MULITMODALITY AND YOUNG CHILDREN'S MEANING MAKING

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ways in which children make meaning through literacy experiences in their multimodal environments. It focuses on young children of kindergarten age. This paper summarizes recent research on multimodal pedagogy and explores the research of prominent researchers in the field of emergent literacy (Marie Clay, Elizabeth Sulzby and Anne Dyson). The work of these researchers suggests that children draw from their social resources to make meaning of written language. Further, children’s writing development involves talking, drawing and the use of a variety of sign symbols to convey meaning. The paper concludes with a kindergarten unit on “Garbage” that highlights multimodal learning experiences and the ways in which multimodal activities support children’s writing development.
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Meaning Making in a Multimodal Environment

During my teacher education year I heard the phrase, “Teaching is ¼ preparations and ¾ theatre,” and I thought it was a great representation of how lively and engaging a kindergarten class should be. While I still believe that theatre must have a place in providing a stimulating environment filled with interest and wonder I would now argue, after 6 years of teaching kindergarten, that there is an immense amount of work that goes into the planning, preparation and execution of almost every minute of every day and that teaching and theatre are equally important. Without an acute awareness of your big picture goals the “theatre” part can come off as more of a short lived special performance rather than a long running meaningful experience. “Theatre” involves teaching in ways that enhance the experience of those involved. Meaning is made in a variety of ways that provide perspective, engagement, and involvement in the process.

The skills teachers use to engage and enhance the learning of students require a number of different qualities that add depth to the material being shared. Some would say that teaching, especially at the kindergarten level, is mostly theatre. There are those quirky made-up transition songs sung to familiar tunes and there are daily approaches to executing lessons that involve movement, action, and getting into various roles. Sometimes it is part of the teacher’s personality and other times the skill needs to be nurtured. Every teacher has different strengths that they can bring to the table and it is important that educators know where their strengths lie so they can teach in modes that are comfortable to them but also work to improve their skills in modes that go beyond their comfort zones.

My “theatre” style of teaching came to me naturally over the years when I worked with children during several summers at camp and my involvement in a youth organization. I have
always really enjoyed singing and playing with language and teaching actively through movement and exploring different perspectives. This has certainly shaped my ESL teaching experience in Japan, Toronto and Vancouver for 4 years prior to completing my education degree. Working with young students who had limited English oral language skills really benefited from active teaching practices that involved getting up and ‘doing’ rather than talking about ‘doing.’ While teaching at an International School I had to learn to adapt and be resourceful as many of my students were native Japanese speakers but were taught the curriculum completely in English. These experiences allowed me to be very creative and I found I was quick on my feet. I had students engage in experiencing vocabulary, story and action from different perspectives and participate in communicating as much as possible in a way that made them enjoy learning. While the theatre part of my teaching was key for these students it could not have been done without careful planning and preparation in the long term goals of their achievement.

Regardless of the students I teach, my approach to education involves the development of the whole child. School is not simply about developing academic ability but learning the skills to cope in the real world, in a variety of situations, with different types of people. I am consistently trying to build on ways to best teach to the whole child. It is important to me that children see school and learning as a stimulating experience and a place where they feel both challenged and successful. Taking my masters in language and literacy for the last two years has opened my eyes to new research and practices, and given a name to pedagogy that helps to define my beliefs and extend my practice. A course I took on the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) has not only impacted my practice but validated what I already hold in
high regard; the emotional connection between the teacher and the students, and the importance of creating an environment that allows children to express themselves in a variety of ways.

Teaching to the SEL needs of students begins with creating an environment that values this mode of learning. I created a presentation to the staff on this topic because it so often takes the back seat. Social and Emotional Learning prescribes to providing and building upon childrens’ sense of autonomy, belonging and competence in an environment they spend much of their lives in. The social and emotional needs of children have to be met before we can get to what Eisner (1996) terms “the real business of learning.” It is one very important part of the whole. Children need to feel safe when making mistakes and taking risks with their learning and learn to overcome obstacles so they can be confident emotionally, physically and psychologically. Once a teacher is aware of the importance of meeting a child’s SEL needs academic skills have more of a place to grow and flourish. So often we spend much of our day dealing with behaviour, negative social interactions in the class, and the highs and lows of various emotions. It is important that students feel like they have a voice in our class and by providing many opportunities to communicate in a number of ways gives learners tools and strategies to reach their true potential on a broad spectrum.

Sparking my interest in the different ways children learn was hearing about Gardner’s (1983) Multiple Intelligences during my teacher education program. I began to see different perspectives into the ways that people take in information and how they make meaning, and how some are more comfortable learning in one mode than another. I was able to reflect on my own learning style and those of my students and it helped to validate modes of learning that were not as recognized at that time, such as “musical intelligence” and “bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.” Since then I have been interested in multimodal literacy practices and looking at the current ways
in which children make meaning from emergent writing to the meaning making of content so as to appeal to all learners.

**Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this project is to provide a background and awareness of the multimodal literacy practices young children and teachers engage in. With increasing research about the different ways in which children learn, the increase in second language learners, advancing technology’s presence in schools, as well as appealing to different types of learners, the importance of multimodal literacy is increasingly important to language and literacy today.

Looking at multimodal learning and literacy through the lens of young students provides an opportunity to reflect on the growing changes for the use of technology in schools from the use of Interactive White Boards, Smart boards, and computers programs and software for primary students. Additionally, this paper will look at what current research has to say on children’s writing development in terms of multimodal meaning-making.

**Questions**

- What is multimodal literacy and how do we plan for multimodal activities in the early years?
- How is young children’s learning (specifically ‘writing’) already multimodal?

The following section will explore the literature on multimodality specifically as it relates to the above questions.
SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Part A: The Pedagogy of Multimodal Meaning Making

(Literacy) relates to the ability to construe meaning in any of the forms used in the culture to create and convey meaning. What cannot be conveyed or constructed in words is often possible in visual images or in music. Becoming literate in the broad sense means learning how to read these images. (Eisner, 1998, p. 15)

Introduction

Before I knew what the term ‘multimodal’ learning was, I had a vivid memory of experiencing it during my second year of university and feeling creatively challenged and extremely capable as a result. Over and again I was asked to write essay after essay and test after test to explain my thinking and understanding in words and symbols on paper. I succeeded in completing these types of assignments to the best of my ability, but when I had the opportunity to express my knowledge in a way that I was truly comfortable with, I felt more excited than ever to complete an assignment. The course was 18th century China and my professor provided us with six different ways we could share our understanding of the material we had learned. The one requirement was to incorporate as much as we could about what we had learned up until that point. I leapt at the opportunity to use an 18th century Chinese scroll painting to write a story based on the finely hand drawn scenes of working peasants and richly robed courtesans while incorporating Chinese history, culture, and way of life.

This assignment had a profound effect on me. I became aware that there were other ways to express oneself in school beyond the accepted written assignment. This was my first “A” grade paper. The professor incorporated a variety of modes in his teaching: traditional stories,
the works of famous authors of the period, viewing real pieces of art and of course reading from
texts book.

It is evident that he prepared us to represent our understanding of the course content by
incorporating multimodal elements that enriched our learning. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) write
that certain modes will draw in particular “learners (who) may be more comfortable in one mode
than another. It may be their preferred mode of representation—what comes to them easiest,
what they are good at, the mode in which they best express the world to themselves” (p. 181).

This paper will take a brief look at the current pedagogical research regarding multimodal
literacy, primarily in the early years, as well as discuss the multimodal nature of young
children’s literacy learning. It will also demonstrate what multimodal literacy looks like and
several ways it can be exercised in the classroom in a kindergarten unit. The importance of
providing a rich curriculum that expands traditional literacy practices and accepts that learning in
a variety of modes serves to expand meaning making is a crucial step in allowing students to
reach their true potential.

The Pedagogy of Multimodality

‘Multimodality’ has been described as the “simultaneous reading, processing and /or
producing and interacting with various modes of print, image, movement, graphics, animation,
sound, music and gesture” (Walsh, 2009, p. 16). Closely related is ‘multimodal literacy’ which
refers to the meaning making process that takes place within the various approaches to, and
modes of interaction (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Multimodal learning can be described as a
multidimensional approach that extends beyond linear ideas of design and construction and
works as a system that flows in and out of a variety of modes, often simultaneously, all the while
allowing the participant to take in information in a number of ways that culminate in a deeper
understanding. Though there are several different terms used, such as ‘multimodal texts’ and ‘multimodal learning’ to define particular veins within the genre, for the purpose of this discussion ‘multimodality’, ‘multiliteracies’ and ‘multimodal literacy’ will be used interchangeably for the purpose of setting the stage for meaning making that occurs when a variety of modes are utilized within the context of literacy learning.

Compared to a decade ago the definition of literacy has been constantly expanding. With the advent of the Internet in the early 90s technology has been paving the way for modes of communication unlike anything that has come before it. The widespread use of online social networks, Podcasts, and Wikis, as well as increased cell phone talk/text usage is dominating the literacy experiences of learners everywhere. Massive changes are taking place from the way we absorb information from a variety of sources, to the way we communicate in modes that were not exercised previously. Recent trends in technology that challenge the notion of what it means to be literate in the 21st century are supported by a growing number of researchers (Albers & Harste, 2007, Gee, 2004, Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) as they work to redefine what being literate means today as it applies to learners in an educational environment. This change has inevitably affected the literacy learning of children as it continues to expand the lens of various theoretical frameworks to create new perspectives for meaning making.

Howard Gardner’s (1983) research on multiple intelligences brought to the forefront the idea that there are “multiple ways of knowing” (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996) or different “frames of mind” (Gardner, 1983). Gardner’s theory, though not as widely accepted by the psychology community (Smith, 2002, 2008), had a profound impact on educators as they became very conscious of the importance of considering the different ways that individuals
grasp meaning from the world around them. Gardner termed these styles as 'intelligences' specifically in the areas of logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. While multiple intelligences identifies the areas of 'intelligences' in learners that need to be nurtured, multimodality works to expand this pedagogy to include a richer and more complex theory of meaning making that occurs in a number of different areas often at the same time.

Jewitt (2008) claims that the way “knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally” (p. 241). In other words the way that something is represented by the way it is communicated has a huge influence over what is to be learned and how it is to be learned. Eisner (1998) a strong advocate for the various modes of the arts represented in the learning and understanding in schools, espouses the injustice that goes on in schools when we begin to ignore the needs of multimodal representation when teaching students. Eisner (1998) uses an example of how teachers can tap into different areas of learning through the subject of slavery during the Civil War in a grade 5 curriculum. He highlights the need for multimodal facets that not only teach about the different aspects of the war but teach it in ways that students can experience it. Eisner (1998) explains that learning goes far beyond literary text when educators begin to include, “the music of the period, the hymns, the chants, the rhythms of Africa (which can) help students gain access to the period” (p. 29), as well as official documents and the correspondence of key figures, folk stories and first-hand accounts.

Drama as a multimodal form brings another dimension to meaning making and literacy that is both enriching and engaging. When students are able to take part in experiences that explore characters and their inner thoughts they gain accessibility to a deeper understanding. All
too often children experience the common story in one mode which usually involves reading a story, or by listening to a story. If students are able to experience literacy by creating, producing, and re-enacting stories, to name a few, meaning making takes place on a number of levels and in a variety of modes rather than through one perspective in one mode. By using drama as a way to communicate literacy on a richer level, Adomat (2005, 2007) discovered that, “struggling readers create and express rich understanding of text through modalities that are not usually emphasized in literacy instruction” (p. 629).

In her research Adomat worked with two struggling readers in grade 1 who were the lowest achievers of a group of ten, and discovered the power of teaching literature through engaging her students in story plots, character role plays, and other interpretations that involved perspective taking and being active learners in this context. She goes on to explain how the mode of drama, “offered opportunities for students to use their strengths to create multilayered and rich understandings of stories...and expanding their perspectives through the social negotiations and multiple viewpoints that were expressed in their drama work” (p. 635). Adomat (2005, 2007) discusses the significance of social meaning making as it applies to the mode of drama as does Kress (1997) who comments that we know young readers:

[M]ake meaning in a plethora of ways, with an absolute plethora of means, in two, three, and four dimensions...Different ways of making meaning involve different kinds of bodily engagement of the world. (p. xvii)

Through this experience they were able to adapt characters in role plays based on their own strengths and interests, and scaffold the knowledge they gained from various experiences and use it in different that strengthened their meaning making. Though Adomat’s research deals with students who had reading difficulties involving meaning making, it is clear that the multimodal
approach works to reach a wider range of students’ abilities that go beyond traditional roadblocks in literacy.

Walsh’s (2009) research looks at how new modes of communication affect current pedagogical practices and how they interact in a classroom context. The study looked at the relationship between the integration of multimodal literacy practices using technology with the conventional literacy practices of reading, writing and viewing. This study demonstrated how different modes within digital technology can be used to enhance a traditional reading lesson for young children expanding over several curriculum areas. The study involved teachers and students ranging in age from kindergarten (4-5 years old) to grade 7 (11-12 years old) in a large city school in Australia. Using several interactive tools such as Podcasts, Interactive White Boards and iMovie teachers worked with Walsh to redesign literacy pedagogy by considering the possibility of working with ‘e-learning’ in a multimodal context. Walsh saw significant higher thinking processes among the participants who demonstrated a variety of literacy strategies required to complete the task. The study demonstrated:

[T]he interdependence of print and digital modes, with the dominance of visual, sound or other modes together with the immediacy of technology, (as it) provides the potential for establishing classroom literacy and learning experiences that are dynamic and cohesive. (Walsh, 2009, p. 8)

Walsh highlighted the merging of specific modes that enabled students to understand the relationships between sound, images and text as they appeared through their interaction with animation, photography, and film. Through engaging in these activities students were required to process a number of modes simultaneously adding another dimension to multimodal learning. Put forward by the New London Group (1996), who developed the multiliteracies framework,
there is a common thread in multimodal research that reveals a variety of cognitive abilities are required to process different modes adding yet another dimension to Gardner’s theory.

There are different cognitive processes at play when students begin to form ideas and thoughts in one mode but then experience information in another. This ability to transfer knowledge from one mode to another is called synesthesia which:

[T]raditional literacy does not recognize or adequately use the meaning and learning potentials (of it)...It tries to confine itself to the monomodal formalities of written language, as if the modality of written language could be isolated into a system unto itself. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 179)

Cope and Kalantzis (2009) remark on this process of shifting between modes and the ability it takes for one to re-represent the same idea but in another way. They explain this idea in terms of processes involved in reading a book and then watching a movie about the same book. The novel will never be the same as the film and the scenes described in the novel will not play out exactly as in the book.

The meaning changes with the modes and the skills required to transfer knowledge moving between modes requires different processes in the brain. Cazden, C., Cope, B., Cook, J., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., et al. (1996) add that there is an “increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioural, and so on” (p.64). Influenced by Kress (1997), Cope and Kalantzis (2009) posit that while children have “natural synesthetic’ capabilities, the education system works against this type of learning as it continues to segment learning with the presence of subjects like math, art, and music. On the other hand, Kenner (2004) argues that:
Print-based reading and writing are and always have been multimodal... (in that) they require the interpretation and design of visual marks, space, colour, font or style, and increasingly image, and other modes of representation and communication. (Jewitt, 2005, p. 315)

While this point is acknowledged, the pedagogy for multiliteracy works to take this foundation and widen the lens to encompass a multitude of learning possibilities.

In summary the definition of ‘literacy’ is evolving to include a wider perspective on learning and meaning making. The impact of this broader concept of literacy is resulting in students being offered opportunities to represent their understanding(s) of important learning through a variety of modes, for example, creating a film, a story, a visual or a role drama to demonstrate their understanding and yet there is still much room for growth. Eisner (1998) writes: “No longer can we rely upon conceptually dense and emotionally eviscerated abstractions to represent what in actuality is a rich source of experience” (p. 45).

Multimodal literacy learning: Key Figures in Emergent Literacy

To trace the beginnings of the multimodal literacy practices of young children it is important to look at a few significant researchers in the field of emergent writing who have helped to shape how we came to view early literacy and meaning making today. This focus deals with the relationship between oral language and the meaning making process within the multimodal context of emergent literacy. This review will focus on the time period from the early 70s to the present and touch on theoretical frameworks and perspectives that have helped to define how we have arrived at our current beliefs regarding how children make meaning of their worlds as they begin to write. This review will focus primarily on the multimodal relationship between early literacy and the emergent writing process.
Background

Starting in the early 1970’s researchers began challenging traditional notions of reading readiness. A “reading readiness” approach to instruction gripped the education profession for over 50 years although it is now widely criticized as having limited the natural capabilities of children (Neuman, 2003). It was a very lock-step approach to learning. Reading instruction was entirely based on “Basal readers,” a highly organized series of books that focused on different skills taught in a pre-determined sequential order (“Basal Reader,” 2008). Writing was not encouraged or taught until the child had grasped a particular level of reading (i.e., mastery of reading was thought to be an essential precursor to writing). While the program was primarily associated with school readiness and could be used at home it was “inevitably modeled on formal, sequenced, direct instruction” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. xiv) and represented a philosophy of literacy learning that was entrenched in the school system. The emergent literacy movement challenged this traditional approach and focused on cognitive development while looking carefully at the beginning of life, “as a period of critical significance in development” (Teale & Sulzby, 1986, p. xiv).

At the heart of the term “emergent literacy” is the notion that through their encounters with print and their participation in several kinds of literacy events (e.g., storybook read-alouds, dramatic play, writing grocery lists, etc.) children try to make sense of print. They also try to produce written marks. These efforts constitute the early steps of reading and writing. The term “emergent literacy” suggests that reading and writing emerge simultaneously. It is important to note that this theory of literacy development holds that children’s literacy emerges in an environment rich in oral language as children attempt to make sense of written language.
The following section aims to explore the work of key researchers in the emergent writing field who have been influential in redefining multimodal emergent literacy forms and what it means for young children to be literate today.

Marie Clay (1926-2007)

The construct of what is now known today as “emergent literacy” was developed by Marie Clay (1966) in her doctoral dissertation, *Emergent Reading Behavior* (1966), and her book *What did I write?* (1975). First coining the term “emergent reading” (Koppenhaver & Erickson, 2003), Clay’s work triggered a great amount of research and worked to widen the field of how children’s writing develops over time and the conventions involved. Emergent literacy as described by Clay identified the behaviours children engaged in that mimicked reading and writing activities. For example, while to some children’s scribbling might appear to be without purpose; Clay saw this important process as laying the foundation for early writing development. Clay’s (1975) main purpose was to show the gradual development of young children’s writing and to give a voice and space for observers to see the repertoire of knowledge children bring to the endeavour of writing and how children build on their knowledge of writing. Through the analysis of numerous writing samples from children in New Zealand aged four- to seven-years-of-age, Clay describes the writing development of children. While she discusses many important discoveries that children make on their writing journey, her most important discovery was children’s understanding of the sign concept, that is, how letters and attempts at letters carry meaning, and that talk can be written down.

As described above, Clay’s work revolved around the written approximations/ artefacts of young children. Clay’s work did not involve children’s conversations around their emergent writing activities but focused on the children’s written samples. What is learned from Clay’s
work is that when a child writes they are drawing on knowledge accumulated over a period of
time and, specifically, knowledge drawn from the child’s environments. In her work Clay (1975)
suggests:

[Emergent literacy depends on many factors that contribute to learning to read and write
including drawing, pictures, stories, books, cultural influences, and familiarity with the
written word. (Leigh & Heid, 2008, p. 3)

Clay’s work further strengthened the argument for the acknowledgement and influence of
multimodal factors that are key contributors to early learner’s literacy.

*Elizabeth Sulzby (unknown-present)*

Spanning over thirty years Elizabeth Sulzby’s research has had a profound impact on the
emergent literacy community. Coining the term “emergent literacy,” based on Clay’s (1966)
aforementioned dissertation, Sulzby, with Teal (1986) worked to shift attention from literacy as
formal instruction (i.e., the reading readiness paradigm), to a process which involves young
children constructing their own meaning through such activities as storytelling and role playing.
Delving into a number of topics from technology and its uses in emergent writing, to language
and hearing impairment, Sulzby’s pioneering work on the importance of oral language in relation
to emergent literacy continues to shape our understanding of emergent literacy.

Sulzby’s (1986) research investigated children’s understandings of oral and written
language relationships; how they came to understand the relationships, and how it affected their
experiences within each context. Incorporating her knowledge from a longitudinal study of
young children’s writing and reading development, Sulzby worked with three children (while
including examples from six other children) to investigate the different forms a child’s writing
can take in different adult-led situations. The participant children engaged in a variety of tasks
that were composed of oral and written language components. Tasks were designed to show how children reveal their knowledge of the ways in which oral and written language are related (p. 86). Tasks included "encouragement techniques that urged the child to "do it our way," "pretend," or "do it like grown-ups do it," (p. 53). Additionally, children participated in various task sessions that elicited writing using different contexts. For example, one task involved writing a story, specifically describing an event to a person who was not present. Another task involved children telling a story with particular components, while another task involved the child in rereading their writing.

Sulzby's findings identified that although there were differences in the emergent literacy skills (the two girls demonstrated high emergent literacy skills, and the boy had lower skills) all three children were found to have significant knowledge regarding how oral and written language relationships function. All of the children revealed an awareness of writing and reading conventions on a metacognitive and metalinguistic level (Sulzby, p. 86) affected by their previous social interaction with adults who they singled out as having "taught them to read and write" (p. 86) although this study was conducted before the children were engaged in formal schooling.

Sulzby's work highlights the notion that literacy develops in a sociocultural context and that children have a repertoire to draw from when engaging in various literacy activities.

*Anne Haas Dyson (unknown-present)*

Dyson's work relates to Sulzby's in that she draws our attention specifically to the social worlds of children; particularly around writing. She is a leading researcher in the field who continues to push boundaries in the way we view writing development. Dyson uses the sociocultural perspective of Bakhtin's (1979/1986) theories of language and learning, and genres, as a
filter with which to view development in children’s writing. Dyson’s work refutes the traditional lockstep description of writing development. Rather Dyson suggests ‘unhinging’ the course of writing development which she sees as narrow. Instead Dyson works to reveal the connections to the symbolic dialogues of children which because they are highly contextualized she refers to as their repertoires. Dyson (2002) refers to oral language as having a multitude of functions in early writing development. She suggests that if we look at what children communicate during their drawing we can see that, “young children are symbol weavers. Their ‘drawings’ may be composed, not only of lines and colors, but of language as well” (Dyson, 1986, p. 381).

While language works as a way to communicate it is rich in signs and symbols. For example, Dyson observed children engaged heavily in their social worlds through oral and written experiences. She discovered that a child’s social experiences are rich and layered and heavily influence their communication with others in different modes, particularly writing and conversations building up to it. Referencing Clay (1998) on the possibility of alternative “pathways to literacy,” Dyson encourages educators to be open to using the “symbolic and social resources” of children in the class to create a closer knit connection between the two social worlds of home and school. If children come to school talking about their newest video game or the latest movie they have seen, we as educators need to think of this as a child’s cultural and linguistic resource that can be tapped into. Dyson (1993) suggests researchers “must attend… to children’s entire symbolic repertoires, for children’s use of writing is linked to their developmental history as symbolizers- as talkers, drawers, and players” (p. 26).

Dyson’s (1988) study of children’s talk during children’s engagement with writing revealed that this talk is complex and appears to both support the writing and provide purpose for the child’s writing. The more we as educators understand the mappings of how children
understand language the more effective we can be in guiding their experience into learning language. It leads us to think about how new practices are shaped and how we come to arrive at our current beliefs.

In summary we can see the affect that a few significant researchers have had in helping to redefine what emergent literacy means today. The development of children's writing has its roots in their social interaction with other more competent members of the society through various meaningful, purposeful activities (Haneda & Wells, 2000; Newman & Roskos, 1997).

Observational studies of children's writing development reveal that their early writing is usually accompanied by talking and drawing (Dyson, 1988). Children usually use their drawing and talk to support their early exploration and use of print (Dyson, 1988). Children may initially regard writing and drawing as the direct symbol systems in which meaning is embedded (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). Therefore, as children write, they weave their drawing and speech into their writing to convey meanings (Dyson, 1983).
SECTION 3: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE

Multiliteracy in Action: A Kindergarten Garbage Unit

Throughout my career as an educator, teaching in a variety of modes so that I may reach a variety of learners has always been a large part of my guiding pedagogical practice. I first became aware of the notion of "teaching and learning in a variety of modes" through the work of Howard Gardner and his theory of *Multiple Intelligences*. When reading his work, I had a moment of clarity when I realized that we all learn in different ways and the importance of educators considering the variety of ways in which children in their classes learn and the necessity of designing learning activities to meet the learning needs of all children. The theory of multiple intelligences developed by Dr. Howard Gardner (1983), suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, Dr. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are:

- Linguistic intelligence
- Logical-mathematical intelligence
- Spatial intelligence
- Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Naturalist intelligence

Thus, Gardner's *multiple intelligences* offer eight different pathways to learning. Having grappled with the ideas of Howard Gardner, the notion of multimodal learning, that is, the ways
in which children represent their understandings through different modes, seemed to make intuitive sense. Multimodal literacy research works to expand the current definition of literacy and the ways in which children view, process, create, and construct meaning. In this pedagogical framework children are active builders of their own meaning.

The purpose of this section of my paper is to reflect upon my teaching practices during a unit on the topic of garbage. It is hoped that my reflections will serve two purposes: 1) to improve my own practice; and, 2) to help other educators learn from my experiences, that is, to learn from, and reflect on my experience, and, perhaps, be inspired to try what may be a new perspective on teaching and learning (i.e., multimodal approaches). My lessons are not ground breaking but were created from my experiences as an educator and through a lens that is very conscious of the multimodal learning needs of students. If these learning engagement serve to make a difference and provide inspiration to anyone who reads it I would be very thankful.

I aim to be very conscious of the different learners in my class and I try to push myself as an educator to go outside the box and use my creativity to teach literacy in ways that are fun, engaging, and involve active participation whenever possible. I believe that children learn ‘by doing’ and whether that is by teaching each other, engaging in role plays, using actions, creating, and experiencing, the idea is that they are ‘experiencing’ different perspectives, making choices about how they learn, and gaining a deeper meaning while building on their knowledge.

A Multimodal Perspective of “Garbage, Garbage, Everywhere!”

I teach at an International Baccalaureate (IB) school in Western Canada that has the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for children K-5. We teach six ‘units of inquiry’ throughout the year for a period of 6 weeks each, and one unit that will be the focus of this multimodal approach is “Garbage, Garbage, Everywhere!” The PYP is a multimodal program by design due
to the inquiry nature of the program. All units are encouraged to be integrated into the whole curriculum as much as possible. There are several different key concepts and transdisciplinary skills that we concentrate on throughout the year that drive the inquiry process for every unit. The key concepts include, form, function, perspective, causation, change, connection, and reflection. The skills include: research, self-management, communication, thinking and social skills. We choose 1-3 different key concepts and skills to focus on for each unit so that students are able to inquire about different content through a variety of perspectives using different skills.

All units have a “central idea” and “inquiries into” the topic which, in this case, is: How our Personal Choices affect our Environment. The two lines of inquiry into this unit deal with: 1. Our responsibility to the environment and 2. The ways we can reduce, reuse and recycle. For this unit our trans-disciplinary skills are thinking and communication, and the key concepts are, form (what is it like?), causation (Why is it the way it is?), and responsibility (What is our responsibility?). These units of inquiry work to tie in with the provincial curriculum as well.

Through a large amount of exposure and experience, student learning is scaffolded over a period of six continuous weeks. Students are able to apply their research skills, ask questions and learn about areas they are particularly interested in which, it is hoped, will drive the inquiry. We want the students to be reflective about their own actions and the importance of making good choices. We also want them to be thinkers and to make ethical judgments about their role in their environment.

The following will provide several learning engagements that were conducted throughout the unit as a way to demonstrate what multimodal literacy can look like at the kindergarten level and the different ways which children can make meaning through a variety of rich multimodal experiences. The first section of each multimodal activities consists of two parts; the first is the
learning engagement; and the second is the writing engagement. While it is intentional that both sections involve multimodal learning experiences to enhance meaning making, the first section's concentration is on oral language and the multitude of ways in which children can represent their understanding, while the second section focuses on how young children's early multimodal writing skills can be developed for each activity. All documents in the appendices were created by myself as well as the photos. It is important to note that writing and reading are linked and work together to contribute to a child's literacy skills.

To provide context for the activities to follow it is important to describe the students and their prior experiences in their class environment. The students who took part in the learning engagements section, and who the writing engagements section is intended for, participated in the garbage unit during their third month of kindergarten. By this time in the year they had participated in a six week unit on communication. They practiced communicating with their faces, bodies and words and often used sign language to communicate asking to go to the washroom, and making a "c" shape with their fingers when they made a connection to the discussion. They took part in presentations in front of their peers from show and tell to book shares practicing communicating their thoughts and ideas to their peers.

In the area of writing and letter knowledge, the children in this class represent a broad range of abilities. Out of 14 students many of the class came to school knowing most of their letter sounds and the same number were experimenting with writing in some form at this time in the year, with at least one student writing sentences. Their broad range of strength in writing included students who understood talk can be written down, to those who were writing letter-like formations that are randomly placed, to those experimenting with beginning sounds and other major sounds they identify in the words they are writing. Most of the children at this stage are
not using spaces between their words and tend to write in larger upper case letters. The following activities are geared towards meeting the multimodal needs of all students so they may work within an area where they feel capable yet challenged.

**Learning Engagement #1-Making Choices**

Because the language for the unit revolved heavily around the words 'making choices,' 'affect,' and 'environment,' it was important that the students be introduced to both the vocabulary and underlying concepts right away. I began talking with the students about the choices that we have to make every day from choosing chocolate or vanilla ice cream, to whether to brush our teeth or not. The students shared with their peers the choices they would make if they could eat anything they wanted for dinner, or choose where they would go for their birthday. Once I related the vocabulary to their lives I wanted to relate it to the immediate environment of the classroom. I wanted to extend the idea that 'making a choice' could immediately 'affect their environment.' I dumped a bucket of markers on the classroom floor and watched their faces. They expressed surprise and excitement and shared their observations with enthusiasm. They had likely never seen a responsible adult they knew make a choice like that! I asked them how this choice had affected our classroom environment. They responded that our room was messy, that someone could slip and fall, that we would not be able to move around easily because they were spread out everywhere. A planning sheet (See Appendix A) involved each child making a choice about what they were going to do to affect their environment. The students were asked to draw/write a before-and-after picture of the choice they had made and to monitor the affect of their choice over time. Some students made the choice to dump bins of books or throw papers on the floor, while others made the choice to clean it up. From this point on this particular language (i.e., *making choices, affect* and *environment*) was used throughout
the unit by myself and the students. Additionally, I was confident that all the students understood the concepts.

**Writing Engagement #1-What Do You Hear?**

The sheet I had created (See Appendix A) set up accountability for the activity on the students part and a clear goal of the two things they needed to do and then document through drawing: “The classroom before you made a choice to do something”, and “How your choice affected the classroom”. Students are always encouraged to “write” when we do activities and I usually leave lines on the page for this purpose. On this occasion students were very excited and needed the time after the activity to reflect on how we could “write” about it. A separate focus on the writing skills would also help those students who needed the support to write.

On this sheet I wanted the students to just focus on writing one word per section. One of the words would be the thing that was going to be affected such as “books,” “chairs,” “pencils,” etc. The other word would reflect the adjective used to describe how their action had affected the space. For many students “messy” became the popular word they wrote. While reviewing the sheets they had previously completed students shared the words they could use for each part. As we said each word we heavily stressed the first sound and the last sound, a game the students were familiar with. We use our hand in a motion that mirrors a roller coaster as we say each word. Our hand corresponds to the beginning and ending of the word with an upward and downward motion. Students are encouraged to write any sounds they hear but to pay particular attention to the beginning and ending sound while using the alphabet chart as support.

**Learning Engagement #2-Wump World/Lego Land**

*The Wump World* (1970) by Bill Peet describes a lush green planet inhabited by the peaceful furry Wumps who fulfill their happy days by eating grass, swimming in the clean rivers,
and sleeping in the shade of trees. The Pollutions invade The Wump World with their industry building machines and take over their planet in a destructive way. It is a clever commentary on humans and our ability to destroy and ‘pollute’ the earth by making choices that do not look at the future consequences.

The “Lego City” (See Appendix B) activity’s purpose was to both re-enact the story of *The Wump World* and to provide students with an opportunity to begin to make their own choices about the world they want to create. Additionally, I wanted students to discover what can happen when they begin to make choices that will negatively affect their environment. The activity was meant to be initiated by the students, with some guidance.

I have led this activity for a few years. Students find it very engaging and they work cooperatively to plan for how the “Lego City” environment will be developed. Students have used plasticene and paper to make gardens, mountains, playgrounds, and added animals to their environment. They have also labelled their created environment and attached descriptive words to objects.

Just as in the book, the students talk about the ways in which our “Lego City” could/might become polluted and they begin to pollute the waters with garbage and add landing strips for planes and cars and roads. It is the students who dialogue with each other on the pros and cons of particular items that go into our class ‘city.’ The “Lego City” is created near the beginning of the unit and the students are usually engaged with the project for the duration of the unit. All the while discussions are occurring and decisions are being made that affect this environment. It is a very effective and meaningful activity that allows children to share their voice and build their knowledge. The students get to see first-hand what polluting means and
how it affects an environment and they learn to make choices that will negatively or positively affect their community space.

Writing Engagement #2-Copy it

The "Lego City" (See Appendix B) project took place over several weeks but it was during the first two weeks where the most group involvement took place. The first year the writing component was not intentional. Students came up with the idea that we needed signs in our city like in our own city. A few students initiated writing on small labels I had in the class. Independently they wrote words such as, "Stop", "Lost dog", and "Do not enter" in mostly phonetic spelling, from one or two letters to complete phrases. Giving them the opportunity to express themselves freely without having a structured lesson was important. They engaged in conversations about their writing, signs they knew of, and how the words sounded. They asked each other if they knew how to spell particular words and would sometimes write as others dictated. While some focused only on creating plasticene gardens and factories with billowing tissue paper smoke while never once participating in this impromptu literacy experience they were still part of an environment that was building onto their repertoire of understanding of how written language works.

In following years, with different groups, I encouraged this authentic writing activity if it was not initiated by students. We may brainstorm in a group what kind of signs we would see in our city and what kinds of signs we would like to add. Then I would write the words on the board and number each word so when students asked me which word was "garden" I could tell them it was number five and they would copy it onto their slip of paper and place it in our city.
Learning Engagement #3 - How our Thinking has Changed

Inspired by Kath Murdoch, a speaker from an inquiry workshop, I gave the students a formal opportunity to think about how their thinking has changed over the course of the unit. The purpose was for students to reflect on their thinking and their thought processes specifically about recycling. I provided the students with a worksheet to guide their responses. One side of the worksheet had the words "I think..." with a graphic organizer of four circles in a circular formation to depict four stages of the recycling process. Before we officially began learning about the recycling process I tried to find out the students' understanding of recycling. Students' responses included, "making things new," and "we use it again," but they did not appear to understand the ways in which materials can actually be recycled, for example, when a tin goes through the recycling process.

As a pre-assessment we did the first side of the sheet described above beginning with "I think..." After we talked about some ideas together the students drew pictures of what they thought happened to any tin cans after the blue bin was picked up from a house, and before the tin cans were returned to the shelves of a supermarket. This activity provided me with an insight into the students' understanding of recycling processes. Some students thought that the tin cans were crushed and then pulled into their original shape, filled up with pop, sealed and put back on the supermarket shelf. Others thought the tin cans were rinsed and then filled with pop. It was interesting to see the shift in their understanding once they had learned more about the recycling process through other activities described below. It was after a few weeks that we completed the, "But now I know..." section and the students were able to reflect on their evolving thinking and understanding.
Writing Engagement #3- Teacher Scribing

For each of these sections I acted as a scribe for the students so that myself and parents would be able to look back on this assignment and know what they were thinking; but also to expose them to literacy in a way that brought reality to the idea that “talk can be written down.” As students drew pictures of a can in the recycle process in each circle, while following the flow of arrows from the truck to the store, I travelled through the class writing down student phrases on their paper. They dictated a phrase for each picture they drew or would draw and I scribed each word sounding it out as I wrote each corresponding sound. At time I would ask the students to help me with a sound by telling me what came next. Some students had already written a few words on their own which demonstrated more independence and higher interest, perhaps, in this skill.

Learning Engagement #4-Reinforcing the Recycling Process

We often talk about recycling with children in schools, and while some have a sense that recycling means to make something new, how many of them actually know what the process involves? After reflecting on past unsuccessful attempts at getting my students to understand what recycling really means I took a sequencing activity and worked to make it richer by expanding student learning in a multimodal context that would provide a number of perspectives. We began the first section of the “I think...now I know” activity after a brief discussion about what we thought recycling may mean. I had a can of Sprite and I passed around this tactile object to get the students thinking about how we can make it new again. I walked them orally through a day in the life of a can and used the can as a visual prop. The kindergarteners came up with terms such as ‘crush,’ ‘rinse,’ and ‘fill,’ but they were missing the part regarding the way in
which the metal is chopped/shredded, melted, rolled-out and cut. Because the students were unaware of the steps in the recycling process, I used a recycling song book with pictures to tell the story of what happens to a can. I had the children create models of a can with play dough (mode of representation or symbolic code); imagine the flavour of the drink; pretend to drink from the can; and, then begin the recycling process by shredding the play dough can. I focused on the idea that there is an order to the way something happens and that one thing can not necessarily happen before another during the process.

I referred back to the book that had pictures of a can being recycled and its sing-song rhyme that explained the cycle or sequence. To the tune of “Dem Bones” we chanted the sequence of the process, “First the cans get sorted, the sorted cans get crushed, etc.” Sometimes we changed the order around to demonstrate that one part of the process cannot happen before another. I led the class in participating in the recycling process kinesthetically and musically. For example, after creating our own recycling machine, two students held a steady beat by banging on a recycling box while other students sang their action-song to the beat chanting, “Pick-up, pick-up,” “crushing, crushing,” “melting, melting.” All the students had opportunities to be engaged in this learning activity. These were powerful activities that provided different pathways into learning about the recycling process. Student’s learning took place in a variety of modes that was conducive to higher meaning making.

**Writing Engagement#4-Write the matching word**

Using a number of different skills students would have pictures of each part of the recycling process on cards and the matching word that corresponded. Students would engage in a memory game to match the picture of the cans getting crushed to the words “crush”, for example. After this game was played a few times and students became accustomed to
associating the word to the picture they would complete an activity which involved writing these words beside the picture on the page. After each matching pair was found the student could write the word on their sheet. To make it competitive, the person who writes down all five recycling words (pick-up, crush, melt, etc) first wins.

Learning Engagement #5 - Checking for Understanding

By this time students had participated in a variety of multimodal learning engagements and it was time to check their understanding and observe if they were able to complete a recycling sequencing activity independently. Students were given several pictures of the recycling process from the song book we had shared. Students were asked to sequence the recycling process on a large page with a circular graphic organizer template. Students were given reminders that they could sing the recycling song if it helped them to remember the process, and to be thinkers and check if the order made sense. They were also given a can to hold in their hands for those learners who needed to imagine taking the can through the process in the pictures. Sometimes a tactile cue can help students visualize the next step. When students had arranged their pictures in order, they were required to show it to another student for their affirmation that the order made sense. This part opened up more opportunities to the children to verbalise their ideas and understandings by sharing it with their peers.

Writing Engagement #5 - Journal Writing

Titling their journal entry, "__________ the can" students can create their own can character and give them a name to add to the title. Beginning with a picture first students can then write a few sentence describing their can by writing, "I am big", "I am empty", or "I am stinky", for example. The class would brainstorm some ideas and then go and independently draw the picture and write the sentences. The writing would be modeled by the teacher to
demonstrate writing each line above the next one and the teacher would draw a can with a number of details which would help the students find descriptive words.

**Learning Engagement #6-Creating a Compost in Two Modes**

A representative from a local compost company visited the school to talk to the students about what worm compost is, what the worm’s job is, and how it helps to prevent more garbage from entering our landfills. Students were shown a scientific picture of a worm’s body highlighting all the different parts that impact the digesting process. The teacher used gesture and action to show how the worm’s diet of sand and food works to grind together in the stomach as the worm digests it. Students took part in contributing to creating our class worm bin by ripping bedding paper while volunteers placed straw, sand and water into the bin (See Appendix C). Each child held their own red worm and they were able to observe it wiggling about in their hands or on the newspaper, as they were encouraged to find parts that were identified on the display picture. While creating the compost the visiting instructor talked about what kinds of foods were safe to go into the bin. The representative held up examples she had brought such as bananas, and tea bags.

To reinforce their understanding of the presentation students created their own art compost collages (See Appendix D) from such materials such as straw, sand, red yarn and blue sparkles. Students were given a sheet with different kinds of items that could be put into the compost. Some were acceptable for the compost and others were not and it was up to the students to make those choices leading us back to the central idea of the unit that, “Our choices affect our environment.” Students had to really think about which items they could glue onto their art compost collages. They were encouraged to add items that did not belong but to put an X on the item to symbolize that it did not belong. I facilitated and supported student learning by
talking with them about the items that went into the compost and why some items did not belong in the compost.

Writing Engagement #6-“Grab Bag Words”

“Grab Bag Words” is a game students take part in during our literacy centers. It consists of students pulling out an object from a bag and drawing a picture of it and writing the sounds they hear on the line next to it. A variation of this activity to encourage writing skills would involve students pulling items out of a grab bag that belong and do not belong in a compost. Their paper would have two sections to it and depending on which item they pulled out they would write the word in the corresponding section. The grab bag could consist of real items or picture items.

Tapping it a different area that supports writing development and letter recognition students could replace the paper and writing with large size letters. For every item “grabbed” the corresponding letter could be found that matches. For example if a student pulled out “egg shells” they could find the letter “e” and match it to their items while stressing on the first sound.

Learning Engagement #7-Sorting garbage

Students brought in a bag full of washed items (e.g., plastics, cans, glass, boxes, etc.) that were considered unwanted items from home. The challenge for students was to work in groups to determine what choices could be made about what to do with the items. Would they throw them into the garbage/landfill? Would they recycle them? In groups of three students talked with each other to determine what they could do with the items. We discussed ways the garbage could be sorted. I provided a number of sorting bins each identified with a label identifying one way students had suggested the garbage could be sorted. Students were asked to sort items into the assigned bins. The results were very interesting.
Some of the students had no idea that plastic went into the recycling bin. Some of them only put glass in the recycling or they made separate recycling piles. Some students put everything in the garbage, which meant the landfill. The activity helped me note the students who had the background experience and knowledge from home, and those who were unaware of recycling practices so that I could adjust my teaching. Students talked to each other regarding where they thought garbage should go and why. The dialogue was fantastic and you could hear the thought processes of the students discussing their reasoning for thinking a particular way and what influenced their decisions. I had them do this same activity individually at the end of the unit to check for their understanding and had them explain where the garbage would be taken if it went in a particular pile. Responses allowed me to assess student learning.

*Writing Engagement #7-Trace it on my Back*

Using the above activity as a way to reinforce the phonetic sounds of the alphabet students learn which items get recycled in a different mode by engaging in tracing the first letter of an object that gets recycled. Using a number of objects that were sorted during the activity as a reference students could look at the objects trace the first sound of the item they are thinking of that can be recycled and their partner has to guess. Letters traced could include “p” for pizza box, “b” for bottle, “j” for juice, and “c” for can. The guessing student could refer to the recycled items to help them or the tracing student could give helpful hints such as the category it would fall into such as “cardboard” for pizza, “plastic” for bottle, “glass” for juice, and “aluminum” for can. Students could keep track of their points on a sheet of paper with the group members’ names on it.
**Learning Engagement #8 - The Action Component**

Through the "PYP action cycle" of "Reflect-Choose-Act," it is intended that, as an extension of their learning and knowledge, students are given the opportunity to take "action" and grow personally and socially from the experience of choosing an action that works to make a difference in the community. This can look very different from kindergarten to grade five especially when it is expected to be student initiated. For this unit, the summative assessment consisted of two components; The first involved having students describe, demonstrate, explain or draw how we sort different items, and what we can do with certain items to reuse them; The second part involved choosing an action for at least a week that they could commit to that demonstrated the central idea of, "Our personal choices affect our environment." Students were asked to draw a picture of what the action was, and parents were made aware of their child's choice(s) so that they could support their child's action at home (See Appendix E). Students were held accountable through a daily checklist which monitored whether each student was making a conscious effort to commit to their choice. The results were varied: some children were very diligent about keeping to their action for the duration and some, even beyond. Others were not so diligent.

As an educator it is my hope that what students learn will impact their lives and actions way beyond the six-week unit. I hope that the opportunities I provide will allow students to reach goals they have set for themselves.

**Writing Engagement #8 - Create a Sentence and Copy it**

During the last week of this six week unit students were asked to choose a specific action that they would focus on for the week. This writing activity would consist of a sentence starter that students would add to explaining their chosen action. For example, they would fill in the
sentence, “My action is to...” with phrases such as, “use paper on both sides”, “recycle my plastic lunch bags”, or “collect compost during lunch time”. As a class we would brainstorm a number of ideas and as I write them on the board I would number each sentence so students have a reference point for finding the sentence they would like to copy. I would write their number down on a piece of paper and give it to them to help them remember. My expectations are that they use spaces between their words and try to copy the words exactly as they are written. For those students who have difficulty doing this I would write it on a piece of paper for them to copy.

Conclusion

These activities represent only a small part of a larger unit that builds on scaffolding knowledge. This unit was six weeks in length and students were given many opportunities to dialogue with each other; work independently and in groups; inquire into the subject of garbage; and understand “How our personal choices affect our environment.” They were able to reflect on many occasions about their learning processes and experience the content in many modes (generally, symbolic e.g., drawing, painting, dancing, singing, model making, imaginative play, etc.) which stimulated their understanding and interest in the topic. My teaching strategies incorporated many symbolic modes as I strived to meet the needs of all learners. I provided a number of writing engagements that could have supported these activities which can work to build students’ literacy skills and complement the other learning engagements. These are rich activities that tap into many different areas in a learning environment that works to build strong meaning making skills.
SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

This paper began by asking the question “What is multimodal literacy and how do we plan for multimodal activities in the early years.” Multimodality has been described in the literature as the “simultaneous reading, processing and /or producing and interacting with various modes of print, image, movement, graphics, animation, sound, music and gesture” (Walsh, 2009, p. 16). Closely related is ‘multimodal literacy’ which refers to the meaning making process that takes place within the various approaches to, and modes of interaction (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Multimodal learning can be described as a multidimensional approach that extends beyond linear ideas of design and construction and works as a system that flows in and out of a variety of modes, often simultaneously, all the while allowing the participant to take in information in a number of ways that culminate in a deeper understanding. Multimodal learning was described as a multidimensional approach that extends beyond linear ideas of design and allows people to take in information in a variety of ways to culminate a deeper understanding.

Observational studies of children’s writing development reveal that their early writing is usually accompanied by talking and drawing (Dyson, 1988). Children usually use their drawing and talk to support their early exploration and use of print (Dyson, 1988). Children may initially regard writing and drawing as the direct symbol systems in which meaning is embedded (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). Therefore, as children write, they weave their drawing and speech into their writing to convey meanings (Dyson, 1983).

There is a growing awareness in the literature that there is a need for multimodal approaches to teaching and learning in school so that we do not rob students from learning in ways that challenge them but help them to learn through different perspectives that encourage multimodal learning. Multimodal approaches include but is not limited to drama, gestures, drawing, music and technology. The
Connections to Practice section of this paper offered an overview of a unit that incorporates multimodal approaches to teaching and learning.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

How did your personal choice affect your class environment?

My choice is to...

The classroom before you made a choice to do something  

class environment

How your choice affected our

class environment
APPENDIX B:

Polluted Lego City in Progress
APPENDIX C:

Real Compost Bin
APPENDIX D:

Compost Art Activity
APPENDIX E:

Final Project

Name: ____________________________

Final Project - Garbage Garbage Everywhere!

The 5 R's..............
1. Reduce-make less
2. Reuse- use again
3. Recycle- make new
4. Refuse- say no!
5. Rethink- think before you do

Which R am I choosing to make a difference?

__________________________

What choice will I make?

__________________________