in educational research; our instructors proposed
the use of luggage as a metaphor to guide our inquiry into our own creative processes as
practicing artists, researchers, and teachers. This view of luggage was immediately
compelling to me, and it only gained more power as I embarked on my Master’s thesis.

Luggage and Currency: The Classroom and Beyond

Travelers use luggage to hold and protect what they value, and due to space
limitations they often have to prioritize need over want. Deciding what will be most useful
to carry can be challenging, especially if a traveler does not know exactly what will be
needed in the next stage of the journey. I often noticed my own struggles between need and want in my role as an English teacher. Should I focus more on teaching what I think my students *need* in order to succeed in the world of work that awaits them after graduation? What, specifically, would that entail? Should I incorporate more technical and professional communications? Would that leave enough room, then, for what I would much rather *want* to teach my students? In an ideal world, I could dedicate all my energy in the classroom to helping students appreciate literature and literary language for the sake of the artistic beauty, mystery, and magic. In an ideal world, high school students at every grade level would take a course in technical and professional communications, *as well as* a separate course in language and literature. In an ideal world, there would be unlimited luggage space so there wouldn’t have to be a compromise between these two extremes.

But this is not an ideal world. Schools are not Ivory Towers, sealed off in their pristine isolation from mundane reality. Schools face unpleasant constraints on the budget and on the timetable: not enough funding, not enough time, not enough space. In fact, my romanticized vision of the English curriculum would be a nightmare to many students (and perhaps to many teachers, too). Therefore, dutifully grounding those fanciful visions with the austere weight of obligation as I proceeded in my teaching, I tried my best to deliver a curriculum that balanced the practical and the aesthetic. My treasured highlight, though, was always my English 12 poetry project, where I could promote the inherent value of the literary text as a cherished object. I always planned this project near the end of the school year, after students had already fulfilled the core learning objectives of the course and had been given sufficient preparation for their upcoming provincial exam. Here I felt most at liberty to encourage students to just play with the language and to play with the arts. Just
play. I did not actively seek a “useful” or “practical” purpose to the project, and if there had been one, for me that would have been merely incidental.

After several years of this mindset, however, I started to question the viability of my aesthetic indulgence. My concerns reflected my mixed feelings about the new direction of literacy education. My first years as a teacher coincided with my initiation into the growing research on multiliteracies. The term multiliteracies expands the traditional definition of literacy to include skills other than reading and writing linear texts in print form (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2003; Unsworth, 2001). Multimodal refers to diverse modes of representation, such as visual images and music, which are central to developing multiliteracies (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Upon discovering this field of research, I applauded the call to widen the range of literacies and modalities in teaching and learning; my belief in the arts as valid languages of communication fit in well with this shift in pedagogy. Nevertheless, my enthusiasm was subdued when I realized that one of the ultimate goals of multiliteracies pedagogy was to make English classrooms more in tune with the practical demands of the economy and workplace. Many researchers (e.g., Bearne, 2003; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Fehring, 2005; Kress, 2000) pointed out the need for schools to integrate diverse modes of communication in order to equip students with skills to succeed in the new economy, a world of rapidly developing multimedia technologies. No doubt this is an important goal, I thought to myself, but does this then diminish the traditional value of studying literature?

So grew my struggle to search for value in my English 12 poetry project, specifically my emphasis on literary close reading and style analysis. With increasingly ubiquitous calls to make the classroom more compatible with the world of work and the
economy, this project started to appear ever more hermetically sealed, beautifully but
pitiably distanced from the outside world.

Was I doing my students a disservice by not explicitly looking for a way to connect
this poetry project to the practical world of commerce and citizenship? From my individual
perspective, a focus on literature, the arts, and aesthetic design needed no justification. But
was I letting my own perspective get in the way of my students’ acquisition of more
“valuable,” employable literacy skills? What value could this project offer to students for
whom the appreciation of literature and aesthetic design is an insufficient reward?

The analogy of luggage gives me the clear direction I need to explore ways to
consolidate the competing demands on the English Language Arts curriculum. It is in the
wider context of the economy that I view language as currency. My central argument in
this paper is that in a pedagogy of multiliteracies that prepares students for the rapidly
evolving technologies and communication demands of a globalized knowledge economy,
there can still be room for teaching the more traditional skills of literary close reading.
One way to merge these two apparent extremes, especially in an arts program, is through a
stylistic analysis of poetry based on multimodal artistic design. Students draw upon their
creativity and artistic skills—their inherent luggage—as they develop a metalanguage to
articulate their design process. The metacognitive skills in transmediation can be of great
worth in a social future where facility with communication in multiple modes is in high
demand.

A traveler may feel more empowered if she can quickly access whatever language or
monetary currency is required of the locale. A participant in the world economy may feel
likewise empowered with a strong command of design and multiple literacies. The ability
to think creatively and transmediate ideas fluently is a valuable asset, perhaps even more so
because it is the kind of luggage that is highly portable. Students can carry these multimodal skills with them, wherever they travel in the global economy. And for the teacher of literature, it is reassuring to know that the currency of skills in close reading can indeed flow beyond the pages of the text and still maintain value.
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Multiliteracies and Multimodalities: Expanding Concepts of Literacy

The students in their summer finery were scattered like petals over the green lawns, reading, talking, necking, or listening to their discoursing teachers. The sun shone upon the façade of the library, whose glazed revolving doors flashed intermittently like the beams of the lighthouse as it fanned readers in and out, and shone upon the buildings of diverse shapes and sizes…

And then [Robyn Penrose] thought, with a sympathetic inward shudder, of how the same sun must be shining upon the corrugated roofs of the factory buildings in West Wallsbury, how the temperature must be rising rapidly inside the foundry; and she imagined the workers stumbling out into the sunshine at midday, sweatstained and blinking in the bright light, and eating their snap, squatting on oil-stained tarmac in the shade of a brick wall, and then, at the sound of a hooter, going back in again to the heat and noise and stench for another four hours’ toil.

But no! Instead of letting them go back into that hell-hole, she transported them, in her imagination, to the campus…

(Lodge, 1988, pp. 346-347)

In his satirical novel Nice Work, David Lodge presents an uncomfortably comical image: the university institution, gleaming in its privileged elegance, juxtaposed with Birmingham’s industrial centre¹, gritty and muscular with its factory smokestacks.

¹ In Nice Work, David Lodge uses Birmingham, England, as the model for the fictional city of Rummidge.
Comical because of the exaggerated incongruity, uncomfortable because of the sobre hint at truth—at least my imagined truth, for when I first read this work in an undergraduate seminar on literary theory, I found this scene a humorous yet ominous caricature of my own quandary. I was contemplating two paths: pursuing graduate studies in English literature, or entering the teaching profession in a high school classroom. I decided on the latter option.

As much as I fancied my naively romanticized vision of an erudite studying literature purely for the sake of literature, I believed that teaching secondary English would give me the best of both worlds: I could still indulge in my passion for language and literature while making practical, everyday contributions to students’ lives and—dare I say—to society. It would be a good middle ground in that stylized dichotomy between the Ivory Tower and the trenches of industry. It would be a comfortable place to inhabit.

But then the illusion of that middle ground started to shift. My early years of teaching coincided with the turn into the twenty-first century. Increasingly I noticed more calls for a critical reassessment of what it means to be a teacher, especially a teacher of English, in this new age of a globalized knowledge economy.

2.1.1 Call for Change

So what distinguishes this shift in literacy education? A good starting point is to look at the work of the New London Group (NLG), a collaboration of ten researchers from Australia, Great Britain, and the USA. In “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures” (1996), the authors observe changes in our social and economic environment in recent decades and draw salient connections between these transformations and a new approach to literacy education that they call *multiliteracies*. The New London Group and other
researchers in this growing field (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2000; Unsworth, 2001) note that our current industrialized world is characterized by a multiplicity of communications media and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Kress (2000) describes the period from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries as one of relative social and economic stability. In concert with the rhythms of industrial mass production, the school curriculum could serve as a “means for cultural reproduction” (p. 133). Students were educated to fit into homogeneous ideals of citizenship to perpetrate the stable class structures of the nation state. The mid-1950s, however, saw the beginning of a new era of instability and fluidity. An economy based on the mass fabrication of products became dominated by an exchange of services and information. Kress mentions in particular the “changing landscapes of representation and communication” which significantly transformed the use and circulation of knowledge and the new forms of the economy (p. 138). He outlines that communication was no longer unidirectional from a power centre to a passive audience, but rather multidirectional among interactive participants. The modes of communication expanded and were “no longer reliant on language-as-speech or on language-as-writing alone” (p. 139). In view of these mass changes, Kress argues that in Western societies the “curriculum which was serviceable for that former world and the social and material organizations and structures built around it will no longer suffice” (p. 139). With the insistent repetition of “no longer” and the unequivocal denial of the capacity to “suffice,” Kress characterizes the old curriculum as outdated and therefore inadequate.
2.1.2 A New Pedagogy of Literacy

The central arguments of “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies” are vigorous and compelling, and perhaps equally revealing is the recurrent diction used throughout. The authors of the New London Group suggest that the fundamental mission of education is “to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life” (1996, p. 60). Integral to this mission is a pedagogy of multiliteracies, which has two main goals: (1) “creating access to the evolving language of work, power, and community,” and (2) “fostering the critical engagement necessary for [students] to design their social futures and achieve success through fulfilling employment” (p. 60). Because of increasing globalization, the workplace now demands skills in “negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society,” which should be “central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students” (p. 60).

Only when schools equip students with such skills can they better prepare these students to be more rounded citizens and to contribute meaningfully and successfully in society. One of the many themes emerging from these arguments can be traced in words such as “work,” “power,” “employment,” “access,” “economic,” “pragmatics,” “civic,” and “society.”

More overtly, deliberately, and urgently than ever before, it appears that teaching literacy in the classroom should now be geared toward the practicalities of the workplace and community, whether civic or global. The trenches of industry and business are being dug in the classroom.

To respond to this demand, educators need to broaden their view of literacy to go beyond reading and writing in the printed textual form. The New London Group label this traditional, often authoritarian language pedagogy as mere literacy, which is “centered on language only, and usually on a singular national form of language at that, which is
conceived as a stable system based on rules such as mastering sound-letter correspondence” (1996, p. 63). Another term for this is *scribal literacy* (Olson, 1987, p. 3). In contrast to mere or scribal literacy, *multiliteracies* broadens and integrates modes of meaning-making beyond just textual language.

Indeed, the notion of *text* itself must be redefined. The range of textual modes now expands to include the visual, audio, spatial, or a combination of these. “Multimodality,” Kress states, “is a given in the Multiliteracies approach; the task then is to uncover, describe and theorize what the different modes are which appear in communication and what meaning potentials they make available to those who integrate them and draw on them in their designs” (2000, p. 143). The connotations of ideas expressed through these modes will also vary according to social and cultural context. Because of this diversity and global connectedness, the New London Group assert that “there cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitute the ends of literacy learning, however taught” (1996, p. 63). Within the field of information literacy alone, for example, Shapiro and Hughes (1996) identify seven subcategories of literacy: tool literacy, resource literacy, social-structural literacy, research literacy, publishing literacy, emerging technology literacy, and critical literacy. “In a profound sense, all meaning-making is multimodal. All written text is also visually designed,” the New London Group argue, “so, a school project can and should properly be evaluated on the basis of visual as well as linguistic design, and their multimodal relationships” (1996, pp. 76-77).

Not only does this expanded literacy pedagogy embrace the diversity of media and modes of communication as different languages, but even the printed textual mode itself is viewed in a new light. More specialist and informal registers within written English, for instance, are recognized and validated as workplaces depend more on teamwork and
informal discourse (Kress, 2000; NLG, 1996). There is no longer a “singular, canonical English that could or should be taught anymore” (NLG, 1996, p. 62). Along with this apparent waning of formal English grammar as the authoritative or standard register, the study of canonical literature also seems to carry less weight. Kress argues, “A curriculum of communication which is to be adequate to the needs of the young cannot afford to remain with older notions of text as valued literary object, as the present English curriculum still does, by and large” (2000, p. 145).

“. . . cannot afford to remain with older notions of text as valued literary object.”

And here I pause.

“. . . cannot afford . . .”

I am lifted away from the first decade of the twenty-first century, transported to the pivotal inter-war years in early twentieth-century western Europe—a foreign time and place that I could only imagine myself inhabiting, yet it is an imagining made vibrant because of such valued literary texts as “The Sunlight on the Garden” by Louis MacNeice (1938/1993). The first two stanzas are poignant:

The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold;
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances
Advances towards its end;
The earth compels, upon it
Sonnets and birds descend;
And soon, my friend,
We shall have no time for dances.

Seemingly far removed from its original context, this poem still resonates. My first encounter with the poem was in my undergraduate study of the transition from the 1920s to
the late 1930s in English literature: a period short in duration, but foreboding for those modernist artists in Britain (and, arguably, elsewhere in western Europe) who indulged in the formalist aesthetics of the 1910s and 1920s with abandon as rich and carefree as the flapper dance itself. In a lingering tribute to the Aestheticism of the late nineteenth century, many modernist writers and other artists in the early decades of the twentieth tended to look within themselves for a creative vision and to structure an aesthetic design that was holistic and self-contained—in other words, to “cage the minute,” to capture time within the golden nets of the literary text or the framed canvas, to distance it from the mundane and vulgar realities of life. Such escapism heightened in the years during and immediately after the Great War, perhaps as a reactionary antidote to the carnage, or as a celebration when it finally came to an end.

This self-involved interiority had limited momentum, however. A social historian or economist might even compare this artistic indulgence to the wild speculation in the stock markets that could only end with a crash. Inevitably, as the 1930s loomed, writers and other artists were starting to see that the old ways of aestheticizing the world into a hermetically-sealed formal entity—the pristine, inviolable work of art—were no longer applicable or justifiable in a world increasingly crippled by economic depression and infected with the opening agues of yet another world war (Yeung, 1997). The artists of the late 1930s could no longer afford to remain sealed off from the public world “out there.” The artistic eye had to refocus itself outward, no longer ignoring the ravages of social, economic, and political changes. Walter Benjamin (1978) remarks that after the modernists, the new theses about art in the 1930s “brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal values and mystery” (p. 218); the meanings, origins, and purposes of art were therefore being redefined.
In this way ended the “freedom as free lances” of those artists who could no longer
dwell in the garden of the Ivory Tower. Their elegant dances, once accompanied by the
golden music of sunlight, had come to a cold halt.

And so, too, ends my momentary reverie and re-immersion in my undergraduate
days, when all I had to do, all I wanted to do, was study the literary text for its own beauty
of style and structure. I return now, reluctantly, to 2009. I am no longer a free-lance
student of literature. I am a public high school English teacher in a metropolitan city,
feeling the weight of responsibility to prepare my students for the vast world beyond the
caged lines of the poem. I hear once again the rallying cry of the New London Group.

“A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies” is called by the authors themselves a “programmatic
manifesto” (NLG, 1996, p. 62). This article has deservedly become a seminal work in
multiliteracies research. It sounds a challenge—a spirited and urgent cry—to educators for
a substantial and critical reassessment of how we view and engage in literacy education.
As a teacher and researcher, I find this manifesto stirring and exciting. But how confident
am I that I will wholeheartedly embrace those goals when something still feels amiss?

The romanticizing literary hermit in me cannot help but worry for what I perceive as
the threatened status of the study of literature and close reading. I am not arguing to keep
English studies confined to the canon of a strictly standardized English language, or to the
beleaguered canon of English literature that has already seen its share of popular criticism
as being elitist, outdated, and rigid. Instead, I am defending specifically the appreciation of
the text as a work of art, a precious entity of sculpted rhythms and mesmerizing sounds
crafted into a unified whole, whose ultimate purpose should not have to be to serve the
New Economy. Why does “text as valued literary object” (Kress, 2000, p. 145) have to be
seen as an antiquated notion to be depreciated and pushed aside? Since the classroom is the
training ground for the workplace and society, is there any room for vestiges of the Ivory Tower of literary studies to still stand strong and dignified?

Yes, I am anxious. I am uncertain. I wonder whether the appreciation of literature and the aesthetic qualities of language, which I carry with me into my classroom and try to foster in my students, can be “useful” to a society driven by the knowledge economy. As I teach close stylistic readings of poems and short stories and even dabble in art history in relation to literary developments, as I marvel in the craftsmanship of a sculpture or a piece of music in response to a poem, will my personal luggage suffice for my students of this new generation?

Need I “beg for pardon”?

2.2 Cognition and the Arts

2.2.1 Multiliteracies and Multiple Intelligences

In our vision of schools, workplaces, and social futures that form the students’ external environments, we as educators must also remain cognizant of the interior landscapes of the students’ minds. Integral to multiliteracies pedagogy is the theory of multiple intelligences (MI), proposed by Howard Gardner (1993a, 1993b). Gardner challenged the view of intelligence as a singular, general entity—known as the $g$ factor—and also challenged the traditional emphasis on linear thinking, empirical test scores, and logical and linguistic mental capacities measured by paper-and-pencil tasks or brief interviews. He argued that the human brain can have a wide range of relatively autonomous intelligences, or frames of mind, and that individuals possess unique combinations of strengths in various intelligences. Gardner identified seven distinct groups of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. Since
the original publication of this theory in 1983, Gardner (1999) has proposed three new
candidate intelligences: naturalist, spiritual, and existential. Despite this listing of types,
the theory of multiple intelligences does not prioritize one over another. In its departure
from the linear and narrow views of intelligence, Gardner’s revisionist theory could be seen
as a precursor for the way proponents of multiliteracies would later challenge and expand
conventional notions of literacy.

Another important similarity between multiple intelligences and multiliteracies is that
both emphasize the importance of functionality and practical application. Gardner (1993a,
1993b) defines a human intellectual competence as a capacity or set of skills to resolve
problems or difficulties, and, where applicable, to represent and communicate knowledge
by creating a product. A human intelligence “must be genuinely useful and important, at
least in certain cultural settings” (1993a, p. 61). Different cultures and societies will value
different forms of intelligence, depending on what is most practical and effective in
achieving the functional and expressive purposes they consider most important. Gardner
himself points out that although it is important to acknowledge the diversity of intelligence,
“MI ideas and practices cannot be an end in themselves; they cannot serve as a goal for a
school or an educational system. Rather, every educational institution must reflect on its
goals, mission, and purposes continuously and, at least at times, explicitly” (1999, p. 143).

Now in the first decade of the twenty-first century, educators are facing one of those
times when we must explicitly reflect and revisit on our goals for school. If we return to
the New London Group’s (1996) call for a pedagogy of multiliteracies, we see a rich
opportunity to apply the theory of multiple intelligences to the classroom. The authors of
the New London Group argue that “[states] must be strong as neutral arbiters of difference.
So must schools. And so must literacy pedagogy” (p. 67). To be effective “arbiters of
difference,” teachers must accommodate and celebrate the variety of skills, talents, or competences—in other words, intelligences—that students bring with them to their learning environments. When students work on lessons and projects that validate their individual skills, they will be more engaged and will connect more meaningfully with the content (Gardner, 1993b; Lazear, 1994).

It is understandable why members of school communities might be skeptical of the potential for multiple intelligences and multiliteracies to still carry the academic integrity of more traditional pedagogy. Gardner (1999) recounts numerous anecdotes where he has witnessed teaching approaches that are labeled “multiple intelligences” but seem devoid of pedagogical value. In one instance, he recalls an educational video featuring “youngsters crawling across the floor, with the superimposed legend ‘Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence’” (p. 142). His response was, “That is not bodily-kinesthetic intelligence; that is kids crawling across the floor” (p. 142). Gardner’s frustration is certainly justified: if MI theory is used too liberally as a label, whether as a convenient catch-phrase or the latest jargon, then it has become misappropriated and decontextualized from its original purpose. As with any theory, MI approaches to pedagogy must be used thoughtfully; Gardner reminds educators that to use an intelligence effectively is to “actively solve a problem or fashion a product valued in society” (p. 142). If the theoretical label of multiple intelligences is applied too lightly, the method may not achieve the intended teaching and learning results. In such cases, it is perhaps reasonable to expect some measure of concern among stakeholders in the education system.

A possible concern could be that opening up pedagogy to involve a wider variety of competences might compromise the perceived academic rigour or integrity of teaching methods that focus on the more traditionally valued intelligences, namely linguistic or
logical-mathematical. This does not have to be the case, however. For instance, David Lazear (1994) reminds us that teaching to and for multiple intelligences does not mean replacing the academic content:

As we move to redefine standards and expectations in our schools, we must be sure they are broad enough to include the full spectrum of intellectual development of our students. This education must include, but not be limited to, the mastery of specified bits of knowledge that our society values as well as the processes that make one capable of lifelong learning. (p. 12)

Rather than replacing academic content, a pedagogy for multiple intelligences can still preserve it while expanding student engagement in the curriculum. The New London Group (1996) also puts forth a case that can apply equally to multiliteracies and to multiple intelligences:

There will be a cognitive benefit to all children in a pedagogy of linguistic and cultural pluralism, including for ‘mainstream’ children. When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles, and approaches, they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions. (p. 67)

Even those students who may not be considered or identified to “need” the diversified approaches of multiliteracies will still benefit. In fact, teaching approaches based on multiliteracies and multiple intelligences not only still support those more traditional skills, but they can also reveal a wider scope of competences that those “mainstream” or “traditionally intelligent” students perhaps may not have been aware they had. Lazear (1994) calls the traditional assessment methods a deficit-based approach: “Assessment should be an opportunity to enhance, empower, and celebrate students’ learning. Instead,
we too often use it as an opportunity to point out students’ failures” (p. 85). With a curriculum based on multiple intelligences, multiliteracies, and multimodalities, students will find a greater diversity of doors opened to them, a greater variety of ways to engage in their own learning.

Theoretical premise and practical application, traditional core and expanded spectrum: recurring here is an emphasis on balance and moderation. A pedagogy of multiple intelligences and multiliteracies is not a matter of choosing one approach at the expense of another, or a discarding of tradition to make way for the latest trend. It is about broadening the choices available so that one may make a more informed selection, for the teacher planning a lesson or project, and for the student engaging in the assigned task. Indeed it is a challenge to make those decisions; for educators, factors that we must consider range from the competences our students bring in with them, to the curricular goal that they are ultimately to achieve. But when that challenge is met—when theory translates judiciously and reflectively into practice—a pedagogy of multiple intelligences and multiliteracies has the potential not only to maintain the academic core of traditional methods, but also to render the teaching and learning experience even more rigorous.

2.2.2 Creative Learners and Aesthetic Education

A pedagogy of multiliteracies and multiple intelligences is of particular importance for students who are creative learners skilled in artistic disciplines. Many students whose strengths might not lie in traditional, linear print-based literacy, or who might not learn best through linguistic or logical-mathematical tasks, could have talents in other areas such as the arts. For these students, the most effective teaching methods would accommodate and engage this creativity, often by giving students individual choice when problem-solving.
Jordan, Porath, and Bickerton (2003) point out that when classroom tasks appeal to students’ specific interests, the tasks not only meet the curricular objectives but also—and perhaps more importantly—make the students “stakeholders in their own learning” (p. 141). Students take such ownership of their learning when there is a high level of curriculum matching, or an optimal fit between the “curricular content, goals, and objectives” and the “skills, talents, needs, interests, and cognitive abilities of the students” (p. 143).

Just as traditional definitions of intelligence and literacy are expanding, so too are traditional notions that identify cognitive competences only within the head of the learner. Ellen Winner (1982) explores the possible connections between personality and innate artistic talent, but she still acknowledges the important role of social and cultural factors. Barab and Plucker (2002), discussing high ability learners, locate talent and intelligence further outside of the individual mind, focusing instead on the external learning environments afforded to students. Debate about the extent to which gifted, talented, or high ability learners inherently possess their competences is beyond the scope of this paper. In fact, from the practical perspective of a teacher, we certainly do not have control over the biological genes that make up the students who come into our classroom. We can, however, have some measure of control (as much as school funding and class composition and size will allow) over how we design our lessons. In the case where students are streamed into a class or program for their previous demonstration of high ability and interest in the arts, curricular matching is particularly important; artistically-inclined or gifted students might not thrive as well if they do not have the optimal match of creative learning contexts that engage their learning styles and challenge their critical thinking and
problem-solving skills (Barab & Plucker, 2002; Jordan, Porath, & Bickerton, 2003; Matthews, 1996; Robinson & Robinson, 1982).

The arts can play an integral role in enhancing literacy learning. Heath (2000) points out evidence in neurobiology, physics, and psychology that the brain’s perception of visual images helps reinforce verbal cognition. Furthermore, arts-based education supports creativity and imagination in literacy development (Egan, 1992; Moody, 1990; Smith & Simpson, 1991) and accommodates diverse learning styles. A multimodal approach to literacy education applies the theory of multiple intelligences to open opportunities for more students to demonstrate their unique talents and skills (Gardner, 1993a, 1993b, 1994). This widening range of teaching and assessment practices is particularly important in magnet schools or programs for gifted or creative learners (Matthews, 1996).

Over the past several decades there have been many initiatives to provide such an optimal match between learner and learning context for students in the arts. Harvard Project Zero is a good starting point to look at how educational theory has found its way into teaching practice. Project Zero was founded in 1967 at the Harvard Graduate School of Education by philosopher Nelson Goodman (Gardner, 1993b). Working with a taxonomy of the major symbols systems used by human cultures, including symbols in the artistic modes, Goodman inspired a team of other researchers to work on the premise that “artistic activities are seen as occasions for mental activities,” and that participants in the arts “must become able to ‘read’ and to ‘write’ the symbol systems featured in the arts” (Gardner, 1993b, p. 136; see also Goodman, 1988). Goodman’s view of the cognitive role of the arts was revolutionary for its time, but Gardner (1993b, 1999) observes that by the 1990s research in cognitive psychology and in education had provided enough substantial
evidence to convince the majority of the skeptics that the arts can be a serious cognitive activity.

Key among Project Zero's missions is “to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts” (Project Zero, 2009). One of the many research projects to spring from Project Zero was Arts PROPEL, a collaboration that started in 1985 with the Educational Testing Service and the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The goal of Arts PROPEL was to create assessment tools to document artistic learning in the later elementary and secondary years, in the areas of music, visual art, and imaginative writing (Gardner, 1993b). Focusing on students’ ongoing production, perception, and reflection of their work, the study developed two key instruments for education in the arts: (1) domain projects based on practical problems faced by practicing artists, and (2) an assessment vehicle termed a *processfolio*, which emphasizes not the final product but rather the students’ works in progress, including drafts and self- and peer-critiques (Gardner, 1993b; Project Zero, 2009).

Another Project Zero collaboration is with the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education in New York (Greene, 2001). What started in 1975 as an outreach program with artists-in-residence going into secondary schools to share their work, and to encourage students to attend performances and galleries at the Lincoln Center, evolved to include partnerships with the Teachers College at Columbia University, and Summer Sessions to provide intensive aesthetic education training for teachers and administrators. With Maxine Greene leading workshops and lectures on the philosophy of aesthetic education, the Institute identified that its “primary task would be to partner with adults—teachers, school leaders, community leaders, and artists—who would develop programs in aesthetic education for students in their own organizations” (Greene, 2001, p. 1).
The programs outlined above are but a small sampling of the numerous initiatives in teaching practice and research in the role of the arts in education. With the increasing prevalence of dialogue in this field, Maxine Greene (2001) offers a useful distinction between *arts education* and *aesthetic education*. *Arts education*, Greene explains, involves students’ direct exploration of various media and modes of expression when learning an artistic craft. *Aesthetic education*, by nuanced contrast, has a more philosophical bent, whereby students reflect and think critically about art and its function; Greene defines aesthetic education as “an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagement with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful” (p. 6). This comprehensive view of aesthetic education as a meta-artistic approach can be interpreted or narrowed down in a multitude of ways. Because I am a teacher of literature and not an “art” educator, for my current research project I will apply Greene’s general view of aesthetic education more specifically to refer to the illumination of one artistic work or mode—namely literary and poetic—through experience with another artistic but non-literary mode.

Whether through direct teaching of the arts, or through aesthetic education, learning in and about the arts should be seen as more than a mere “frill” to supplement the core subjects of a basic education (Greene, 2001, p. 7). In one of her lectures for the Lincoln Center Institute, Maxine Greene passionately argues the following:

Yes, of course we know that verbal and numerate literacy is required in a culture like ours; and many people are beginning to see the need for computer literacy, various kinds of technical literacy, political or civic literacy. But, in addition, there is aesthetic literacy, of an importance equal to that of the others: the power to perceive
and to respond to aesthetic qualities; the capacity to attend to paintings, dance performances, musical pieces—to engage with them in such a fashion that they actually do emerge in experience in their fullness, vividness, vitality. (p. 50)

This declaration appears to have echoes of the “programmatic manifesto” of the New London Group’s call for a pedagogy of multiliteracies (1996, p. 62). However, Greene delivered this lecture in 1982, more than a decade before the articulation of the need for multiliteracies. Greene seems to have foreseen the New London Group’s call to emphasize computer, technical, political, and civic literacies in what would eventually be termed the New Economy. But in her anticipation of this exciting expansion of literacies, Greene has also offered an early caution not to let enthusiasm for the social or economic functions of multiliteracies to outshine appreciation of more traditional forms and aims of aesthetics. She reminds us to hold a special place for works of art for their own structural and subjective beauty—and in the context of teaching literature, this would include the cherishing of the text as valued literary object.

2.3 The Arts as Languages: Design and Transmediation

In addition to stimulating creativity and accommodating a wide range of learning styles, arts-based approaches are especially pertinent to the teaching of literature because all modes of art have an inherent connection: literature is, after all, an art. In the same way, art is a language. Before proceeding, a discussion of aesthetic literacy should first critically examine the validity of positing the arts as a language in the first place. A starting point is a background look at the creative and expressive impulse that literature shares with the other arts.
2.3.1 The Sister Arts: Shared Creative and Expressive Impulse

Interarts discourse has a long and rich tradition, with frequent references to the “sister arts.” The most common comparison is between the verbal text and the visual image, notably poetry and painting. The articulation of such parallels dates back to antiquity. Plutarch, citing Simonides of Ceos, noted that “painting is mute poetry and poetry a speaking picture” (Golahny, 1996, p. 11). Horace, in his *Ars poetica*, declared *ut picture poesis*: “as in painting, so in poetry” (p. 11).

An intrinsic link between the visual and the verbal can be found in the practice of *ekphrasis* in literature. Golahny (1996) gives an overview of the use of the term *ekphrasis* in interarts discourse. The Greek verb *ekphrasein* in the field of rhetoric is “to report in detail” or “to elaborate upon” (p. 12). In both prose and poetry, *ekphrasis* is the verbal description of an object, person, or event that evokes a visual image in the reader’s mind. The use of *ekphrasis* suggests that writers can use words to attempt an expression similar to the visual. Mirollo (1996) calls this “image envy” or “sibling rivalry” (p. 132) because literature wants to be visual. He further explores this notion by pointing out that often in history the arts had to compete for support by the state. Mirollo thus identifies conflict rather than harmony between visual and literary arts.

Whether in rivalry or harmony, the sibling arts share the intrinsic impulse of creative expression. This impulse usually manifests itself in the idea of a muse as inspiration for artists. Mario Praz (1970) turns to Greek mythology for what was considered the origin of all the arts: *Mnemosyne*, or Memory. It is in memory where all the arts are contained. Praz quotes Italian philosopher Antonio Russi: Memory “is, itself, Art, in which all the various arts are united without residua. Ancient mythology saw this clearly, in a way, when it imagined that Mnemosyne was the mother of the Muses” (Praz, 1970, p. 57). Scholars
need only glance at art history to find artists who practiced in disciplines beyond the visual: Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci in the Renaissance; William Blake and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the nineteenth century; and e.e. cummings, Jean Cocteau, and Henri Matisse in the twentieth century. Numerous literary and visual works respond to each other through allusion and intertextuality. According to Gisbert Kranz, Bruegel’s *Fall of Icarus* has inspired over forty poems in the twentieth century (Mirollo, 1996). Arguably the most famous of these is W.H. Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts.”

Although these aforementioned inter-arts studies tend to focus on the verbal and the visual modes (see also Drucker & Gass, 1997; Heckscher, 1985; Selig & Sears, 1990), the scope of comparison can be extended to all the arts. Walter Sorell (1970) acknowledges that writing and painting are the more common disciplines that reveal multiple creativities, but he argues that all disciplines of art serve essentially the same purpose of stirring and drawing together the senses, the heart, the mind, and the spirit. He proposes that the “poetic image is at the root of all art” and the “essence of all life is poetry as much as it is the essence of all art” (p. 27). Describing the similarities between different artistic modes, Sorell uses metaphors such as “dance is sculpture in movement” (p. 28). He points out how our senses overlap: “We can see sounds, hear colours, touch tones, taste smells. The interrelation of all sensations is much closer than we realize” (p. 27). It is no surprise, then, that there is even a literary term, *synaesthesia*, referring to this fusion of the senses. Many universities offer interdisciplinary courses to critically explore the connections among the arts such as literature, painting, music, and architecture (e.g., Barricelli, Gibaldi, & Lauter, 1990; Ward-Steinman, 1989).
2.3.2  Art as Language, Language as Art: Structure and Semiotics

To say that artists of different modes share a similar creative, expressive impulse—as if drawing inspiration from the collective memory of the muses—is to establish a parallel that some critics might consider too abstract. At a more concrete level, then, scholars can look at art forms as languages, each with its own set of structures and signs. We can turn to de Saussure’s (1915/1991a; 1915/1991b) work on language and semiotics. The linguistic sign comprises the signified (the concept being expressed) and the signifier (the sound pattern or word that expresses). Language, wherein these signs are organized, is “a system of signs expressing ideas, and hence comparable to writing, the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, symbolic rites, forms of politeness, military signals, and so on. [Language] is simply the most important of such systems” (1915/1991b, p. 8). De Saussure developed semiology (from the Greek σήμειον, “sign”) as “a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life” (p. 8). Inherent in this proposal is a paradox: semiology is to be conceived as an empirical science, but the object of study—the signs of social life—is necessarily subjective because it involves customs and symbol systems unique to different cultures.

This paradox continues to fuel debates on whether or not arts can or should be considered languages. Rhys Carpenter (1921), for example, outlines how the arts can be analogous to language:

Under this analogy, the representata of art do service as the words of the language. The formal arrangement is the grammar and syntax. The aesthetic emotion is the meaning. In order to impart this emotion, the artist puts representata in artistic form—very much as we put sounds which are words in coherent grammatical construction in order to impart intelligible information. Under the same analogy, just
as we cannot make a sentence without syntax, we cannot make art without artistic form. (pp. 28-29)

This analogy between art and language is challenged by Donald Weismann, who, in *Language and Visual Form* (1968), records his own journey as writer and visual artist in what he calls a dual creative process. Based on this “experiment,” Weismann concluded that while language and painting are “complementary media to express meaning from a single body of experience” (p. 11), he does not consider art a language, nor language an art:

I realize that visual artistic symbols are untranslatable, and can least of all be rendered into any verbal equivalent. . . . There is no ‘grammar’ of visual form, no ‘syntax’; it does not constitute a ‘language’ in the *proper* [italics added] sense of the word; it has no ‘dictionary.’ (p. 44)

Weismann further argues that a comparison of art as language is essentially destructive to any clear understanding of the nature of language, the nature of visual experience, and the nature of knowledge itself. Serious thinkers on the meaning of visual form *never* [italics added] refer to ‘language.’ Nor does any worker in the visual arts write seriously in such terms about his art, although he may use the metaphor of language in passing. (pp. 44-45)

Such an extended look at Weismann’s observations helps demonstrate that this extreme delineation—notably in Weismann’s use of the absolute qualifiers “never” and “proper,” and his insistent repetition of “no”—is similar to the type of thinking that confines literacy to the linear written text. Weismann’s premise is that finding an exact verbal equivalent to visual form (or vice versa) is impossible. Weismann notes differences between visual and verbal forms to pay due respect to the uniqueness of each medium. However, the distinction in their unique abilities does not necessarily negate the status of the visual as
language. In fact, Weismann contradicts himself when he explicates his dual process of visually depicting a boat and verbally describing a carnival as a metaphor for that boat. He explains that “the force of the visual metaphor [italics added] worked back into the narrative” (p. 54). In using the term “metaphor” here, Weismann appropriates a literary trope for a discussion of visual form. My intention here is not to find flaw in Weismann’s compelling artistic inquiry, but rather to point out that Weismann’s diction belies an instinctive recognition that the visual and verbal modes, as forms of expression and communication, are both art and language: they are inextricable.

Broudy (1991) also provides a sharp critique of methodologies in aesthetic education that use metaphors such as the “language of the arts” and “artistic literacy”:

This argument twists the meaning of language almost beyond recognition. Indeed, the strength of the arts lies in their claim that they are not abstract cognitive symbolic systems; that they are ‘presentational’ symbols, not referential ones; that they convey images of human import directly and are not the result of decoding and translation. … Attempts to construct arts alphabets are not very convincing. Colors, sounds, textures, gestures, lines, and shapes can be thought of as elements out of which aesthetic images are assembled, but the resulting images cannot be looked up in a standard dictionary for definitions. Conversely, these individual lines, shapes, and colors often have an expressive power that letters of the ordinary linguistic alphabet almost never have. (127)

Indeed this is a powerful rejection of attempts to “construct art alphabets” as if the subjective meanings of artistic creations could be meticulously recorded in dictionaries. Described in this way, such approaches perhaps may deserve Broudy’s criticism. But that is not the approach to language that I propose. Applying a language model for analysis of
visual data—or data of any other artistic mode—does not have to be as rigid as some critics would have us believe. In a pedagogy of multiliteracies that expands the traditional notions of literacy and text, the methodology of language analysis should likewise be expanded so that it is necessarily not rigid. In the poetry project that I am researching, the goal for the students is not to formulate a systematic alphabet or an objective cognitive symbolic system that will apply to all arts or that will correlate one entire artistic mode to another. Rather, the focus is on each student’s process of critical thinking as she develops a metalanguage that is specific to the particular poem that she reads and the art work that she chooses to create. It is possible to look at the arts as cognitive symbolic systems and still appreciate the unique expressive power of each mode or medium.

Contrary to what some critics may argue, the arts can and do have their own grammars and dictionaries. Art historian Alois Riegl, whom Gandelman (1991) celebrates as “one of the great precursors of the semiotic approach to the visual arts” (p. 5), attempted to write a grammar of visual art in the early twentieth century. We can find in libraries and bookstores today dictionaries of terminology in a wide range of artistic fields (e.g., Beaver, 2009; Craine & Mackrell, 2004; Latham, 2004; Mayer, 1991).

So what, then, lies at the heart of the different modes of art that make them so inextricable? A growing body of work explores the possibility of an underlying commonality of structure within the arts. Martin and Jacobus (1978) point out structural similarities between different forms of art. Although these authors survey the autonomy of individual forms of art—painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, drama, music, dance, and film—they also appreciate the ways different arts can interrelate at a structural level. Combining different types of art into multi-media works is possible because all “artistic
media are systematically organizable” (p. 436). To view works of art as formal systems in themselves is the first step to exploring interrelationships between one system and another.

Bearne (2003) closely examines the rhetoric in different forms of representation which, regardless of their mode or medium, can all be considered texts. What they have in common, Bearne claims, is their dependence on some pattern of cohesion in time or space; written narratives, for instance, are structured through chronological cohesion, while ballets and operas rely on spatial cohesion and the repetition of sound. Bearne draws parallels between the rhetorical devices in various texts; for example, the message achieved through intonation, pace, and volume in a speech can correspond to the colours, shapes, and composition of a picture.

Praz (1970) also argues for the validity of this search for a “deep structural affinity” (p. 153). He proposes that critical observers can distinguish, to varying degrees, “sameness and structure in a variety of media” (p. 55). He outlines examples of artists and artisans who, through the ages in western art and culture, have interpreted similar motifs and achieved similar effects. Wit in poetry, for example, can function in a similar way to illusionism in painting.2

The deep structural affinity that Praz sketches out becomes more comprehensive and systematic in the work of David Ward-Steinman (1989). Composer and professor of music at San Diego State University, Ward-Steinman has developed a course, Analogs in Music, Art, and Literature, in which he explores this underlying deep structure that transcends boundaries of content, theme, style, and chronological periods. In Toward a Comparative Structural Theory of the Arts (1989), Ward-Steinman remarks that though there is a rich

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2 “Light playing on certain singled-out points of a [visual] scene has a dramatic effect similar to wit, insofar as it creates a tension, and dramatic contrasts” (Praz, 1970, p. 129).
tradition of comparisons of the arts, “almost all of these deal usually with only two of the arts, and then not really from a structuralist point of view” (p. 6). In his ambitious field of inquiry, Ward-Steinman notes the problems and shortcomings of stylistic or structural comparisons between works of art if the scholar is not equally conversant with all of the media or modes in question. He is also careful to identify key challenges and inherent flaws in structural comparisons of works of different scale or dimension. Nevertheless, Ward-Steinman proposes that there are some basic structural parallels among music, painting, poetry, and prose; he offers his own table of comparisons in what he hopes will help build an aesthetic morphology, “a kind of meta-language for analysis, since each of the various arts has its own vocabulary for describing its structures and organizing principles” (p. 7). Undoubtedly the uniqueness of each artistic medium or form means that one mode of art can reveal a unique facet that another mode may not. However, rather than deter an inter-art comparison, this uniqueness invites it; the act of probing through the possibilities and limitations of structural affinities requires rigorous critical thinking that, regardless of how smooth or complete the comparison is at the end, will expand the researcher’s metacognition of the artistic vocabularies and styles.

2.3.3 Semiotics and Design in a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Ward-Steinman’s (1989) call for a metalanguage to compare the structures of the arts foreshadows what the New London Group (1996) would propose less than a decade later, not only for the arts but for multiliteracies in general. Central to the New London Group’s vision of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is the concept of design and metalanguage. The group remarks, “We are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning and at the same time active designers of meaning” (p. 63). Through this view, a key goal of
multiliteracies is not simply to foster expanded modes of reading and decoding the communications around us, but also to actively create new modes of making meaning. It is in this way that “we are designers of social futures” (p. 63). This dynamic process of meaning-making has six design modes: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal patterns that connect the first five modes. Once again, educators can see how multiliteracies are compatible with the theory of multiple intelligences.

To equip students with skills in designing for their social futures, the New London Group (1996) propose a “meta-language of multiliteracies” that will allow us to “treat any semiotic activity…as a matter of Design” (p. 70). The design process is based on the premise that every semiotic mode or system—whether writing, image, gesture, speech, or music—has its own grammar. The New London Group clarify that they use grammar here in a positive light, to refer to a “specialized language that describes patterns of representation” (p. 74). Liberated from its more traditional associations with the restrictions and rules for language usage, grammar now opens itself up to “a range of choices one makes in designing communication for specific ends” (p. 75). The three components of the New London Group’s design process are as follows:

1. **Available Designs**: These are the resources with which students start, including the grammars of languages and of other forms of communication.

2. **Designing**: This is the process whereby students thoughtfully and purposefully select from the Available Designs, and then reshape and transform this knowledge to make new meaning from old materials.

3. **The Redesigned**: This is the outcome, the final product that results from the process of designing. The Redesigned will now become a new Available Design.
In order to engage meaningfully in the design process, “teachers and students need a language to describe the forms of meaning that are represented in Available Designs and the Redesigned. In other words, they need a *metalanguage*—a language for talking about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interactions” (NLG, 1996, p. 73). This argument carves another facet in the already multi-dimensional pedagogy of multiliteracies: while it is necessary to be able to communicate in different modes, arguably more important are the metacognitive skills to articulate and critically reflect on the process of multimodal communication. When students develop these metalinguistic and metacognitive skills, they can take key concepts that might at first seem limited to one particular communication mode, and apply them to a much wider range of multimodal tasks as they redesign and reshape knowledge.

Given the importance of teaching the metalanguage of design in schools, educators face the practical question: Whose responsibility is it to deliver this new curriculum? Kress (2000) asks,

What school subject is likely to deal with this as an issue, both as an issue of preparing the young appropriately for their societies and as an issue of making overt the principles of design which suffuse every aspect of the aesthetics of the market? For me the answer is quite clear: if the subject English in the English [British] curriculum does not do so, then there is nowhere else at the moment where this will happen. (p. 144)

Siegel (2006) has recently reviewed the work of influential researchers who have incorporated arts and semiotic theory into their research with students. Some other studies have begun to examine multimodal rhetoric in the specific context of the secondary English literature classroom. Bourne and Jewitt (2003) trace the dynamics of social interaction in a
class debate on character development in a story, providing a nuanced explication of the
significance of posture, gaze, gesture, movement, and voice. They propose that the
multimodal communication in the debate could improve students’ understanding of social
identity in the story, which consequently may help students write higher quality essays of
literary analysis. In another study, Jewitt (2003) investigates the benefits of computer-
mediated learning when a class explores a novel using a multimedia CD-ROM. Jewitt
carefully analyzes the ways in which multimodal learning can open up connections to
characters and themes that a written text alone may not afford.

Since much of the research into multiliteracies features the elementary school level,
studies such as those by Bourne and Jewitt (2003) and by Jewitt (2003) draw much-needed
attention to an area that currently seems to be underrepresented: the student demographic at
the secondary level, specifically in the study of literature rather than the general
development of reading and writing skills. Bearne (2003) also joins the important
argument that educators need to broaden and diversify our forms of assessment—which
still tend to favour the written word—to more effectively accommodate the multimodal
learning that already occurs in classrooms.

2.3.4 Interpretation, Intertextuality, Transmediation, and Translation

The concept of the arts as languages is not new to our recent decades. Researchers must
recall that early Man communicated through cave paintings; ancient Egyptians through
hieroglyphics; and today, modern languages such as Chinese are based on characters that
are, in essence, little pictures. If it is possible to translate pictograms into verbal text, so too
can we find links between one sensory expression and another; likewise, we can translate
ideas from one artistic medium into another.
Translation will inevitably kindle or fuel semantic debates regarding denotation and connotation, but this is to be expected. For all that one may criticize about the mere idea of translating from one art to another, decrying what can be lost in this process, we as literacy educators must remind ourselves that exactitude is elusive even in the translation from one verbal language into another: connotations will differ among various translations of the same literary work. Two different English translations of Henrik Ibsen’s play *Hedda Gabler*, for instance, will highlight different connotations from the original Norwegian script; indeed, two theatre directors working from the same English translated script will produce different interpretations of the play. Each version will have something that the other does not. Language always has been a shifting phenomenon. Even within the same language we can trace its evolution through history. Two Modern English renditions of the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* can illuminate different shades of meaning from the original Old English. Scholars can look, for example, at lines 435-438, the scene where Beowulf explains to King Hrothgar why he is declining the use of weapons to fight the monster Grendel, electing instead to fight with his bare hands. In Burton Raffel’s (1996) translation, Beowulf confides,

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My lord Higlac
Might think less of me if I let my sword
Go where my feet were afraid to, if I hid
Behind some broad linden shield… (p. 18)
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In contrast, Seamus Heaney (2000) translates the same lines as follows:

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to heighten Hygelac’s fame
and gladden his heart, I hereby renounce
sword and the shelter of the broad shield,
the heavy war-board… (p. 31)
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Whereas in Raffel’s version Beowulf is more concerned with preventing the tarnishing of his own reputation, in Heaney’s translation the hero focuses instead on strengthening the
reputation of his king. This contrast in characterization is merely one indication of the countless interpretive variations that come with translating one linguistic text into another. Yes, something will always be lost in translation, but something will also be gained. Whether transferring ideas from one verbal language to another, or making more radical changes by transmediating across different modes, translation always results in a new product. Rather than insist on exactitude in fidelity to the original, critics of inter-modal translations can view the divergent results as an opportunity to appreciate the constructive richness of language, whatever the mode.

As demonstrated through the Beowulf example, the groundwork of any act of translation is the critical interpretation of the work to be translated. That a work of art can be interpreted necessitates an audience to do the interpreting. In their definition of a work of art, Martin and Jacobus (1978) argue that the most fundamental criterion is that the work invites the viewer’s participation: instead of being a mere spectator, the viewer immerses himself in the work of art to appreciate “the power of its artistic form” (p. 34).

Mary Ann Caws (e.g., 1981, 1989) has written extensively on the processes that occur in the act of reading texts—and not just literary texts, for she views paintings, sculptures, and writing all as texts. The act of reading and interpretation depends very much on what the reader or viewer brings into the text, at both intuitive and analytical levels. In The Eye in the Text, Caws advocates “textual self-consciousness,” which is “the mind’s own reflection in its working” (1981, p. 5). To read a text closely is to “perceive inner structures and relations and relate them to [the literary eye’s] own complex knowledge and experience and to the outer context” (p. 3). An important component of interpreting a work of art is intertextuality; whether made by the reader or the work itself, references to other, pre-existing texts enrich the present work.
To interpret a text, Caws explains, is to design and build the text. She calls this process *architexture*, which is “the combination of structure and texture visible in a given work and its constructive attachment to other works in an overall building developed in the reader’s mind” (1981, p. 9). The reader is thus an active collaborator in constructing a new text in her mind, giving “special attention . . . to the surface of the building material, its *texturality*” (p. 10).

It is in this architextural creation of a new text in the reader-observer-viewer’s mind that interpretation becomes translation—the transference of ideas from one form, medium, or language into another. To build a new text, the reader inevitably identifies certain points as more important than others. Caws (1989) appreciates the artfulness of inter-modal reading: “The problematics of address and translation of ideas and forms, of relation and involvement, lead to a reading situation I am calling *stressful*, a term I insist upon taking as positive” (p. 3). Caws plays with the double sense of “stress” to mean (1) “the accentuation of rhythm . . . and of the heavy emphasis on certain parts,” and (2) “the passionate, even anxious, sense we have and give of our own vital inclusion in the process of reading” (p. 4). The reader’s inclusion in text formation can be seen as a type of interference or interruption that Caws celebrates as positive; the “intellectual tension” (p. 9) of a stress-full reading helps us work toward openness and can even be enjoyable. The reader, now an author and builder, has the freedom to select which elements of the original text to emphasize or stress. This openness of interpretation is what allows any given text to inspire innumerable translations.
In the octave of John Milton’s sonnet “On His Blindness,” the poet laments the loss of his eyesight. More tragic than the failing of his physical vision is the decline of his ability to serve God. For Milton, his worthiest service to God takes the form of writing—in other words, his “talent.” This “talent” has a double meaning; Milton is alluding here to the Biblical parable of the talents in Matthew 25: 14-30, in which “talent” denotes “coin,” in the monetary sense. Other phrases in this passage also support this context of money. Milton equates losing his eyesight with his light being “spent”; being able to see, and therefore to write at his full capacity, is compared to presenting God his “true account,” or worth. For the man who would later become canonized as one of the greatest figures in English literature, Milton’s ability to serve God is described as currency: his talent, his wealth, his worth. Skill in literacy is thus invested with financial value. Language is currency.

The idea of value in language and literature brings this paper back to my question about multiliteracies pedagogy: How can skills with literary close reading and transmediation be of any service to the new knowledge economy? I propose we start looking for an answer in the notion of currency, both as monetary value and as a state of fluidity. The facility and power to critically engage in the semiotics of communication,
through reading and designing new texts, can hold value in the multimedia marketplace. These skills have fluidity because they help us navigate the constant shifting of ideas as they pass on through one medium or mode to another, from one language to another.

Caws (1989) relates language to money in the domain of translation. She raises questions about currency and worth in the intertextual, architextural processes of perceiving, interpreting, exchanging, and translating ideas through verbal and visual language:

> How do we perceive worth, anyway? What relation does such perception of the invisible system of the initially visible coinage of exchange bear to present visual perception, and then to seeing? And what does perception matter anyway, in relation to writing, reading, and exchanging words? Which is primary? (pp. 10-11)

“Worth” is a nebulous concept. What an individual considers worthy or worthwhile will be based on personal need or desire. As a popular saying goes, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. In the public domain of a free market economy, the price of products and services depends on the dynamics of supply and demand. With the New Economy defined as the increasingly globalized world of information exchange and multimedia technologies, there is great demand for skills to navigate the diversity and fluidity of ideas across different media and languages. With rising demand, the value—or worth—of these skills could likewise be great.

The ideas carried in the currents of language, then, are likewise fluid. As they travel along the lines of intertextuality and art-fully stressed readings, ideas are reorganized into different structures and forms. In this transfer from one domain to another, how much of their original meaning do the ideas maintain? What is lost in translation? What remains? What is gained? If the process of translation contributes to the architexture, one might
argue that the text has become enriched. Alternatively, depending on the value with which the beholder invests the new text, it may be seen to have been diminished in value. Either way, the process of transmediation and translation is fraught with the dynamics of appreciation and depreciation in currency.
3. STATEMENT OF THE QUESTIONS

This paper investigates a multimodal approach to studying poetry in an English 12 classroom. The main objectives of this study are twofold. First, I hope this study will reveal that when students transmediate their close reading of a poem into an original artistic design, and also conduct a meta-analysis of their creative interpretations, they develop a deeper critical understanding of literary devices and of how different modes of art and language are interrelated. Secondly, I hope to demonstrate that although this project has its roots in the close reading analysis of a text, it can have value beyond the appreciation of aesthetic style in literature: by critically examining the semiotic power of different modes of communication, and by actively engaging in the language of design, students can develop metacognitive skills that they can transfer and apply to the new knowledge economy.

My central argument is that amidst the rapidly evolving technologies and communication demands of a globalized knowledge economy, there can be room for traditional teaching of literature through close reading and style analysis. The extent to which the two can merge depends on how the classroom learning tasks are designed. To examine this claim, I pose an overarching question: When students transmediate a literary close reading into another mode of artistic design, in what ways can the skills they develop be considered “currency” for the new knowledge economy?

This main question opens up two sub-sets of questions:

1. **Currency in language, artistic design, and multimodal transmediation:**

   In what ways can students communicate their close reading and style analysis of a poem through other, non-textual modes? As students transmediate elements of a poem into other artistic modes, what descriptive language do they use to reflect on and
explain their own process of design and translation? Through this metacognitive language, or metalanguage, what parallels can they draw between elements in their artistic work and the literary style and devices in the poem?

2. *Currency from the classroom to the marketplace:*

   What role can literary close reading and artistic design play in a pedagogy of multiliteracies for the future? What potential value might the metalanguage of design and transmediation carry in the wider world of the knowledge economy?
4. METHODS

4.1. Methodologies

4.1.1 Qualitative Teacher Research

As a teacher and a researcher in literature and language arts, I have chosen to reflect on my classroom practice and critically examine my delivery of a multiliteracies curriculum. Every multimodal project that I have done with my students has prompted me to reflect on the pedagogical implications of multiple literacies and the arts in the teaching of literature; this reflection would often extend to frequent discussions with my colleagues in the English Department, in the fine arts mini-school, and in the context of a school-wide effort to expand assessment methods to improve student literacy. Inspired by these professional conversations, my colleagues and I became involved with the Multiliteracies Project: From Literacy to Multiliteracies in 2003 (see Multiliteracies Project, 2007). This large-scale project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), involved researchers and teachers at the elementary, secondary, and university levels in Toronto and Vancouver; we had the opportunity to share our practices and to explore just some of the myriad possibilities of a multimodal literacy curriculum. The classroom projects that I investigated, ranging from picture books and story performances by French 9 students, to English 12 interpretations of *Hamlet*, were diverse and spanned several years over the course of the Multiliteracies Project. Although these individual studies were not formulated to be one systematic action research project, my overall involvement in the Multiliteracies Project eventually exhibited some qualities of action research. Though definitions continue to evolve, Peterat and Smith (2001) offer some useful descriptors to identify action research: it is research conducted systematically and intentionally by teachers into our own practice, with the goal of applying the research to improve practice; it
is often collaborative, whether conducted with colleagues or with the input from students or other stakeholders; and it is usually cyclical and recurrent. While not systematic at the outset, my revisiting of particular questions in multiliteracies pedagogy and my redesigning of classroom lessons in response have shown a recurring pattern of practice and reflection that fits in with the cyclical nature of action research (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

If I may loosely use the term action research for my general, ongoing practice and reflection into my teaching for multiliteracies over the years, then this current paper can be considered the most systematic cycle within that overall inquiry. In action research, “teacher researchers examine the everyday, taken-for-granted ways in which they carry out professional practice” (Mills, 2003, p. 8). The practice in question, a senior English poetry project, is one that I have taught for seven years. Based on the depth of critical thinking that I observed in my students’ work, I did take for granted that this project was valuable. And though I could speak endlessly about why I believed it to be worthwhile, I had yet to formally and systematically investigate the pedagogical value of such a project. Every year I would make adjustments to the project, but the general approach remained. Every year the students’ works seemed to become more and more impressive, the atmosphere even more electric and inspiring as each new class of students presented their creations. It was at this point in my teaching, in the spring of 2007, that I finally collected the data for this thesis. I observed my students in their natural classroom environment participating in a poetry project that I would be teaching regardless of any affiliated research activities. Through qualitative and quantitative data, I noted the students’ level of engagement with their detailed close readings of poems, as well as their critical understanding of the parallels between different modes of art and artistic languages. Overall, the study explored how
students could strengthen their critical thinking skills by transferring ideas laterally from one mode to another and critically reflecting on their own design process.

At the time I conducted the classroom inquiry, I planned for my thesis to focus only on the students and their interaction with the literary texts and artistic designs. I was content to confine my research within the domain of the classroom, celebrating the sophisticated ways in which students could understand the inner workings of language and textual structures. With students often far exceeding grade-level standards in literary analysis and creative representation, the collected data provided more than enough convincing evidence for what I had initially set out to study. I could have just remained with this for my thesis.

Unfortunately (or, perhaps, fortunately), I took much longer to write my Master’s thesis than I had anticipated. Ironically, the main reason why I so often pushed my own research aside was to devote my full energies to enriching more aspects of my classroom teaching. In the two years between collecting my data and writing my thesis, further self-critical questions inevitably surfaced. I could not shake the underlying suspicion that there just had to be a greater purpose to this poetry project than just the critical analysis and appreciation of literature and aesthetic design. For me, personally, no further justification for this project was necessary, but I could not trust my own preferences. *Not everybody can be content with these Ivory Tower indulgences,* I had to remind myself. That was when the voices of the New London Group’s (1996) programmatic manifesto returned to clamour even more insistently. That was what compelled me to add another layer to my teacher-research inquiry. I wanted to explore not only the intrinsic value of the poetry project, but also its relevance and value outside the classroom, beyond the cherished world of literary analysis. More than ever, it seemed, I had to critically examine the value of what I could
offer as a teacher. I needed affirmation that students could take from this project something of value to them, not just of value to me.

4.1.2 A/r/tography

**Wireless communication:**
*a letter to my students*

Will you remember this?
Did my sharing reach you,
speak to you
in the same threaded voice
that you have strung for me,
your many voices echoing
in layers, still and always
as I remember all that you have taught me?

I wish to spin trails, invisible threads
to follow through, to see you through
as you learn and grow and learn some more.

But why these strings, this net of words,
ideas that travel, tingle, tap-dance
their way from me to you and back to me,
why these tangible directions?
Why these strings, these chorus lines
this dancing web
a silken fugue
minds in sparks
exploding
fires of
affirmation?

(Do I fear that you will lose your way?)

Cut the strings,
I must let go
let the threads float away
silk snapped
for you to rise and climb into the air
And you will fly away
leap like baby spiders,
trapezes in the air
postmarked in the sun.
Aiming high you will
venture, laughing in the wind
The threads falling, delicate:

Sparkling
you will glisten on your own.

I wrote my poem “Wireless Communication” when I finished my pre-service teaching practicum, eleven years ago. Re-reading the poem now, I am reminded of how fervently I wanted to ensure that what I shared in the classroom mattered outside it. I shake my head now at the naivety of the notion that my students would continue to need my guidance after they had left my class, as if I were a parent facing the departure of her child into adulthood. In the short course of that practicum, and even more so as I acquired experience teaching in my “own” classroom, I learned to let go, to trust that students would best know how to select, apply, or even reject, whatever I had taught them. But I never lost that desire to always strive to make my teaching matter somehow, to gain affirmation that what students learned with me could after all be considered worthwhile, somewhere, in some way, beyond the classroom. I wanted my teaching to have value, although I did not insist that this value had to be in the practical sense of the job market.

The heart of my thesis remains with the findings from the data I originally collected in 2007, to investigate students’ development of multimodal communication and metacognitive skills. Teacher research is therefore still the core methodology. Part of that critical reflection led me to question why I so cherished the aesthetic domain of the poetry project and did not feel the need to look beyond. This query led me back to my own practice as an artist.

To complement my central methodology of qualitative teacher research, this paper also draws peripherally on a/r/tography. A/r/tography has emerged in the past decade as a
practice-based research methodology, whereby the researcher is also teacher and artist, as represented by the acronym *a/r/t* (Irwin, 2004). This method of educational research features the interweaving of text and image as a mode of inquiry, and is based on the premise that art practice is a form of research (Sullivan, 2005). The artist-researcher-teacher attempts “to integrate theoria, praxis, and poesis, or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making” (Irwin, 2004, p. 28). In other words, it is in the process of making art that the researcher discovers, creates, and represents meaning; it is the aesthetic experience that allows the artist-researcher-teacher to integrate knowing, doing, and making (Irwin, 2004). As living inquiry, *a/r/t*ography involves self-study and autobiography; being in communities of practice; and ethics and activism (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). The way my paper explores *a/r/t*ography is through autobiographical inquiry.

Unlike many of the artists I know, whom I admire for their power and courage to use their art as a vehicle for social change, my own art practice has always been quiet and inward-looking. Invariably on a modest, private scale, my work in painting, bookbinding, and writing poetry has always been just for myself: as a way to give order and timelessness to what is otherwise disordered and fleeting, or as a way to escape and indulge in imagined worlds.

From an early age and like many children, I found creative expression equally through a paint brush as through a pen. In primary school, my teachers worried that perhaps I had a hearing problem, so often did I fail to heed their calls when I was at the easel. What they probably did not understand at the time was that I was just too busy painting stories; my ears were full of the voices that chimed with each new stroke of colour that I added to my narratives. Growing up in a first-generation immigrant family, I found
that what I could not share with my parents through my fledgling Chinese words, I could instead try to show them through the stories I drew. It was a modest attempt to assuage the heartache of not being able to converse fluently with my parents in their own language.

As a student of literature in high school and university, I read words from the printed page that refused to lie still in my mind’s eye: restless, curious, often anxious, these words insisted on marching back outside, onto a different page, a blank page. The words would then take on new hues, fanciful in jewel tones of Alizarin Crimson or Cadmium Lemon, or brooding in the storms of Payne’s Grey or Prussian Blue. It was immediately after my summer reading of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927/1992) that I visualized the topic I would later choose for my undergraduate honours thesis in English literature. The decision came while I was painting my response to the novel, hypnotized and unrelenting in my rendering of the rocks and waves in my own feverish attempt to “make of the moment something permanent,” as if I were Lily Briscoe heeding Mrs. Ramsay’s call myself, imploring, “Life stand still here” (p. 176). It was the same topic that I would later revisit through my own sketches of poetry: the shared capacity of writing and visual art to make life stand still, to give form to fleeting experience. The words I had read transformed themselves into images and then back into new words. For me, this was more than just natural. It was an imperative.

And so it was again, another imperative to return to art in the middle of my Master’s thesis. My own art practice as a mode of inquiry was not planned when I first set out to conduct this research project. In fact, due to the intense demands of my full-time English teaching load, my graduate coursework, and my self-imposed rigorous standards of work, my own practice as an artist had receded into the cracks, overrun by papers to mark, lessons to plan, meetings to attend, and e-mails to answer. Nonetheless, as I confronted the search
for some practical connection between my poetry project and the “outside” world, I had to envision myself stepping out of my pristine comfort zone. That was when the images of travel and transport emerged. I turned to my sketchbook, opening the pages from which I had too long been absent. Then, in disbelief, I found myself using a pencil for something other than writing feedback on student essays. A stroke in one direction, two strokes at another angle. This continued. Within ten minutes I was amused to find that I had drawn a lighthouse superimposed on a suitcase. These were the motifs that would never leave me. I carried on, brainstorming research ideas through poetic scribbles and framing my outline with more sketches and collages. I found myself taking out from storage—after a distance of years—my watercolour paper blocks, my tubes of acrylic paint, my brushes, my bookbinding fabrics, and my ribbons for weaving.

Rita Irwin writes that “a/r/tography is about each of us living a life of deep meaning enhanced through perceptual practices that reveal what was once hidden, create what has never been known, and imagine what we hope to achieve” (2004, p. 36). Energized by readings on the languages of art, and inspired by my students’ vibrant creative works, and most of all anxious about the value and worth of the skills I was providing in the classroom, I rediscovered what had seemed lost or dormant in me. Somewhere in the dark spaces between teacher and researcher, and without conscious intention, my own art practice had begun to resurface, ready to be unpacked once again.
4.2 Procedures

4.2.1 Participants

The classroom research for this paper was conducted over a period of six weeks in a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic Vancouver high school in the spring of 2007. This study featured a Grade 12 English class in a mini-school specializing in the fine and performing arts. I was the teacher-researcher in this class. Because the poetry project was a regular part of the course curriculum, all members of the class participated in the project. Of the 29 students in the class, 25 took part in the research. The data would be generalizable to students who have indicated a strong interest and talent in the arts.

4.2.2 Materials and Equipment

The poems that students worked with came primarily from the class readings, although they also had the option of studying a poem from outside the list of suggested works. Students procured their own materials for their individual creative projects, but some basic supplies such as multi-purpose canvases were already available in the English department. To document work samples and interviews, I used a digital camera, a scanner, a mini audio recorder, and a video camera.

4.2.3 Project Design and Data Collection

As a teacher-research project, this study uses primarily qualitative data in the form of observations, interviews, and samples of projects, with some quantitative data from questionnaires. Because this poetry project was part of my regular English teaching curriculum in the fine arts program, independent of my thesis research, all students in the class engaged in the project activities. The research data, however, features only the 25
students who freely consented to participate in the research. Generally, data were collected from all research participants, but my discussion will highlight three student projects in more detail.

In explaining the design of the research project, it is timely now to also mention the general design of close reading that I teach to the students. Whether for prose, drama, or poetry, I recommend throughout the course that students approach any analysis of textual communication with the following questions in mind:

1. “How?”

   What tools and methods does the writer use to communicate ideas? What forms, structures, or stylistic elements (e.g., figurative devices, sound devices, syntax, diction, punctuation and other mechanics of language) are noteworthy?

2. “Prove it!”

   Show specific evidence from the text to prove or support these observations.

3. “So what?”

   This is what I argue as the most important question. Important though it may be to identify the writer’s techniques, that labeling is no more than a mere academic exercise if the student does not dig deeper and critically assess how these “tools” or “methods” are significant in developing meaning in the text. So what if the novelist uses a fragmented chronological narrative structure? So what if the dramatist writes this particular speech in prose whereas those same characters speak in verse elsewhere in the scene? So what if the poet eliminates the use of punctuation in the final stanza, or inserts a pair of feminine rhymes as a contrast to the predominant use of masculine rhymes, or describes human actions primarily through synecdoche?
The simplicity of this two-word question suggests that what I want students to arrive at is the heart of communication: language tools are used to achieve a rhetorical purpose. Form fulfills a function. The structure and style of a text are inextricably tied to the content. It is this key question of *So what?* that forms the basis of comparison between different modalities of communication. All forms of expression, whether visual image, written text, or musical sounds, feature some type of grammar of style and technique, whether formalized into a dictionary or not. No doubt that the beauty of each mode or medium lies in its uniqueness. But what they all have in common is that they are methods of communication, each making use of tools to convey meaning. This question of *So what?* fits in with Kress’s (2000) view that multiliteracies design “does not privilege any one of the modes of representation which are in use, but rather focuses on what goes on and on the *purposes* [*italics added*] of what is going on. This rhetorical approach of course has to be attuned to the effects of power in communication” (p. 142).

The following table outlines the major procedures and the corresponding data collected. At the time that I first started teaching this poetry project, I had not yet learned about the New London Group’s (1996) design model. As I embarked in my research and background reading, however, I noticed how the procedures of the classroom project could correlate to the key stages of the New London Group’s outline of Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned. I have thus chosen to frame my study in this paper according to that design model.
### AVAILABLE DESIGNS
The “available designs” of the project consisted of the literary terminology, the strategies in close reading and style analysis, and the poems in the booklet of class readings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before the start of the data collection, the class studied a four-week poetry unit. Students reviewed the literary terminology that would be relevant not only for the creative project but also for the poetry section on the provincial exam that they would write in June. Class activities included close readings of poems to demonstrate strategies in literary style analysis. Several of the poems on the reading list were studied in great detail, while many others were read aloud for enjoyment.</td>
<td>N / A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students selected a poem from the list of suggestions. They also had the option of working with a poem not on the list, with teacher approval. Students also selected a mode (or modes) of creative interpretation for their poem.</td>
<td>Students each submitted a short written proposal (60-80 words) to identify their selected titles, why they made their particular selections, and what mode(s) of creative interpretation they planned to conduct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DESIGNING
During the “designing” stage, students analyzed stylistic elements of the available designs in order to reshape them into new artistic modes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Students conducted a close reading and style analysis of their selected poem.</td>
<td>Annotated poems: Students submitted a copy of their selected poem with their own annotations to demonstrate active, personal engagement with the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students designed and worked on their artistic interpretations of their poem. I emphasized to students to be selective about what particular aspects they wanted to focus on for interpretation; the goal was not to translate the entire poem and every aspect of the written language into another, completely equivalent work. Students had the option of working with a partner. During work periods in class, as well as appointments scheduled outside of class time, students met one-on-one with the teacher for formative feedback.</td>
<td>Journal notes by the teacher-researcher, and audio recordings of the one-on-one formative meetings. Students submitted preparatory notes and drafts and sketches of their work. They also submitted Artist’s Statements, the written compositions of meta-analysis in which they explained the interconnections between their selected poem and their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students had six weeks in total to produce their work. They were given one week of class time to work on their projects; the rest of the work was conducted outside of class time to allow the class to proceed onto other units of study.

5. (Concurrently with Procedure 4) Students conducted a meta-analysis, explaining how elements in their work, such as patterns of shading or musical chords, represented literary elements in their poem or story.

REDESIGNED
Students shared their final products, the artistic works they created.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Presentation of projects: Students exhibited or performed their artistic works, whether through music, visual art, drama, film, or any combination of media. Students also briefly explained their meta-analyses to the class.</td>
<td>Projects were documented by photographs, scans, and audio or video recordings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Assessment of projects and meta-analyses: The teacher conducted the assessment of all projects.</td>
<td>Samples of teacher feedback were documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Post-project questionnaires for students: Some questions required short answers, while others were quantitative in the form of Likert rating scales. Respondents indicated or explained their experiences in each step of the project and the degree to which they acquired particular skills.</td>
<td>Questionnaires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Post-project one-on-one interviews with students (six students were randomly selected). Interviewees expanded on some of the questionnaire items. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.</td>
<td>Audio recordings of interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. TRANSLATING THE DATA: EMERGENT UNDERSTANDINGS

5.1 In Breadth: Overview of Class Works and Responses

Twenty-five out of the 29 students in the class freely consented to take part in the research study. After I collected the data, I originally intended to categorize the students’ observations into separate stages of the project, but I soon found this approach to be too mechanical and rigid. Although there were different stages and components in the project, the process as a whole was organic. For example, some students found that they discovered some insights about the poetic text during the process of making (designing) their product that they had not realized during the earlier, close reading stage. There were also some observations about the poem or even about the design process itself that were not realized and articulated explicitly until the students conducted the meta-analysis for their Artist’s Statements. Many students started designing their products concurrently with the close reading stage. In short, the different stages of the project were not meant to be discrete and sequential, but rather complementary and flexible, with some stages being revisited and refined as the design and critical thinking evolved. The following discussion therefore synthesizes information collated from the students’ annotated close readings, Artist’s Statements, final products of transmediated design, questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews with the teacher.

Having used the New London Group’s (1996) design model to frame the procedures of the classroom project and data collection, I shall do the same again to present the understandings that have so far emerged from the data. As I read through the students’ work and my own journal observations of the project, I highlighted the students’ explanations of how and why they chose their particular poem and artistic modality—in other words, what Available Designs captured their interest in the first place. I then sorted
through students’ comments on their individual processes of transmediation—that is, their processes of Designing a product to become a Redesigned work. I made a chart of the various parallels that they were able to draw between the literary text and the new modality. I also noted the challenges that arose when students did not find parallels. I paid special attention to the students’ ability to use the metalanguage of design; even in instances where they could not find apparent correlations between artistic modes, they still used metalanguage to identify such challenges.

5.1.1 Available Designs

As outlined in the Procedures section, the Available Designs for this project included the literary terminology and close reading skills that the students had already developed during an intensive four-week study of poems through class activities and small-group discussions. Other components of the Available Designs were the poetic texts from which students could select, and the skills in non-textual artistic modes that students could apply to interpret these poems.

When asked why they chose their particular poem, every one of the 25 student respondents indicated some level of personal engagement with the poem. Many stated that they “liked” or “loved” the poem overall. Many students also specified elements that “resonated” with or “intrigued” them, such as the tone, mood, theme, dramatic situation, or even individual images. One student, for example, explained, “I immediately felt a personal connection because I could relate to the speaker’s desire to overcome his fear of death,” for John Donne’s sonnet “Death Be Not Proud.” Another student mentioned, “I was drawn to the relevance of the poem’s concern for human connection with nature in an industrial age,” for William Wordsworth’s sonnet “The World is Too Much With Us.” For
Tennyson’s dramatic monologue “Ulysses,” one student described her “personal connection with Ulysses’ desire to strive eternally for knowledge.”

Most students based their poem selection either partly or primarily on the artistic mode that they envisioned during the process of reading. One student explained that in reading “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T. S. Eliot, “I felt a strong sense of narrative from the poem which encouraged a dramatic response, so I wrote and performed a dramatic monologue from the perspective of the unnamed lady that Prufrock speaks to.” For the villanelle “The Waking” by Theodore Roethke, a student remarked that the poem had a “song-like form and so to some extent lent itself to musical interpretation.” Another student, while reading “The Secret in the Cat” by May Swenson, was drawn to the multiple sensory images in the poem and “wanted some kind of three-dimensional model that could accommodate a more interactive experience to uphold the tactile nature of the poem.” Her final model was determined by the “practicality and availability of materials.” For another poem, David Zieroth’s “Time Over Earth,” a student chose to create his artistic response through computer animation. He remarked, “Computer technology & multimedia seemed more intuitive to me than acting, music, or even building something with my hands.”

Of particular interest is that out of the 25 participants in the study, 8 students chose to work in a mode that they did not consider their “specialty.” In this project students could select any artistic mode(s), regardless of the discipline in which they were officially enrolled for the fine arts mini-school. Because the emphasis was on the critical thinking behind the process of transmediation, rather than the level of mastery of any particular artistic skill, students had the freedom to experiment with materials and modes for which they might not have had formal training. One drama student, for instance, presented her interpretation of T. S. Eliot’s “Preludes” on canvas to emphasize the power of the imagery,
setting, and mood in the poem. Her explanation, “I enjoy painting, even though I’m not
great at it,” demonstrates that personal engagement with a particular artistic mode does not
have to be dictated by a student’s skill level.

Of the 25 participants, the number of students who chose to work with each mode
was as follows:

Table 5.1 Selection of artistic modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual 2-dimensional:</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual 3-dimensional:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other: One student chose a cooking demonstration; another constructed a model of a chemical reaction.

5.1.2 Meta-Language: Design and the Redesigned

When students reflected on their design process, they were able to identify many parallels
between the written language of the poem and the language of their chosen non-textual
mode(s). The magic of literary language, especially in the compressed form of poetry, is
that it can lend itself so flexibly to adaptations into other artistic forms. For instance, a
survey of the terminology for imagery alone gives a good indication of the capacity of
literary language to appeal to all the senses: visual, auditory, tactile, thermal, kinesthetic,
olfactory, and gustatory. Descriptors such as deep and light can be used for both colours
and sounds; rough and soft for textures and voices; and round and elongated for vowels and
gestures. Poetry is language that should, ideally, appeal equally to the eyes through its
visual arrangement on the page and to the ears through its sound devices; because of this
multi-sensory nature, it is not surprising that 3 students drew parallels between negative space in their chosen texts and negative space in their paintings.

One student, connecting music and poetry, noted that “rhythm and metre apply to both forms.” Another student, who interpreted “Bartok and the Geranium” through a visual collage of two dancers surrounded by music, remarked that it was “easy” to articulate her transfer of ideas from poetic to visual text: “The language was similar. I believe the languages of dance, music, and visual arts have a lot in common.” Whether visual, musical, dramatic, or filmic, all artistic modes of expression can be said to convey a tone, evoke a mood and atmosphere, and reveal a theme or character.

The following table presents a sample of some of the correlations students drew between elements in their selected poems and elements in their designed product:

**Figure 5.1 Sample parallels between elements in poems and elements in non-textual modes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stylistic or Structural Element in Poem</th>
<th>Equivalent, Parallel, or Correlation in Non-Textual Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Waking” (T. Roethke)</td>
<td>Composition for oboe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• iambic pentameter</td>
<td>• pickup measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• villanelle form</td>
<td>• bourée (song form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recurring images</td>
<td>• repeated musical phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dulce et Decorum Est” (W. Owen)</td>
<td>Composition for violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• imagery of choking; pained noise of inhalation and exhalation</td>
<td>• diminished fifth chords, followed by perfect fifth chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consonance and alliteration of / sound</td>
<td>• slides on violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consonance and alliteration of s sound</td>
<td>• trills on violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• irony</td>
<td>• deceptive chord (cadence consisting of chords V-VI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylistic or Structural Element in Poem</td>
<td>Equivalent, Parallel, or Correlation in Non-Textual Mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(T. S. Eliot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ juxtaposition of positive and negative imagery</td>
<td>▪ <strong>Dramatic monologue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ separation of stanzas</td>
<td>▪ conflict in character’s objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ ellipses</td>
<td>▪ “beats”: moments of dramatic pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ speaker’s voice trailing off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Blank Joy” (R. M. Rilke)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ thematic continuity of unrequited love; use of enjambment to show cyclical nature of speaker’s yearning and torment</td>
<td>▪ <strong>Classical ballet</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ personification and imagery of “joy” as the centre of speaker’s desire</td>
<td>▪ repetition of arabesques (used in traditional ballet choreography to show yearning and loss) and <em>port de bras</em> to bring choreography to complete cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ interrogative statements: uncertainty, frustration, need for acknowledgment</td>
<td>▪ pirouette and <em>ronde de jambe</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ speaker’s unabashed, vulnerable confession of pain and love; surrender of heart as conquered and deserted</td>
<td>▪ allegro series: petit allegro growing into grand allegro: size, speed, complication of jumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ adage: deflation and contractions in arms and body as they breathe in and out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Art</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My Last Duchess” (R. Browning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ dramatic monologue: sustained privileged voice of uninterrupted speaker</td>
<td>▪ <strong>Graphic novel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ subtext: connotations of speaker’s jealousy, petty pride; implied ruthlessness</td>
<td>▪ readers primarily share standpoint of Duke as main character, narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ narrow-mindedness of Duke</td>
<td>▪ multiple frames show perspectives NOT revealed or acknowledged by speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“A Summer’s Singing” (L. Crozier)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ repetition of question, “Where does that singing start?”</td>
<td>▪ <strong>Ceramic sculpture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ the answer is in the “room / Between your heartbeats” – i.e., an answer in empty space, therefore ultimately unknown and undefined</td>
<td>▪ yellow cord wrapped around a tubular heart, searching for the source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ the sculpted heart is hollow and twisted almost as if it were a shell that emits an echoing sound; the bottom of the tubular heart cannot be seen through the dark hollow space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were, as expected, many elements in the poems that could not be expressed or translated into the new mode. This is inevitable, for each artistic mode is ultimately unique and cannot be translated wholesale into another mode. One of the students in the class noted that music has an advantage over poetic language because “music tends to be more abstract than poetry” and can therefore express more abstract ideas; however, on the flip side, “you can only communicate an emotional message and not the knowledge that words can provide.” Sound devices such as assonance, consonance, and alliteration tended to be difficult to convey visually. Rhyme scheme also presented a challenge to many students, one of whom explained that “rhyme can be represented to some extent, but direct translation is hard.”

Interesting to note is that in many cases where students identified an area of difficulty in transmediating, they would eventually arrive at some type of solution. For instance, one student wanted to paint a landscape for T. S. Eliot’s “Preludes” but found some difficulty in incorporating the multiple points of view and time frames in the poem’s four sections. She
solved this challenge by varying the materials she used on the canvas, mixing paint with paper and fabric; manipulating her placement of warm colours among a predominantly grey or neutral background; and contrasting vast, empty spaces with areas crowded with objects. For one interpretation of Tennyson’s “Ulysses,” a student faced the difficulty of portraying time frames in her visual piece. Explaining her use of computer software to manipulate images, she noted, “I had to experiment with layering and changing background colours. Then I found in the end that I was finally able to show both time and the speaker’s opinion of his memories.” In another challenge to transmediation, one student commented that “devices such as enjambment, caesura and things like punctuation were difficult to represent in the visual art work.” However, as demonstrated in the table above, such aspects as enjambment and punctuation could be given some type of equivalent expression in a ballet move or film editing technique—both of which are examples of visual modes in motion. Out of the 25 students in the study, 13 of them remarked that there were no stylistic devices in their poetic text that they were not able to find some corresponding term or device in the new modalities. “There was always some kind of equivalent term,” commented one student. Another student agreed: “At first, it was confusing to identify the connections because of the different languages for the poem and my diorama, but then I found that everything worked out well in both modes once I found parallels to translate the terminology.” Another participant noted, “Even if not all of the poetic devices can be conveyed, it was still fairly easy to address most of the ideas of the poem.”

Students were well aware that even after discovering different ways to parallel elements in different modalities, not all aspects of the poems would be able to be translated to the same extent. “Not every part is exactly interpreted, or interpreted far enough,” observed one student. However, they had been reassured at the beginning of the project
that the purpose of the transmediation was not to find an equivalent between every word or line in the poem and every aspect of the new artistic mode. Rather, the purpose was for students to identify elements that mattered most to them in the poem—whether imagery, structure, rhythm, sounds, or thematic and less “technical” ideas—and focus on those selected elements to communicate in the new modality. This purpose was perhaps best articulated in one student’s comment: “Basically, it boils down to the dilemma that translators face: to translate a poem verbatim, or just capture the essence? I did the latter.” All of the 25 participants, to different degrees, did just that: “capture the essence” in their own way.

5.2 In Depth: Three Projects in Focus

For a more detailed understanding of the students’ processes of transmediation and their use of metalanguage, I will focus on three individual projects. My choice of projects was determined by several factors. I originally hoped to feature one each from the visual, musical, and dramatic or dance projects, in order to have a balanced and representative look at the modalities. There were certain poems such as Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum Est” and William Wordsworth’s “The World is Too Much With Us” that students selected more often, but I wanted to have a different poem in each featured project. Although I was intrigued by the way different students transmediated the same poem, or the way one literary text could be interpreted so divergently in various modalities, I decided that if I had the same poem in more than one project, for the sake of balance it would have to be the same poem in all three selected projects; this latter situation did not occur. My selection of projects for detailed analysis was also determined by the levels of consent that individual

3 To more clearly distinguish quotations, words quoted from the poetic texts will be italicized.
students and their parents had given for the works to be documented; for example, some students allowed for the research to feature their close reading notes and Artist’s Statements but not their final redesigned product. With these parameters in mind, I chose the three following projects, representing the musical, visual two-dimensional, and visual three-dimensional modalities.

5.2.1 Musical Response to “Bartok and the Geranium”

Daniel was a jazz pianist. He chose to respond to Dorothy Livesay’s (1952/1999) poem “Bartok and the Geranium” through a free improvisation for solo piano. “[The poem] contains many references to darkness and light,” he explained, “and I thought it apt to use the marvelous dimensions of the piano to help me parallel this interplay as best I could. I knew that the huge range of the piano would also help me in my response.”

The “interplay” in the poem that Daniel mentioned is, at the literal level, the coexistence of a geranium plant on a window sill and the music of Bartok in the room. On one interpretive level, the geranium could represent peace and tranquility, while Bartok’s music could suggest chaos and intensity. Alternatively, the two could symbolize the interaction between feminine and masculine forces. Daniel focused instead on yet another level of symbolism. He recalled:

When I first read this poem, I thought that the author was merely trying to capture her enjoyment of a certain geranium and its contrast with the wonderful music of Bartok. However, when I began to look further, I realized that there are some key passages that are clues that something bigger is going on. The allusion to Lucifer and the image of an “essence of serenity” made known to me that the poem is actually a fitting representation of the struggle between good and evil.
Daniel’s interpretation of the “struggle between good and evil” was supported by his close reading of the poem (see Figure 5.2). Of primary importance was his exploration of the allusion to “lost Lucifer,” the Archangel. This line prompted him to look into Christian literature and the various interpretations of the war in Heaven; Daniel’s reading of the poem focused on how “the story ends with Lucifer being cast out of Heaven and falling to earth.” He found a “direct correlation between how Livesay ends her poem, and how the story ends.” This parallel opened up a path for Daniel to analyze the language in the poem on the premise of this struggle of contrasting forces.

**Figure 5.2  Sample of Daniel’s close reading notes**

Daniel outlined the imagery and figurative devices in the text that establish the symbolism of the war in Heaven. He identified the setting of the poem, “*this room, this moment now,*” as the location of the war—Heaven itself, where the reader is witnessing the
war as it is unfolding. Noting the personification of the plant and the music, Daniel called the geranium “the ideal embodiment of peace and calm…a supreme being or creator,” whereas “the music of Bartok is the opposition to the creator…the root of all evil.” The juxtaposition of the geranium and the music in the same room “emphasizes the battle between good and evil.” The impressive strength of Lucifer as an adversary is further developed through imagery when the music of Bartok is described as something that “must speed high and higher still,” something that “Whirls” and “Explodes in space.” Daniel identified the use of metaphor here, where the music is described as a spaceship, “a giant moving assemblage of mechanical parts shooting far into space.” If it were not a spaceship, Daniel proposed that it could be a “supernatural being with equivalent abilities.” The intensity and ambition of a spaceship is associated with the daring and pride of Lucifer.

**Figure 5.3 Samples of Daniel’s design planning**

Literary sound devices were also an important component of Daniel’s close reading. For instance, in the description of the geranium as the “essence of serenity,” he remarked that the alliteration and consonance of the words “is very pleasing to the ears and harmonious.” He then highlighted how that softness contrasts with Lucifer, symbolized by Bartok’s music. In the line “Spits with hell’s own spark,” Daniel identified a “harsh,
grating *sp* sound” that “contributes to the image of a maniacal, cruel being.” This harshness is further supported by the consonance of the hard *k* in other words associated with Lucifer, such as “*dark*,” “*crackles*,” and “*spark*.”

Having completed a style analysis of the poetic text, Daniel’s next task was to create a musical response (see Figure 5.3), which he described as “immensely more complex, and consequently more difficult.” The “huge range” of the piano would certainly be ideal to accommodate the vast scope of the narrative, but Daniel’s main challenge was to convey the interplay between the contrasting forces of serenity and intensity, light and dark, Heaven and Hell. Daniel described how he met this challenge:

I chose to use each hand (and consequently register) to represent the two sides of the struggle—namely, good in the left hand (and lower register), and evil in the right hand (higher register). This way I could clearly communicate how the two sides are juxtaposed in the poem.

Daniel thus utilized the affordances of the piano, the lower and higher registers, to symbolize the binary opposition of ideas in the poem. He outlined his process of using a “schematic to develop [his] composition in a logical and sequential manner” (Figure 5.4):

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**Figure 5.4  Daniel's summary of hand sequence on piano**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juxtaposition in lines 1-18: left hand vs. right hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Good / God / the geranium in line 19: <em>both hands together</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Evil / Lucifer / the music of Bartok in line 20: <em>both hands together</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Good / God / the geranium in line 21: <em>both hands together</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Evil / Lucifer / the music of Bartok in lines 22-23: <em>both hands together</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juxtaposition in lines 24-30: left hand vs. right hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of Good / God / the geranium in lines 31-33: <em>both hands together</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Daniel’s distinction between passages where both hands work together, and passages where the left and right hands function separately, shows his careful attention to the dynamic conflict between the two forces in the poem. He recalled:

After I had established the form of my composition, I began to figure out the harmonic base which would provide context for the improvised right hand part. I chose a simple 4 bar pattern for the left hand, around which I would develop the improvised right hand.

Daniel established earlier that the juxtaposition of the geranium and Bartok’s music in the poem conveys the struggle in Heaven, but now he must convey the dynamics of that struggle through his musical composition. Daniel’s use of the left hand to provide the harmonic base is appropriate because he has designated the left to represent God: stable, calm, and good. The improvisation of the right hand could therefore show the disruptiveness of Lucifer’s rebellion, going against the order of God. Daniel specifically pointed out that to develop the right hand part, he used chromaticism, or incorporation of notes foreign to or deviating from the dominant scale. To even further highlight the rebellious origin of the war in Heaven, the right hand uses tritones. “Historically,” Daniel explained, “the tritone has been given the name the ‘interval of the devil.’” Relating to this is the use of diminished chords, which are actually built by stacking two tritones on top of each other.” To emphasize the tension between the God and Lucifer, Daniel juxtaposed two sets of harmonies, as in this example: “The first chord I played in the left hand is an E flat major chord, and overttop of this I placed a G major arpeggio.” Through such musical devices, Daniel was able to “depict the struggle between the two entities.”
Particularly impressive about Daniel’s musical composition was the physical execution of his ideas through his handling of the keys on the piano. He explained the difficulty of maintaining the contrast between the two entities:

The challenge here was maintaining complete separation of the two hands. Instead of having the hands work together as in any harmonious music, I had to make each hand work independently of the other, and in so doing create the tension between the two parts. It was particularly difficult to make the left hand serene, calm and peaceful, while at the same time making the right hand angular, unpredictable and dissonant.

Daniel thus provided a musical demonstration of the baffling nature of the geranium’s coexistence with Bartok’s music in the same room. Livesay’s poem sets up a clear contrast between the two elements, and then states that “Yet in this room, this moment now / These together breathe and be.” The space preceding this new stanza carries with it the blankness of disbelief—surprise that these two could be in the same room. Livesay’s use of the coordinator “Yet” further suggests that their coexistence while in conflict is inexplicable or even illogical. Daniel’s difficulty in keeping the two hands independent of each other, while playing at the same time, effectively conveyed that sense of puzzlement.

The coexistence-in-conflict does, however, have an end. The music of Bartok eventually comes to a stop, and Lucifer is ultimately cast out of Heaven. Daniel explained how he musically depicted the image of Lucifer falling:

I represented “Heaven’s height” as the highest note on the piano, and signified the fall of Lucifer using a pattern of falling major chords. I tried to build up the right hand in a frenzy leading up to this moment, and finally ended with the 12 bar theme. Daniel’s reference to “the highest note on the piano” can remind one how the semantic flexibility of words can facilitate translation from one mode to another. High can refer to
physical, visible height, but it is also a descriptor of auditory pitch. As soon as Lucifer is
fallen, “he’s done, he’s out,” and so too is the music of Bartok. Daniel noted a change in
mood, both in the poem and in his own music: “As all of the tension is removed, we feel
relaxed and free. Essentially, good is victorious over evil. I developed a 12 bar theme
based on the original 4 bar ostinato to represent this.” In Livesay’s poem, we are left with a
final, serene image when the geranium “leans a lip against the glass / And preens herself in
light.” In correlation with this calmness, Daniel’s composition ended with both hands
playing harmoniously together; without the difficulty of having to maintain separate moods
for the left hand versus right hand, the physical tension of playing subsides.

5.2.2 Visual (2-D) Response to “When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be”

Geoffrey was a visual artist who chose to respond to John Keats’ (1818/1994) sonnet
“When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be” through an acrylic painting on canvas (Figure
5.5). The poem is arguably Keats’ most poignant reflection on mortality. Writing in 1818,
Keats seemed to presage his own death from tuberculosis only three years later at the young
age of twenty-five. As an English (or Shakepearean) sonnet, the poem unfolds as a
progression through three quatrains, each developing a different aspect of his fear of death,
followed by a concluding couplet. One particular point of structural interest is that the third
quatrain is cut short, to signify a premature death.

In his visual interpretation of Keats’ sonnet, Geoffrey divided the painting into two
parts: “the sky, dealing with [Keats’] ambition, ideas, and inspiration, and the foreground
and water, which represents the poet’s suffering, love, and his death.” Viewers can in fact
read the painting from top to bottom, the same direction that we would read the sonnet.
Figure 5.5  Geoffrey’s painting of “When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be”
Figure 5.6  Sample of Geoffrey's close reading notes

[Image of a page filled with handwritten notes and text, including a quote: “When I have fears that I may cease to be, I go into the room and cut a leaf from the book I am reading.”]

Figure 5.7  Sample of Geoffrey's design planning

[Image of a page filled with sketches and annotations, including a note: “Here lies one whose Name was not in Water.”]
The sky in the painting primarily conveys the ideas of the first two quatrains. In the first four lines Keats envisions himself dying before reaching his full potential as a poet. The dominant imagery here is that of the harvest: comparing his “teeming brain” to a field of wheat, Keats fears his pen may never be able to fully harvest his words into the final form of published books. Because the image of “rich garners of full-ripened grain” is metaphorical, Geoffrey decided not to do a figurative illustration of the wheat. Instead, he presented that metaphor through the texture of his painting. As Geoffrey explained, “The sky’s texture is meant to symbolize the imagery of grain” and “reflects this by being vertical stripes like a field of wheat” (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Close-up of clouds and vertical strokes in the sky

The sky also includes the main idea of the second quatrain of the sonnet, which is about the mystery of artistic inspiration and imagination, as well as the heights of aspiration for knowledge and understanding. Geoffrey pointed out that the figure in his painting “is
looking up at a night sky, chosen for the imagery of the ‘night’s starred face,’ and meant to reflect the ideas of the poet.” With the inextricable connection between imagination and poetry, Geoffrey merged both quatrains to form the top portion of his painting:

Creating the whole sky like this shows the poet’s ideas as being huge in number and scope. The colour and stars in the sky deal with the poet’s ideas of inspiration. The constantly changing colours between the stars are meant to show the process of developing and refining ideas with “the magic hand of chance”—inspiration. If the stars are considered ideas, the spaces between them represent the changes of course, ideas, and thought that lead to products.

While Geoffrey articulated the significance of colour and texture, he also paid careful attention to the negation of these elements. The clouds in his starry sky are “dark and lack the texture of the rest of the sky, which shows the loss of ideas that would result from the poet’s death”; the dark patches also depict “the thoughts of death that are occupying the thoughts of the figure in the painting.” Keats, thinking of the stars that illuminate and the clouds that obscure thought, desires to “trace their shadows,” as if to give tangible form to the elusive process of understanding. What Geoffrey did in his painting is similar: to give concrete form to that abstract process, portraying the dynamic paths and directions of imagination through visible changes on the canvas.

The third quatrain in the sonnet is about love, but not necessarily the romantic love between John Keats and his fiancée, Fanny Brawne. Geoffrey suggested that this quatrain might have “less to do with Fanny Brawne than just an encounter” the poet might have had, perhaps just a momentary glance. Geoffrey wanted to draw attention to the brevity and spontaneity of love, desire, or admiration. The reader and viewer can find evidence for this interpretation in Keats’ references to “fair creature of an hour” and the “faery power / Of
unreflecting love”—in this case, “unreflecting” could be read as “without too much thinking or reflection,” thus connoting the unhindered responses of intuition. Whether romantic love or the mystical attraction of fleeting encounters, Keats fears that he may never be able to “relish” in this experience. Geoffrey portrayed the ideas of this third quatrain in the horizon that separates the sky from the sea, emphasized by a wide patch of darkness in the water. He explained that this area of darkness in the painting is “near to the figure’s heart, showing regret over the loss of love.” If we are reading the painting from top to bottom, our eyes may pause at the darkness, but only briefly, for it has a horizontal orientation rather than a long vertical presence. The relatively small amount of space that this dark patch occupies on the canvas as a whole might signify that the third quatrain in the poem is cut short, which in turn correlates with the idea of a premature death.

With the third quatrain cut short in the poem—marked by the caesura near the middle of line 12—the message of the final couplet starts early, and it is this couplet that provides the main ideas for the ocean in the painting. Geoffrey explained that “the imagery of the ocean takes up the foreground and most of the bottom part of the painting, and deals predominantly with the poet’s suffering and death.” Although only a couple of lines long, the concluding thoughts in the poem are given the majority of the space in the painting. Geoffrey recalled that he wanted to “show the prolonged suffering that Keats experienced with his illness, as well as relating to the caesura that cuts quatrain three short, prolonging the sestet.” Further contributing to this effect is the assonance of long and open vowels in key words in the couplet: shores, wide, world, alone. Thus, in transmediating structural elements of the poetic text into his painting, Geoffrey focused not on the short physical length of the final quatrain, but rather on other stylistic techniques in the poem—the early
start to the couplet and the use of assonance—to convey the poet’s elongated contemplation of death.

Many works in literature and art use the shoreline between land and sea to represent the threshold between life and death; the solid, knowable land is seen as our earthly or mortal life, while the vast sea, seemingly endless, is a fitting symbol of the unknown realm of whatever lies beyond death. Geoffrey reversed this conception. His painting situates us, the viewers, on the land with our gaze directed toward the water. The figure “standing ankle deep in water” has his back turned to us, but not because he is heading toward the sea; instead, Geoffrey clarified, he is “leaving the ocean that is the world, and is approaching death that is the shore.” In other words, the figure has paused to cast a look backward, contemplating the mortal life from which he is departing. In the poem, Keats posits himself standing “on the shore / Of the wide world,” but his words do not specify the direction of his journey. Without this restriction in the text, Geoffrey took the artistic license to decide on the path the figure in his painting takes.

Geoffrey portrayed the figure “walking on a tidal flat—this is shown in his clothes being wet only below his knees, and yet still with distance to shore behind him.” The tidal flat, being neither exclusively land nor exclusively water, emphasizes the duration of one’s journey toward dying rather than the momentary instance of death. The figure is “not entirely out of the water by walking on the tidal flat, but has been close to it for a long period of time, which reflects the nature of Keats’ illness, which affected him for quite a while.” Here Geoffrey used physical distance on his canvas to convey the abstract idea of time. To show that the future is time that is not yet known, Geoffrey had the figure cast a reflection on the water to “illustrate that there is an indefinite distance behind him until he reaches the shore, which shows the uncertainty [Keats] felt about his future.” The waves
and ripples of the ocean break up the figure’s reflection to emphasize this uncertainty. Even more fragmented is the reflection of the sky. Geoffrey explained that “the surface of the water also poorly reflects the sky, showing that if [Keats] should die his ideas would mean little for the rest of the world” (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Close-up of poet’s reflection on the water

Because the figure is looking back toward the horizon, we as viewers cannot help but also return to that patch of darkness. In addition to illustrating the brevity or elusiveness of love developed in the third quatrain, Geoffrey related this darkness to the final words in the poem: “Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.” He explained that “fame, love, and other feelings are shown as too deep in the ocean to relate to the poet’s current position, and so are in darkness.” Keats’ aspirations for a full poetic career and a lifetime of love fall into the abyss of the sea, diffusing into the water’s broken surface. Geoffrey appears to have
incorporated Keats’ own request for his gravestone to say simply: “Here lies one whose name was writ in water” (Hebron, 2002, p. 118).

Keats highlights the image of his pen as his instrument in the artistic process, but a writer’s tools can also include the techniques of form and style, such as figurative language and sound devices. If we as readers and viewers think of metaphor and range of diction as some of the tools of the poet, then Geoffrey has applied the tools available to him as a visual artist—such as texture, colour, and composition—to translate the words from Keats’ sonnet onto the canvas.

5.2.3 Visual (3-D) Response to “Backdrop Addresses Cowboy”

Sara chose a diorama to show her interpretation of Margaret Atwood’s (1968/1987) poem “Backdrop Addresses Cowboy.” Sara said she was “drawn to the poem because of the setting and imagery that Atwood uses.” Her choice of a three-dimensional visual mode reflects the central role that setting plays in the poem, which uses the extended metaphor of the environment to develop what Sara saw as “a theme around gender differences.” The speaker of the poem is the personified landscape, who is addressing a cowboy. “The nature of men is illustrated by the cowboy,” Sara explained, “while women are represented by the environment.” The landscape’s message to the cowboy is that no matter how he tries to dominate her, she will be strong and resilient, able to survive his passing invasion.

The diorama (Figure 5.10) consisted of a three-walled box with one side open to expose the figure within: a clay cowboy caught and suspended by strings that stretch from the walls of the box. Atwood’s poem opens with the image of the “Starspangled cowboy / sauntering out of the almost- / silly West.” This cowboy moves with an air of confidence through the landscape, leaving behind him “a heroic / trail of desolation.” Sara’s
interpretation was that the cowboy “symbolizes male chauvinists,” and in reference to her
diorama explained that “the belief of the cowboy that women are inferior is displayed by
him dragging a cactus behind him.” She added that “the cactus stands for the scenery,
which is an example of synecdoche” because the cactus is part of the whole landscape that
the cowboy wants to control. Sara pointed out that the cowboy seems to actively “look for
things to blame and destroy”; he desecrates the environment as his “laconic / trigger-
fingers / people the streets with villains” and pollute the land with “the litter of [his]
invasions.” To emphasize this physical brutality, Sara explained that the poem’s images of
beer bottles, tin cans, bones, and empty shells “are translated literally into [her] diorama”—
hence, the fragments and objects themselves.

Figure 5.10 Sara’s diorama for “Backdrop Addresses Cowboy”
Figure 5.11 Sample of Sara’s close reading notes

Figure 5.12 Sample of Sara’s design planning
Sara found it important to feature the physicality of the invasion as literal images in order to show that “only the superficial exterior of women is affected by men.” If viewers look beyond what is immediately apparent, however, we start to see Sara’s interpretation of the reality behind the cowboy’s façade. To convey how this control of the landscape—represented by the synecdoche of the cactus—is merely “apparent” and not real, Sara made the cactus out of papier-mâché, as the poem itself indicates. Atwood describes the cowboy as having a “porcelain grin,” suggesting the artificiality of his assumed power. Sara explained how she has conveyed this superficiality (see Figure 5.13):

The cowboy is composed of a pliable clay body covered in a thin layer of hardened glue. The clay can easily be changed by the strong environment. Since he is “as innocent as a bathtub full of bullets,” I used a weak glue coating to show his feigned toughness.

Figure 5.13 Close-up of cowboy figure in pliable clay
Sara thus expressed characterization through the very materiality of her model; the “pliable clay” is the underlying softness that the cowboy does not wish the outside world to see. The speaker’s reference to the cowboy’s “heroic” invasion carries an ironic tone. In the diorama the surface layer of “weak glue,” or in other words “his feigned toughness,” is Sara’s visual method to transmediate this verbal irony. Sara also interpreted some dramatic irony, for she found that the cowboy’s “righteous eyes’ do not realize the consequences of his actions.” To visually convey this dramatic irony, she suspended the cowboy in such a way that “he can only look forward. The strings in the diorama prevent movement that would otherwise allow him to see the effect he has on his surroundings.”

The environment around the cowboy is equally as compelling as the suspended figure himself. The speaker of the poem states, “I am...what surrounds you.” The physical landscape is depicted by the two walls on either side of the cowboy:

[These walls have] an internal unchanging layer and an external layer that is affected by the cowboy. To create the inner layer I used strong images of nature such as rocks and the sky. These are all constant aspects of our surroundings. This shows the resilience of the environment… I covered the images with a paste to separate the resilient inner layer from the outer layer. The shiny paste is reflective, therefore shielding the inner essence from the cowboy’s influence.

A similar layering is used for the ground as well. Sara explained that “underneath, a colourful and strong floor covered in the paste shows the inner environment.” The objects that litter the ground, such as the tin can and beer bottle, are “destructive but not lasting” and “can easily be removed to reveal the true essence of the backdrop.”

The speaker of the poem also declares, “I am the horizon / you ride towards, the thing you can never lasso.” Sara constructed the horizon as the wall that lies behind the cowboy.
It is this wall that most powerfully depicts the personification of the environment, with the image of the eyes that look out toward the cowboy. The horizon is arguably the most elusive aspect of the landscape, for even as one approaches it, it seems to move further away, continually out of one’s reach. Sara explained that “despite the belief that [the cowboy] is traveling closer to it, he will ‘never lasso’ it because it is not tangible.” Sara gave the back wall a textured surface and covered it in glaze; the resultant haziness conveys the elusiveness of the horizon, especially because it is protected by the glaze. Unlike the rest of the surroundings on either side of the cowboy, “the horizon is not ‘scattered with’ litter.” Sara chose to keep the horizon free of litter to show the clear-mindedness of the speaker. In the poem the personified landscape points out, “I ought to be watching / from behind a cliff or a cardboard storefront” with “hands clasped / in admiration,” but the reality is that “I am elsewhere.” The eyes painted on the horizon of the diorama represent the “inner watchful layer”; this omniscient point of view is what allows her to escape the influence of the cowboy.

Sara thus availed herself of the materiality of her visual media to characterize the landscape. Through qualities such as pliability, layering, physical positioning in a three-dimensional space, she expressed that even though women “can be affected externally by others,” they “have a constant persona inside them that cannot be changed.” The final lines of the poem read, “I am the space you desecrate / as you pass through.” In Sara’s diorama, she visually translated the poem’s theme that despite apparent destruction by a male force, the female has a resilient inner strength that enables her to survive and overcome the invasion.
5.3 The Value of Transmediating Poetic Texts: Student Perspectives

When asked how they felt about interpreting poems through transmediating elements of the written text into a non-textual modality, every one of the 25 students indicated that he or she gained something that writing a formal essay alone might not have provided or revealed. Common in many students’ responses was the feeling that “it’s definitely more fun” and “more interesting than just writing an essay.” One student reported that “by doing an artistic response you can play with the poem more, and fully enjoy the analysis.” Another student even wrote, “Yay for literary analysis!”

Words such as “fun,” “interesting,” “play,” “enjoy,” and especially “Yay!” are not what one might typically expect from students conducting poetic analysis. So what was it about the project that engaged these students? One frequently recurring explanation was personal investment. Many students attributed their interest to the flexibility and freedom to choose whatever modalities they wanted—whether or not the mode was their area of “expertise.” They could choose not only which poem interested them the most, but also which particular aspects of the text they found most significant or compelling. Because of this freedom, a pattern of intrinsic motivation seemed to emerge. One student summed up her personal engagement with the project: “After a certain point, it stopped being about the marks. I put lots of effort in because I really connected to the poem and I wanted to show that connection, not just tell.”

Aside from the intrinsic motivation of personal investment, another notable reason for students’ engagement in the project was what one participant called the “freshness of an alternative perspective.” Twenty-two of the participants commented on how transferring ideas from textual to other modes opened up new ways of thinking about the poem. “Using an artistic mode that you are comfortable with can bring you closer to the poem,” explained
one student, “and force you to examine it in a new light.” Another remarked, “The poem is no longer trapped in its textual form and left to be visualized only in our heads. By using an artistic mode (collage) I was able to transfer the ideas/images in my head to something that exists in a physical form and allows others to see what I see in my head.” Yet another student explained, “Using an artistic mode allowed me to explain and interpret the poetic text in a way that would not be possible if I only used words. The learning seemed more in-depth.” This acknowledgment of the power of understanding concepts through different senses and modalities was common among many of the participants, as seen in this observation: “I learned how to analyze better through using different elements. I am more sensitive to art than to words.” Another student wrote, very succinctly: “more senses involved = better understanding.”

Not only did students comment on this “new light” and “freshness” of perspective, but they were also able to identify specific elements of the text that were illuminated. One student recalled, “While creating the artwork I found things I never noticed in the poem before. I ended up doing a closer examination of sound devices than I might otherwise have done.” In addition to details as specific as sound devices, students also gained a greater appreciation of more general ideas, as reported by another student: “I learned so much about the theme, and how powerful the message of the poem actually is, that I wouldn’t have been able to do without artistic interpretation.” Even more importantly, though, students were able to see the relationship between the specific elements of style and the more global meaning of the text as a whole. One student explained, for example, “I learned the reasons why certain things were revealed in the poem, not just the fact that it was there.” In other words, these students had made the connection between the How? and the So what? that had been at the foundation of the critical thinking in this project. Further
still, they were able to connect the form and function in the written textual mode of the poem, to the form and function of another modality. As one of the students observed, “Using art to interpret art makes sense – we’re not changing the ‘language of expression.’”

The only type of quantitative data collected in the classroom study was an overview of what students thought they gained from the project. These survey questions were in the form of the Likert scale, where students indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The instruction stem was as follows:

![Figure 5.14 Likert scale used in the questionnaire](image)

Circle the number that best reflects your response. Use the following scale for each question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>neither agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>nor disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following summary lists the average (mean) of student responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree):

**Table 5.2 Quantitative responses on questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement on Questionnaire</th>
<th>Average Response Out of 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Creating the artistic work enriched my understanding of poetic terminology:</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing the Artist's Statement (meta-analysis connecting the poem and artistic work) enriched my understanding of poetic terminology:</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writing the Artist's Statement (meta-analysis connecting the poem and artistic work) enriched my understanding of the terminology and stylistic devices of my chosen artistic mode:</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel more confident about my skills in poetic analysis after doing this project:</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel more confident about my artistic skills after doing this project:</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This project enriched my understanding of my selected poem:</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Doing this poetry project has raised my interest in poetic analysis:</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The averages indicate that students overall either Agreed or Strongly Agreed with each statement. Statements 1 and 2 indicate that for understanding poetic terminology students felt the role of the meta-analysis was greater than the role of just creating the artistic work. However, this distinction may perhaps not be fully reliable or relevant, given that the two procedures were not necessarily discrete or sequential; many students reported going back and forth between the design, the production, and the meta-analysis of their work. The objective in this case was not to weigh the importance of one step over another. Statements 2 and 3 both indicate a high overall student response to the role of meta-analysis in enriching students’ understanding of terminology and stylistic elements in both the written mode of the poems and the non-textual artistic modes. In retrospect, when I designed this survey I could have included more specific questions about how students understood the explicit connections between “grammars” of different modes. However, although this issue was not directly addressed by the survey, it was certainly addressed through the array of qualitative data—in the Artist’s Statements, the open-ended questions on the survey, and my informal discussions with the students in the course of the project.

There is no denying that this project involved a tremendous amount of hard work. It seems, though, that students were engaged in the project not in spite of, but perhaps because of the extra threads of critical thinking involved. These students appeared to enjoy the thinking—certainly not at every single moment of the project, especially when they seemed to hit an obstacle in analysis and had to dig even deeper or shift their perspective, but overall the students reported a sense of pride. They seemed genuinely excited about their discoveries and engaged in the process of design. This class project demanded rigorous critical thinking from the students, but this was rigour that could be enjoyable. Artistic activity is cognitive activity.
6. DISCUSSION

6.1 A Return to the Questions: Significance of the Research

Multimodal transmediation is essentially the transferring and re-designing of ideas, an unconventional translation of artistic languages. I return now to the concept of currency, as fluidity and as capital. The class project, set against the backdrop of research on multiliteracies pedagogy and the languages of art, has demonstrated how a multimodal close reading and transmediation of poetry can function as currency in both ways. The critical thinking involved in such a project involves the flowing of ideas through boundaries, the blurring of borders that once compartmentalized notions of text and literacy. In addition, with the portability of ideas from one mode or medium to another, students can also develop currency in the sense of capital and worth when they apply these skills in the multimedia communications of the new knowledge economy.

6.1.1 Currency in Language, Artistic Design, and Multimodal Transmediation

In the Statement of the Questions, my first line of inquiry was in regard to the inner workings of language, artistic design, and multimodal transmediation. The students’ process of translating elements of a poem into a different artistic mode is a sophisticated exploration of the semiotics of language. This project was not, nor was it meant to be, a conventional translation of an entire text in one verbal language into an entire text in another verbal language. It did not hold the claim to produce “accurate” translations. Instead, this project was intended to demonstrate how the very nature of translation is changing. As conceptions of literacy and text expand, so too must conceptions of language and translation.
As noted earlier, researchers such as Broudy (1991) and Weismann (1968) bring up important questions about the viability of using language models to analyze non-textual, non-verbal modes of artistic communication. For example, Broudy (1991) expresses a concern about the semantic integrity of “language” if a too liberal use of the term twists it “beyond recognition” (p. 127). Broudy cautions readers against ignoring the unique medium of each form of art.

My counterargument is that the kind of transmediation that the students have conducted in this project can result in a heightened appreciation, rather than an ignoring, of the uniqueness of each artistic medium. Through an active, creative, and critical application of the semiotics of different communication modes, students necessarily had to account for the specificity of each medium and mode. Using metalanguage to draw explicit parallels between the poetic text and the transmediated work—and indeed, to identify the extent to which elements may not easily be translated—these students have gained new insights into the analogies between the arts. Ward-Steinman (1989) proposes that it is possible to search for some deep structural affinity among different artistic forms and modes. What the students in this project have done is take that to a more active, perhaps even deeper level: more than just observing and analyzing analogies among existing artistic works, they have developed and applied descriptive language to create original works. Thus contributing new products to the existing network of artistic texts, these students have become the active collaborators in architexture envisioned by Mary-Ann Caws (1981).

As active collaborators to the architexture of inter-connected texts, the students in this class project have demonstrated what the New London Group (1996) propose for active engagement in Design and creative semiotic activity. The connections the students have drawn between their selected poems and their original artistic works apply the “explicit
metalanguage of Design” (p. 64), which, as one may recall, the New London Group define as “a language for talking about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interactions” (p. 73). Through the students’ detailed analyses of their own critical thought processes in transmediating ideas and stylistic elements from one mode to another, they have shown remarkable “conscious awareness and control over what is being learned” (p. 80).

Because the boundaries that have traditionally defined text and language are blurring, it can be viable to use language models to study the semiotics of artistic communication. The New London Group (1996) explains the role that metalanguage should play in a framework based on Design:

[Metalinguage] needs to be quite flexible and open ended. It should be seen as a tool kit for working on semiotic activities, not a formalism to be applied to them. We should be comfortable with fuzzy-edged, overlapping concepts. Teachers and learners should be able to pick and choose from the tools offered. They should also feel free to fashion their own tools. (p. 73)

The emphasis here on “tools” correlates with one of the questions I encourage my students to pose in close reading. When they ask themselves How? they are trying to identify the tools, the methods, the structure, form, and stylistic devices that a writer uses in a written text. The ultimate question of So what? is of course the effect and significance of those tools in creating meaning. These questions are grounded in the semiotic components of signifier (e.g., tool, device, word, image) and signified (e.g., idea). The emphasis here on choice reminds educators of the importance of giving our students the freedom to choose their modes and styles of interpretation and expression—not only because it reflects their uniqueness as individuals but also because making a choice necessitates critical thinking about the options available in the first place. Given the premise that semiotics underpin the
power of communication regardless of the mode, the questions *How?* and *So what?* can apply to any artistic mode as a language. We must not be so purist as to limit language, grammar, and syntax to just verbal (word-based) text.

With such exploration of interconnections between different artistic modes, it is inevitable that teachers in an English classroom will encounter areas beyond their personal expertise. Ward-Steinman (1989) identifies some possible shortfalls of studying inter-art analogies if the observer does not possess equal strengths or competence in all the disciplines in question. The New London Group (1996) observe that perhaps such mastery of the disciplines may not always be required; the authors remark that metalanguage “must be capable of supporting sophisticated critical analysis of language and other semiotic systems, yet at the same time not make unrealistic demands on teacher and learning knowledge” (p. 73). The potential discomfort with being a non-expert can be turned into an opportunity to learn from others who do have the mastery. When a student analyzes the technical language of a violin composition, for instance, I do enter an area beyond my initial comfort zone, but I take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of teachers in the music department. I consult with my school colleagues and seek their support and advice for these multimodal projects. Over the years many of my students involved in multimodal artistic projects have performed or presented their literature-based works in the presence of their teachers in other disciplines, whether band, strings, or film and media arts. When I explain the poetry project to my class, I am upfront with the students and tell them that they already possess a multitude of skills that I myself do not have, and that their work will be an opportunity for me to learn from them as well. This project cannot work smoothly if kept in isolation, without the support of my colleagues in the rest of the fine arts mini-school. Through such collaborative dialogue that values the expertise of colleagues, and
through this fluid blurring of boundaries between subject areas, another level of currency emerges.

6.1.2 Currency from the Classroom to the Marketplace

The second line of inquiry in my Statement of the Questions was in regard to the way skills acquired in the classroom can be applied to the larger world of the new knowledge economy. Unlike the first line of inquiry, it is here where I felt less certain. Even at the outset of this paper my stance was more assured in arguing for the value and fluidity of ideas at the aesthetic level of literary close reading and artistic design. But when facing the concepts of economy, social change, and global marketplace, my initial reaction was to resist the pull toward that “outside world.” I championed multiliteracies pedagogy for its implications on the semiotics of artistic languages, but inconsistently and inexplicably, that gusto was matched by the passion with which I resisted my perceived obligation to gear that same pedagogy toward the world of work. The New London Group (1996) illustrate a scenario that echoes my own reaction:

As educators attempt to address the context of cultural and linguistic diversity through literacy pedagogy, we hear shrill claims and counterclaims about political correctness, the canon of great literature, grammar, and back-to-basics. (p. 61)

Admittedly, I started as one of those anxious, shrill voices. I defended not so much the study of the canon of literature as a prescribed syllabus, but rather the study of what I revered as skills in literary close reading—in other words, the valuing of the text as a literary object, whether or not the particular text is considered part of the traditional “canon.”
In the course of this paper, however, I discovered that my defensiveness was not necessary after all. There does not have to be a conflict of “claims and counterclaims.” There can and must be room for moderation and balance. I found that even though I had not initially envisioned the multimodal poetry project to have explicit applications to the world of work and the economy, it proved to indeed have that potential. In hindsight, that connection now seems obvious, but I was too busy protecting the cherished glassy world of aesthetic design and close reading to realize it. If I believed so strongly in the fluid transference of learning from one language mode to another within the domain of literature and art in the classroom, it only makes sense to extend that transference from classroom to beyond. The New London Group (1996) point out what all learners—whether teachers or students—need to make that transference happen:

[Learners must] gain the necessary personal and theoretical distance from what they have learned, constructively critique it, account for its cultural location, creatively extend and apply it, and eventually innovate on their own. (p. 81)

Only when I thought about design skills as currency did I conceive of them as luggage. And only when I envisioned the luggage did I gain that necessary distance: to see luggage as a portable suitcase that protects what is cherished inside, but carries it against an ever-changing backdrop of social, cultural, political, educational and economic contexts.

In Lazear’s (1994) discussion of practical ways to apply the theory of multiple intelligences to classroom lessons, he reminds us of the Chinese proverb about fishing:

The old Chinese proverb about giving someone a fish, which feeds a person for a day, or teaching someone how to fish, which feeds a person for a lifetime, is brought to mind by this situation [the question of what we should be teaching in our schools]. Should we be concerned primarily with students’ learning particular bits of
information that will likely change several times by the time they graduate from high school? Or should we be more concerned with teaching them how to learn? (p. 12)

Lazear emphasizes the importance of process over content. His use of the proverb made me realize that the skills students develop in the poetry project can apply to the world beyond school. Having achieved that necessary distance from the aesthetics and semiotics of the multimodal close reading, I was able to appreciate the project as being something greater than just the text of the poem, greater even than the specific metalanguage that draws connections between that poem and the selected mode of new design. The real value of the project in the wider context is that students have actively engaged in a sophisticated critical thinking activity and gained metacognitive skills that they can potentially apply to any practical context that requires explicit awareness of multimodal semiotics and the communicative power of symbols and signs in a range of media.

It is only now that I fully appreciate how the rhetoric of currency applies to my teaching of language arts. I always took for granted the intrinsic value of multimodal design in its aesthetic beauty and its ability to demonstrate the magic of language and grammar, but now I can also be receptive to its inextricable connection to the new economy. Caws (1989) speaks of language and translation in the context of exchanging monetary worth. Bearne (2003) discusses multimodalities and multiliteracies as educational capital. Gardner (1993) remarks that working with symbol systems and semiotics allows us to “have commerce with entities and levels of analysis” (p. 300). Kress (2000) also highlights the semiotic function of commodities in the economic domain:

Both the economy of services and the economy of information demand the ability to design: to design objects (whether as texts or as commodity of any kind) and to design processes (whether in entertainment, in business or in education). (p. 140)
If the ability to design objects or processes can be seen as the power to produce commodities, then students who have engaged in critical and creative design in multiple modes have opened themselves up to skills that they can later apply to other types of design. Like the fisherman in the Chinese proverb who has learned the steps to sustain himself for the long-term, these students (on a much more modest scale, of course) have developed portable skills as well.

In the globalized knowledge economy, students can apply their facility with multimodalities and semiotics in any area that requires effective communication. Desktop publishing and multimedia processes, for instance, require skills in visual design and “the interface of visual and linguistic meaning” (New London Group, 1996, p. 60). In marketing and advertising, the ability to navigate the semiotics of signs and symbols, whether images, words, sounds, or gestures, is essential to capturing the attention of potential consumers. Winner (1982) outlines ways in which the images and sounds in a language have a power more far-reaching than just aesthetic literary beauty. She refers to one of Roman Jakobson’s examples of language in advertising. The line “I’d walk a mile for a Camel” is considered “one of the most successful advertising jingles ever invented” (p. 249). This line, promoting the cigarette brand, was effective because of the memorable consonance of the $k$-$m$-$l$ sounds. Knowledge of this language aspect is useful both for the creator of the advertisement to manipulate the consumer, and for the consumer who can be more critically aware of how he is being manipulated. Given that this is only one example of the power of one small aspect of just one modality, then the observer need only imagine the magnitude of communicative power when an advertising campaign targets the consumer through a multitude of modes. This is the essence of effective marketing. This is
the power of a carefully controlled, critical and creative application of multimodal semiotics and design.

Even in the enthusiastic rhetoric of the New London Group and other proponents of multiliteracies, however, there is a reminder to moderate. “As we remake our literacy pedagogy to be more relevant to a new world of work,” they explain, “we need to be aware of the danger that our words become co-opted by economically and market-driven discourses. [In teaching], our role is not simply to be technocrats” (1996, p. 65). We must not define our educational goals based only on economic success. This acknowledgment is reassuring for educators who do not want to abandon traditional skills in literary close reading in our English curriculum. Against the often frenetic pace of globalized communication and economic markets, there must surely be room to still enjoy, for its own sake, the artistry of a literary text.

Making room for different educational objectives in the curriculum is always a challenge because in reality that room is limited. Educators can recall Kress’s (2000) question about which school subject is most likely to take on the responsibility of “preparing the young appropriately for their societies” as well as “making overt the principles of design which suffuse every aspect of the aesthetics of the market” (p. 144). His response that “if the subject English . . . does not do so, then there is nowhere else at the moment where this will happen” (p. 144) places a great burden on English as a school subject, but that burden is undeniable. As much as we can work toward eventually expanding multiliteracies pedagogy in other subject areas, the reality is that for now, the onus rests with English language arts. If we place these objectives alongside other, more traditional, skills such as literary close reading, we see how the English curriculum can become too crowded.
This is why a project such as the multimodal close reading of poetry can be of value. Because there is only so much room in the English language arts curriculum, and only so much time in the school year, it is important to find teaching strategies that can achieve diverse learning objectives more efficiently. Transmediating elements of a poetic text into an original artistic design, while using metalanguage to critically describe this process, can provide students with the design skills for the information economy as well as an appreciation of poetic language and literature. The class project featured in this study can contribute to what Kress (2000) calls a dissolution of former educational frameworks, a dissolution which “undoes a boundary between sacred (or at least the ‘revered’) and profane (or at least everyday) forms of knowledge” (p. 137). Breaking down this boundary makes sense for a curriculum that sets out to equip students with both types of knowledge. I finally see here the meeting of two extremes—or, more accurately, the re-envisioning of two concepts that are not extremes after all. The new economy of multimedia technologies does not have to be seen as devoid of the aesthetic beauty often reserved for poetry or fine art. At the same time, the aesthetic or academic activity of literary close reading does not have to be seen as antiquated and hermetically sealed off in its privileged world. The classroom project in this study, in its own small way, illustrates how the Ivory Tower can and must be networked with the global marketplace of the New Economy.

6.2 Further Research

This paper draws on a multitude of research areas, each one of which invites further study. The essence of multiliteracies and multimodalities, of transmediation and translation, suggests the interconnectedness and hybridization of disciplines and worlds that were once more clearly delineated from each other. I have used some terminology knowing that it can
be problematic. Terms such as *art, language,* and *creativity* can be complexified and critiqued for their semantic implications.

One of the issues for further study is the current and future state of arts literacy in the Canadian curriculum. In the past few decades there has been increasing attention paid to the importance of the arts in education. *The State of the Art: Arts Literacy in Canada* (McIntosh, Hanley, Verriour, & VanGyn, 1993) is a report prepared for the Canada Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to provide a survey of research and educational initiatives in the arts across the country. This report draws much-needed attention to the importance of arts in education in Canada, particularly in identifying gaps in research areas and proposing new directions and initiatives to fill some of those gaps. The report argues that there is a need for new methodologies “if Canadians are to contribute to arts research in a significant way rather than reading about it in foreign journals and if they are to provide a Canadian interpretation for arts practice” (p. 15). It is exciting that such methodologies are being cultivated. The arts-based methodology of a/r/tography, for example, has developed through contributions by members of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (e.g., Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). A/r/tography is beginning to fill the need for “research methodologies more sensitive to the often elusive modes and styles of learning that are associated with the arts” (McIntosh, Hanley, Verriour, & VanGyn, 1993, p. 14).

With regard to aesthetic education in the school curriculum, *The State of the Art* recommends further investigation of how students can transfer ideas between different subject areas; how best to integrate the arts with other learning opportunities for students; and how perception, response, and production in the arts can contribute to cognitive development. The Multiliteracies Project (2007) is a major initiative in this direction. I
hope my current paper, with its origins in the Multiliteracies Project, can add to the growing effort to reveal how a pedagogy of multiliteracies and multimodalities can enhance critical cognitive activity. In order to enable the continued expansion of such studies, The State of the Art also recommends the funding and establishment of a Centre for Excellence in the Arts in Canada. With 1993 as the publication date of The State of the Art, such funding could perhaps allow for an update of this report, or of other wide-scale research into Canadian arts programs (e.g., Upitis & Smithrim, 2001, 2002).

Continued research into aesthetic education could explore implications for multimodal teaching and learning for students who are not in a specialized program for the arts. My classroom study featured students who were selected into a mini-school for their demonstrated talents, skills, and passion for the arts. Many of the students have extensive technical training in their discipline, expertise which they bring in to enrich their work in the project. Whether or not they have been officially tested and designated as “gifted” learners, all the students in the mini-school show some predisposition and willingness to learn in creative ways. From the data collected, the students have shown remarkable insight not only into the language, style, and structure of poetic texts but also the semiotic parallels to other artistic modalities. It is worth remembering, however, that not every student in the study chose to work with the modality of their specialization. For example, Sara, the student who constructed the diorama for “Backdrop Addresses Cowboy,” was in the arts program for drama; she did not take visual arts classes and did not identify or label herself as a “visual artist.” Her analysis of her three-dimensional visual work, however, was masterful.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to inquire into the extent to which such insights come from students’ inherent creativity and “giftedness,” or from the external learning
context of the project design. My own hypothesis would be that it is a combination of inherent abilities and the situational context, but I would not attempt to quantify the “extent” of each factor. I am nonetheless intrigued by arguments that certain types of giftedness can be developed and nurtured. The idea of “smart contexts” as opposed to “smart people” (Barab & Plucker, 2002) locates ability, talent, and intelligence outside of the individual mind, focusing instead on the learning environments afforded to students. It would be worthwhile to study how the same project design would work in classes that are not in the fine arts mini-school. Having already taught this project in several regular English 12 classes, I have already made informal observations that students in the general population—that is, not streamed into a specialized arts program—are just as capable of demonstrating the metacognitive insights into the language of poetry and other modes. The range of selected artistic modes might not be as varied or technically specialized, but since students have equal freedom to choose whatever non-textual mode they are comfortable with, their creative and lateral thinking can be just as impressive and original.

I remember the work of a student who created a model of a chemical reaction to demonstrate the interpersonal relationships within a poem. This creative use of a scientific analogy suggests the importance of aesthetic design and metalanguage in subject areas outside of English or the arts. It reminds us that design is “the making of signs . . . whether in the science classroom, in English or in art” (Kress, 2000, pp. 140-141). A formal study of classes outside of specialized arts programs, and in subject areas outside of English or art, could shed more light on the value of multimodal design and transmediation for all students. If we as educators provide students with more learning contexts that invite the transfer of ideas from one language or design model to another, we would be stepping in the direction of the new curriculum envisioned by the New London Group.
A school curriculum rooted in a pedagogy of design and multimodalities may sound rather idealistic, but that is no reason to stop striving in that direction. The authors of the New London Group encourage us to continue working toward the greater vision of social futures through small, manageable steps that we can and do have control over as educators:

We cannot remake the world through schooling, but we can instantiate a vision through pedagogy that creates in microcosm a transformed set of relationships and possibilities for social futures, a vision that is lived in schools. (1996, p. 69)

On an even smaller and more modest scale, and in a more immediate context, the multimodal close reading project featured in this paper can perhaps also be seen as a microcosm of possible change. My central argument is that in a multiliteracies pedagogy that prepares students for the rapidly evolving technologies and communication demands of a globalized knowledge economy, *there can still be room for teaching literature through rigorous close reading and style analysis*. One way to merge these two apparent extremes, in the specific context of an arts-focused program, is through a multimodal project in which students transmediate poetic elements into other artistic languages. This project draws upon students’ creativity and artistic skills—their inherent luggage—as they develop a metalanguage to articulate their process of artistic design. These metacognitive skills in transmediation can be of great worth in a social future that values the ability to design and communicate in multiple modes. Ideas can and do flow from one mode to another. These ideas will undoubtedly be changed, as any text that is translated, or any money that is transferred from one currency to another. But where one aspect of value might be lost in the exchange, there is always the possibility that another, previously hidden, value might emerge instead.
When I started my Master’s thesis research, I did not intend to include a visual art component. As I proceeded, however, I found myself sketching out images of luggage, both metaphorical and literal, to arrive at the leitmotif of currency for my paper.

I use the image of luggage as the overall frame for my investigation of currency in literacy education (Figure 7.1). On a literal level, luggage holds the items that a traveler carries. Currency, in this same context, is the monetary value of the means to make purchases. The metaphorical use of luggage in this paper comes from the application of currency to the value of literacy skills that enable students to participate meaningfully in society and the workplace. I constructed a suitcase to signify that without visually conceptualizing my research along the lines of luggage, I would not have been able to...
articulate my central argument: that literary close reading, when integrated with artistic design in the classroom, can indeed have value in the knowledge economy. The portability of these skills enables students to apply or translate them to a multitude of critical and creative thinking tasks.

Figure 7.2  Hand-made suitcase: side view

It was important for me to construct the suitcase from raw materials, ranging from the rough mill board for the box body, to the wrought iron drawer pull for the handle, to the silk fabric to cover the entire case. The process was a laborious but thoroughly enjoyable one, bringing together painting, weaving, and bookbinding techniques. These traditional arts all require careful craftsmanship; I chose them because I wanted to apply what I usually do for aesthetic pleasure to the more practical purpose of articulating research. For instance, whereas I would ordinarily display my paintings on a wall or store them in my portfolio (that is, if I managed to find the time to paint), here I used it to form part of a utilitarian object (I intend to use this suitcase to store my future research papers). This
merging of the practical and the beautiful reminds me of Bolter’s (2001) argument for why
the definition of technology should be broadened; he points out that the Greek root of
technology is techne, referring to both fine arts and useful crafts.

The image of the lighthouse is an important symbol for me as a student, an artist, a teacher, and a researcher. It signifies my view of the Ivory Tower of literature and aesthetics: tall, elegant, and remote. I used to be so entranced with this poetic image that I disregarded what now seems so obvious: the utilitarian function that marks the reason for its very existence. Stable and steadfast, a lighthouse provides guidance to those who navigate through the ever-changing currents. Traffic in the sea often includes ships that transport goods for economic exchange—another cogwheel in the world-wide engine of commerce. My research for this paper has allowed me to see, finally, the basic and inherent connection between the lighthouse and the world around it. The Ivory Tower is not isolated after all. I shake my head now at why I used to insist otherwise.

The weaving depicts the merging of what I initially viewed as two extremes. The ribbons of text originating from the lighthouse are excerpts from literary works. Each quotation conveys an aspect of my adamant reverence for the power of art. In particular, I’d like to mention the passage from lines 49-51 of T. S. Eliot’s “Preludes,” in which the speaker envisions himself clinging on to “the notion of some infinitely gentle, / Infinitely suffering thing (1917/1969, p. 23). Before writing this paper, I used to feel that the traditional teaching of literature, especially close reading of poetic language, was something I had to cling on to, as if in a desperate attempt to preserve it from what seemed to be increasingly prosaic and mundane demands on the English curriculum. I have realized that my defensive anxiety was not necessary. There is still room for stylistic analysis of literature in the new knowledge economy, with the creation and metacognition
of artistic design as one of the teaching approaches. The other quotation to highlight is from Act 1, scene 2 of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*: “Me, poor man, / My library was dukedom large enough. Of temporal royalties / He thinks me now incapable” (1611/2007, pp. 156-157). Prospero, former Duke of Milan, is describing how he was usurped by his brother, Antonio. Too concerned with his private studies of magic—referred to as his books and his art—Prospero mistakenly let Antonio oversee the day-to-day world affairs of the dukedom. Prospero’s error of judgment is a reminder of the dangers that can come if one retreats too far away from the world of the mundane.

The vertical ribbons of text quote from various researchers in the area of literacy pedagogy, all of whom have been referenced in this paper. I used translucent ribbons in order to let each layer of text still remain visible even if woven underneath. It is essential that I remain cognizant that literary studies and the economy can be interwoven in the English classroom.

I conclude with a final reference to Kress’s (2000) argument that a literacy curriculum for the knowledge economy “cannot afford to remain with older notions of text as valued literary object” (p. 145). A project in which students explore literary close reading through multimodal design can help them develop critical and creative skills that do have value in the economic and cultural world outside the classroom. With such portable currency, we in literacy education can afford to maintain tradition in our students’ social futures.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX: Behavioural Research Ethics Board Approval Form

The University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board  
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

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Other locations where the research will be conducted:
Vancouver School Board: Lord Byng Secondary

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Cindy Yeung

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Multimodal Literary Criticism: Stylistic Analysis of Poetry through the Arts

REB MEETING DATE:  March 22, 2007  
CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:  March 22, 2008

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:

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The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair  
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair  
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair  
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair  
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair