

**MULTILITERACIES IN ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**

by

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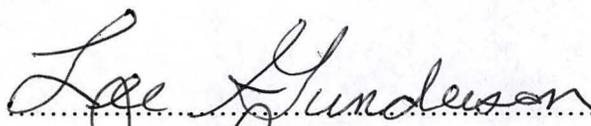
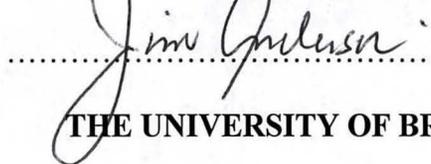
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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the last number of years there has been a growing recognition of important changes in the way that literacy is used and understood. These changes are attributed to increased flows of immigration around the globe that have resulted in more diverse populations, and the massive increase in use and accessibility of Internet and Communication Technology (ICT), principally internet based multimedia. Multiliteracies was the term given to these changes by the New London Group in 1996. Since that time much has been written on the topic and many case studies have documented its use in a wide range of programs, ages, and contexts. There is evidence, however, that educational programs continue to lag behind in recognizing and implementing these changes in substantive form, or struggle with how to bridge the gap between the old print literacy standards of reading and writing based assignments and assessments- and those of multiliteracies. The goal in this study was to examine in what ways multiliteracies-based pedagogies have been applied in the area of adult English as a second language education. In addition to presenting case studies from this teaching context, various case studies involving different ages and contexts are presented with the hypothesis that many of their findings are relevant and applicable to the practice of multiliteracies in the adult ESL context.

Lastly, the findings of a study involving an original questionnaire on policies, beliefs and practices in the adult ESL classroom are presented. It is hoped that these findings will contribute to the research base on multiliteracies practices in this teaching context. By sharing these results with professionals in this educational sector the author hopes to raise awareness of multiliteracies and their potential to contribute to the theory and teaching practices that are used in adult ESL programs.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the study**

With the growing importance of English as the global *lingua franca*, world Englishes (Kachru, 1997) and the increased flow of immigrants from all over the world to English speaking countries, there is a need to change the way of teaching literacy. No longer is it possible to speak of a single national “correct” version of English (New London Group, 2000). To create equal educational and social opportunities for all, it is necessary to recognize the socially situated nature of literacy and promote ways of teaching and learning that engage with the identity of the learner. In addition the nature of literacy is broadly recognized as having changed due to the prevalence of multimedia-based communication devices such as the internet, cell phone, video-cameras, among many others. In spite of this, there is evidence that print-based literacy remains dominant in practice in many schools, while others struggle with how to build multimedia into their programs (Burke, 2009; Senyshyn, & Chamberlin-Quinlisk, 2009; Tan & McWilliam, 2009).

### **Motivation for the project**

In my experience as a language learner, I often felt demotivated and frustrated with what I felt to be abstract and uninteresting lessons focused around answering workbook based grammar and vocabulary questions. The lessons in the classroom lacked relevance to my life in the ‘real world’ and typically teachers’ most notable effort to connect the in-class lesson to the outside world was in assigning us homework assignments. I attribute a measure of my lack of interest in French and less than impressive results throughout my elementary and high school education to teachers’ inability to connect the learning to my personal interests and investments. Upon starting a Spanish program in university, again I found I did not connect well with the classroom lessons in spite of strong personal investment in learning the language. I experienced

frustration at wasting significant amounts of class time when I was unable to follow teachers who attempted to stick to the “monolingual principle” (Howatt, 1984) - allowing communication only in the target language. Often all that I needed was one or two missing words, that the teacher, a dictionary or a classmate could have translated or helped me understand in order to save me several minutes of confusion. Eventually I found on my own what I needed to fully engage- personal contact and communication with Spanish speakers within my community in Canada, and later a semester-long field school in Mexico, both of which provided me with ample authentic and real life exposure to the language.

Nonetheless, I was aware that my learning patterns and needs did not seem to reflect what I had been told was the best path to fluency in school: I relied extensively on both bilingual English/Spanish dictionaries to find words to fill frequent lexical gaps, and I did not live a total immersion experience, but rather spoke a mix of English and Spanish throughout the day.

When I myself became an ESL teacher I attempted to connect to learners through discussion of their interests, yet found it a challenge to keep them engaged in many of the reading-based activities from textbooks or commercial ESL activity books. Additionally, in the school I was required to enforce an English-only policy and I found myself repeating the party line that complete immersion was the best way to learn. Part of me was conflicted about this as I knew that this did not match my own experience, and I felt slightly guilty when I was unable to allow frustrated students to ask for any clarification or assistance in their own language.

However, I did not know how to help them given both the multilingual mix of students in the classroom, and a clear language policy which penalized students for using their own language.

It was with great interest that I began to learn of the multiliteracies approach in my Masters of Education program. By seeking to make the interests and backgrounds of the students

salient to the classroom and increase their level of engagement, the multiliteracies approach seemed to address the key aspects that I found to be lacking in my own language learning and teaching experiences – that of student engagement and affirming the value of previous language knowledge in the second language classroom.

### **Significance of the project**

No matter how good the teacher or curriculum is, if the learning doesn't connect to the learners' needs and interests, it may be limited in helping students achieve success. The implementation of multiliteracies in the class and curriculum create increased opportunities for learners to connect the world of the classroom to their own personal needs and investments, therefore increasing learner engagement. Multiliteracies pedagogies also consider the changing nature of literacy and real-life literacy practices of students are regarded as having an important place in the classroom.

In this paper I will argue that multiliteracies allow for:

- 1- Diverse ways of connecting classroom-based assignments and learning to students' identities, interests, backgrounds, and imagined futures outside the classroom.
- 2- Learners to activate their first language knowledge to assist them in learning the L2.
- 3- Learning that may be topic or content specific but that is relevant for contemporary and real world opportunities and futures.
- 4- Use of a variety of teaching approaches and texts which can accommodate different kinds of knowledge and ways of using literacy, and in this way increases learning potential.

In recent years there has been a substantial number of papers written on multiliteracies pedagogies and identity in examining elementary, middle years or high school learners.

However, adult English as a second language, and English for academic purposes has largely escaped the focus of these studies and the private ESL industry remains virtually invisible in the literature. In this paper I will explore these adult ESL contexts through an examination of the existent literature, as well as the literature based on other ages and contexts to draw upon relevant and compatible findings.

### **Guiding questions**

1. What are the benefits of incorporating multiliteracies in ESL classes for adults?
2. In what ways can students L1 language and culture be incorporated and benefit ESL students in learning L2 -using multimodal and multilingual meaning making?
3. What does the literature say about how multiliteracies are currently implemented in ESL for adults?
4. What are some recommended ways of incorporating multiliteracies into adult ESL classes?

## Theoretical Framework

I will approach the studies in the literature review from the viewpoint of The Literacy Expertise Framework of Cummins, Early & Stille (2011). The focus of this framework is on the importance of how “knowledge is generated and identities are negotiated” by student-teacher interactions in the classroom (p.13). Students’ literacy development is said to be highest when these interactions “maximise both cognitive/literacy engagement and identity investment” (p.13). Cummins, Early & Stille state that there is “overwhelming evidence” that engagement is “a direct determinant of literacy attainment” (p.13). Identity investment is also key as students are said to engage only when engagement is “identity-affirming” (p.14).

The Literacy Expertise framework includes three parts:

1. Focus on Meaning- Which includes gaining an understanding of content, but also developing a critical perspective on literacy.
2. Focus on Language- Which entails: a) explicit knowledge/instruction of how the “linguistic system” works, b) developing a metalanguage to talk about it and, c) helping students to acquire a critical awareness the social function of language in society.
3. Focus on Use- Encourages transformative practice in which students take the learning from the classroom into their lives in concrete terms using “a range of linguistic registers, including academic ones” (Cummins, Early & Stille, 2011, p. 32).

## **Overview**

This paper is organized into five chapters: 1-The introduction, 2- literature review, 3-a description of the research instrument, the multiliteracies questionnaire, 4- the results of the questionnaire, and 5-the interpretations of the study and concluding remarks. In the following chapter, the literature review, I present the background of the concept of multiliteracies, explain its principal objectives, and analyse key aspects of multiliteracies through a presentation of literature. Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study including its objective and the participants as well as a description of the research instrument- the multiliteracies questionnaire. The fourth chapter presents the results of the study for each of the major focal areas of the questionnaire. Chapter five offers an interpretation of these results, suggestions for future research, and discussion of the limitations of the study and the hypothesis.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review some of the influential literature related to multiliteracies. In the first part I outline key research which led to a shift from the traditional concept of literacy to current multi-literacy based concepts. In the second part I outline various aspects of learning considered central to the teaching of multiliteracies. Within this context I present some case studies which show their use in practice, and attempt to demonstrate how these aspects of the multiliteracies pedagogy are applicable and valuable in an adult oriented ESL context.

I have chosen to use the term ESL throughout this paper rather than English as an additional language (EAL) or English Language Learner (ELL) as it is the predominant term used in much of the literature and in many English language institutes within Canada. However, a strong argument could be made for the use of EAL as more appropriate as many learners of English are multilingual language users with two or more languages in addition to English. While ELL is in common usage in some circles, particularly in the United States, personally I believe that it does not disambiguate adequately the difference between a learner of English as a native language -as all native language always will be- and English as a second or additional language. A further point of note is that the distinction between ESL and English as a foreign language (EFL) has been called into question. The distinction between the two is based on the learner's current need and whether the language is learned in an environment where it is a native language (Cook, 2001 p.141). This division is considered problematic as it does not recognize the more complex reality of language use (Kachru, 1997; Cook, 2001; Lotherington, 2007). Cook says that perhaps the most common use of English in the world is unaccounted for by this ESL/EFL based distinction: day-to-day communication and transactions which take place between speakers who are not native speakers of English in countries where English is neither an

official nor a minority language. Additionally, it does not account for adult English learners who in some major cities with large immigrant populations may be able to carry out most day-to-day activities within a local community largely in their native language (Cook, 2001).

### **Background: From traditional concepts of literacy to multiliteracies**

#### **From autonomous to ideological literacy**

Traditionally, literacy was defined simply as the ability to read and write print or handwritten based text (Lotherington, 2007, p. 891). Learning to read and write was viewed as the acquisition of universal “technical” and “logical” skills, which were considered value “neutral” and offered to confer positive “cognitive consequences” (Street, 1984, p. 2) to all who acquired them. These were said to facilitate logical processes such as “ ‘empathy’, ‘abstract context-free thought’, ‘rationality’, ‘critical thought’ ” (Street, 1984) independent from cultural norms and considered to be of equal benefit for all. People without these literacy skills were said to lack the ability to develop context free logical thinking and adopt different perspectives to concepts (Street, 1984, p.3). Street (1984) was one of the first researchers to challenge this concept, and has become associated with a stream of literacy analysis known as New Literacy Studies. Street called this belief in a context-free neutral viewpoint of literacy the “autonomous” model of literacy. He argued that this autonomous model disguised the “cultural and ideological assumptions” which underpin it, allowing them to be presented as “neutral and universal” (Street, 2008, p.4). Street claimed that this autonomous model was used to impose dominant western-based “conceptions of literacy onto other cultures”. In counterpoint to this Street presented the ideological model of literacy according to which literacy is embedded in local social and cultural practices. According to this concept the patterns of interaction between students and teachers are social practices which affect the literacy skills and views to be learned, and reflect and reinforce

relations of power. In other words, learning literacy is learning the rules and social roles of individuals and the expectations of how to address and interact with one another according to a given cultural/social view. For this reason it is impossible for literacy to represent a neutral set of skills or knowledge (p.4).

With the advent of socially situated viewpoints of literacy, such as those of Street (1984) and Heath (1983), along with the failure of traditional literacy programs, many educators, researchers and academics concluded that the autonomous model of literacy was not appropriate for understanding the multitude of ways that writing and reading were practiced around the world, nor to design programs which were appropriate to the local needs or practical reality of the people it purports to make literate (Street, 2008, p. 5).

### **Connecting the classroom to home and community**

In recognizing the concept of literacy as being socially situated and based on the language practices of the users- the personal literacy history of learners becomes a central point of focus in literacy teaching. What literacy practices does the learner bring with him/herself to class? Who are these associated with (family, friends, school-based)? In what context and for what purpose were they learned? (This could include certain activities such as reading books with parents, memorizing material for tests, writing up store inventories for business at home, learning the words to church hymns, writing e-mails, formal reference or complaint letters, taking minutes at a meeting, sharing anecdotes, and so forth). Also, what specific social, cultural or linguistic ways of doing things are these practices associated with?

As learners bring with them a multitude of ways of knowing and doing literacy based on social, cultural, linguistic and economic differences, it became important to bridge the gap

between home and community based literacy on the one hand and school/academic based learning on the other.

Early and Gundersen (1993) looked at how to make effective connections between the literacy uses of home, community and the classroom. They argued that the dominant traditional school based literacy instruction has negative effects on immigrants and students of lower economic means whose home literacy practices differ from the “standard”. Early and Gundersen persuasively argued for the replacement of traditional abstract school-based literacy tasks with authentic ones grounded in “real, meaningful, personal reading and writing activities” (p.99). Refuting claims that “working class and ESL homes” do not offer literacy support they argued rather that there are diverse social and cultural “ways of ‘doing’ literacy” (p.100) and practices may differ “in style and focus” from school based standards (p.102). To link home and school practises in a meaningful way Early and Gundersen argued for joint student-teacher led ethnographic studies to critically examine social issues of importance to community members (p. 106). The validation of home literacy in the school is also encouraged to promote respect between students, schools and the community. (p.109-110). Since this time, various publications have focused on making meaningful home-community- school literacy links (Rowse, 2006; Anderson, Kendrick, Rogers & Smythe, 2005; Marshall & Toohey, 2010; Cummins & Early, 2011).

### **Learner identity**

Norton Peirce’s (1995) theory of learner investment is salient for its role in clarifying the integral role of identity in the classroom. In contrast to the psychological concept which held motivation to be an essential learner characteristic, and which was unable to adequately account for poor performance or lack of participation from apparently motivated learners, Norton

Peirce's theory presents identity as socially constructed, complex, and multiple. Learning a language is considered an investment in the learners own social identity, which is continually changing over time and space (p.17-18). Norton Peirce argued that power relations and inequalities also play a role in language learning and challenges the notion that the good language learner can choose under what condition they will interact with members of the target language as 'deficient' speakers of the language. She called for "an awareness of the right to speak" (p. 18). Norton (2001) helps us understand that learner communities are not only physical ones we inhabit (the classroom, home, soccer team, etc.), but are also imagined communities relating to their desired, imagined futures. The case of two immigrant adult ESL learners is presented whose imagined communities and their related investments were left unrecognized and un-respected, and they, therefore, stopped attending class in spite of strong investments in learning the language. Norton argues that to "engage learners' identities (p. 170) it is important to attempt to learn what the imagined or desired connection to future communities are, and to the extent that it is appropriate or productive to encourage learners in their investments.

Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997) examined the complex layers of social identity and language among immigrants and their children in England and present the case of immigrants for whom English is their L2, yet who are more proficient in the use of English than their 'native' language. Additionally, they discuss those who reject affiliation with their home based culture for varying reasons. The authors also disputed the assumption that English language learners in the classroom are newcomers to the society, or that long term immigrants with English as an L2 should permanently be considered language learners. The challenge is presented of elaborating TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) pedagogies which adequately address the diverse and complex nature of identity and cultural linguistic affiliations of long term ethnic

minority immigrants or their children and call for “developing more effective and more pupil-sensitive classroom and curriculum responses to multilingual urban contexts” (p. 558). The authors suggest a framework, which would replace “native speaker” and “mother tongue” with the three more informative terms “language expertise”, “language affiliation”, and “language inheritance” to guide educators in examining students’ skills and needs in more considered and useful ways. An implication being that teachers must resist making assumptions about language learners’ identities or needs based on cultural or linguistic backgrounds, but rather should work towards identifying them as individuals with a complex and unique set of traits, backgrounds and needs.

### **Multiliteracies**

In 1996 The New London Group (NLG), a group of ten prominent scholars and researchers published the seminal paper *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures*. Defining the fundamental mission of education as providing equal opportunities to all students and ensuring that as a result they will have the same access to participate fully in “public, community and economic life” (NLG, 2000, p. 9) the New London Group argued for a re-conceptualization of literacy to account for two major shifts in the use of the English language.

First, it was recognized that the growing diversity of national populations needed to be accounted for- it was no longer possible to talk of one standardized model of English as new arrivals brought with them different patterns of literacy and language use. With increased diversity locally and greater connections globally the NLG called for the “need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities, interest, intentions, commitments, and purposes that students bring to learning” (p.18). Second, with the rapid and widespread growth of information technology and multimedia (NLG, 2000, p. 9), they posited that the nature

and meaning making of texts had fundamentally changed. They considered that literacy could no longer be accurately nor practically referred to as only learning to read and write monomodal printed text, as meaning is increasingly spread over a mix of visual, sound and print based modes. The term multiliteracies was coined by the NLG to refer to these two aspects- multiple social and cultural ways of using literacy, and the various modes of literacy. Due to their recognition of multiliteracies in the use of language the NLG called for an examination of what is being taught in schools and a rethinking as to whether the needs of literacy had changed. The New London Group expanded their concept of literacy beyond the traditional print-centred definition to recognize and include all aspects of linguistic meaning-making as they occur in various forms in real life: print, audio, spatial, gestural, visual modes, as well as multimodal forms (NLG, 2000, p. 28). The constructivist notion of design of language argues that in learning a language students do not just memorise and learn fixed static linguistic forms – or “available design”, but rather that meaning is socially situated and constructed and will always change in some manner or be re-designed from the cultural and historical meaning. According to this concept, language users in their meaning making are re-designing language and “reconstruct and renegotiate their identities” (p.23).

The NLG referred to received design as: available, previously used and experienced examples of texts (understood in the broad sense as spoken written, visual etc.) in recognizable patterns from which we can understand their intention or purpose (greetings, essays, threats and so forth). Re-design refers to the notion that, although users of language may draw upon “patterns of meaning that are more or less predictable,” the particular combination of language and the context specific aspect of its use will always take on new meaning , shifting in some aspect in focus, tone, or form (p. 22).

A central contribution of the New London Group's multiliteracies theory was the multiliteracies pedagogical framework, comprised of four components:

1-Situated practice: This considers the importance of "immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners" (The New London Group, p. 33).

2- Overt Instruction: Refers to the role of the teacher in intervening on the behalf of her/his students', teaching and scaffolding learning collaboratively to help the learners gain greater skills and abilities. In evaluation the focus is developmental, guiding the learner to "further thought and action" (p.34) as opposed to the more traditional focus on reproducing knowledge.

3- Critical Framing: This aims to help the students gain the ability to place their learning in social, cultural, political, historical context and analyze and critique it, rather than accepting it as value neutral.

4-Transformed Practice: This represents the viewpoint of the necessity of assisting learners to reflect and create "new practices" (p.35) based on their own values and goals and to enable them to transfer them beyond the classroom.

Recognizing the historicity of each of these four components, one of the principal contributions of the NLG's was to argue that the implementation of all four *in conjunction* were essential for optimal teaching. These pedagogical components were not intended to replace existing teaching practices or to be learned in sequence, but rather to complement each other to form the basis of a literacy pedagogy that would "work pragmatically" and give students the knowledge and skills needed to get a "decent job" based on the needs of the "new economy" (Cope & Kalantzis (2009. p. 170).

Additionally the New London Group called for the development of a metalanguage to "...identify and explain differences between texts, and relate these to the contexts of culture and

situation in which they seem to work” (p. 24). The metalanguage was meant to be an open-ended, flexible “tool kit” from which teachers could choose the most appropriate tools for the context of analysis. Noting that teachers must be motivated to work on the metalanguage with the students for it to work, the New London Group cautioned against overly formalizing the process of creating the metalanguage and placing “unreasonable demands” or rules and “standards of correctness” on teachers and students (p.24).

Kress, one of the contributors to the NLG, is well-known for his theory of social semiotics which seeks to explain the role of visual and multimodal aspects of sign making in society and attempting to formulate a ‘visual grammar’ of modern literacy. Kress (2000) emphasizes the critical role of visual and multimodal forms in understanding and designing texts due to the massively increased presence of modern multimedia and states “it is now impossible to make sense of texts, even of their linguistic parts alone, without having a clear idea of what these other features might be contributing to the meaning of a text" (p. 337).

## **2.1 MULTILITERACIES IN PRACTICE: CASE STUDIES**

Since the publication of the New London Group’s *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* in 1996 a great number research papers, case studies and edited volumes have been published, emphasizing different aspects of literacy or using various frames of reference to further theorize and elaborate these concepts. Additionally, many case studies have been conducted to explore the benefits and limitations of classroom practices that utilize pedagogies based on the theory of multiliteracies including numerous compiled volumes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Burke & Hammett, 2009; Pullen & Cole, 2010; Cummins & Early, 2011). This field of studies is known variously as New Literacy Studies, multiliteracies, or multi literacies -depending on the school of thought, aspects of literacy emphasized, or pedagogical framework drawn upon. An in-

depth presentation of the points of variance between these different multi-literacy focused schools is beyond the scope of this paper. In brief, Gallego and Hollingsworth's (2000) *multiple literacies* framework presents *school literacies*, *community literacies* and *personal literacies* (In Lotherington, 2007, p. 892). School literacies are forms needed for social adaptation to contexts of dominant language use, while the community and personal literacies are based on situated experiences- the latter at times critiquing school based literacies and the former at times critiquing both school and community literacies. These literacies are not clearly separated and at times overlap. New Literacy Studies, while influential on the work of multiliteracies, has typically been considered less interested in pedagogical applications, in contrast to *multiliteracies* (Rowse, Kosnick & Beck, 2008, p. 111). In this chapter, as my aim was to look at pedagogical implications, I focus mainly on work associated with the multiliteracies of the New London Group.

A significant amount of writing and research has been conducted on the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogies in elementary, middle or high schools, however, in spite of the steady growth in numbers and economic importance of the adult ESL education sector, including college or university based English for Academic Purposes and private ESL education, there appears to be a relative lack of research in this area.

Of the studies which have been done in this adult ESL or EAP context, most of them are in colleges or universities, and a number of them explicitly focus on only one or two of the four areas of pedagogical focus called for by multiliteracies. The use of multiliteracies in private ESL institutes appears to remain largely undocumented. This strongly suggests that adult ESL is an area which calls for greater research to investigate empirically the potential compatibility of multiliteracies pedagogies to adult ESL contexts. Nonetheless, on the basis of the existent

literature, focused on both adult and younger learners, there are grounds to believe that many of the educational benefits of multiliteracies pedagogies will apply in the adult ESL context.

By examining various aspects of learning and teaching, which are considered central to the social and educational goals of multiliteracies oriented pedagogies, I have attempted to demonstrate the rationale for the application of multiliteracies in an adult oriented context in this chapter of the paper. I offer the caveat that further adult ESL classroom based research will need to be undertaken to demonstrate empirically which aspects of this hypothesis will practically carry over to the adult ESL context. This research will need to consider in greater detail specific context based variables such as language level taught, content focus, cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds of teachers and students, and access to materials among other factors.

### **Equitable learning opportunities and inclusion**

One of the main goals of multiliteracies is to provide equitable opportunities in education for all, including those who may be marginalized and discriminated against for their socio-cultural, or literacy backgrounds, which vary from that of mainstream schools or society-including international immigrants, members of national socio-linguistic minorities, or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The kind of interaction that teachers have with their students are said to either help enable and affirm positive identity options and increase self-expression (what Cummins, Early & Stille (2011) term “collaborative relations of power”), or disempower them by forcing them to accept dominant social norms or standards -which are damaging to the identities of students through the use of “coercive relations of power” (p. 25). National educational systems and standards, which have denied indigenous language and culture their place, are an example of coercion, with its concomitant result of social and economic marginalization.

### *Use of various modalities for different needs*

Inclusion can refer to giving students of all backgrounds a welcome place and teaching respect for one another (Rowell, Kosnik & Beck, 2008); it can also include teaching practices that give space for the demonstration and sharing of knowledge through a variety of modalities which differ from print based practices traditionally given primacy in Western schooling systems.

Some important examples have come from post-apartheid South Africa where considerable challenges exist to create equal learning opportunities for marginalized learners of English as a second language. These studies demonstrate how visual, oral or mixed modalities can be used effectively to teach and assess learners from marginalized ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Newfield & Stein, 2000; Stein, 2000; Archer, 2006; Archer 2010). These studies, set variously in high school and adult ESL or EAP oriented classes, show how the use of various modes in the ESL classroom not only can provide more equitable access but some modes appear to be more effective at conveying certain kinds of meaning.

Stein (2000) is important in adding to our understanding of how multimodal media can be used to promote equitable access to meaning making resources for people of diverse backgrounds. In this paper the author presents an analysis of a project she offered to her undergraduate ESL classes over a period of two years in South Africa. Stein states that oral, gestural and musical modes are far more common than written texts in Black South African homes, and argues that the use of the visual mode as a sensory and cognitive activity enables many ESL students who struggle with writing to produce more logical, coherent written texts (p. 335). In a multimodal project students were required to document literacy practices of the workplace or home through taking a series of photos which they mounted on a poster with

captions and an accompanying written full text explanation. The taking of a photograph is said to give the sense of ownership and power to students struggling with the written word.

Furthermore, a sense of physical connection is established between the object- the photo, and the concept- the writing assignment -which moves it beyond the linguistic to the “material world” (p.336). While in this paper no supporting data is presented, Stein asserts that “This project has repeatedly demonstrated the value of photography as an entry point to academic writing (p.335).

Archer (2010), also from South Africa, takes a similar stance to Stein in looking at multimodality in terms of “power and access” in university academic curriculum courses, where most students are academically disadvantaged ESL students. Archer indicates an intention of using different modalities not only as a way of apprenticing those with literacy backgrounds that vary from the dominant academic forms, but to explore how the meaning making resources can lend themselves to alternative practices. Archer points out the need for a metalanguage to analyze and understand modern multimodal texts and assignments and emphasizes the complexity of these. She proposes that they require the ability to use four kinds of language: “the English language system, academic discourse, mode-specific language associated with the analysis of the visual and a metalanguage of critical analysis” (p. 202). Focusing on the linkages between visual images and accompanying written text, Archer shows how some forms of meaning are more clearly carried by one mode or the other- such as affect being achieved more strongly through visual images. In analyzing multimodal posters with images and text Archer also looks at their issue of congruency or lack of congruency between visuals and text which can confuse or be used to mislead readers. This concept of congruency carries important implications for reading modern mass media where the impression of the meaning of the written text can be altered or even manipulated by the use of incongruent visual images. Archer suggests that

construction of multimodal texts demonstrating congruency between the modes can be an element of assessment for assignments.

### ***Power relations and equal access in the classroom***

Based on a series of multimodal lessons with a linguistically and culturally diverse group of grade six students, Mills (2009) draws upon the premise that multiliteracies reading should be “critical, social practice” that help students think about and critique texts and question how they may reproduce “dominant cultural values” (p.105). Mills found that teacher methods of controlling and punishing students for behaviour issues resulted in unequal access to multimodal resources, and in turn the skills and meaning making associated with them. The disruptive students, who were prohibited from completing digital moviemaking aspects of a class assignment, were mostly ‘economically marginalized’ boys and the punishment involved writing monomodal handwritten work. Mills found that this form of disciplinary action caused a divide in the form of pedagogy implemented. Students were grouped according to ability, with the low-level group mainly comprised of “culturally, linguistically and socio-economically marginalized” students who received transmission based pedagogy and print based monomodal literacies, while higher level ability were given access to more progressive multimodal pedagogy. Mills states that this furthered their marginalization as the monomodal writing tasks did not work to “foster decision-making, communication or creative and technological skills that are required to transcend working-class jobs” (Mills, 2009, p. 110).

An additional concern, according to Mills, is that the classroom discourse favoured the dominant culture- Anglo-Australian, middle class students whose socialization in the home echoed the patterns of Western school discourse – such as raising their hands and waiting to be nominated to speak by the teacher. On the other hand indigenous Australian students used the

form of discourse common to their culture – that of replying without being called upon by the teacher. Mills' (2009) study points out the limitations of a pedagogical approach -whether multiliteracies or traditional-to provide “equitable access” to all students -unless understood in relation to the “complex power relations in the institution of schooling” that constrain or enable it (p.110).

Issues of discipline, as noted by Mills, may not be as common in the adult ESL classroom; however, this study highlights the need for educators to have an awareness of the dominant social discourses and power structure which may serve to marginalize certain learners of any age. The manner in which the teacher implements the lesson and his /her treatment of students, especially marginalized ones will have an impact on the message they receive of their place and role in the classroom, and perhaps in society. Cummins, Early, Leone and Stille (2011) state that in their actions and choices educators are not only teaching content but are creating a set of images for their students of themselves as teachers, of the identity options for the students, of the kind of society that we want our students to help form. If teachers wish to create classrooms that promote inclusivity, equitable relations and that help students engage critically with language, then it is critical for them to remember that they are modelling expectations of social and power relations -which may have an impact on what students' learn in the classroom and even on choices they make for their futures.

### ***Deficient learner identities***

International adult ESL learners and national minority students may feel isolated from their classmates and the local community, and adopt negative learner identities when using English. Many learners feel judged as deficient, inferior or as “illegitimate” language speakers or writers when measured against the abilities of their fellow classmates or against the impossible

yard stick of the “idealized native speaker” (Leung et al., 1997, Norton, 1995; Lam, 2000; Morita, 2004; Fernstein, 2008). This sense of vulnerability may impede students from fully and openly participating and utilizing opportunities to practice the language.

Teachers should be aware that many students adopt a deficient learner identity- and should find ways to support and encourage ESL students to forge more positive learner identities. Additionally, teachers should be sensitive to the fact that what may be viewed as deficient ways speaking and writing English often reflect students’ legitimate first language discursive practices (Steinman, 2003).

While not an actual case study, Fernstein (2008) considers the issue of how many ESL students take on negative writing identities of being deficient or "incompetent" as they experience difficulty in conforming to the academic discourse required by university programs. The author presents the concept of language conflict as better suited than the deficiency model to understand the difficulties experienced by ESL writers. According to this concept, when writing, ESL students experience conflict between "competing discourses" and they often develop a negative viewpoint towards writing as a consequence of the negative academic response they receive. Fernstein advocates for assisting students to analyze and discuss the challenges or struggles they face as writers and giving them voice to counter negative writer identity.

Additionally, Fernstein argues for explicit explanations of aspects that make for "good" writing as opposed to "bad" (register, dialect, the differences between spoken and written language privileged and marginalized forms) and strategies to work on these aspects. This includes analyzing differences in language use and style and how these differences relate to aspects of personal writer identity such as: "access, ethnicity, race, dis/ability and class"(p.51).

Steinman (2003) argues that teachers need to be aware that what is often deemed as incorrect or unacceptable writing practices are actually legitimate discursive practices common to the first language of the student. She advocates exploring with the students their way of writing and knowing language and helping them see their difficulties in English writing not as deficiency of self -but rather as different discursive practices. Steinman worked with students to help them gain a greater awareness and understanding of language use patterns by encouraging students to build on their first language knowledge and compare and contrast patterns of use between English and their first language. The author suggests that equal benefit befalls the teacher -in becoming aware that the assumptions of good writing are based on Western rhetorical styles and in becoming more sensitive in the corrective feedback they give (p. 85).

Miller (2007) offers a note of caution about the limits that may exist in helping ESL students attain positive learner identities or positioning in the class. Based on a discourse analysis of interviews with three adult immigrant ESL students, Miller uses positioning theory to analyse their subject identities. He finds that a supportive affirming class atmosphere and teacher support helped achieve “relatively powerful subject positions” where they felt confident and comfortable expressing themselves in class, yet this positioning was not maintained in real life situations outside of class for two of the learners, where they experienced negative reactions from English speakers. The third learner, suggests Miller, maintained positive positioning in spite of limited English competency, as he held a position of respect and power as a Buddhist teacher who was able to depend on translators to assist him to communicate.

## **Connecting the classroom to the learners' community/ies and interests**

For adult ESL learners to achieve success in college or university it is important to learn “academic literacy practices” and engage “in social transformation of identity and roles within a new learning community” (Senyshyn & Chamberlin-Quinlisk, 2009, p. 168). The classroom itself may be limited in its ability to provide access to these practices. Norton and Toohey (2002) note that, while language practices are embedded in the activities of a community of users, in most language classrooms all members are newcomers to the language practices except the teacher. While the classroom may aim to expose students to the academic language practices, one teacher in a class full of students is poorly placed to approximate the voice or instantiate the practices of an entire local target language community. There is, therefore, a need for greater exposure to the target language community to allow the learners to gain access to local social and language practices.

Although participating in local community activities with native speakers may be generally associated with successful learners (Senyshyn & Chamberlin-Quinlisk, p. 168), Norton Peirce's (1995) concept of learner investment challenges the notion that the good language learner can choose under what condition they will interact with members of the target language. Power relations and inequalities restrict the learners' opportunities to speak as they may be positioned as “illegitimate” or deficient speakers and feel they lack “the right to speak” (Norton Pierce, 1995, p.18). Schools have the potential to play a valuable role in assisting English language learners to gain confidence and challenge some of these real-world inequalities by facilitating opportunities to connect ESL students and local English speaking community members.

Senyshyn and Chamberlin-Quinlisk (2009) present a case study of a program which attempts to address the need to provide greater interaction between ESL college students and local English speakers. In this study, immigrant ESL students are paired with 'native' speaking intercultural communication students with the goal of providing "authentic and transformative" (p. 169) learning. Through their interaction, both the ESL students and local native speakers moved beyond seeing each other for their differences- as 'alien'- and got to see that there are shared commonalities. Partners met up after school for an hour five times over the semester and wrote reflective journals, discussed in groups and made presentations on their experience. The ESL students gained confidence and a significant amount of knowledge about the social and cultural practices of the local American community, and both ESL students and native speakers found there were more similarities in language learning experience and identity than previously thought. It also challenged their ideas of what a native speaker is - as one ESL student noted that both he and the American had 'accents'.

Marshall and Toohey (2010) demonstrate how connections between home and school can be made through community funds of knowledge: students interview family members about personal narrative stories to capture their history and voice, and bring this to the classroom in terms of projects using various modes. These stories allow for greater participation of parents and grandparents who may tell their stories in their language, which is then translated by the student into a bilingual text which use a mix of old (printed text) and new media (audio recording, videos, and so forth).

Cummins and Early (2011) present a strong case for making community connections, and increasing learner engagement through the creation of dual language identity texts. Identity texts are described as pieces of work, projects or performances that can be "written, spoken, signed,

visual, musical dramatic, or combinations in multimodal form” (p. 3) based on the interests and identities of students. In line with the spirit of the New London Group’s multiliteracies pedagogy, the identity texts’ central purpose is to affirm student identity, empower and create opportunities for equity for students from marginalized backgrounds. Student-generated identity texts connect students’ personal lives, communities and interests to their classwork. Texts are produced both in their native language (L1) as well as in the target language, which in most of these case studies is English. The role of teachers is to guide or scaffold students in terms of learning objectives and help them “invest their identities in the creation” (p.3). The authors state that the improvements in English and outcome in the identity texts produced go “far beyond what might be expected from typical newcomer students” (p.19).

*In Identity texts: the collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools* 18 case studies are presented by various teacher/researchers from Canada and around the world which convincingly demonstrate the value of using identity texts for second language learners. The contexts include elementary, middle and high school classrooms, and the texts are prepared and presented by individuals, in groups and even co-created in classrooms across the world through the use of the internet.

The latter case involves two partner grade seven ESL classrooms - one from Hong Kong, the other from Canada. These students co-created identity texts via a project website which allowed them to present and discuss various aspects of the culture, geography, history and climate of their respective home countries. The author/teacher states that interviews with students and teachers showed that literacy engagement occurred as the students experienced a sense of ownerships from being authors and in sharing their work on the website with parents and friends (Ng, 2011).

## **Access to a broad range of literature**

Multiliteracies emphasizes the need for student exposure to a broad range of literature and the kinds of daily literacy experiences that learners are likely to encounter and use outside the class. Accordingly classroom texts should go beyond classic Anglo-centred literature classics and include various kinds of text such as science fiction, internet based texts, recipes and music lyrics among others (Rowse, Kosnik, & Beck, 2008).

The use of multimedia based texts is a particularly important element of many multiliteracies case studies. While the core benefits and values of multiliteracies pedagogies are not dependent on digital technology, its various forms (Facebook, e-mail, texting, tweeting, surfing the net, filming, instant voice or text messaging, producing iMovie's, and communicating through online gaming avatars among others) offer flexible use, ability to access multiple modes and virtually endless information -making them an easy fit with multiliteracies.

Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) contend that the massive increase in the use of computer-mediated communications in recent years suggests that for many "performing linguistically structured identities in second and foreign languages now involves digital mediation as often as, or more often than, non-digital forms of communication" (p. 554). Given that young people spend a large percentage of their time interacting online and that these forms of communication are relevant to the lives and experiences of learners, it's also essential to actively incorporate them into literacy classes (Burke & Hammett, 2009).

While the use of technology offers many potential affordances, Street (2008) believes we must guard against adopting a deterministic viewpoint of the role of technology as being necessarily beneficial to literacy itself. In much the same way that his theory of ideological literacy helped challenge the deterministic concept that literacy itself would lead to cognitive and

social benefits, the use of multimedia technology in promoting literacy depends on the “social mediating factors” associated with its use (p. 7). The success in use of technology depends, in large part, on the role of the teacher in coordinating and guiding technology based activities, and to reflect critical use of language culture and context and the effort of the teacher (Kern, 2006).

A related concern is that computers are recreating and reinforcing global inequalities as wealthy countries and economic classes are readily able to access the technological affordances of computers and computer mediated communication (CMC), while the less affluent are left behind. While recognizing the concern over this digital divide, rather than rejecting the use of internet technology (IT) for its relation to large scale western corporate power, Cummins (2000) makes the case for language educators to look at how they can use computers not only to help students for their individual language learning needs, but in “critical and constructive ways to strengthen the social fabric of our local and global communities” (p.539). According to Cummins, internet technology has “considerable potential to promote language learning in a transformative way when it is aligned with a pedagogy oriented towards promoting collaborate relations of power in the classroom and beyond” (p.539).

### ***The promise and challenges of implementing multimodal pedagogies***

Tan and Guo (2009) demonstrate the challenges inherent in substantively shifting from a traditional print based approach to one that recognizes the literacy needs of the digital, globalized age of information. This paper is based on a year-and-half long project to introduce critical multimedia literacy to English content classes in a Singaporean high school, where its implementation into the academic English classes was considered a valuable addition. However, the authors state that pressure to prepare students for national “high-stakes language assessments” (p. 323) meant emphasis on multimodal critical literacy was secondary and was

used to support the learning of conventional print literacy skills. Although the authors acknowledge that critical multimodal skills are necessary for allowing students to access secure futures in the increasingly global and multicultural world, they conclude that that if there is a weak alignment between traditional classroom practices and national “high stakes tests” assessments on the one hand, and critical multimodal skills on the other, the effectiveness of latter is likely to be compromised.

Tan and McWilliam (2009) present a similar challenge in their case study of two schools attempting to implement a multiliteracies approach. One school had a population of highly socially and economically advantaged students, the other school “empty suitcase refugees” (p.215).

In the first case, the authors found whereas teachers were in favour of a “twenty-first century” multiliteracies pedagogical model, the traditional school “cultures and values” were difficult to displace and worked at odds with the new model, limiting the potential for multiliteracies to transform the learning process (p.216).

A newly opened multimodal student media centre was considered an important resource to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skill sets, yet the authors note that students were ambivalent about its value. The authors attributed this ambivalence to a pragmatic assessment on the part of the students to dedicate their time to what they judged to be the most valued and rewarded activity: learning traditional print modes. Students were said to recognize that these traditional print modes were directly related to the path for future opportunities, through the evaluation of exams. The use of the digital student media centre, on the other hand, was said to offer less immediate and tangible benefits.

The second case involved an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) school specializing in delivering intensive ESL classes to immigrants to help ensure they attained the required level to be integrated within mainstream secondary schools as quickly as possible.

Difficulties in helping a group of African refugees who had fled traumatic situations and who had received limited education led to a collaboration between the researchers and school to develop a “multimodal social networking virtual learning platform” (p. 221). Similar to the first case, the teachers were initially supportive of exploring all ways possible to increase student engagement with learning and help them to transition. However, the teachers were said to have a “resolute” commitment to teaching basic English print literacy and numeracy that impeded the use of the multimedia based learning. Tan and McWilliam say that while the students understood the need for basic literacy skills, they “chafed at the ‘baby stuff’ through which alphabetic literacies were delivered” (p.221). The authors note that ironically, while teachers expressed concern about stressing “pre-literate” students by teaching them complex ICT technology, the students themselves demonstrated ease in using devices such as iPods to download and share music without any problems. Tan and McWilliam contend that in-part the teachers concern over the use of technology reflected their own lack of familiarity or comfort in using it. This, the authors state, points to an issue that is not only pedagogical but generational, as mature teachers are less likely to have the level of knowledge and comfort in using digital technology than the younger generation which has been brought up using it. The authors conclude that as schools continue to struggle to understand and adapt their pedagogies to the modern “globalized” post-industrial age digital multiliteracies are viewed as only an extension of traditional print based schooling. As long as this remains true, the authors assert that digital multiliteracies will remain on the margin.

In some teachers may debate whether to teach the old print based literature of the canon or the more modern multimodal forms which are prevalent in the lives of many students, Mills (2009) contends that it is not necessary to choose between one form or the other. She states that the lines between them are becoming “blurred” with the availability of classic literature in electronic versions, which can be viewed and commented on CD-ROM online (p.105).

Difficulty in comprehending multiliteracies was an issue that Rowsell et al. (2008) found among teachers. The authors found that even teachers who had undergone multiliteracies training had difficulties understanding and implementing some of the concepts. These included: difficulty in understanding clearly “the nature of multiliteracies pedagogy” (p.119); a use of literacy forms which was not broad enough according the multiliteracies perspective; insufficient attention to dealing with issues related to values of inclusion to counteract concepts of prejudice in popular culture; insufficient discussion of similarities across group and differences within groups and not enough attention or support to individual students in exploring their way-of life choices and development.

Despite the challenges involved in working to change long- established education practices, schools are at risk of making themselves irrelevant if they do not recognize the new ICT based literacies and needs of their multiliterate learners. Lotherington (2007) states

Education reproduces the social order. Modern education demanded particular knowledges and skills of its educational systems, of which literacy was central. Postmodern education, too, anticipates preparation of the worker, but as capitalism and communication media have changed, so, too have educational priorities for future work demands. (p.898)

### **Critical studies: Transformed learning**

One of the goals of critical literacy is to help learners recognize the social purposes or intention behind any given text whether spoken, written, visual or multimodal and to learn to see these viewpoints as socially situated, and be able to question or challenge them. According to Cummins et al. (2011), “If students are to participate effectively within a democratic society they should be able to ‘read’ how language is used to achieve social goals: to elucidate issues, to persuade, to deceive, to include, to exclude etc.”(p.32). For ESL learners, it is also essential to learn how the specific features of language, as well as different registers serve to convey these concepts. This knowledge assists learners to interpret and react to texts as well as to make informed decisions about how to use language to represent or position themselves in English that is socially appropriate and reflects their intentions. Critically analyzing and challenging texts and viewpoints helps students see whose viewpoint and interest are served by a given text, and relates to the larger aspect of students’ ability to make critical decisions about power and social roles.

The widespread use of the internet has created further need to expand critical literacy skills to include digital texts as well as print based ones (Lotherington, 2007). While many adult ESL students have likely been exposed to some form of multimodal texts, it cannot be assumed that they have the tools to critically analyze them, particularly in light of the fact that the meaning of images is not universal but is “culturally bound” (Royce, 2007, p. 366) and therefore they may misinterpret the inter-semiotic meanings of images and text in their English learning.

### ***Critical EAP case studies***

Morgan (2009) describes a critical EAP writing class and its transformative results. In lieu of teaching the students to produce academic type essays, he introduces the students to materials in the form of videos and written texts which introduce a critical perspective and metalanguage to write critical essays about current events or social issues. Morgan states that, “Through the processes of researching, composing and revising an academic L2 essay, self and collective understandings are (re)imagined and potentially transformed.” (p.312). In this class, students research social issues mainly using the internet and present their assignments in various modes- written, with images, sounds, and multimodally. Discrete language skills are not taught in isolation but in the context of the students’ critical social research projects -for example learning how to persuade, slant a story, show positioning and power relations of authors as well as readers and so forth. The research is said to promote “bi-literacy and bilingualism” (Morgan, p.317) as students compare media sources in their L1 and translate these to English and the students are exposed to various sources of authentic texts. In order to be able to analyse and critique meanings students are exposed to a metalanguage discussion in the form of several socially critical videos which students view and discuss, and through associated critical readings. These are said to help them become familiar with how vocabulary, grammar and other linguistic features can be used to achieve various purposes such as to persuade, to slant a story, show positioning and power relations of authors as well as readers and so forth. This study appears to successfully address and fulfil many of the goals of multiliteracies; goals and meanings of texts are constructed together by teacher and students, they gain a critical perspective of social issues, and as the students experience transformative learning as they gain new perspectives, ideas and perhaps goals to take with them out of the classroom.

Grey's (2009) case study is based on two critical English for Academic Purposes business communication classes where the teacher tries to create new and unusual possibilities for her students -which challenge the traditional power structures and patterns of institutional learning. Rather than doing traditional reading and writing exercises students are given multimodal assignments in which they act as ethnographers: photographing images of people. The teacher attempts to reduce the power imbalance between teacher and students by involving students in forming the curriculum and in choosing readings. The final product is a poster of a fused multi-person image, in the creation of which the students discuss, critically examine and challenge ideas based on race, gender and subjectivity. The author argues that this form of analysis would help students prepare for the complex cultural realities of the modern world.

Morgan and Grey's case studies illustrate that, in spite of the constraints associated with delivering curriculum oriented to teaching structured academic forms, styles and genres, there is room for the teacher to introduce critical reflexive perspectives and discussion. Some students may find being asked to be critical unsettling, or confusing -especially those who have been socialized in a system that favours transmission based methods of pedagogy- in particular where questioning of authority and institutions is not encouraged, and where the teacher may be viewed as a figure of absolute authority (Hawkins & Norton , 2009). However, critical pedagogy can be used in a manner respectful of students' beliefs, raising new ways of questioning and assisting them in co-constructing a critical perspective that is socially situated in their experiences. From these new perspectives students may carry transformed ideas, viewpoints and plans of action -or choose to reject them.

## **The transfer of the L1 knowledge as a resource**

The possibility that the use of the L1 in language class can hold benefits for students has rarely even been considered in most language teaching practices for over a century. Most teaching methods over the last few decades and the majority of language course books avoid mention of the use of the L1 in the language classroom -its avoidance being a given (Cook, 2001). Many private language schools prohibit the use of students' first languages with strict English only policies, whereby learners are only permitted to speak English within the classroom or entire school itself. The concept of restricting the use of the speaker's L1 is known as the "monolingual principle" (Howatt, 1984) and holds that language instruction should be "carried out, as far as possible, exclusively in the target language without recourse to students' first language (Cummins, 2008, p. 65).

The L1 was considered a source of negative interference and teachers sought to minimize this through compartmentalizing the use of languages, to keep them separate in the brain, and aimed to de-activate the non-target language (Cook, 407). However, modern research has shown that languages are connected and stored in the same place in the brain and are always activated to some degree (Cook, 2001; Dewaele, 2001; deBot, 2004; Cummins, 2008). Additionally, proficient speakers can readily choose to use one language, change languages or code switch, or insert words or phrase from one language into another without inference or ill effects (Cook, 2001; Grosjean, 1997).

Cummins' (1983) theory of interdependence of proficiency across languages' or Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) lends strong support to the argument against the need to separate languages. According to this hypothesis, knowledge learned in one language carries across to other languages to assist in developing deep level cognitive or literacy abilities in the other

language (Cummins, 2008, p. 68). This is to say that cognitive, academic or literacy related concepts will transfer in a beneficial manner to another language. Another key aspect raised by Cummins (2008) is the importance of activating learners' prior knowledge:

This principle implies that when students are being educated through a second language (either in second/foreign language instruction or in bilingual/immersion programs) instruction should explicitly attempt to activate students' prior knowledge and build relevant background knowledge as necessary. (p.68)

The fact that many L2 classrooms do not recognize the value of the L1 means that learners' prior knowledge is unlikely to be activated and limits the possibilities of L2 expression for students (Cummins, 2008). Cook (2001) stated that an "anti-L1 attitude" has impeded teachers from rationally looking at systematic ways that the L1 can be positively used in the classroom and presents four factors to consider when deciding if the L1 can be of benefit:

*Efficiency:* Can material be taught more effectively through the LI?

*Learning:* Will L2 learning results be assisted by the use of the LI alongside the L2?

*Naturalness:* Do the participants feel more comfortable discussing certain functions or topics in their L1 rather L2?

*External relevance:* Will use of both L1 and L2 assist the students to gain the specific knowledge or skills they will need outside of the classroom?

Cummins (2008) states that in freeing ourselves from "exclusive reliance on monolingual instructional approaches, a wide variety of opportunities arise for teaching bilingual students by means of bilingual instructional strategies that acknowledge the reality of, and strongly promote, cross-language" (p. 65).

Steinman (2007) demonstrates the use of students' L1 knowledge as a resource for reflection and contrastive rhetoric in a university ESL classroom. Students used a language narrative -Suresh Canagarajah's (2001) *The Fortunate Traveller: Shuttling between Communities and Literacies by Economy Class*- as a model to write literacy autobiographies as personal narratives, in which they used contrastive rhetoric to reflect what is valued in their L1, English and a third language, Tamil. Additionally, they created a literacy timeline which allowed them to reflect on the "connectedness of their writing selves" during key points in their process of becoming literate, bi-literate, or multi-literate. Knowledge was said to be co-constructed by the students and teacher. By analysing texts and contrasting the rhetorical style of English with their first language students became the "experts", giving a presentation about how their language varied from English in terms of pragmatics, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and orthography. Students positive reactions to having the opportunity to share their L1 knowledge and sharing of personal language experiences is an example of connecting the learners personal life-worlds to the classroom, highlighting relevance of the learning and increasing engagement.

The attitude of teachers towards the use of learners L1 is an important factor which can be influential on both the students and their families' sense of value or respect, or lack of it. De Angelis' (2011) study looks at the attitude of teachers of various subject matters across the curriculum towards the use of students L1. In the study, completed in Italy, Austria and the UK among teachers of various subject matter, many teachers indicated that they don't make reference to students' home language or culture while in-class or allow their students to speak their home language in class.

While these teachers were from a variety of content course backgrounds rather than specifically trained as language teachers, it shows the continuing prevalence of the monolingual

principle among many teachers. An additional finding of De Angelis was that a large number of teachers believed that it was less important for students to know their home language than a major international language. Based on the prevailing use of the monolingual principle, and research on teacher attitudes such as De Angelis', it is not unreasonable to conclude that many teachers will continue to ignore or sanction the use of the learners L1 in the classroom in spite of research which shows its cognitive benefits. This is a significant concern in terms of limiting students access to their L1 based resources, in terms of the negative message they receive about the social value of their L1, and finally it represents a failed opportunity to engage learner's through connecting their life-worlds to the classroom.

Cummins and Early (2011) present a strong case for the use of the learners L1 to help transfer their knowledge in the construction of L2 texts for young emergent bilingual learners, while helping engage students and promote a spirit of inclusion. Eighteen cases are presented in various countries and contexts with elementary, middle and high school age students. The students were able to make use of their first language resources to research (via books the internet or interviews or other methods) with family or friends and working in teams (or with additional assistance) translated the multimodal texts to English or other L2 texts. The inclusion and recognition of their home language was a source of pride and the active participation of family members and knowledge affirmed their background language and culture. Connecting their life knowledge based in their first language helped engage and connect prior knowledge to the production of the L2 texts, and students with basic language skills would receive editing support from the teacher or fellow students. According to Cummins and Early the students were able to participate in literacy activities produced much greater outcomes from that normally expected of newly arrived students (Cummins & Early, 2011).

As shown in the cases above, the use of learners' L1 helps to bridge their home life and school based identities, increases learner engagement, allows them to use valuable prior knowledge, and transfer skills and knowledge from one language to another.

### **Summary and Limitations**

The case studies and papers presented in this chapter applied some or all of the teaching and learning strategies that are considered central to multiliteracies theory in varying contexts of place, content, student age, and institutional setting. While each study presented a different focal point, a common theme which is critical to multiliteracies is the importance for schools and teachers to engage students by affirming their identities, to recognize and validate the personal attributes and knowledge that students bring to class and to help them connect the classroom-based learning to their own lives and experiences outside of school. These studies demonstrate the potential of a multiliteracies approach to enhance the meaning making in the language classroom, as well as some of challenges that exist as schools and teacher struggle to adapt pedagogies to reflect technological and societal changes that are transforming the way that students use language and literacy.

It is important to note that in drawing on a small number of case studies with widely varying classroom contexts that the findings presented by the authors should not be to extrapolated to draw specific conclusions about the outcomes that multiliteracies practices may have.

Additionally, it needs to be kept in mind that the original framework for the multiliteracies as set out by the NLG was based on a theoretical construct of pedagogical factors, which, in conjunction, could lead to optimal learning results. It was not intended as a methodology, a prescribed sequence of teaching methods or a finished project, but as a

framework and the beginning of an iterative process of exploration and practice, leading to refinement of the theory.

The socially situated context of institutions, classrooms, ages, course content, learner level and mix of L1's will necessarily mean that the teaching approach and results will vary, and the teacher will need to be flexible in adapting teaching strategies appropriately to their institutional and classroom context.

### **CHAPTER 3: THE STUDY-THE MULTILITERACIES QUESTIONNAIRE**

The review of the literature, based on both theory and specific case studies in the previous chapter, demonstrates that there are solid grounds to believe multiliteracies pedagogies hold strong potential to contribute to adult ESL programs. This notion is based on consideration of the various aspects of multiliteracies which apply to the learner regardless of age, including:

- Affirming learner identity and increasing engagement.
- Promoting the use varied forms of literacy that include not only traditional text types and genres such as those required to pass current high stakes exams and university essay based requirements, but also multimodal texts that learners will increasingly need to use for their futures.
- The need for critical literacy skills to negotiate the social meanings and uses of these various print, visual and multimodal texts.
- Engaging the learner's prior knowledge and cross-linguistic transfer through the judicious use of learner L1.

The studies presented in this literature review are part of an important and growing body of research related to multiliteracies. While there are numerous case studies on multiliteracies practices based at the primary and secondary levels very little has been published on multiliteracies in college or university level ESL classrooms. In particular there is a gap in information about these practices in private adult ESL schools. This lack of information motivated the author to create and implement a questionnaire to seek information on the current policies of adult ESL institutions as well as the opinions and practices of adult ESL instructors in these institutions.

## **Objective and focus**

The objective of the questionnaire was to assess adult ESL instructors' knowledge of multiliteracies and to what extent multiliteracies or aspects of them are implemented in local adult ESL classrooms. An assumption made by the author was that knowledge of multiliteracies would vary substantially and the questionnaire was designed in part to assess institutional policies, and instructors' opinions and teaching practices related to aspects of multiliteracies regardless of the degree of teacher familiarity with the term.

The questions can be broadly grouped as follows: (The questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.)

- 1- Role of student's first language and identity in the classroom. This did not include explicit reference to students' socio-cultural backgrounds, but rather focused on the use of L1 and bilingual dictionaries. The inclusion of questions focused on socio-cultural backgrounds was not a point of focus as the researcher made an assumption from his own years of experience in teaching and administering adult ESL programs that students' socio-cultural backgrounds are recognized and celebrated in adult ESL classes.
- 2- The importance of promoting a critical viewpoint of the use of English and the society it is used in.
- 3- Programs or policies which help connect the language learner to the local community of English speakers.
- 4- The use of a broad range of reading and writing materials- both traditional print-based and modern technologically based ICT and multimedia.

- 5- Lastly, to determine instructors' knowledge of the concept of multiliteracies itself. Although a concise definition of multiliteracies was given in the accompanying cover letter, this left ample room for interpretation for those without prior knowledge of the concept.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

This research took place in a major Western Canadian city in March 2012. The questionnaire was sent out to nine adult ESL schools, two private colleges, and four public colleges, including one recently designated with university status.

The criterion for choosing the adult ESL schools and colleges was that they had to be members of the Canadian language training organization, Languages Canada. Languages Canada created a baseline of standards in terms of curriculum, teacher qualifications, facilities and assessment of language schools. Membership is contingent upon the school passing a review of all the above aspects. The criterion of choosing to include Languages Canada members helped ensure a rough equivalence in terms of teaching standards and instructor qualifications. The private colleges all had to have recognized university bridge or transfer programs recognized by universities and include courses such as English for academic purposes as did the public colleges.

### ***The instrument***

The instrument of investigation was a 19-item questionnaire. The questions were based on a mixture of five-point Likert scale questions, as well as several yes/no, open-ended questions and questions where multiple answers were possible. Space for comments or to specify *other* was provided for all questions.

The questionnaire was mailed to 13 institutions in paper form, one was sent by email and in two cases it was dropped-off directly to the institution. The questionnaire invited all instructors in the ESL or EAP departments to participate by completing it. Subsequently it was collected by the program head or equivalent and returned in a pre-paid self-addressed envelope. In several cases, the envelope was picked up by the author, and in a few cases the results were faxed, or scanned and e-mailed to the author. After a period of three weeks the total number of respondents was 57. Of these, 32 were from seven different private language schools, 24 were from three colleges, one private and two public ones, as well as one former college that recently received university status in British Columbia.

The results of the questionnaire were entered into SPSS in order to compute descriptive statistics and the respondents' comments were analyzed to identify common themes in their answers.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter I will briefly present all sections of the questionnaire while focusing in more depth on those aspects which provide the most insight into the main objective of the survey itself; to shed light on the policies of the institutions and the opinions and practices of instructors in relation to multiliteracies theory.

### **Descriptive background of institutions and instructors**

The first series of questions, shown in Table 1 below, requested descriptive background information about the school, the instructor's educational and teaching experience, as well as the course they were teaching at the time of completing the survey.

**Table 1.** Questions related to descriptive information of institutions and instructors.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Questions/statements</b>
1	Name of institution/department
2	Please choose the option that best describes the institution.
3	Please indicate the educational programs or training you have completed.
4	For how long have you taught English as a second language?
5	What is the name/level of the course(s) you currently teach?

Question one was a reference point which helped the researcher evaluate and compare responses from instructors in the same institution who gave descriptions of programs or policies that conflicted. In some cases this helped evaluate to what extent the response reflected a personal interpretation of a policy rather than a description. Question two allowed for respondents to choose among three options: private language school, college or university, or to specify *other*.

Question three allowed respondents to choose one or more of the four options given to indicate their educational background, with space to provide other educational background or

training. A total of 22 different response types were recorded indicating various combinations of educational experiences. A summary of the results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Summary of educational qualifications.

Question 3	Private Lang. Sch.		College		University		Total completed	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Undergraduate degree in TESL/TEFL or SLA	3	9.38	2	8.33	0	0.00	5	8.77
Undergraduate degree- non-ESL focus	27	84.38	12	50.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
TESL/TEFL certificates or diplomas	27	84.38	8	33.33	1	100.00	36	63.16
Graduate degree non TESL/SLA/Applied linguistics	1	3.13	3	12.50	0	0.00	15	26.32
Graduate degree in TESL/SLA/Applied linguistics	0	0.00	12	50.00	1	100.00	13	22.81

*Note:* Total number of respondents Priv. Lang. School 32, College 24, University 1.

This table refers to the number of respondents who indicated having the above qualifications. As most respondents reported having more than one of the above qualifications the total of responses exceeds the number of respondents.

Several respondents with graduate degrees did not indicate having an undergraduate degree and this is reflected in the table. However, the author made the assumption that they do hold undergraduate degrees as well.

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
57	100.00%	0	0.00%	57	100.00%

Question four asked how long respondents had taught ESL/EFL. Five options were given from less than one year to over ten years. A majority indicated over 10 years (61.4%), while only 8.7% indicated they had two or less years of experience. The author had predicted that private ESL instructors would have a lower number of years teaching experience than college and university instructors. While this was shown on average to be true, a large percentage (43.75%) of private school instructors indicated 10 or more years' experience teaching ESL. The percentage of college instructors with over 10 years ESL teaching experience was 83.3%, while the one university instructor also indicated over ten years teaching experience.

Question five was an open-ended question for which respondents were asked to fill in the name of the course(s) they were teaching at the time of completing the survey. For this question the author intended to attempt to analyze whether the level/course content that the respondent

was teaching appeared to cause a measurable deviation in the responses to overall survey answers. For example, an instructor of a pronunciation class might reasonably view the role of reading material and multimedia differently than the instructor of an ELS reading and writing class and this consideration may have influenced his/her responses.

This analysis proved to be problematic as the responses referred to general descriptive course titles that were institution-specific and varied substantially between them. For this reason the ability to accurately group courses according to content or to gauge equivalence between courses with any degree of accuracy was not feasible without extensive inquiries beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, most respondents indicated they were teaching two or more courses which may or may not share similar content with the courses taught by other instructors. This made the prospect of a valid analysis less likely. Recognizing the limitations for analytical purposes the researcher loosely categorized the responses into four broad groups: 1. Beginner to intermediate course levels, 2. Upper intermediate/advanced, 3. Test Preparation, 4. Academic Preparation. Responses were coded according to which one of these groups or a combination of them corresponded to each instructor's response. The most prevalent responses are shown in Table 3 below. The courses taught by several instructors were not clear from their responses (Ex. *all levels*), and several other courses were indicated including pronunciation and business English.

**Table 3.** Courses taught at time of completing the survey.

Question 5.	Private Lang. Sch.		College		University	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Beg. to int.	13	40.63	4	17.39	0	
Upper Int. to Adv.	8	25.00	4	17.39	1	100.00
Test prep.	9	28.13	0	0.00	0	
Academic Prep	6	18.75	11	47.83	1	100.00

*Note:* Most instructors indicated teaching more than one course. If an instructor stated they taught academic preparation and advanced courses this will be reflected in both of these categories above. Other course types such as listening or pronunciation are not reflected in this table.

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
56	98.20%	0	1.80%	57	100.00%

### The role of the L1 in the language classroom

Questions six to ten, as listed in Table 4, below, sought to explore institutional policies, and instructors' beliefs and practices towards the use of learners' L1s in the classroom and/or school.

**Table 4.** Questions related to the role of the L1 in the language classroom.

Number	Questions/statements
6	Does the program have an English-only policy for language use?
7	If you answered yes to question 6, what is the motivation for this policy?
8	Please indicate your opinion: students' use of their native language in ESL class can help them learn English.
9	The use of bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators in class helps students learn.

Question six gave respondents the choice of providing a yes or no answer as to whether the school had an English-only policy, with a space to explain what the actual policy was. A large majority of the respondents- 55 of the 57 (98.2%) stated that there was an English-only

policy. The respondent who responded *no* said that if there was a policy he/she was not aware of it. The one missing respondent did not check yes or no, but made the comment that unofficially there *was* a policy. Both of these last respondents were college instructors. Thirty-five respondents outlined an official policy and the specific rules or consequences associated with not following it, or referred in more general terms to whether it was enforced school-wide or only in the classroom.

The responses show the existence of punitive policies in the majority of institutions. An escalating system of punishment for not adhering to the English-only policy involving warnings, suspension and even expulsion was outlined by instructors of five of the seven private language schools, while instructors from the remaining two did not comment on their school's specific policy. Two of the colleges indicated that there was a system of language warnings, while one of these additionally had a system of positive reinforcement involving rewards for speaking in English. Instructors from one college stated that each teacher set his/her own rules for the in-class language policy; however, they did not specify their own classroom language policy. The university instructor did not describe the policy.

Question seven was an open-ended question, contingent upon answering yes to question six, about the existence of an English-only policy and asked respondents to indicate the motivation for the institute's English-only policy. The author had predicted that in interpreting the institutional policy, instructors' responses would reflect some of their own opinions about the use of a restrictive English-only policy. Fifty-three of the 57 respondents answered this question for a total 92.98% response rate.

The responses focused on different kinds of rationale for the English-only policy and several themes emerged. These were grouped by the researcher as follows, in order of frequency:

1- A way to *encourage* students to maximize English use and practice, 2-A way to *force* students to use and practice English, 3-For *Monitoring, policing, warning or reprimanding* students, 4- To create *class unity* and an *inclusive atmosphere* where all students can understand each other and feel included, and 5- To encourage *immersion*. The author chose this grouping based upon the focus of the responses and the reoccurrence over multiple responses of the descriptive words as italicized above. The author suspects that the various response themes chiefly reflect instructors' personal perspectives or understandings of the reason for the English-only policies as opposed to reflecting an actual stated institutional motivation. This being said, it was not clear from many of the responses whether they reflected what the instructor felt the policy *should* be or whether they were simply stating what they perceived to be the intention of the institution itself in implementing the policy.

Question eight asked for the instructors' response on a five point Likert Scale to the statement that students' use of the L1 in class could help them learn English. Space for respondents to add a comment was also provided. The results in Table 5 below show the responses to this scale as well as two other types of comments that respondents made.

**Table 5.** The use of L1 in the language classroom can help students learn English.

Question 8	Private Lang. Sch.		College		University		Total completed	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly agree	1	3.23	2	8.70			3	5.45
Moderately agree	7	22.58	6	26.09			13	23.64
Not sure	5	16.13	1	4.35			6	10.91
Moderately disagree	12	38.71	6	26.09	1	100.00	19	34.55
Strongly disagree	6	19.35	6	26.09			12	21.82
Depends on learner level- higher helping lower mix translation helps moves things forward	0	0.00	1	4.35			1	1.82
Strongly disagree at higher language level	0	0.00	1	4.35			1	1.82
	31	100.00	23	100.00	1	100.00	55	100.00

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
55	96.50%	2	3.50%	57	100.00%

A majority of the 55 respondents, who completed this item, 56.3%, indicated that they moderately or strongly disagreed with the statement that L1 use could be beneficial in the ESL classroom. In contrast, only 29.9% indicated moderate or strong agreement. Of the 55 respondents, 31 made additional comments about the use of L1 in the classroom or the school. The author grouped these comments according to recurring themes. Notably the predominant theme was the need to discourage, restrict or prohibit the use of L1. Fifteen responses stated that the use of L1 can be useful -but only in low learner levels. Eleven responses showed opposition to the use of L1 (five responses) or recognized the potential value in very specific and restricted circumstances (six responses). It is interesting that only four of the 31 responses mentioned that the use of L1 could be beneficial, without qualifying this use.

The researcher had predicted that there would be less of a bias against the use of the L1 among college instructors due to greater knowledge of second language acquisition theory -50% of college instructors indicated they had completed a graduate degree in a TESL related field while no private ESL instructors had. This prediction appeared to be confirmed by the

percentage of college instructors who moderately or strongly agreed that the use of the L1 can help students learn English (34.79%). The percentage of private language instructors who indicated they agreed was 25.81%. However, the percentage of college and private language school instructors who stated that they moderately or strongly disagreed to the statement was very similar (53.8% for the former, and 58.6% for the latter). The one university instructor indicated he/she moderately disagreed that the L1 can be useful in learning English.

Question nine used a five point Likert scale to determine instructors' opinions regarding the statement that bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators in class can assist students learn English. A majority of respondents disagreed with this statement as seen in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Opinion regarding the statement that in-class use of bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators help students learn English.

Question 9	Private Lang. Sch.		College		University		Total completed	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly agree	4	12.50	3	13.04			7	12.50
Moderately agree	11	34.38	6	26.09			17	30.36
Not sure	4	12.50	2	8.70			6	10.71
Moderately disagree	7	21.88	6	26.09	1	100.00	14	25.00
Strongly disagree	6	18.75	6	26.09			12	21.43
	32	100.00	23	100.00	1	100.00	56	100

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
56	98.20%	2	1.80%	57	100.00%

Similar to the responses given to question number eight, numerous instructor comments made in reference to the use of bilingual dictionaries or electronic dictionaries focused on the need to limit or restrict their use. Of the 32 comments made, 10 indicated that their use depended on the students' level of English, with most explicitly saying they were only helpful at lower

levels. Three mentioned that their value was limited as they did not provide context for the use of words, and several stated that *they impeded learning and memorization or hold people back*. Of the 32 comments only three were supportive -with no mentioning the need to restrict the use of dictionaries or focusing on negative aspects of their use.

**Critical language knowledge and opportunities for socially situated practice**

These questions as shown in Table 7 explored the perceived value of promoting critical language skills and whether the program provided students with opportunities to gain situated, contextual practice using English through programs or initiatives that connect them with local English speakers.

**Table 7.** Questions related to the importance of critical language knowledge and connections with local English speakers.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Questions/statements</b>
10	It is important that ESL students be encouraged to ask critical questions about the use of English and the society they are learning it in.
11	Does the language program have specific policies or initiatives that connect students and local English speakers?

Question 10 used a five point Likert scale to gauge instructors opinions to the statement that students' should be encouraged to ask critical questions about the use of English in the local community. The author recognizes that this question was broadly stated and left much room for interpretation. Nonetheless, it is notable that a strong majority of instructors agreed that students should be encouraged to develop this kind of contextual knowledge. Ninety point six percent of private language school instructors agreed either moderately or strongly with this statement as did 95.6% of college instructors, as well as the one university instructor.

Question 11 was a yes/no response type and asked about the existence of institutionally organized activities, programs or policies to help students gain authentic and socially situated experience hearing and using English in the community of local English speakers. Local English speakers were not defined, and this was left up to the judgement of the respondents. The lack of agreement among the responses from instructors in the same institutes indicated that either they had varying interpretations of kind of activities or policies qualified in their minds or different levels of awareness of these kinds of programs. Fifty percent of private language school respondents answered yes to this question, as did 68.2% of college instructors and the one university instructor.

**Breadth of reading materials and use of multimedia in the classroom.**

Questions 12 to 16 were designed to gain knowledge about the breadth of literacy materials used in classrooms; including traditional print-based texts such as textbooks, novels or newspapers as well as texts combining print and visuals such as magazines or comics, in addition to modern multimedia texts. This series of questions is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Questions related to the use of in-class reading material and multimedia.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Questions/statements</b>
12	Which of the following do you use for classroom reading assignments?
13	Students' use of multimedia (internet research, e-mail, blogs, texting, etc.) for completing in-class assignments is:
14	If students use multimedia for in-class assignments, please indicate which, and frequency of use:
15	If you chose any multimedia in the previous question, is their use:
16	What kind of role do you believe that multimedia technology should play in the classroom for ESL reading and writing?

Question 12 provided a list of nine kinds of reading materials for respondents to choose among those they used for in-class assignments. Space was provided to add other kinds of reading material. Results are shown in Table 9 below.

**Table 9.** Reading materials used for in-class assignments.

Question 12	Total completed	
	Responses	%
Internet articles/websites	42	75.00
Textbooks	39	69.64
Magazines	31	55.36
Novels	17	30.36
Classic literature	14	25.00
Internet based textbooks	11	19.64
Newspapers	11	19.64
Blogs	10	17.86
Comic books	6	10.71
Own course/college prepared reading material/	6	10.71
Material adapted for level from authentic sources	3	5.36
Authentic material	2	3.57
Total of respondents	56	

Note: These responses indicate instructor use of these texts in-class, however, frequency of use was not indicated.

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
56	98.20%	1	1.80%	57	100.00%

Additionally, the following reading materials were indicated as *other* by one respondent each: short stories, website specifically designed for vocabulary, teacher's own writing, Penguin readers, own course/college prepared audio material, academic materials. All the reported cases of authentic, level-adapted authentic or in-house material were from one college.

Questions 13 to 16 focused on the use of multimedia in the classroom. Question 13 was a five point Likert scale question and notably, a majority of the 54 completed responses (77.8% of completed responses) indicated that the use of multimedia was encouraged in the classroom.

Question 14 provided a table for respondents to indicate which of the seven listed kinds of multimedia they use for in-class assignments and with what frequency: every class, once every few classes, 2-4 times a month, once or less a month or never. A space was also provided for instructors to add other multimedia used in-class. Of the multimedia options given in the responses, the most frequently indicated were internet searches, e-mail and You Tube. It is notable that of the 55 respondents who completed this item, only one indicated that he/she uses multimedia for every class (internet searches). The highest frequency of responses for internet searches was once every few classes (38.18% of completed responses); followed by You Tube (27.27% of completed responses) and e-mail (16.36% of completed responses). A summary of results from question 14 is shown in Table 10 which shows the kinds of multimedia and the frequency it was used.

**Table 10.** Frequency of multimedia use for in-class assignments.

Question 14	Responses		Responses		Responses		Responses		Responses		Responses	
	Every class	%	Once every few classes	%	2-4 times a month	%	Once or less a month	%	Never	%	No choice indicated	
E-mail	0	0.00	9	16.36	3	5.45	10	18.18	14	25.45	20	36.36
internet searches	1	1.82	21	38.18	17	30.91	6	10.91	3	5.45	9	16.36
text messaging	0	0.00	1	1.82	0	0.00	1	1.82	32	58.18	23	41.82
Blogs	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	9.09	10	18.18	18	32.73	23	41.82
i-movies	0	0.00	1	1.82	2	3.64	8	14.55	22	40.00	24	43.64
Power Point	0	0.00	4	7.27	2	3.64	19	34.55	17	30.91	14	25.45
YouTube	0	0.00	15	27.27	11	20.00	10	18.18	9	16.36	10	18.18

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
55	96.49%	2	3.11%	57	100.00%

In addition to the seven multimedia choices listed in question 14, with one mention each respondents indicated 13 other kinds of media or multimedia. The frequency they used these

media was not stated. One respondent indicated the use of an internet website for vocabulary for every class, and another indicated the use of DVD's "a lot".

Questions 15 and 16 were single response type questions with four answer options with a space to include *other* or comments. More than half of the 53 completed responses indicated that multimedia was either a recommended part of the curriculum (22.6%) or not explicitly recommended but used at the teacher's discretion (43.4%). Additionally, 30.2% of responses showed multimedia was a mandatory part of the course. In question 16, 67.8% of the 56 completed responses agreed that multimedia should play a supplementary role in the classroom for ESL reading and writing, while 23.2% considered that it should have an integral role.

**Pedagogical approach: Current practice, opinions and knowledge of multiliteracies**

Questions 17- 19 focused on pedagogical approaches and instructors' opinions and knowledge of multiliteracies.

**Table 11.** Questions related to pedagogical practices and knowledge of multiliteracies theory.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Questions/statements</b>
17	How would you describe the pedagogical approach used in your classroom?
18	Do you think that the use of multiliteracies is compatible with, or could be beneficial to the course(s) you teach?
19	What level of familiarity do you have with multiliteracies?

The most notable results are those from question 19, to which a majority of instructors (58.06 % of private language school instructors and 60.87 % of college instructors) who responded indicated that they were not very familiar or not familiar at all with the concept of multiliteracies, while one university instructor indicated moderate familiarity. Of the 55 respondents who completed this question (96.2%), only four (7.27 %) stated they were very familiar, while 16.36 % said they were not familiar at all. Results can be seen in Table 12 below.

As anticipated, a greater number of respondents from colleges than private language schools stated they were very familiar with multiliteracies; however, when broadened to include the category *moderately familiar*, private language school instructors reported being more familiar overall than college instructors. This result surprised the researcher who had predicted that college instructors were more likely to be exposed to theories such as multiliteracies in a graduate ESL/SLA or applied linguistics focused oriented program, which 50% had indicated having completed as indicated previously in Table 3. Conversely none of the private ESL school instructors had completed such a graduate degree.

Table 12. Familiarity of instructors with the concept of multiliteracies.

Question 19	Private Lang. Sch.		College		University		Total completed	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
Very familiar	1	3.23	3	13.04	0	0.00	4	7.27
Moderately familiar	12	38.71	6	26.09	1	100.00	19	34.55
Not very familiar	13	41.94	10	43.48	0	0.00	23	41.82
Not familiar at all	5	16.13	4	17.39	0	0.00	9	16.36
Total responses	31	100.00	23	100.00	1	100.00	55	100.00

Case Processing Summary					
Cases					
Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
55	96.20%	0	3.50%	57	100.00%

The pool of respondents in this study was limited in size and a larger, more in-depth study of the areas of policy, practice and beliefs would be necessary to form a more representative sample of ESL instructors and programs in the region in order to draw stronger conclusions. Nonetheless, these responses point towards to some patterns in language policy, and instructors' practices and beliefs. In chapter five I will discuss these findings and their potential implications.

## **CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETING THE RESULTS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Interpreting the results**

In this chapter, I will interpret the results of the multiliteracies questionnaire and look at some of the implications based upon these results. Additionally, I offer suggestions for future research as well as discuss some of the limitations of the research undertaken. Discussion of the results will be presented by examining each of the major aspects focused on in the survey.

### ***The role of the L1 in the language classroom***

The results of the multiliteracies survey suggest that the English-only language policies of ESL programs and the beliefs and practices of the majority of adult ESL instructors who participated in this survey are biased against the use of the L1 in the language classroom and do not recognize the role that the L1 can have in learning the L2.

The existence of English-only policies was confirmed by 56 of the respondents (98.20 response rate). Thirty-five of the respondents also commented on an escalating system of punitive measures for non-adherence involving warnings, suspension and even expulsion. Additionally, thirty-one instructors (56.3%) indicated that they (strongly or moderately) disagreed with the statement that the use of the L1 in the language classroom can help students learn English. Slightly less than half of respondents (26 instructors or (46.43%) indicated that they did not agree (strongly or moderately) that in-class use of bilingual dictionaries can help learners improve English while 24 (42.86 %) indicated that they felt dictionaries could help learners Six instructors (10.71%) were unsure. Of the total number of respondents, only 29.1% agreed that the L1 could help students learn English.

The author had predicted that there would be a negative view of L1 use. However, it was thought that college instructors would be less biased against the use of the L1 due to greater

knowledge of second language acquisition theory- 50% of college instructors indicated they had completed a graduate degree in a TESL related field -while none of the private ESL instructors had. The percentage of college instructors who agreed that the use of the L1 can help students learn English was in fact higher, 34.79% compared to 25.81% of private language instructors; however, the percentage of college and private language school instructors who stated that they disagreed moderately or strongly to the statement was very similar (53.8% for the former, and 58.6% for the latter).

These results seem to confirm what Cook (2001) called an “anti-L1 attitude” that has impeded teachers from rationally looking at systematic ways that the L1 can be positively used in the classroom (p.405). Cummins (2008) argued that:

...instruction should explicitly attempt to activate students' prior knowledge and build relevant background knowledge as necessary. However, monolingual instructional approaches appear at variance with this fundamental principle of learning because they regard students' L1 (and by implication, the knowledge encoded therein) as an impediment to the learning of L2. (p. 68)

The implication of these results is that increased dialogue needs to take place between SLA researchers and practitioners to create greater awareness of the role of the L1 in L2 acquisition. There may be practical limitations to the use of the L1 in multilingual language classrooms, yet this is not a reason not to avoid its use. Cook (2001) says “it is clearly beneficial to expose the students to as much L2 as possible” (p.409) yet makes a strong argument for systematically incorporating the judicious use of the L1 in the language classroom (as discussed in chapter two).

In the adult ESL classroom various factors will need to be accounted for to adapt the best approach including: whether the students all speak the same language or various different languages; teacher knowledge, or lack thereof of student languages; and the course content and level of students. Nonetheless, there are numerous ways to make effective use of the L1 and a number of useful suggestions are presented by both Cummins (2008) and Cook (2001).

A greater awareness and understanding of the role of L1 in L2 acquisition would likely help counter the negative attitude that the responses of some instructors displayed towards the use of the L1 in-class. An important part of this would be to inform instructors as to the various ways that they can assist students to use their L1 knowledge effectively and to assure them that this use of the L1 need not result in the loss of control of an English-centred classroom that provides extensive speaking practice.

If providing the best opportunities for students to learn is the objective, then institutions and programs which have explicit English-only policies or attempt to generally avoid the use of English should reconsider their approach to the use of the L1; it represents a lost opportunity to engage the learner and constructively connect his/her life-world experience and linguistic background knowledge to the classroom. Greater benefits would likely result by systematically encouraging students to focus on and understand how their L1 knowledge relates to their L2 rather than focusing on restricting and policing them (Cummins, 2008).

### ***Critical language knowledge and opportunities for socially situated practice***

The results from the questionnaire show that almost all instructors, 56 out of 57 who responded. (98.2%) are supportive of helping students develop a critical awareness of the English language and the society they are learning it in. The comments made by instructors seem to indicate varying concepts of what *critical* means. Instructors' comments show a focus on

critical questions in terms of: understanding language in its social and cultural context; the need to learn language beyond the content of a lesson; strategies to be aware of and to be able to negotiate one's place in society; discussion on the importance of learning an L2; exposure to different regional dialects of English such as British English; and one instructor mentioned that English is not only a "native" speaker language. As the comments were brief, additional information would be necessary to gain a deeper understanding of what critical questioning means to the instructors and how, and if this translates into teaching practice. Yet in principle, instructors appear to agree with the need to prepare students to critically question language and society.

An important manner for students to acquire a greater critical awareness of the social function of language in society is through interaction with speakers using it in authentic social situations. Results were mixed in regards to whether and how institutes provide meaningful opportunities to interact with local English speakers (in referring to English speaker the author considers it important to clarify that this is not intended to refer to "native" English speakers, but English speakers of any linguistic background who have resided in the community and have gained extensive experience in the situated use of the language. The author did not define English speaker in the questionnaire with the intention of allowing respondents to decide and define this through their responses). Fifteen (50%) of the 30 private language school instructors who completed this question stated that there were such initiatives. Stronger school support of programs or initiatives to connect students with local English speakers was indicated by the college and university instructors: fifteen of the twenty-two (68.20%) college instructors who completed the question confirmed the existence of such initiatives, as did the one university instructor. It is important to note that different instructors from the same institute often gave

contradictory responses, which could indicate a lack of awareness of such programs or initiatives or perhaps differing interpretations of what programs qualified.

The comments provided by instructors (35 in total) were informative and pointed to a number of activities and initiatives set-up by schools that appear to provide for some level of interaction between language students and local English speakers. The most frequently mentioned were extra-curricular activities programs, and English speaking homestays. A number of instructors also mentioned field trips and guest speakers and a few stated that they assign students to do interviews with native speakers or encourage volunteer work. The public colleges appeared to offer the advantage of having extra-curricular activities which offered opportunities to socialize with other local English speaking students.

Only four instructors indicated any interaction with local English speakers as a required element of classwork. One respondent indicated that there had been a buddy system with native speakers that had been cancelled due to budget cutbacks.

Without doubting that all extra-curricular programs have the potential to be useful opportunities for socializing and practicing English, in the author's experience these are frequently composed of ESL students and a teacher or coordinator. Although discussion may occur in English during these activities this form of interaction represents a slightly less formal version of the teacher-student relationship in the classroom and cannot act as a substitute for authentic socially situated out-of-class interaction. Volunteer opportunities and other suggestions for participation in local community activities likewise can only be viewed as positive, and may hold potential for increased interaction and practice, yet as argued by Norton Pierce (1995), the inequalities inherent between native and non-native speakers mean that many ESL students are positioned as deficient speakers and this may restrict their opportunities for in-depth interaction.

The relative lack of organized buddy programs or courses which partner up ESL students with local students was surprising to the author and suggest that there is room to create greater opportunities to help ESL students engage in meaningful socially situated practice with local speakers.

Senyshyn and Chamberlin-Quinlisk's (2009) case study, presented in chapter two of this paper, appears to hold some potential as a model. This involved pairing ESL students and local English speaking students for discussion as part of required course work. This obligatory aspect helped bring together students who otherwise may have preferred to avoid the "disorientation" of interaction with those who don't share the same language background. By having shared learning objectives, which involved discussing and then writing and reflecting on what each student learned from the other, these meetings created meaningful and "transformative" interactions according to Senyshyn and Chamberlin-Quinlisk. The ESL students, in addition to gaining meaningful English practice, also were said to learn much about the "social and cultural environment" of their partner (p.175).

### ***Breadth of reading materials and use of multimedia in the classroom***

The need to expose students to a broad range of different types of text whether print, visual, multimodal or multimedia is emphasized in multiliteracies theory in order to connect and engage learners with the kinds of day-to-day literacy experiences that they are likely to encounter and use.

The survey results showed that the majority of instructors use paper-based textbooks, internet searches and magazines as reading material in their classes. The responses of 41 of the 55 instructors who responded use between 3 and 5 different kinds of reading materials in their class; frequency of use of these materials, however, was not indicated.

In regards to the role of multimedia, notably 42 of the 54 teachers who responded to question 13 indicated that the use of multimedia was encouraged in the classroom and 16 of the 53 respondents to question 15 (over 30%) stated that multimedia was a mandatory part of their course. Yet a strong majority of instructors, 38 of 56 respondents (65.8%), in response to question 16 indicated that multimedia should play only a supplementary rather than integral role in reading and writing in the ESL classroom. This supplementary role appears to be confirmed by the actual frequency of use of multimedia shown in the response to question 14: only two respondents indicated that any form of multimedia was utilized as part of every class (internet searches, and an internet website for vocabulary). Some of the instructors made comments about practical considerations such as limited access to computer labs, and mixed levels of familiarity of students with computer programs, or the difficulty of knowing if a student is doing an assignment, chatting and playing games. Only one respondent mentioned that it is essential for students' to develop digital literacy.

These results suggest that while multimedia does play a role in some adult ESL classrooms, its role is more limited than that advocated by proponents of multiliteracies. Researchers Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) emphasize that it is essential for multimedia or digital literacy to be an integral part of language and literacy classes and that students in the second or foreign language classroom need to be taught awareness of "internet- specific genres" in the second or foreign language classroom (p.560).

Proponents of multiliteracies argue that reading material ought to be relevant to the kinds of text that students are likely to use and encounter outside of the classroom, and this may serve to help motivate them, as well as expose them to various genres of writing such as the e-mail, blog or text message whose conventions of use differ from more traditional print based text

types. Cummins (2000) stated that “L2 acquisition will remain abstract and classroom-bound unless students have the opportunity to express themselves – their identities and their intelligence – through that language” (p.544). The author considers this to include the need to recognize that increasingly part of learners’ identities and means of interacting and connecting emotionally with others is mediated via internet and computer technology. Lotherington (2007) presented the need to teach critical literacy of multimedia texts so students learn to analyze and critique their meanings.

The author believes that multiliteracies could serve a useful role in helping inform program and curriculum planners of the justification for systematically building curricula that uses a breadth of texts including multimedia. In order to make these changes schools would need to have sufficient computer facilities. As mentioned above, instructors from at least one public college mentioned the lack of access to computer labs. If language schools and programs are to keep up with changing needs of education, they will need to invest in new computer facilities or alternatively there may be benefits in adopting a program that requires that all students have laptops. This undoubtedly has practical implications related to budgets if schools are to supply the laptops, or for marketers, if learners are expected to bring their own.

A related issue, beyond the scope of this paper to consider in-depth is how to assess multimodal texts in order to justify to administrators the use of time spent on multimedia (Cummins, Early, Leone & Stille, 2011).

***Pedagogical approach: Current practice, opinions and knowledge of multiliteracies***

Response to the question of teaching practices revealed that the majority considered that their teaching approach was communicative (21 of 56 respondents or 37.50%), or a combination of communicative and task-based (19 respondents or 33.90%). Two respondents (3.50%) chose multiliteracies to describe their teaching approach and four (7.10%) chose a combination of task-based and multiliteracies. In regards to question 18, which asked if instructors felt that multiliteracies would be compatible with the course(s) they were teaching, 34 instructors (60.7%) stated yes. This response seemed to indicate an openness to the ideas inherent in multiliteracies, yet in response to question 19, which asked the instructors their level of familiarity with the concept of multiliteracies, only 23 (41.82%) indicated that they were (very or moderately) familiar with multiliteracies. Conversely, 32 of 55 instructors (58.18 %) responded that they were not familiar with the teaching theory. Additionally, the responses of two of the four instructors who included multiliteracies as part of their stated teaching approach appeared questionable- one indicated having only moderate familiarity with the term, and one stated he/she was not very familiar with multiliteracies.

The author had predicted that college instructors would have a greater knowledge of multiliteracies than private school instructors, however, the responses indicated that the opposite was true. Thirteen of the thirty-one private school instructors who completed this item (41.94%) indicated familiarity with multiliteracies compared to nine of 23 college instructors (39.13%). As the question did not request in-depth responses from instructors explaining what they understood multiliteracies to mean and few comments were provided, it is not clear how many understand multiliteracies in the spirit intended by the New London School. What is clear, however, is that

multiliteracies are not well known by a majority of ESL instructors who responded at the private language school, college and university level.

## **Conclusions**

Although this questionnaire provides an incomplete picture of instructors' practices, the results suggest that multiliteracies are not being practiced by most instructors. The results do suggest that some of the aspects central to multiliteracies align at least partially with a number of the respondents' beliefs or practices, yet multiliteracies theory, as intended by the New London School, holds that all four aspects considered central to multiliteracies need to be part of the lesson for optimal teaching (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008). Given that the majority of instructors also indicated a lack of familiarity with multiliteracies theory it is reasonable to conclude that without a comprehensive understanding of this theory, it is unlikely to be instantiated in practice.

The results of the current study indicate a need for increased dialogue between researchers and practicing teachers to bring current SLA theories and practices to the classroom. From a multiliteracies perspective these include: the role of the L1 in learning a second language, the value of using a wide-range of reading material and multimedia in L2 literacy, and a need for increased teacher awareness of the concept of multiliteracies itself. Instructors appeared to show strong support of students asking critical questions, yet more information is needed to learn how this translates into teaching practice. Lastly, with just over half of the instructors (58.49 %) acknowledging the existence of institutionally supported initiatives to assist students with opportunities to connect with local English speakers there appears to be much room for institutes to provide stronger support to their students in gaining situated practice out of the classroom.

Classroom studies such as those presented in chapter two suggest that multiliteracies based strategies, which include aspects such as those mentioned above, have the potential to

enrich the meaning making in the adult ESL classroom. Additionally, multiliteracies-based pedagogical strategies appear to offer a way to help the English language teaching industry adapt to the changing educational needs of students, many of whose societies and workforces are in transition from a 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial age to a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> information and technology based age (Tan & McWilliam, p. 224). Some researchers believe that institutions can no longer choose whether or not to adapt to the changing needs and goals of literacy. Lotherington (2007) argued that English language teaching (ELT) is in crisis and that ELT "...needs to rethink the place and nature of English language and literacy, and ways of teaching and learning that compatibly and proactively anticipate the world in which students engage" (p. 898).

### **Limitations of the study**

The author considered the multiliteracies survey a pilot study into the burgeoning adult ESL industry, a growing but under-represented area in academic research. It did not pretend to comprehensively address all aspects related to multiliteracies theory, and given the limited pool of respondents it cannot be said to be a representative sample of adult ESL institutions and instructors. It was hoped that the results of this study would provide a starting point to better understand current policies, beliefs and practices. Based on an analysis of these results, it was hoped that the next step for research would be suggested. The author had also hoped to gain information about any instructors using a multiliteracies approach with the possible view to follow-up interviews to further investigate the perceived successes and challenges or limitations in using this pedagogical approach in the classroom.

### **Suggestions for future research**

As the pool of respondents in this study was limited, I believe that a useful contribution could be made by a more in-depth variation of the multiliteracies survey to be distributed more

widely to a more representative sample of ESL instructors and programs in order to confirm or refute the findings of this survey. Additionally, interviews with instructors or program administrators and classroom observations would reveal more information about actual practices and beliefs. Finally, I believe that it would be valuable to gain information about the TESL and SLA training or education programs for ESL teachers to find out whether multiliteracies theory form part of current course content and if not what the reason for this may be.

### **Private ESL: access for some, but not all**

A final limitation to note is that a central goal of multiliteracies is to create equal learning opportunities for all learners in order have an equal chance to participate fully in social and economic life. This goal is in tension with the reality of private profit based ESL schools in Canada and around the world, many of which have no public funding or scholarship programs. This makes them the domain of privileged middle and upper class learners while excluding the economically marginalized. With the rise in importance of English as world lingua franca, English language skills have become a requirement for professional jobs in many parts of the world. If competence in English is to be a prerequisite for social and economic benefits around the world, then, to avoid being seen as complicit in reinforcing disparities in educational and professional opportunities, it behooves the ELT industry to explore ways to create or support initiatives that allow for increasing access for the marginalized to learn English, while recognizing and valuing local cultural and linguistic knowledge rather than seeking to supplant it. While this may be a project outside of the budgets and purvey of individual institutions, by working in conjunction with national organizations such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC),

and Languages Canada, much could be achieved in line with both the spirit of multiliteracies and the desired role of Canada in contributing to international human development.

### **Summary**

Gaining an awareness of the concepts of learner identity and multiliteracies has led me to believe in their potential for the teaching of English as a second language to adult learners today, and that they are likely to become critically important in the near future. As the research presented in chapter two shows, multiliteracies do not seek to supplant traditional language and literacy teaching, but to give teachers and students tools to access and teaching approaches which will help scaffold students' learning and enrich their understanding (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Acting as a framework or guideline for good teaching practices it helps bring into focus the need to connect the specific language learning needs to the social needs and goals of learners as a whole.

In writing this paper I hope to make the concepts of multiliteracies more accessible for adult ESL teachers through the compiled study of relevant literature in chapter two. Additionally, through the presentation of the results of the multiliteracies questionnaire I hope to make a research contribution that helps in understanding current teaching practices and instructor beliefs in the adult ESL sector, in particular in relation to multiliteracies.

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Appendix A: The Multiliteracies Questionnaire

**1. Name of institution/department:**

**2. Please choose the option that best describes the institution:**

- Private Language School
- College
- University

Other (please specify):

**3. Please indicate the educational programs or training you have completed:**

- Undergraduate degree in TESL/TEFL or second language acquisition
- Undergraduate degree - other /non-ESL focus
- TESL certificate or diploma
- Graduate degree in TESL

Other (please specify):

**4. For how long have you taught English as a second language?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- Over 10 years

**5. What is the name/ level of the course(s) you currently teach?**

**6. Does the program have an English only policy for language use?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify the policy:

**7. If you answered yes to question 6, what is the motivation for this policy?**

**8. Please indicate your opinion: students' use of their native language in ESL class can help them learn English:**

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- Not sure
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

**9. The use of bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators in class helps students learn:**

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- Not sure
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

**10. It is important that ESL students be encouraged to ask critical questions about the use of English and the society they are learning it in.**

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- Not sure
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

**11. Does the language program have specific policies or initiatives that connect students and local English speakers?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give examples:

**12. Which of the following do you use for classroom reading assignments?**

- Paper based textbooks       Internet based textbooks       Blogs  
 Internet articles or websites       Classic literature       Novels  
 Comic books       Magazines       Newspapers  
 Other (please specify):

**13. Students' use of multimedia (internet research, e-mail, blogs, texting, etc.) for completing in-class assignments is:**

- Highly encouraged  
 Encouraged  
 Neither encouraged nor discouraged  
 Discouraged  
 Highly discouraged

Comments:

**14. If students use multimedia for in-class assignments, please indicate which, and frequency of use:**

	Every Class	Once every few classes	2-4 times a month	Once or less a month	Never
E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>				
internet searches	<input type="checkbox"/>				
text messaging	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
i-movies	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Power Point	<input type="checkbox"/>				
YouTube	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Other(Please specify):

**15. If you chose any multimedia in the previous question, is their use:**

- Mandatory part of the course  
 Recommended part of the course  
 Not explicitly recommended, but used at teacher's discretion  
 Other (please specify):

**16. What kind of role do you believe that multimedia technology should play in the classroom for ESL reading and writing?**

- Integral
- Supplementary
- Marginal
- None

Comments:

**17. How would you describe the pedagogical approach used in your classroom?**

- Communicative
- Grammar translation
- Task-based
- Multiliteracies
- Other (please specify) /comments:

**18. Do you think that the use of multiliteracies is compatible with, or could be beneficial to the course(s) you teach?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Comments:

**19. What level of familiarity do you have with multiliteracies?**

- Very familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not familiar at all

Comments:

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire, your input will make a valuable contribution towards this research paper on multiliteracies practice.