Teacher Professional Learning in Multiliteracies Pedagogy: Exploring the Lived Curriculum of Preservice and In-service Educators

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to examine the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education language arts course and in-service teachers enrolled in an online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies pedagogy. Through this study, the rationale is to understand how these formal professional learning experiences shape teachers’ perceptions of their literacy pedagogy. Specifically, the aim is to gain insight into how to promote multiliteracies pedagogy in preservice and in-service professional learning. This dissertation research builds upon two qualitative exploratory case studies (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2012) rooted in a theory of literacy learning and pedagogy called multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis and Cope, 2016) and two theories of curriculum: lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) and curricular commonplaces (Schwab, 1973). I collected in-depth interviews and artifacts from six focal participants, three preservice and three in-service educators. For triangulation of data, other data sources included curriculum and program documents and interviews with the graduate program manager, the language arts program coordinator, and instructors from both programs. Through a reflexive iterative approach to data analysis the findings show that the preservice educators struggle in their coming-to-know multiliteracies through the language arts course as they simultaneously strive to build their foundational knowledge in a variety of content areas. There are also limited ways of seeing the pedagogy used in practice during preservice candidate practicums. However, preservice candidates did develop a disposition towards using multiliteracies in their perceptions of their developing literacy pedagogy. The in-service educators in the graduate program, having built foundational knowledge through their careers, such as lesson planning and assessment and evaluation of students, perceived a change in their literacy pedagogy to include multiliteracies.
In-service educators engaged in plentiful opportunities to make meaning multimodally through their online courses. Conclusions suggest that immersion in teachers’ professional learning in multiliteracies, with opportunities to create a diversity of multimodal texts and to see and use the pedagogy in practice, is key to developing more than just a disposition to use multiliteracies. Further research on ways to create meaningful opportunities for preservice teachers within a pedagogy of multiliteracies is important.

**Key words:** Teacher professional learning, preservice educators, in-service educators, lived curriculum, multiliteracies pedagogy
Lay Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the professional learning experiences of preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education language arts course and in-service teachers enrolled in an online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies pedagogy. Multiliteracies is an approach to teaching practice focused on literacy learning with consideration for culturally and linguistically diverse students as well as new digital technologies used both in-and out-of-the classroom. Through this study, the rationale is to understand how these formal professional learning experiences shape teachers’ perceptions of their own literacy practice. Specifically, the aim is to gain insight into how to promote multiliteracies in preservice and in-service professional learning. This dissertation research builds upon two qualitative exploratory case studies (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2012) rooted in a theory of literacy learning and pedagogy called multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis and Cope, 2016) and two theories of curriculum: lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) and curricular commonplaces (Schwab, 1973). I collected in-depth interviews and artifacts from six focal participants, three preservice and three in-service educators. Multiple data sources included curriculum and program documents and interviews with the graduate program manager, the language arts program coordinator, and instructors from both programs. Through data analysis the findings show that the preservice educators struggle in their coming-to-know multiliteracies through the language arts course as they simultaneously strive to build their foundational knowledge in a variety of content areas. There are also limited ways of seeing this particular literacy used in practice during preservice candidate practicums. However, preservice candidates did develop a disposition towards using multiliteracies in their perceptions of their developing literacy practice. The in-service educators in the graduate program, having built foundational knowledge through their careers, such as lesson planning and assessment and evaluation of students, perceived a
change in their literacy practice to include multiliteracies. In-service educators engaged in plentiful opportunities to make meaning multimodally (visual, oral, tactile, linguistic, spatial, auditory, and gestural) through their online courses. Conclusions suggest that immersion in teachers’ professional learning in multiliteracies, with opportunities to create a diversity of multimodal texts and to see and use the pedagogy in practice, is key to developing more than just a disposition to use multiliteracies. Further research on ways to create meaningful opportunities for preservice teachers within a pedagogy of multiliteracies is important.

**Key words:** Teacher professional learning, preservice educators, in-service educators, lived curriculum, multiliteracies pedagogy
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. i  
Lay Abstract ......................................................................................................................... iii  
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................... v  
List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... xii  
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... xiii  
List of Appendices ................................................................................................................... xiv  
Chapter One ............................................................................................................................ 1  
  Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 1  
    The Research Context and Problem ................................................................. 4  
    The Education of Teachers in Canada ............................................................ 8  
    Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity ....................................................... 10  
    Research Questions and Design ................................................................... 12  
    Operationalization of Terms ......................................................................... 13  
    Organization of Dissertation ......................................................................... 15  
Chapter Two .............................................................................................................................. 16  
  Theoretical Framework and Literature Review ................................................. 16  
  Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 16  
    Multiliteracies ......................................................................................................... 16  
      Lifeworlds ............................................................................................................... 18  
      Knowledge processes ........................................................................................ 19  
      Learning by design and multimodality ........................................................ 21  
      Teacher as designer ........................................................................................... 23  
    Theories of Curriculum ...................................................................................... 28  
      Lived curriculum ............................................................................................... 28  
      Curricular commonplaces ............................................................................... 29  
  Literature Review .............................................................................................................. 31  
    Professional Development and Professional Learning .................................... 40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>Methodology and Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>Professional Learning in a Bachelor of Education Course in Language Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anna ......................................................................................................................... 91
Tye.......................................................................................................................... 96
Preservice Language Arts Education and Multiliteracies Pedagogies.......................... 102
Instructors’ Perspectives in the Language Arts Course .............................................. 109
Engaging with multiliteracies and its challenges ....................................................... 109
Participants’ Experiences within the Language Arts Course....................................... 117
Brittany...................................................................................................................... 118
   The course, peers, and instructor ......................................................................... 118
   First practicum experiences ............................................................................... 122
      Multiliteracies in practice ............................................................................... 123
   Language and literacy pedagogical development ............................................... 123
Anna ......................................................................................................................... 125
   The course, peers, and instructor ......................................................................... 126
   First practicum experiences ............................................................................... 128
      Multiliteracies in practice ............................................................................... 130
   Language and literacy pedagogical development ............................................... 132
Tye ............................................................................................................................ 132
   The course, peers, and instructor ......................................................................... 133
   First practicum experiences ............................................................................... 134
      Multiliteracies in practice ............................................................................... 134
   Language and literacy pedagogical development ............................................... 136
Participant Reflections of the Language Arts Course............................................... 137
Brittany...................................................................................................................... 137
Anna ......................................................................................................................... 141
Tye ............................................................................................................................ 146
Chapter Summary .................................................................................................... 151
Chapter Five .......................................................................................................... 153
Professional Learning in a Graduate Program in Education ...................................... 153
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Experiences with Literacy and Teaching</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Education in Multiliteracies</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reflective Practice Project</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Experiences within the Program</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cohort, instructors, and the online space</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home–school connections</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and equity</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with multimodality</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal artifacts</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason’s reflective practice project</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cohort, instructors, and the online space</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home–school connections</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and equity</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with multimodality</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal artifacts</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah’s reflective practice project</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cohort, instructors, and the online space</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home–school connections</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and equity</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with multimodality</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal artifacts</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel’s reflective practice project</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Reflections on the Graduate Program ........................................................................ 228
  Jason ........................................................................................................................................ 229
  Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy ............................................. 230
  Sarah ......................................................................................................................................... 235
  Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy ............................................. 237
  Rachel ....................................................................................................................................... 242
  Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy ............................................. 244
  Chapter Summary ....................................................................................................................... 246
Chapter Six ................................................................................................................................... 249
Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion ........................................................................ 249
The Intended Curriculum ............................................................................................................. 250
  The Bachelor of Education Language Arts Course ................................................................ 250
  The Graduate Program in Multiliteracies .................................................................................. 253
Coming-to-Know Multiliteracies as Lived Curriculum ............................................................... 256
Preservice Educators .................................................................................................................. 257
  Coming-to-know through the language arts course ................................................................. 258
    Constraints ............................................................................................................................... 261
  Coming-to-know with peers and through reflection ............................................................... 262
In-Service Educators ................................................................................................................. 263
  Coming-to-know through bridging theory and practice ......................................................... 264
  Coming-to-know through their artifact designs ....................................................................... 265
  Coming-to-know through online peer support ....................................................................... 267
  Coming-to-know through teacher autonomy .......................................................................... 269
  Coming-to-know through reflection ......................................................................................... 270
Implications for Teacher Professional Learning ........................................................................ 271
  Other considerations ................................................................................................................ 277
  Issues of diversity and equity ................................................................................................. 277
Opportunities for Further Research .......................................................................................... 278
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Anna’s literacy life map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Excerpt from Jason’s perspective on student skills for the 21st C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Jason’s Lego PowerPoint action plan questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Jason’s science website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Jason’s Prezi section on technology tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Jason’s infographic on learning theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Reflective practice project website (video from YouTube)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Jason’s reflective practice project section on multiliteracies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Jason’s reflective practice project objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Sarah’s reflective portfolio homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Sarah’s teaching and learning resource tool website homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Sarah’s mind map: The family’s role in assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Sarah’s reflective practice project website: Project objectives and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Sarah’s reflective practice project’s website homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Sarah’s YouTube videos linking multiliteracies to her classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Examples of other classroom projects Sarah incorporated into her website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Rachel’s PowerPoint presentation: Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Rachel’s WeChat examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: The knowledge processes as epistemological orientations........................................... 20
Table 2: Pedagogical emphases within the knowledge processes .............................................. 25
Table 3: Study Participants ........................................................................................................ 68
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval Document ................................................................. 301
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent .................................................. 302
Appendix C: Interview Protocols: Program manager and Course Coordinator ........ 308
Appendix D: Interview Protocol: Instructors .......................................................... 309
Appendix E: Interview Protocol: Focal Participants Interview One ...................... 310
Appendix F: Interview Protocol: Focal Participants Interview Two ....................... 312
Appendix G: Interview Protocol: Focal Participants Interview Three ..................... 314
Chapter One

Introduction

In 2008, Rowsell, Kosnik, and Beck, contended that multiliteracies is “urgently needed in both schooling and teacher education” (p. 121). In 2010, Kalantzis and Cope further claimed, “a revolution is occurring in education” (p. 200). New London Group (1996) scholars, Kalantzis and Cope, continue to assert that educators must forge new ways of schooling through a democratic lens. Multiliteracies scholars envision the democratization of literacy in schools where teachers and students co-construct knowledge and move towards innovative ways of sense-making through a diversity of modes and with new participatory digital technologies. Their work builds on the notion that traditional Western schooling systems are inadequate and are continually entrenched in didactic or traditional ways of teaching and learning, where reading and writing print literacy is privileged. Like the original vision of the New London Group’s (NLG) manifesto, Kalantzis and Cope’s vision embraces globalization and values the rich cultural and linguistic diversity students bring with them into the classroom. However, since the U.S. presidential election in 2016, there is now a global backlash against globalization (Freedom in the World, 2019), as war, corruption, and climate crisis grip countries around the world, and diasporic immigration continues to rise. For example, according to Statistics Canada, more than 25,000 Syrian refugees came into Canada between 2015 and 2016 (Houle, 2019). While some governments, like Canada’s, welcome a culturally and linguistically diverse population, other countries do not, as demonstrated by the United States and the crisis at their southern border with Mexico (Wagner, Hammond, & Hayes, 2019), as well as the United Kingdom leaving the European Union through Brexit (BBC News, 2019).
In a re-reading of the original NLG (1996) work, Garcia and Seglem (2018) found in the document, in light of today’s digital landscape, “both a healthy skepticism and a sense of hope for technology” (p. 2). However, in tandem with swift developments in technology are, as Garcia and Seglem identified:

Advances in suppressing the liberties, voices, and agentic freedoms of individuals. This is seen in the culturally oppressive movements from the recent rise of the Alt-Right in political spheres and the Gamergate movement’s violently oppressive stance toward women, people of colour, and members of the LGBTQ+ community within video gaming circles. As much as digital tools may further the reach and scope of critical learning opportunities, these systems, too, breed inequality. (p. 3)

As editors of the 2018 special issue of Theory into Practice, this issue centered on what a pedagogy of multiliteracies looks like now, 20 years later. The issue’s authors collectively argued for the need, now more than ever, for “schooling, education, and literacies…to be about reading and writing the world” (Garcia, Luke, & Seglem, 2018, p. 72, emphasis in original), an homage to Paolo Freire (1985) and his critical stance towards literacy as reading the world. The authors in this special issue take up this call through their continued work in multiliteracies.

With this global pushback against immigration, there is also a new war on public education. For example, in the United States, the federal government is pushing for the privatization of education. For example, in Michigan, when students filed suit against the federal government claiming that they, as racialized students, were denied “access to literacy because of underfunding, mismanagement and discrimination” (n.p.), a federal court district court judge ruled that “access to literacy is not a constitutional right” (Fortin, 2018). Thus, these students had
no recourse in seeking improvement and access to resources for their education. In other Western countries, such as in the U.K. (Tait, 2016) and Australia (ABC News Breakfast, 2018), the call to a back-to-basics education is looming. Here in Canada, provinces such as Alberta and Ontario are also wielding the back-to-basics rhetoric in an effort to stifle more progressive visions of public education (Ferguson, 2018; Rushowy, 2019)—one that attends to culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse children in new and creative ways. Thus, as students are growing up in uncertain times, such as a world in long-term climate crisis, an education that builds on creativity and innovation is indispensable. It is because of this pull backwards, not only in education within a back-to-basics ideology, but also in the attack on culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, that I also argue a pedagogy of multiliteracies is crucially needed in both the initial teacher education of preservice teachers and for in-service teachers continuing in their professional learning.

This exploratory case study explores the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education language arts course and in-service teachers enrolled in an online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies. Through this study, I aim to understand how these formal professional learning experiences shape teachers’ perceptions of their literacy pedagogy to gain insight into how to promote multiliteracies pedagogy in both preservice and in-service professional learning.

In this introductory chapter, I further contextualize the research problem, state my positionality as a literacy researcher and teacher educator in literacy, outline my research questions and the research design, and operationalize the terms used in this study.
The Research Context and Problem

The scholars who wrote the manifesto, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing for Social Futures* (New London Group, 1996), originally sought to address rapid globalization, its ensuing cultural and linguistic diversity in Western societies, the digitization of communication, and how these dynamic forces affect and reshape education. Currently, multiliteracies scholars continue to seek inclusive education for students from socioculturally, linguistically, and historically diverse communities (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009, 2015; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Kalantzis, Cope, Chan, & Dalley-Trim, 2016). Using this sociocultural approach to literacy pedagogy, researchers continue to explore how to address burgeoning new technologies and the changing nature of literacies as people now communicate in a multiplicity of ways.

Multiliteracies scholars pursue a focus on the diverse ways people communicate multimodally (e.g., in linguistic, visual, auditory, oral, spatial, gestural, and tactile ways [Kalantzis & Cope, 2009]) and how they engage in *sense-making* (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012) in a digital era.

Literacy scholars contend that within a pedagogy of multiliteracies, an improved quality of literacy education can be achieved (Bull & Anstey, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Serafini & Gee, 2017; Rowsell, Kosnik, & Beck, 2008). From my experiences as an elementary teacher in Ontario, and through my previous research (Nagle, 2009; Nagle & Stooke, 2016), I have witnessed first-hand how multiliteracies creates opportunities for students to make a space in-school for their out-of-school literacy practices. These opportunities to bridge in-school and out-of-school literacies can enable students to foreground their identities in their literacy practices and texts (Nagle & Stooke, 2016; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012). Further, these opportunities acknowledge, value, and
make visible children’s identities as capable designers and producers of a variety of literacies to make meaning and communicate what they know and understand about the world.

Nonetheless, neoliberal ideologies of standardization, teacher accountability, and narrowed views of literacy as autonomous (Street, 1986) continue to pervade educational discourse (e.g., Carpenter, Weber, & Schugurensky, 2012). Despite the constraining effects of these political agendas on literacy education, students continue to create and communicate in a variety of ways, both in- and out-of-school. Both online and offline, children navigate through, communicate with, and produce robust literacies using digital devices (e.g., iPads) and apps (e.g., Minecraft). While some teachers acknowledge these new literacies and work to bring these literacies into school spaces (e.g., McKee & Heydon, 2015; McKee, 2017), traditional views of literacy teaching and learning, as mono-modal by privileging print literacy, still occupy the public conversation within education, as mentioned in the introduction. Multiliteracies continues to embrace new technologies and focus on how students can create meaning, as well as how teachers and students can co-create meaning together in diverse, multimodal ways with an expansive view of literacy teaching and learning as multimodal. In order to work towards contributing to this conversation, my study aims to explore how educators engage with multiliteracies in their professional learning and for me to further understand ways to promote multiliteracies in professional learning at both the preservice and in-service levels.

Students are constant users and producers of new literacies; thus teachers need to be “fully engaged in new literacies practices” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014, p. 100) if they are to understand how their students are engaged with and use these new literacies (i.e., digital participatory technologies). This need for teachers to be equipped with pedagogical knowledge, such as multiliteracies, is necessary as the current generation is “showing signs of being
frustrated by an old-fashioned literacy curriculum that expects them to be passive recipients of knowledge that is deemed good for them” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012, p. 10)—students can no longer be viewed as knowledge consumers, but as knowledge producers. Kalantzis and Cope asserted that these changes in education cannot take place without a “transformation of the teaching profession,” where “teachers are designers of learning environments for engaged students” (p. 11). In these learning environments, Kalantzis and Cope envisioned attention that is given to a globally diverse and multimodally adept student audience. These students are new learners who are, as Kalantzis and Cope identified as,

flexible and collaborative learners…problem-solvers, broadly knowledgeable and capable of applying divergent ways of thinking…more discerning in the context of much more and ever-changing complexity…innovative, creative risk-takers…able to navigate change and diversity…[with] an expanded range of ways of meaning making…[and] negotiated ‘literacies.’” (p. 7)

Therefore, teachers need to attend to the needs of their students as they navigate through a fast-paced, unpredictable world created through new technologies. Both students and teachers will be at a disadvantage if they are not evolving their literacy practices framed in critical and transformative ways, because it is crucial that teachers and students learn how to communicate and navigate their way through and with these new technologies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Thus, teachers and students need to envision themselves as designers of their social futures (NLG, 1996). Accordingly, if teachers’ pedagogies are to evolve to meet the needs of a diversity of students in the 21st century, and attempt to bridge the gap between students’ in-school and out-of-school literacies, teacher professional learning in multiliteracies is crucial.
Focusing on both preservice and in-service teachers’ lifeworld (NLG, 1996; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012) and funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) is significant. The lifeworld and funds of knowledge of teachers includes their personal and community knowledge, expertise and experiences, as well as their schooling experiences, which shaped their early literacy lives. In this study, these lifeworlds and funds of knowledge are important to explore with participants for what they bring to educators’ experiences within professional learning with multiliteracies. Acknowledging these histories is important if I am to understand how some teachers navigate new diverse literacies within their practice, which may be very different from their earlier life and schooling experiences. Kissling (2014) stated that “teachers’ living experiences shape their teaching experiences” (p. 82), and it is his contention that teachers’ lives, which are “gloriously messy” (p. 90), need to have a place in teacher education; especially to help teachers reflect on and “investigate the relationships between their lives and their work” (p. 90). It is through such reflections that teachers can understand how their personal and professional experiences shape their experiences within school spaces as educators.

Hibbert (2013) also suggested that as teachers, “we cannot imagine a new way of being in education if we cannot first acknowledge, reflect upon, and critique our own experiences” (p. 23). Through the creation of the online Multiliteracies Collaborative for educators, Hibbert identified themes of conflict where teachers struggle to incorporate new literacies, such as technology, into their practices. Teachers described they were, “unsure of how to integrate them into their curriculum in meaningful and purposeful ways” (p. 33). This lack of meaningful and purposeful implementation of new literacies suggests educators still need professional learning, in both preservice and in-service, to address the new communication environments teachers and students are navigating within.
Further, teachers can develop a disposition (Skerrett, 2011; McLean & Rowsell, 2013) towards multiliteracies pedagogy. They can develop this disposition either through their on-going professional learning or in their initial teacher education as a way to begin teaching with an understanding of the affordances of a pedagogy of multiliteracies; such affordances are the knowledge processes (outlined in Chapter two), as purposeful, pedagogical moves. This need for professional learning with preservice and with in-service educators suggests an importance for exploring teachers’ experiences within their professional learning—for a deeper and expanded understanding of how these experiences with new literacies, such as those outlined within multiliteracies, may or may not assist in shaping their literacy pedagogy.

Few studies have explored multiliteracies and its role in professional learning in literacy for educators; for example at the school level (e.g., Anstey & Bull, 2010; Cloonan, 2010; Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin, & Hesterman, 2013; Roe, 2004) and for preservice teachers (e.g., Ajayi, 2011; Rowsell, Kosnik, & Beck, 2008). However, because of the scant research in this area of multiliteracies and teacher professional learning, not much is known about the lived curriculum of preservice and in-service educators or how their knowledge is produced as they participate in professional learning in multiliteracies. Thus, it is important to understand the dynamic forces, both material and immaterial, which act in tandem within the experiences of teachers in their learning (e.g., syllabi, program expectations, curriculum, peers). Therefore, studying this phenomenon as lived curriculum is necessary. Without a holistic understanding of how educators produce meaning within their professional learning, and given the potential of multiliteracies pedagogy, a gap exists. My research seeks to address this gap.

The Education of Teachers in Canada
In Canada, there are different pathways to becoming a teacher. First, a post-secondary degree is needed. When a student obtains their undergraduate degree, they need to attend a one or two-year, accredited Bachelor of Education program, depending on the specific requirements for each province or territory (e.g., Ontario is a two-year, four semester program). Prospective teachers can also obtain a concurrent education degree, which offers a degree in education simultaneously with an undergraduate degree. In Ontario, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is the self-governing, professional organization, which oversees accreditation of education programs and regulates teacher professionalism (OCT, n.d.): In order to be certified to teach in Ontario, teachers are required to become members of the OCT.

Another option for becoming an educator in Canada is by becoming an early childhood educator (ECE). This qualification can be acquired as a two-year diploma from a province or territory-accredited college or it can be completed as a post-secondary degree program. In some provinces, such as Ontario, ECEs work within the public-school boards in kindergarten classrooms as a teaching partner to an OCT certified teacher (Nagle & Heydon, forthcoming).

The professional trajectory of educators in Canada moves from preservice teacher within a Bachelor of Education program to a practicing teacher within either a private school or public-school board run by a provincial or territorial ministry of education. The continued professional learning of teachers is voluntary. For example, in Ontario, the OCT offers additional qualifications courses within OCT accredited institutions.

Graduate degrees in education are also an option in Canada. However, students do not need to be have a degree in education to complete a graduate degree in education. Within graduate education there are options for a research-based or professional degree. Research-based
programs can be completed full- or part-time. These professional degrees are created for working professionals interested in pursuing a degree while working simultaneously. These professional degrees are also geared towards professional practice rather than research-intensive. Most professional degree programs are delivered online, such as the graduate program used in this study.

In my study, the three preservice focal participants enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program in Ontario’s two-year program. For the in-service participants in the graduate program, one focal participant received his teacher education concurrently at a Faculty of Education in Ontario, one focal participant received her ECE diploma in Ontario and works in a kindergarten classroom, and one focal participant does not have a formal degree in education but has an undergraduate degree.

**Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity**

As a former grades seven and eight classroom teacher, in the early 2000s, I was unaware of the scholarly work in multiliteracies. Feeling unable to verbalize my pedagogical choices, or even understand my deeper motivations within my pedagogy as I worked with children, I committed to continue my professional learning in graduate studies in curriculum. Introduced to concepts of multimodality, multimodal literacy, and multiliteracies, through my master’s studies, not only was my pedagogy renewed, but also it was made visible to me—I could now make sense of and verbalize the choices I was making, within my practice, to facilitate literacy learning with my students. I felt I had the language and scholarly knowledge as tools in my continued pedagogical learning. My previous research (Nagle, 2009; Nagle & Stooke, 2016) is thus rooted in multiliteracies (NLG, 1996) and multimodal literacy (Jewitt & Kress, 2003).
After I graduated with my master’s degree in education and began my doctoral studies, I also became a teacher educator in literacy and multiliteracies. Thus, acknowledging the importance of multiliteracies in my professional learning trajectory as an educator is essential within my research. I need to be constantly aware of my positionality through reflexivity as I explore how educators, engaging with multiliteracies, perceive their new understandings of their literacy pedagogy; I also need to acknowledge if they perceive no new understandings as well. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) described reflexive subjectivity as a “constant reflective and self-critical processes—as an essential component of data collection and data analysis. The researcher and the researched are not considered separate entities; through interpretation, their constructed meanings become interwoven” (p. 35). In this reflexive way, I strive to interrogate both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives. Though I have personal and professional experiences within the scope of this research, “the key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16)—to understand the phenomenon from the participants’ point-of-view and to attempt to see how participants interact with the world around them.

Reflexivity is key to “incorporate the biases, beliefs, and values of the researcher up-front in the study” (Janesick, 2011, p. 10) and to “reflect on the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape their interpretation” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). Creswell (2013) stated that “researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, [and] historical experiences” (p. 25 emphasis in original). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) agreed and stated that a researchers’ “own background shapes their interpretation” (p. 29). Stating my positionality as a white, North American-born, middle-class, female educator
in Ontario is important. Recognizing my positionality in this way helps me understand and acknowledge my personal biases and possible assumptions within my research. Patton (2015) stated that reflexivity is “a way of emphasizing the importance of deep introspection, political consciousness, cultural awareness, and ownership of one’s perspective” (p. 70). This reflexivity is also important during my analysis where I engage in the process of “interpretation of interpretation” (Alvesson & Sköldberg as cited in Patton, 2015, p.70). Thus, I attempted to engage in reflexivity throughout the design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation of this research study.

**Research Design and Questions**

The purpose of this research is to examine, through an exploratory case study design (Stake, 2010), the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education language arts course and in-service teachers enrolled in an online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies pedagogy. It is my aim to explore how educators engage with multiliteracies in their professional learning and to further understand ways to promote multiliteracies pedagogy at both the preservice and in-service levels. Further, I aim to understand how educators’ lived curriculum is produced by considering Schwab’s (1973) curricular commonplaces, which conceptualizes curriculum as always involving at least five bodies of experience: subject matter, learner, milieu, teacher, and curriculum-making. These aims and goals of study are reflected in the following research questions:

1. What is the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice and in-service educators participating, as learners, in multiliteracies, and how do their respective curricula shape their perceptions, as educators, of literacy pedagogy?
a) What is the intended curriculum of the language arts course within the Bachelor of Education program and the graduate program in multiliteracies pedagogy?

b) How do the participants, through these experiences, come to know multiliteracies pedagogy, and how is this knowledge produced, if at all, through their designs?

c) What changes to participants’ developing literacy pedagogy do they perceive, if at all, as a result of their professional learning experiences in multiliteracies?

2. What are the implications for teacher professional learning to promote formal opportunities for the meaning making in multiliteracies?

These guiding questions assisted me in the exploration of the professional learning of educators in multiliteracies through in-depth interviews of six focal participants, interviews with a program coordinator, an administrative program manager, and instructors from both programs, and the collection of artifacts, and program documents.

**Operationalization of terms**

The following list of terms are used within my study:

**A pedagogy of multiliteracies:** An approach to teaching practice that attends to cultural and linguistic diversity of students, as well as to the multimodality present within representation and communication (particular attention is placed on the digital). This non-linear pedagogical framework includes four knowledge processes: Situated practice (experiencing), critical framing
analyzing), overt instruction (conceptualizing), and transformed practice (applying) (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996).

**Multiliteracies pedagogies:** Draws on the four knowledge processes of a pedagogy of multiliteracies and acknowledges, “that many pedagogies can be in the service of the ideals of multiliteracies, [and] can be informed by other theories, and are always in development” (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2013, p. 26).

**Learning by design:** The learning theory underpinning a pedagogy of multiliteracies where, “any semiotic activity, including using language to produce or consume texts…Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned. Together these three elements emphasise the fact that meaning-making is an active and dynamic process” (NLG, 2000, p. 20; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

**Literacy:** a sociocultural practice, which uses semiotic, multimodal tools for meaning-making in the representation and communication of knowledge.

**Multimodality:** Diverse modes used in concert to represent and communicate knowledge, such as visual, oral, tactile, gestural, linguistic, audio, and spatial modes.

**New literacies:** Digital participatory technologies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

**Pedagogy:** Generally, a teacher’s subjective approach to teaching and learning, where along with it as “the design of learning activity sequences” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 17), teachers can be responsive to the needs of their students. As pedagogy is not ideologically neutral (Morris & Stommel, 2018), it is “fundamentally concerned with what people perceive to
be meaningful, important and relevant as they engage in teaching-related activity and develop competence and expertise in practice” (Nind, Curtin, & Hall, 2016, p. 9).

**Professional development:** A top-down method of instruction prepared in advanced for teachers, typically by an expert, and without teachers’ input or collaboration.

**Professional learning:** A bottom-up approach built on teacher inquiry, rooted in teacher practice, for individual and student needs.

**Organization of Dissertation**

Chapter one outlined the research context, problem, and purpose for conducting this study, the research design, and an operationalization of terms. In chapter two, I outline my theoretical framework in multiliteracies and curriculum. I also review the current literature on professional development and professional learning in literacy and multiliteracies, as well as multiliteracies in teacher education. Concepts of teacher learning, professional pathways for teachers, and multiliteracies in teacher education are also included in this chapter. In chapter three I outline my exploratory case study methodology and the methods used for data collection and analysis. In chapter four I showcase my findings from the data collected from the preservice teachers and their experiences within their Bachelor of Education language arts course, focused on multiliteracies pedagogies. In chapter five I showcase my findings from in-service teachers and their experiences within the online graduate program in multiliteracies. Finally, in chapter six I offer a discussion of my findings with implications and suggestions for further research.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to examine the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education language arts course and in-service teachers enrolled in an online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies. Through the study, I aimed to understand how these formal professional learning experiences shape teachers’ perceptions of their literacy pedagogy and to gain insight into how to promote multiliteracies pedagogy in preservice and in-service professional learning.

In the first section I outline my theoretical framework in multiliteracies followed by two theories of curriculum: the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) and Schwab’s (1973) curricular commonplaces. Next, I review the literature on multiliteracies, followed by professional development and learning in literacy and multiliteracies. I include within the literature review teacher learning, professional pathways for teachers, and multiliteracies in teacher education.

Theoretical Framework

Multiliteracies

This study is undergirded by a pedagogy of multiliteracies. This is an apt choice of theory given the aim of my study is to understand the experiences of both preservice and in-service educators through the lens of multiliteracies pedagogy as they participated in professional learning in language and literacy. The theory within multiliteracies is learning by design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis, Cope, Chan, & Dalley-Trim, 2016; New London Group, 1996). This theory enabled me to understand the professional learning of
educators through the designs and modes of meaning-making they used within their respective programs. This theory also helped me understand and how these experiences, in turn, shaped their perceptions of their literacy pedagogy. I chose to use Kalantzis and Cope’s (2009; 2012; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) current, more in-depth conceptualizations of multiliteracies’ theory and pedagogy, which builds on the New London Group’s (1996) original work.

The underlying assumption of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is that literacy is socioculturally situated; rooted in the context and history of individuals from diverse sociocultural and linguistic communities. The initial premise for this programmatic manifesto (New London Group, 1996) was to address rapid globalization and the increase in diverse cultural and linguistic communities represented within educational spaces. In conjunction with this relatively new global diversity at the time, the digitization of communication via digital technologies, such as the internet, became an important factor in the changing educational landscape. These two dynamic factors were the catalysts for the New London Group (NLG) to articulate their vision for how these factors were intersecting and impacting the social futures of new generations of school children. The NLG understood the crucial importance of an education that attends to the changing landscape in order to support children in the design of their social futures. For Cope and Kalantzis (2009),

one of the fundamental goals of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is to create the conditions for learning that support the growth of this kind of person: a person comfortable with themselves as well as being flexible enough to collaborate and negotiate with others who are different from themselves in order to forge a common interest. (p. 174).
Cope and Kalantzis continue this work today, and it is important teachers develop rich pedagogies that weave new technologies, diverse multimodalities, and criticality into the fabric of their student-centered literacy teaching practice.

**Lifeworlds.** In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, personal and community experiences, which shape a person’s identity, are considered their *lifeworld* (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). One’s lifeworld is inherent within them and something that one is not readily conscious of, because “the lifeworld is not particularly explicit. It is a set of habits, behaviours, values and interests that go without saying in a particular context” (p. 385). The importance of understanding lifeworlds in education is to acknowledge what “learners bring to a learning setting” (p. 385). It is a learner’s repertoire of experience; their complex world of family, peers, popular culture, previous education, and the community they are bringing into the classroom.

For Kalantzis and Cope (2012), there are *lifeworld attributes*. These attributes include: *narrative*, a person’s life background and experiences; *persona*, which affixes identity to “interpersonal styles [and] languages spoken” (p. 386); *affinity*, belonging to interest-groups; and *orientation*, which is located in a person’s epistemological and ontological philosophies. The notion of a lifeworld, in this way, suggests a challenge for teachers is to attend to the diversity and “deep difference” (p. 386) of a learner’s lifeworld in their classrooms. Understanding the importance of lifeworlds within multiliteracies is important when exploring the lived curriculum of educators, because a teacher also brings their lifeworld into the classroom through their pedagogy. Each of the knowledge processes within a pedagogy of multiliteracies (outlined below) builds on the subjectivities of a person’s lifeworld.
Knowledge processes. Contemporaneously working within multiple modes are four knowledge processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). These knowledge processes are the “foundational types of thinking-in-action, four things you can do to know” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012, p. 356). Originally identified by the New London Group (1996) as the four dimensions of pedagogy: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice, but still commensurable with these categories of literacy pedagogy, Kalantzis and Cope (2009) renamed them as: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying. These processes of learning are dynamic and speak to a theory of learning as “a process of weaving backwards and forwards across and between different ways of knowing” (p. 358). These processes are a critical part of the multiliteracies pedagogical framework as they “frame [teachers’] pedagogical repertoires in purposeful ways and justify the range of activity types they use in order to meet particular teaching and learning goals” (p. 359). Holistically, multiliteracies pedagogy is “a careful process of choosing a suitable mix of ways of knowing [i.e., the seven modes of meaning] and purposeful weaving between these different kinds of knowing [knowledge processes]” (p. 360, emphasis added). Kalantzis and Cope (2010) stated that the knowledge processes were “grounded in the notion that effective pedagogy involves a process of purposefully and deliberately weaving backwards and forwards between a variety of activity types or forms of engagement to ensure specific-subject matter and other learning goals” (p. 208). Thus, the knowledge processes, or pedagogical moves, as a framework, assists teachers in being purposeful and deliberate within their choices in practice. The framework is not a “sequence to be followed” (p. 209), but rather it offers an explicit “range of pedagogical moves that teachers choose in order to demonstrate their pedagogical repertoires and their application in purposeful ways” (p. 209). Within a learning by design framework, Cope and Kalantzis (2009; 2015) conceptualized the knowledge processes as
“epistemological moves that underpin pedagogy by creating a typology of ‘things you do to know’” (p. 23) (see Table 1).

Table 1

The knowledge processes as epistemological orientations (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Processes</th>
<th>Epistemology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing</td>
<td>… the known</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>… the new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizing</td>
<td>… by naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>… with theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>… functionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>… critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>… appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>… creatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empiricism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Categorization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Schematization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Functionalism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the educators in my study, I explore the knowledge processes as pedagogical moves and ways of coming to know, as an important piece in their professional learning in multiliteracies.
Learning by design and multimodality. Within a pedagogy of multiliteracies, “all forms of representation, including language, are regarded as dynamic processes of transformation rather than processes of reproduction” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). The notion of design, and being an active designer of meaning, contrasts the traditional notions of literacy teaching built on stability and uniformity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). An active designer of meaning imbues agency; the designer actively engages with diverse modalities and curriculum content and makes choices in representation and communication. In multiliteracies, representation is an “internalised narrative” (p. 175) of sense-making, and communication is an “externalised narrative” (p. 175) where one communicates meaning-making to the world. These narratives also include interpretation of meanings and meaning-making, both internal and external. Meaning-making here, refers to what “occurs when we put signifiers together into a coherent system that more-or-less corresponds with the sense of the world of our experienced meanings, or what is signified” (p. 177).

In a pedagogy of multiliteracies the process of representation and communication, or learning by design, includes: available designs, designing, and the redesigned. Available designs are “meaning-making resources” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 184) that we draw on from our repertoire of experiences, both material and immaterial, which reflect “an always-unique mix of personal attributes, material (social class, locale, family), corporeal (age, race, sex and sexuality) and symbolic (language, ethnos, gender)” (p. 185) with a variety of modes and media. These design processes have a direct connection to the processes of learning as “designing is transformational work. In the life of the meaning-maker, this process of transformation is the essence of learning” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012, p. 186). When we take these available designs and put them together to create something new—such as a conversation or a material artifact—
this process of designing is transformative. Never before have these meaning-making resources been constructed in this way to represent and communicate the designers’ new meaning; designing is “never simply replicat[ing] available designs. We always rework and revoice the world as found” (p. 184). The redesigned, is a hybrid of available designs and designing and, often leaves a tangible, communicated trace, such as an image, an object, an oral utterance or a written text…the world has been transformed, no matter in how small a way, because the trace that has been left behind is unique. (p. 185)

In this way, multiliteracies provides a powerful conceptualization of the learning process as a transformation of resources to make sense of and create meaning. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) stated, “this is one of the key propositions of Multiliteracies theory: that a theory of meaning as transformation or redesign is also the basis for a theory of learning” (p. 186). In the process of designing—or learning—Cope and Kalantzis (2015) also characterized it as a process of coming-to-know. They argued that learning is something inherent and “pervasive in our everyday lifeworld…[it] is endogenous to the lifeworld, incidental, casual, informed” (p. 23). For the educators in my study, this notion of designing as learning, assisted me in understanding how participants might actively work through their understandings of multiliteracies in the artifacts they produce.

Included within available designs, designing, and the redesigned is multimodality. Multimodality is key in multiliteracies pedagogy and the focus on multimodality is what sets this pedagogy apart from other sociocultural perspectives of literacy (Perry, 2012). In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, seven modes of meaning are identified: audio, oral, written, visual, gestural, tactile, and spatial (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). How these modes are interconnected is the “nature
of multimodality” (p. 191); thus, meaning-making, adding to the previous definition, is the “multimodal processes of representation and communication” (p. 192). As designers, people are constantly moving between one mode and another, blending and remixing modes to create meaning. This process is what Kalantzis and Cope (2012) referred to as synaesthesia: “the process of shifting backwards and forwards between different modes of meaning” (p. 195). This mode-shifting, “can be a very powerful way to support and deepen learning” (p. 195), because if we understand and know how to express our knowledge in multiple ways, there is potential to “create a deeper understanding of these things” (p. 196).

In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, Kalantzis and Cope (2012) called for a metalanguage to use when talking about and analyzing multimodal designs. Kalantzis and Cope referred to this metalanguage as elements of design analysis and are listed as: reference (To whom and what do the meanings refer? How are they multimodally represented?); interaction (How are the producer and receiver connected in a relationship of meaning?); composition (How are the modes and media connected together in meaning?); context (How are meanings situated? Where? When? Why?); and purpose (Who are these meanings for and why? How are we positioned? What are the interests and motivations of those involved?). By drawing on this metalanguage, teachers can understand, interpret, and derive meaning from the multimodal designs (artifacts) of their students.

Teacher as designer. Today, in our knowledge economy, students are poised to challenge the status quo of their communities through their new exposure to a “pedagogy of possibility” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010, p. 47) or learning by design. For Kalantzis and Cope multiliteracies as a pedagogy is “an approach to teaching and learning that addresses literacy and learning in the context of new media and the globalizing knowledge economy” (p. 200). This
pedagogy addresses the needs of today’s world. By constructing a framework for pedagogy, multiliteracies seeks to enable “teachers to explicitly track and be aware of the relationship between their pedagogical choices and their students’ learning outcomes” (p. 200). This explicit awareness implies that teachers must be purposeful when making pedagogical choices. Kalantzis and Cope outlined the need to move away from the old basics, which emphasizes the three R’s: reading, writing, and arithmetic and where curriculum content is divided into subjects or disciplines to be memorized through testing and drills. For Kalantzis and Cope, this ethos of instruction began due to the nature of the social economy of the times. Today, the old basics ideology is not enough to attend to the needs of students’ social futures in our knowledge society, because of the rapidly changing nature of new technologies. Thus, Kalantzis and Cope outlined their vision for learning by design: Whereas the nineteenth century was rooted in educational paradigms of didactic teaching and the twenty-first century focused on authentic education (e.g., collaborative learning, experiential learning, inquiry-based and child-centered, more multimodality but still text-privileged), Kalantzis and Cope argued that a new educational paradigm needs to move towards transformational learning.

In a transformational learning ethos, there is a focus on collaborative learning in digital spaces (either in a formal work space or community site or in an informal location, such as at home). Students are active in participatory networks, such as social media, and work together to create projects as a community of learners. The knowledge processes are balanced and the teacher works as “a designer and manager of learning” (p. 202). Diversity of “differences, cultures, interests, abilities” (p. 202) is attended to by educators through “flexible physical and learning architectures, multi-learner environments, [and] group pacing” (p. 202). Multimodality is privileged by educators as well, with expanded assessments that address the complexity of
multimodal artifacts, including self and peer assessments. In transformational learning, both the teacher and the learner work together to co-construct pedagogical choices that are purposeful and meaningful to meet learner needs as identified by both the teacher and the student; learners will be able to engage in ubiquitous learning, as the learning continues beyond the classroom and in all facets of the learners’ lifeworld.

In addition, Cope and Kalantzis (2015) considered the knowledge processes, not just in terms of the educational paradigms as noted above, but for pedagogy as well. They outlined the three pedagogical emphases of the knowledge processes within pedagogy: didactic pedagogy, authentic pedagogy, and reflexive pedagogy (see Table 2).

Table 2

Pedagogical emphases within the knowledge processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Processes</th>
<th>... in Didactic Pedagogy</th>
<th>... in Authentic Pedagogy</th>
<th>... in Reflexive Pedagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the known</td>
<td>Weak emphasis, as all students are doing the same curriculum, given to them</td>
<td>Strong emphasis, highlighting student interest, identity, and personal practice</td>
<td>Regular returns to student lifeworld experiences, knowledge, and prior experience, with metacognitive reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... the new</td>
<td>Limited to new information provided by the teacher and textbooks</td>
<td>Immersion in hands-on experiences: experiments, field trips, investigations in projects, and the like</td>
<td>Immersion in the range of information sources such as those now available on the web, as well as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptualizing</strong></td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... by naming</strong></td>
<td>Strong on naming academic concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak emphasis, hoping that concepts will develop through exposure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>... with theory</strong></td>
<td>Strong on laying out theories, learning rules, deductive reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak emphasis—to the extent that generalizations emerge, these come naturally, via inductive reasoning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Analyzing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>... functionally</strong></td>
<td>Strong on presenting functional explanations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak emphasis, on the assumption that this will develop incidental to experience</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... critically</strong></td>
<td>No or minimal emphasis on critical thinking</td>
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Transfer of knowledge to different contexts, hybrid knowledge and cultural creations expressing student voice and perspective

| Weak to no emphasis | Strong emphasis, as student work and projects express individual cultural perspectives |

With the knowledge processes in a reflexive pedagogy, “pedagogy is a range of different ‘things you do to know’, a repertoire of learning activity types, including activity types that have their genesis variously in didactic and authentic pedagogy” (p. 14). In Table 2, this blending within the reflexive pedagogy is demarcated by the shaded sections of the table. Thus, reflexivity here is the ability to move across the knowledge processes—to be able to make pedagogical moves when and where appropriate and for “different moments of the learning processes, for different students, and for different subject matters” (p. 16).

By using multiliteracies as my theoretical framework, I am able to inquire into how participants engaged and experienced the knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying as they come to know multiliteracies. To explore these experiences of preservice and in-service educators, it is important to understand their lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) and to consider the weaving together of subject matter, learners, milieus, teacher, and curriculum-making within curricular commonplaces (Schwab, 1973).
Theories of Curriculum

The two theories of curriculum, which I draw upon in my study, are Aoki’s (1993) lived curriculum and Schwab’s (1973) curricular commonplaces. In the next section, I outline these two theories of curriculum that I use to inform my analysis pertaining to my research questions.

**Lived curriculum.** For Aoki (1993) there are two types of curriculum that work in tension with each other: the *curriculum-as-plan* and the *lived curriculum*. The curriculum-as-plan begins outside the classroom with curriculum planners, administrators, and Ministries of Education making decisions about the knowledge that should be included in official curriculum documents, which are administered within schools. Unfortunately, this curriculum is “imbued with the planners’ orientations to the world, which inevitably include their own interests and assumptions about ways of knowing and about how teachers and students are to be understood” (Aoki, 1993, p. 258). These biases become *implicit* as they are embedded into the curriculum-as-plan. As such, teachers and students are not invited or deeply considered in these curricular conversations.

On the other hand, the lived curriculum is a “multiplicity of lived curricula” and “there are as many lived curricula, as many as there are self and students, possibly more” (Aoki, 1993, p. 258). In this multiplicity of curricula both the teacher and student live out their experiences together: “It is a world of face-to-face living” (p. 258). For Aoki, multiplicity does not refer just merely to the multiple identities of teachers and students. As identity is dynamic and in constant “production” (p. 260), the multiplicity can be found in “a place of difference,” it is found “between and among curriculum-as-plan and the lived curricula” (p. 260).
The affordances of considering curriculum in this dynamic way are to give “legitimacy [to] narratives” (p. 262) and “to the wisdom held in the lived stories of people” (p. 267). In contrast to a grand narrative, “with its single privileged curriculum-as-plan awaiting implementation” (pp. 258-259), the lived curriculum creates multiple narratives imbued with the experiences of the student and “entails at times a letting go that allows a letting be in students’ own becoming” (p. 266).

This theory of curriculum supports and informs my study by allowing me to investigate the experiences of educators within either the Bachelor of Education course or graduate program as a lived curriculum. According to Pinar (2012), by “expressing one’s subjectivity through academic knowledge” (p. xii) the participants, as students, will link “the lived curriculum with the planned one and enter into a complicated conversation” (p. xii emphasis in original). Pinar, in reference to studying and understanding curriculum, stated that he “deliberately cut ‘holes’ in the curriculum-as-plan…to enable students to breathe, thereby creating space and encouraging voices” (p. 1). It is within these holes where I hope to understand the experiences of my participants as they engaged in diverse ways in their programs with a focus on multiliteracies.

Curricular commonplaces. Contributing to this complicated conversation of curriculum-as-plan and the lived curriculum are Schwab’s (1973) curricular commonplaces. The curricular commonplaces are also considered as the five bodies of experience as each is important, necessary, equal, and must be considered cohesively to achieve a holistic curriculum. Schwab outlined the curricular commonplaces as subject matter, learner, milieu, teacher, and curriculum-making: (a) the subject matter in my study relates to the language arts course and graduate program, both focused on multiliteracies, (b) the learners are the preservice and in-service educators engaging with their peers, their teacher(s), and the subject matter. In my study
the learners are at varying levels in their professional pathways as educators and preservice educators are in their first year of professional study. In this current study, the educators’ funds of knowledge and lifeworlds are important as educators bring their own knowledge, experience, and expertise, both personal and professional into their learning, (c) next, according to Schwab, is the milieu, which in my study includes both virtual and on-campus spaces. However, there is an overlap within the in-class or online space and either the participants’ own classroom or in their associate teachers’ classroom, (d) the teachers are the instructors who have knowledge of the subject matter, the learner, the milieus, and curriculum-making, (e) lastly, is curriculum-making. Schwab characterized the curriculum-making process as one where, “each representative of a body of experience must discover the experience of the others and the relevance of these radically different experiences to curriculum making for a partial coalescence of these bodies of experience to occur” (p. 504). With the instructors as knowledgeable of curriculum-making, so too, were the in-service educators as early- to mid-career teachers.

Multiliteracies as theory affords me the opportunity to understand what and how the participants are learning through their designs. Examining the lived curriculum of my focal participants helps me understand how they engage with and experience the curriculum-as-plan as lived. The affordances of using the curricular commonplaces in my study are that they assist me in seeking out a holistic depth of understanding needed when looking at the material and immaterial influences of different bodies of experience at play in producing the lived curriculum of participants. Schwab’s curricular commonplaces helps me understand the holistic nature of curriculum as these commonplaces bring together the multifaceted curriculum-as-plan, lived curriculum, teacher pedagogy, student learning, and the learning space(s), and how they interact and engage with one another in the process of curriculum-making. Multiliteracies provides me
with the metalanguage to examine the designs of participants, and it allows me the possibility to understand how participants are representing and communicating their knowledge through their designs. The curricular commonplaces bring together various components of the experience of participants within the curriculum. Together these theories afford me a complex, in-depth way to understand the lived curriculum of my focal participants.

In the next section, I discuss current perspectives on multiliteracies and review the literature on professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL), pathways for teacher professional learning and teacher learning, the professional development and professional learning of educators, specifically in language and literacy and multiliteracies, and finally multiliteracies in teacher education.

**Literature Review**

References to multiliteracies are plentiful in the literature since its initial introduction by the New London Group (1996). A quick Google Scholar search using the term multiliteracies yields almost 23,000 articles that mention multiliteracies in any kind of iteration. However, as a way to make an examination of multiliteracies in the literature more manageable, Zhang, Nagle, McKishnie, Lin, and Li (2019) conducted a systematic review of multiliteracies research using ProQuest® Education Journals, exclusively. By examining empirical studies only, they included 66 studies from 2006-2015. Findings show that the majority of these studies in multiliteracies focused mainly on multimodality, identity, and the pedagogical framework of multiliteracies; while some studies looked at the framework as a whole part of pedagogical weaving (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) between situated practice, critical framing, overt instruction, and transformed practice. Other studies did not include them together and pieced out particular parts of the
framework (i.e., situated practice). While 15 countries are represented, the United States, Australia, and particularly Canada are the most prominent in the research. Thus, Zhang et al., suggested the need for “inquiries in more diverse contexts (i.e., beyond the Anglophone countries) and on broader learner diversity (e.g., learners with special needs)” (p. 41).

Most recently, multiliteracies continues to be used in a variety of ways, as both a pedagogy and as a theory. Some examples of current research building on the concepts of multiliteracies, are black girls’ literacies (e.g., Muhammad & Haddix, 2016), understanding early literacies (e.g., Heydon, Moffatt, & Iannacci, 2015), exploring adolescent literacy through identity texts (e.g., Nagle & Stooke, 2016), exploring secondary school literacies (e.g., Broderick, 2014), foregrounding Indigenous literacies (e.g., Hare, 2011), exploring sonic cartography in LGBTQ literacies (e.g., Wargo, 2018), exploring transliteracies (e.g., Kim, 2015) and literacies in transnational education (e.g., Zheng & Heydon, 2014), as well as exploring English as a second language (ESL) students’ lived experiences (e.g., Burke & Hardware, 2015), and designing literacy assessments (e.g., Jacobs, 2013). These studies are just to name a few. Thus, while the initial manifest of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is almost 25 years old, it made a strong contribution and impact in the field of language and literacy studies.

However, more recently, multiliteracies is not without critique in the ways it has been taken up in research. Alvermann (2017), who dared to even mention the M word, argued that multiliteracies has long become “conflated with its so-called synonyms—of multimodal reading and writing, new literacies, digital literacies, and multiple literacies” (p. 99), which to Alvermann were “loosely associated constructs” (p. 99). Alvermann wanted to reclaim multiliteracies as a separate pedagogy where both teachers and teacher educators could “precisely define their instructional practices” (p. 99) within a multiliteracies pedagogical framework. Additionally,
Rowsell and Burgess (2017) contended that the concept of design within multiliteracies “tends to eclipse the concept of pedagogy” (p. 74). They also argued that the “field has moved on” (p. 75), because “modern-day multiliteracies are far more layered and variegated than the original manifesto rendered them” (p. 74).

Along the same vein, Collier and Rowsell (2014) argued that the central mission of multiliteracies and its pedagogical commitment to equity and social justice, with its “push for scholarship on multimodal meaning making and design epistemologies” (p. 13), has loosened the braid of the “twin goals of access and critical engagement” (NLG as cited in Collier & Rowsell, 2014). For Collier and Rowsell, emphasis on the “digital, and design-based, multimodal epistemologies” (p. 14) is privileged over the “linguistic and discursive accounts of language and of meaning making [and] critical pedagogy, accounts of power, and Freirean values” (p. 14). Therefore, though an important part of the original NLG manifesto, the critical, activist undertaking, argued Collier and Rowsell, is lost, with the “ascendance and ubiquitous presence of technology and digital worlds” (p. 15). Rogers and Trigos-Carrillo (2017) agreed, stating that the critical framing piece needs to be reinvigorated within multiliteracies research. While they acknowledged that multiliteracies is still relevant, they emphasized the need for teachers to be more critical and to “see themselves as theorizers—to connect the dots between capitalism, militarism, racism, and environmental destruction” (p. 101). Rowsell and Burgess (2017) concluded that for multiliteracies to “live on and flourish” (p. 88), it needs to “align with the deeper grooves and undulations of larger social theories that explain the human condition” (p. 88).

A further critique, which supports the scholars’ assertions above that a deeper criticality is needed within multiliteracies research, is by Nagle (2018). In my literature review on cyber-
violence and the use of the social media site, Twitter, in education, I argued that a large focus on digital participatory technologies in literacy and multiliteracies research neglects an examination or discussion of how a diversity of peoples experience these technologies in online spaces. These discussions are particularly important when online spaces are “known to be rife with misogynistic and racial violence” (Nagle, 2018, p. 88). Though there are many affordances of using social media sites, such as Twitter, in education and teacher education as a professional learning network, some scholars treat digital spaces in cyberutopian terms (e.g., Vasudevan, 2010 as cited in Nagle, 2018). Thus, I called for a critical social media literacy within literacy and multiliteracies as a way to examine and interrogate one’s privilege within cyber spaces. This examination is to acknowledge and understand that many women and men of colour and LGBTQ peoples do not experience these spaces in the same ways as Western and European, heterosexual, white peoples do.

In his interview with Garcia and Seglem (Garcia, Luke, & Seglem, 2018), Allen Luke agreed that a criticality in terms of equity, inclusivity, and diversity is missing within new iterations of multiliteracies where it is, “taught as neutral tools, sans discussion of all the key ethical and political issues of surveillance and control, truth and lies, bullying and exploitation, profit and ownership” (p. 76). Considering multiliteracies in the present-day context, Luke ascertained that the current education system includes a colonization of multiliteracies. Luke stated:

Multiliteracies have been incorporated into the human capital rationale, the very heart of neoliberalism—redefined as requisite job skills or tools for the new economy. This strips it out of a broader critical education; it can silence classroom debate over the morality,
ethics, and everyday social consequences of communications media, their ownership and control. (Garcia, Luke, & Seglem, 2018, p. 75)

Further, Luke argued that the digital component within multiliteracies is now, “redefined as a measurable domain of curriculum on standardized assessments: digital tasks will be included in the current PISA testing. This has the effect of normalizing, controlling what officially counts as digital creativity, critique, and innovation” (p. 75). Lastly, Luke recognized the commodification of multiliteracies, “with curriculum packages, approaches, methods and materials offered by publishers, corporations and consultants [which] has the effect of eliminating the local, idiosyncratic, cultural play and interaction with new media and supplanting it with formulae and scripts” (p. 75).

Furthermore, Luke contended that if scholars and teachers are to continue to use a pedagogy of multiliteracies, a close examination of current times is needed:

Any reconnoitering of multiliteracies has to begin from an educational engagement and critical analysis of these new economic and cultural, civic, and media conditions. For many students, and communities have to contend with not just poverty, joblessness, and inequality, but also the stark effects of autocracy and plutocracy, renewed racism and sexism, ideological distortion and untruths, unethical and unjust social relations and conditions. (Garcia, Luke, & Seglem, 2018)

On the contrary, according to Simon (2011), over recent years multiliteracies has become “a more flexible concept to name and frame a range of local projects” (p. 363). He argued that this work, though perhaps not explicitly, is inherently critical and “cuts against the grain of literacy policy in contexts such as the United States, where literacy legislation continues to
restrict rather than invite children’s full literate lives into classrooms” (p. 363). Making the critical more explicit, Pirbhai-Illich (2011) attempted to instill a critical multiliteracies as she worked with Aboriginal youth in Canada, particularly in educational spaces where “institutions either fail to recognize or dismiss the glaring fact that urban Aboriginal students are attempting to function in an educational system that is hostile to them” (p. 258). Her participatory action research produced hopeful findings when working within a critical multiliteracies lens to engage students within their interests and use of digital tools, but also by “accepting their lived experiences, and inviting them to use their funds of knowledge in multiliteracies” (p. 264).

Further, Mirra, Morrell, and Filipak (2018) jointly called for a new critical theory of multiliteracies that encompassed four types of critical engagement with digital technologies: “(a) critical digital consumption, (b) critical digital production, (c) critical distribution, and (d) critical digital invention” (p. 12). The authors argued that this new critical theory is needed, and through its use,

the ultimate goal of critical digital pedagogies should entail providing young people with the skills needed to think and create beyond the circumscribed boundaries of mass media producers. Such practice is crucial to ensure that creative solutions emerge to tackle the most pressing challenges of the 21st century in compassionate and inclusive ways. (p. 17).

Nevertheless, Simon (2011) argued that the best “multimodal work is fundamentally critical” (p. 364). He suggested that as technology is a large focus of multimodal research, “the significance of this work is in how it furthers understandings of the social realities of teaching
and semiotic affordances of different kinds of texts and forms of interaction with them” (p. 364).

Simons continued:

The best multiliteracies research interweaves concerns with new literacies with important questions about diversity, identity, and politics. Foregrounding political contexts tempers temptations to regard technology as powerful—or power—in and of itself, rather than a means to power, one that might support more equitable or democratic possibilities for learning, or more oppressive ones. (p. 363)

Considering a posthumanist stance, with its new and emergent conversations around scholarship in literacy, the tensions within multiliteracies become greater. The question may be asked: What are we missing in a multiliteracies approach when considering the posthuman? Leander and Boldt (2012), without mentioning posthumanism outright, waded into this question with their Rereading “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies.” In their work they described what they see as limitations of the New London Group’s original work and how it manifested in both research and pedagogy. Their most important argument is that they viewed multiliteracies as text-centric and a concept that over-rationalizes youth engagement in their literacy practices.

They argued: “Episodes of practice become dominated and misread as they are sifted and pushed through textual funnels such that much that characterizes practice becomes sorted out, pushed aside, ignored” (p. 33). They further argued that multiliteracies, as a vision of literacy practice, “involves a domestication that subtracts movement, indeterminacy, and emergent potential from the picture” (p. 24). The authors called for literacy texts to be considered in rhizomatic ways where “life is understood as emergent, having no natural directions of growth or boundaries or barriers” (p. 25). In their study of Lee, a youth engaged with Manga, Leander and Boldt created differing observations and interpretations, which are in tension with each other; one observation
examines Lee’s literacy practices with the text, the other includes Lee’s practices and movements in time and space—his *assemblages*. These assemblages are anything, present in any given context. In these assemblages things have no necessary relation to one another, and they lack organization, yet their happenstance coming together in the assemblage produces any number of possible effects on the elements in the assemblage.

(p. 25)

In this way, the texts used are not about the world, “they are participants in the world. Texts are artifacts of literacy practice, but do not describe the practice itself” (p. 25). These considerations of both the material and immaterial components, challenge the text-centered observation and interpretation of Lee as only engaged with text. If, the authors argued, these other considerations are left out of sight, all the other rich movements in time and space that are emergent and moved beyond the text are missed. Leander and Boldt further argued that when practice is text-centric, it relies on an end-point, rather than working within an “emergent moment-by-moment unfolding” (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Leander & Boldt, 2012, p. 29, emphasis in original). This would suggest there are limits to the notion of the NLG’s concepts of design, as they begin and end with intention and being “deliberate” (Leander & Boldt, 2012, p. 37) and precludes the emergent nature of meaning-making. Collier and Rowsell (2014) agreed and noted that, “we see schools as often lacking ‘playfulness and exploration’ and encourage less bounded approaches to literacy that engage bodies, objects, and texts” (p. 25).

Leander and Boldt (2012) and Collier and Rowsell (2014) called for new ways within scholarship and research to attend to literacy *as unbounded* (Leander & Boldt, 2012, p. 41). Yet, how do teachers work within this tension? Jacobs (2014) saw Leander and Boldt’s claims as
more of a critique of current schooling than a criticism of multiliteracies, because for Jacobs, “schooling, as currently conceptualized, lacks playfulness and exploration, and movement is discouraged as children are taught to remain at their desks and on task” (p. 272). Jacobs’ vision for the next steps for multiliteracies within practice is to,

return our attention to the original meaning of *multi* and create room for play and the unexpected as we consider the meaning of design. One question to be asked is whether intentionality is a necessary aspect of design or whether design includes the spontaneous, random, and unexpected. (p. 272)

Jacobs also argued for the need for a “reconceptualization of schooling so that it incorporates fun and play” (p. 272)—a way of schooling that does not look toward the result or end as something that can be “predicated” (p. 272). Though, for this to happen, Jacobs argued, there needs to be great strides made in the continued education of preservice and in-service educators. For Jacobs, this is where a shift from traditionally functioning schools and instruction can move to a richer space where literacy is observed and valued as unbounded.

The focus for the rest of this literature review is on the ways multiliteracies has been researched with teachers in either professional development or professional learning. I begin with notions of professional development and professional learning in education in general, professional learning pathways for teachers, adult and teacher learning, professional development and professional learning in general literacy education and specifically in multiliteracies, and multiliteracies in teacher education.
Professional Development and Professional Learning

Professional development (PD) within the teaching profession is an internationally delivered approach to professional learning (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). Various types of PD are available to teachers, mainly through their school board or school administrators. In an international survey on teaching and learning, the OECD considered teacher development as “a lifelong learning approach,” which “requires opportunities and incentives for professional development throughout the career to enable staff to refresh, develop and broaden their knowledge and understanding of teaching and to improve their skills and practices” (OECD, n.d.). However, professional development can be considered a top-down delivery of instruction for teachers. In a professional development model, an “outside expert” (Murray, 2014, p. 1, emphasis in original) speaks about education, and the purpose “seem[s] to be on the premise that learning happens as a direct result of exposure to new information, as if upon hearing new information [teachers] would learn it” (p. 2). To combat this reductionist view of teacher professional learning, Easton (2008) argued that “teachers will have to move from being trained or developed to becoming active learners” (p. 755). In the International Literacy Association’s (IRA) 2018 leadership brief (Hicks, Sailors, & IRA), their position on moving from conceptualizations of professional development to professional learning is that,

often, teachers must submit to the very type of instruction (e.g., in workshops, conferences, webinars) that teacher educators ask them not to use with their students. Teachers are not engaged as active learners with their own questions and goals. Instead, they are treated as if they need to be developed, an idea that we need to problematize,
challenge, and reconsider if we wish to create empowering and equitable experiences with teachers. This shift requires that we democratize professional learning. (p. 2).

The IRA argued that forcing teachers to engage in PD in this way, “leaves educators feeling uninspired, de-professionalized, and at a loss for how to implement a number of disconnected strategies presented in a one-shot fashion” (p. 2). Therefore, teachers need to seek out their own professional learning. This personalized professional learning affords teachers the opportunity to take an agentive stance against one-size-fits-all and one-off PD sessions to create pathways of learning that attend to their specific needs and interests as educators, as well as to the needs and interests of their students.

Professional learning (PL), in contrast to professional development, can be either formal or informal. Saydam (2019), in his study of English language teachers, found that rooting professional learning within their classroom practice as a site for learning is a necessary aspect in teacher learning. Informal PL opportunities can occur as professional learning networks, established through social media, such as Twitter or Facebook (Colwell & Hutchison, 2018), or can be more formal like professional learning committees (PLCs) conducted within schools. However, as argued by Yoon (2015), PLCs located within schools run the risk of being co-opted by administrative agendas. Other professional learning opportunities can occur within continued education programs (as either additional graduate degrees or qualifications) provided by universities and professional teacher associations. These professional degree or qualification options offer online learning opportunities for teachers while they continued to teach, and contribute to a teacher’s ability for self-directed learning. Kabilan (2004) found that an asynchronous learning environment, “enabled teachers to map their thoughts and ideas carefully,
and reflect on others’ ideas before responding to the concerning issues” (p. 54). Lock (2006) agreed and stated that online learning spaces offer,

the capacity of network technologies along with the use of networked communities of inquiry [which] provide a forum where teachers can work in online collaborative, collegial spaces investigating ideas, engaging in pedagogical conversations, sharing resources and expertise, reflecting on practice, and providing support. (p. 670)

Further, Lock found that teachers participating in online professional learning, “develop their proficiency and their confidence in using technology and begin to develop a network of colleagues” (p. 671).

Roe (2004), in her study of teacher experiences in professional learning, posited that choice and control matter greatly when they participate in professional development (p. 52). She also affirmed that it is important for professional development that “provides teachers a chance to choose a line of inquiry” (p. 34): Teachers need to be seen as knowledgeable professionals who are able to make decisions regarding their own professional learning. Professional judgment based on personal and professional experiences informs teacher pedagogy; Kissling (2014) stated, a teacher’s “living curricula experiences shape their teaching” (p. 90). For Kissling, one of the few scholars who explored the lived curricula of teachers, understands the importance of teacher experiences in shaping their practice as teachers. The implications from his work are that a teacher’s histories and experiences—their living curricula, “across all times and places of their lives, not just classroom moments” (p. 81)—contribute just as importantly to their practices as teachers. It is in these fulsome experiences of teachers’ lived curriculum that I seek to explore
how my participants come to know multiliteracies through their professional learning—working to make meaning with multiliteracies and use this new knowledge in practice.

In recent years, the concept of what professional development is and does to teachers instead of for teachers is under debate (Easton, 2008; Hord, 2008; Timperley, 2011; Wells, 2014). Timperley (2011) suggested that the key difference between terms is that “professional learning requires teachers to be seriously engaged in their learning whereas professional development is often seen as merely participation” (p. 5). Thus, considering teacher professional learning, instead of professional development, is gaining traction (see The State of Educator’s Professional Learning in Canada, 2017; Teaching excellence through professional learning and policy reform: Lessons from around the world, 2016; and Democratizing Professional Growth with Teachers from Development to Learning, 2018). For Easton (2008), “development is not enough. Educators must be knowledgeable and wise. They must know enough in order to change. They must change in order to get results. They must become learners, and they must be self-developing” (p. 756, emphasis in original). Both Easton (2008) and Wells (2014) argued that only through professional learning is teacher change effected. The IRA (2018) agreed and stated that if traditional professional development is “both intellectually and emotionally unsatisfying, there is no significant growth in teacher practice” (p. 2); and Timperley (2011) posited that there is scant evidence that PD has “an impact on teachers’ practices or on student outcomes” (p. 5). For Timperley, professional learning implies an “active process of systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of practice for student engagement, learning and well-being and through this process become self-regulated learners” (p. 7). Timperley argued that when teachers are active decision-makers in their learning process, professionalism becomes the heart of their professional learning.
Based on this more progressive view of teacher learning as professional learning and its more current conceptualizations, professional learning can attend to and cultivate teachers’ on-going pedagogical needs and interests in the area of language and literacy. This focus on teacher needs is with the understanding that educators have, at the heart of their on-going professional learning, the interests and needs of their students. Professional development, on the other hand, is at risk of producing a perception of teacher learning that is steeped in essentialism, where teacher effectiveness is reduced to narrow technical skills and knowledge (Imig & Imig, 2006). While it is important that teachers focus on particular skills in language and literacy teaching and learning, it is in a more holistic and fulsome manner that teachers’ pedagogical expertise is considered important as it is refined through active, individualized, and relevant professional learning.

In the literature, professional development is often conflated with professional learning. For example, Borko’s (2004) review on teacher professional development conflates professional development with professional learning and makes the assumption that where there is professional development there is teacher learning (also see Darling-Hammond, 2009). While she attempted to create a clear picture of effective professional development at the time, Borko’s cited studies are heavily instruction-oriented, with a focus on how PD can be designed to change teacher instruction in order to change student thinking in areas such as math. Borko (2004) discussed that, in phase one of her literature review, the “research provides evidence that high-quality professional development programs can help teachers deepen their knowledge and transform their teaching,” (p. 5). Yet her conceptualization of a transformation in teaching is reductive, as she further stated, “phase 1 research provides evidence that intensive professional development programs can help teachers to increase their [content] knowledge and change their
instructional practices” (p. 5). While direct instruction is a key part of what a teacher does within the classroom, it does not represent the totality of a teacher’s pedagogy nor does it address effective professional learning by simply increasing one’s content knowledge. Only one study, which reviewed a national writing project, seemed to underscore the importance of a socio-cultural understanding of learning as situated. In this study, teachers were immersed in collaboration, research, theory, as well as active learning in the writing process themselves. These teacher leaders then presented their learning to their peers. As a result, teachers “reported that [the writing project] helped them to develop a valuable professional network, change their philosophies about teaching writing, and increase both the time spent on writing instruction and use of exemplary teaching practices” (p. 10). This suggests that to be more fulsome, teacher learning must move beyond simple instructional strategies to impact broader facets of teacher practice, such as their overarching philosophy within a specific discipline. To achieve this, teachers need supportive and networked collaboration, immersion in practice, research, and theory. Further, having fellow teachers participate in the learning of their peers, rather than an outside expert, is essential. These more encompassing strategies within teachers’ professional learning is important within my study. The learning opportunities supported through the language arts course and the graduate program in multiliteracies set out to inform educators’ pedagogy in a more robust way, not simply a focus on instructional strategies.

A focus on instruction and content development as the ultimate goal of professional development negates the broader tenets of pedagogy, such as what the New London Group (1996) offered in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Merely focusing on one area of teaching and learning, such as overt instruction (conceptual knowledge), removes opportunities for critical framing, situated practice, and transformed practice and leaves one’s pedagogy lopsided and
under-developed. Hibbert and Rich (2006) poignantly asked that within education do we see the teacher as discerner or disseminator? Where, as discerner, teacher knowledge “of content, students, and pedagogy” (p. 563) is important; as disseminator, a teacher delivers content designed by others: “The former implies a need for professional development that informs, enriches and extends teacher knowledge. The latter suggests that training in new materials is sufficient” (p. 563). For Hibbert and Rich, the view of teacher as disseminator leads to professional development that is teacher proof, which models a train-the-trainer mentality. This idea of teacher as disseminator is suggestive in both Borko (2004) and Darling-Hammond (2009) and their commentaries on teacher professional development. Hibbert and Rich (2006) posited that “the characterization of teacher as disseminator inhibits meaningful professional growth and perpetuates curricular conditions that limit the potential of the teaching learning process” (p. 563).

Kalantzis and Cope (2010) aptly stated: “If we are to have ‘new learners’, we need ‘new teachers’, no less” (p. 204). In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the teacher is a purposeful learning designer, and pedagogy “is a process of deliberate choice and purposeful shunting between different acts of knowing” (p. 210). Professional learning needs to be more fulsome and rich to include the wider range of knowledge processes available; by focusing on pedagogy, not simply instruction in professional learning, teachers are able to understand their role in teaching and learning in a more holistic way. In a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the teacher and the learner are positioned as agentive and co-constructors in the meaning-making process (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010).

Pathways in Teacher Professional Learning
There are different considerations for teachers as professionals within their professional teaching career. Ward, Grudnoff, Brooker, and Simpson (2013) asserted that, “a teacher begins their professional life-cycle the day they begin initial teacher education” (p. 69). In her seminal work on teachers and their professional pathways, Feiman-Nemser (2001) designed a professional learning continuum of teachers from preparation to practice—from their initial teacher education through induction to expertise through continued professional development or learning.

In the preservice stage, Feiman-Nemser (2001) argued that teachers must interrogate and engage in a “critical examination” (p. 1017) of their preconceived ideas and beliefs about education:

Before they can embrace these new visions, prospective teachers need opportunities to examine critically their taken-for-granted, often deeply entrenched beliefs so that these beliefs can be developed or amended. Teacher candidates must also form visions of what is possible and desirable in teaching to inspire their professional learning and practice. (p. 1017)

Feiman-Nemser also suggested the need for preservice teachers to develop a “pedagogical stance” (p. 1018), which included getting to know the diverse cultures and sociocultural lives of students. For Feiman-Nemser, it is important for new teachers to “explore their own biases and personal experiences with literacy” (p. 1018). Heydon and Hibbert (2010), in their study of preservice teachers in a literacy course aimed at “promoting critical reflection and complex understandings of literacy, teaching, and learning” (p. 796), found that teacher “candidates’ prior experiences (both in formal and informal settings) powerfully connected with their expressed
beliefs about practice” (p. 803). They suggested that within teacher education, “literacy teaching could be strengthened by dwelling more specifically on the socio-political contexts of candidates’ narratives and the implications of their beliefs and desires” (p. 803).

Feiman-Nemser (2001) also identified preservice teachers as needing to build a “basic repertoire” (p. 1018) for teaching—a variety of strategies with the focus on pedagogy, which helps teachers identify the “when, where, how, and why to use particular approaches” (p. 1019). Ward et al. (2013) supported this claim and stated that teacher education needs to provide a “solid foundation in pedagogy and subject matter” (p. 73 emphasis added). However, McCormack, Gore, and Thomas (2006) found that new teachers whose teacher education programs focused highly on new pedagogies, struggled during their induction phase in schools where new or ambitious pedagogies were discouraged in favour of more traditional or safe approaches. Nonetheless, a pedagogy of multiliteracies is an apt framework for new teachers who are developing their pedagogy and teaching repertoire within initial teacher education, because it offers teachers the opportunity to become purposeful designers of rich learning opportunities for students that are immersed in student experience and framed critically for students to interrogate and examine the world they live in.

Throughout a teacher’s professional learning, starting with initial teacher education and moving onto in-service expertise, Ward et al. (2013) stated:

During initial teacher education, a teacher learns about and through teaching. They develop knowledge for practice; knowledge which has been produced by others that they are able to use. They also begin to develop knowledge in practice as they gain experience through practicum and as their learning becomes situated in authentic, practical
contexts…During in-service, this knowledge develops into knowledge of practice; knowledge that enables them to support the development of others and to create new knowledge. (p. 73 emphasis added)

Ward et al. (2013), like Feiman-Nemser (2001), called for induction programs to help novice teachers’ transition between initial teacher education and in-service teaching. Feiman-Nemser remarked that during the induction phase, a new teacher’s job is twofold, as they have “to teach and they have to learn to teach” (p. 1026). Further, while initial teacher education creates competent teachers, the induction period is meant to move new teachers from competent to proficient (Ward et al., 2013). In Ontario, the Ministry of Education offers new teachers the opportunity to participate in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018). This program offers new teachers: (1) orientation for all new teachers to the school or school board; (2) mentoring of new teachers by experienced teachers; and (3) professional learning relevant to the individual needs of new teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.). The four goals of the program are to increase a teachers’ confidence and efficacy, and to increase a teacher’s basic repertoire with attention to instructional practice and commitment to continuous learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.). There is no mention of pedagogy within Ontario’s induction program.

Next in the pathway of teaching is continued professional learning. Just as Feiman-Nemser (2001) stated that teacher learning needs to be the “desired outcome” (p. 1025) for teacher education, teachers need to see themselves as life-long learners and engage in continued opportunities for professional learning. In Ontario, the Ontario College of Teachers, as part of their Standards of Practice, includes ongoing professional learning as a requirement within professional practice: “Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by
experience, research, collaboration and knowledge” (OCT, n.d.). However, this continued professional learning is voluntary. Ward et al. (2013) argued that at this induction stage, in-service teachers need to engage in professional learning that is “largely self-driven and determined by needs identified through reflection and inquiry into their own practice and that of others” (p. 77), and McCormack, Gore, and Thomas (2006) posited that “professional learning is a vital process” within one’s teaching career.

Within my study, I refer to preservice teachers as engaging in professional learning within the process of being a novice teacher in their initial teacher education. By doing so, I argue that it creates a sense of professionalism, which begins the moment students enter their Bachelor of Education program. In this study, I also acknowledge the differences in professional learning between the two groups of focal participants—preservice and in-service educators—because the learning occurs on both ends of the professional learning continuum within teaching. This difference may reflect different professional learning experiences with multiliteracies.

**Teacher Learning**

Important to the discussion of professional learning is how the literature conceptualizes teacher learning. Kennedy (2016) argued that while various types of professional development are ubiquitous within the teaching profession, there is no “single, over-arching theory of teaching or teacher learning” (p. 946), and as such, “there is little consensus about how PD works, that is, about what happens in PD, how it fosters teacher learning, and how it is expected to alter teaching practice” (p. 945). For Kennedy, teaching is noisy where there are “multiple and conflicting messages about what is most important to do” (p. 947). She found that across various types of PD there is limited to no real effect for increased student achievement, which she used
as a basis for considering PD effective. The implications here are that while there is plentiful research on teacher PD, there is scant research that seeks to understand the unique experiences of teachers within their professional learning opportunities to suggest any effect on teacher change or student achievement. Within Kennedy’s systematic literature review, many of the PD offered were found to be ineffective in relation to change in the classroom. Kennedy echoed the IRA’s leadership brief (Hicks, Sailors, & IRA, 2018) where they recognized that teachers are expected to engage in prescriptive PD, yet teachers are no longer expected to provide these kinds of prescriptive learning environments for their students. Thus, if teachers are expected to have progressive views of student learning, the same progressive views of teachers and their professional learning is essential.

Kennedy (2016) further found that the most effective type of PD is located in professional learning communities, but only those PLCs that offer opportunities to engage with research have facilitated discussions centered on the research, and to see its applications in practice. This suggests that professional learning needs to involve teachers in research and collaborative discussion with their peers. This finding aligns with Heubner (2009) who considered teacher learning as located within their practice and also builds on self-reflection and collaboration with other teachers. In practice, Heubner conceptualized what teachers do within the classroom as sensemaking: “the process by which teachers notice and select certain messages from their environment, interpret them, and then decide whether to act on those interpretations to change their practice” (p. 89). Borko (2004), though most of her reviewed studies suggested otherwise and considered teacher learning within a professional development model, aptly acknowledged that: “To understand teacher learning, we must study it within these multiple contexts, taking into account both the individual teacher-learners and the social systems in which
they are participant” (p. 4). For Borko the situative nature of teacher learning is key as it can happen anywhere and at any time, either in formal professional development sessions or “in a brief hallway conversation with a colleague, or after school when counseling a troubled child” (p. 4). When looking at professional development versus professional learning compared to models of adult learning, it is critical to see why there is now a widespread rejection of traditional PD and its various iterations.

How teachers learn should not be considered separate from theories of adult learning. Knowles’ (1996) foundational work on adult learning is significant as it addresses the need for adults to be involved in identifying their own needs to direct their learning:

The main thrust of modern adult techniques is for involving adults in ever deeper processes of self-diagnosis of their own needs for continued learning, in formulating their own objectives for learning, in sharing responsibility for designing and carrying out their learning objectives. (p. 68)

The need for teachers to be involved in identifying their specific needs, and the needs of their students, is a crucial tenet of professional learning, which is supported by theories of adult learning. Merriam (2001) identified a number of assumptions about adult learning as being a person who:

- Has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning;
- Has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning;
- Has learning needs closely related to changing social roles;
- Is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and
- Is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (p. 5)
These tenets of adult learning build on the notion that teachers, as adults and professionals, need to design their learning in a way that attends to their agency and experiences as adults; adults who are engaged in a profession with specific needs to fulfill.

Mezirow (1997), in his seminal work within his transformational learning theory in adult education, cited critical self-reflection and reflexivity as an important component in adult learning. For Mezirow, new information needs to be entangled within a learner’s history, challenge and reflect on one’s and others’ assumptions, and engage in dialogue. Similarly, teacher learning needs to be collaborative and rooted in practice—adults’ lived curricula (Kissling, 2014), where there are opportunities to reflect on their needs in order to attend to the needs of their students. Shulman and Shulman (2004), in their conceptualizations of teacher learning, also argued that critical reflection as a process is important and is “the key to teacher learning and development” (p. 260).

Shulman and Shulman (2004) argued there is a need to understand what models of professional development can “foster the right kinds of learning” (p. 260) for teachers. While it may be problematic to consider teacher learning opportunities in terms of the “right kinds of learning,” Shulman and Shulman put forth a model of “teacher development, and thus of teacher learning” (p. 258), which included: vision, motivation, understanding, practice, reflection, and community. However, this view of teachers and their learning still supports the notion of professional development as a top-down form of learning, with a taken-for-granted notion of where there is professional development, there is teacher learning.

Hibbert and Rich (2006) connected online teacher learning as a method of teacher education that builds on the premises of adult education. They found that teachers who learned
online had opportunities to engage within a community of practice. They argued that the online learning environment, “can bring professionals together to discuss new research and ways in which their learning informs their professional practice” (p. 564) and teachers can encounter a “shared repertoire” in “the pursuit of an enterprise (e.g., teaching reading well)” (p. 565). For Hibbert and Rich, “an online environment can offer a degree of flexibility, independence and choice that appeals to adults, many of whom are studying in addition to raising families and working outside of the home” (p. 567). Thus, in thinking of teacher professional learning, it is crucial to keep in mind the characteristics of adult learning and not treat teacher learning and adult learning as different concepts, which then requires different considerations for teachers than we consider other adult learners. This attention to adult learning is important to my study to understand the educators in both the preservice course and the graduate program as they engage in their professional learning.

**Professional Development and Learning in Language and Literacy Education**

A review of the literature demonstrates that while various professional development in-and out-of-schools is widespread when addressing the professional learning of teachers within the area of language and literacy, professional development opportunities are somewhat limited to positioning teachers as *technicians* (Cloonan, 2010). In this kind of PD, language and literacy tends to focus on targeted instruction and assessment practices in order to increase student achievement in one linguistic mode only, reading and writing (e.g., Griffin, Murray, Care, Thomas, & Perry, 2010). The modes of delivery for this type of PD are mainly engaged through on-site, job-embedded professional development in literacy instruction (Rosemary, Roskos, & Landreth, 2007), or brief, one time, off-site sessions (Carreker, Joshi, & Boulware-Goode, 2015; Correnti, 2007; Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011; Griffin et al., 2010; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010;
Morrow & Casey, 2004; Syed, 2008; Timperley & Phillips, 2003). Professional development as technical training is conducted with the goal of offering support for teachers with the purpose of increasing student achievement on standardized tests (Imig & Imig, 2006; Kraft & Papay, 2014). Poulson and Avramidis (2003) stated that because of a focus on literacy achievement for standardized tests, “opportunities for professional learning have, largely, taken the form of standardised courses and materials to enable teachers to implement the strategy framework and manage and deliver the required lesson format” (p. 544). They posited that professional development in literacy is becoming more like training with an assumption that teaching is “largely a technical enterprise…over which they [teachers] have little control,” and “teaching is informed by the desire to make students’ experiences more consistent, regardless of where they are taught, and [there is] a stronger focus on outcomes” (p. 544). Because of this focus on specific and targeted teacher practices and instruction for gains in student achievement in reading and writing, there is an assumption that through professional development a change has taken place in teacher pedagogy. As such, with little focus on the specific experiences of teachers that are meaningful within their professional learning through these professional development opportunities, a gap remains to understand what, within these experiences, are meaningful enough to affect their pedagogy. Therefore, as Roe (2004) stated, “a shift from professional development to an ecological view of what drives a teacher’s practices to evolve and shift” (p. 51) is necessary.

Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) contended that in an era of continued emphasis on standards and standardization, the underlying issue is that, “standards are sometimes regarded as a panacea for an ailing teaching profession and/or education system” (p. 6), and standards, “have the capacity to raise the profile of the profession, improve teachers’ performance and
facilitate more effective professional development for teachers” (p. 6). However, this focus on standards to improve teachers’ performance does not consider “the complexity and nuance of teaching practice or to celebrate the diversity of teachers and learners” (p. 8). When considering professional learning, this alludes to the loss of teacher autonomy in making professional judgments about their professional learning activities to inform their pedagogy. This is further evidenced in marketed language arts programs purchased for teachers as these “programs are often mass purchased in a top-down fashion and deposited into classrooms with little or no input from teachers” (Hibbert & Iannacci, 2005, p. 716), and “they take away those things [improvisation] that enable teachers to respond to the diverse needs of individual students” (Dudley-Marling & Murphy, 2001, p. 577). Instead, Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) suggested that teachers have “access to professional development and learning, which is engaging, situated and relevant to teachers’ needs and those of their students” (p. 10), and they should be able to leverage their own professional judgement in their practice.

In their case studies of effective teachers of literacy, Poulson and Avramidis (2003) found that it is through teacher professional autonomy that effective professional learning in literacy occurs (p. 557). The researchers stated that “both curriculum and pedagogy have become tightly specified and standardised, and professional development provision largely tied to implementing national policies or specific school development priorities” (p. 557). As such, the kind of professional development that has grown out of this standardized culture does not attend to what is needed to be effective teachers of literacy. The researchers argued that instead of scripted and forced standardized professional development designed by others, “teaching literacy effectively [is] achieved through the interweaving of different kinds of experience, rather than through specific training, or in-service courses” (p. 549). Their findings suggest that, “the personal
dimension of professional development in literacy and language was clearly important, and the
teachers in [their] study had maintained a personal commitment to an extended form of
professional learning” (p. 550).

When considering teacher learning within their professional learning opportunities, it is
important to consider theories of adult learning and to realize teachers, as professionals and
adults, need to engage in meaningful, relevant professional learning. This acknowledgement in
planning professional learning opportunities offers a more expanded view of teachers and
teaching, rather than teacher as technician. Within a pedagogy of multiliteracies, it offers a view
of teachers as designers.

**Professional Learning in Multiliteracies**

While there is a wealth of studies on multiliteracies explored within a variety of contexts,
as mentioned at the beginning of this literature review, there are scant studies that specifically
address professional learning in multiliteracies (e.g., Bull & Anstey, 2010; Cloonan, 2010;
Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin, & Hesterman, 2013). Yet despite efforts to move towards
professional learning, Cloonan (2010) contended that “literacy practices of both teachers and
students still stand in contrast to the literacy orientations and implementation efforts valued by
many school-based educators, schools and school-related bureaucracies” (p. 30). According to
Cloonan, this is due in part to the way educators themselves have been trained in traditional,
“print-based literacy pedagogies” (p. 31), and, therefore, “the changed communication
environment…stands outside the paradigm in which they were trained” (p. 31). This calls for
professional learning to be meaningful in the new ways students and teachers are interacting and
communicating with literacy, such as from a pedagogy of multiliteracies lens.
Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin, and Hesterman (2013), who echoed Cloonan’s (2010) observation above, found that even though Australia’s national curriculum included the idea of multimodality, it was only “broadly defined…and no rationale [was] given for its relationship to existing practices” (p. 357). In response to this limited connection to practice the researchers invited teachers to participate in a collaborative multiliteracies book club. They found that the teachers who volunteered were underwhelmed with board-initiated professional development. Teachers expressed the view that, “associated professional development with prescribed curriculum reform efforts” (p. 364) was “often quite disappointing in regard to what teachers wanted...[and] was all so repetitious” (p. 363). Through Gardiner et al.’s case study, the book club, which was structured according to multiliteracies pedagogy, met five times over the course of six months. Findings suggest that through the collaborative, supportive environment of the book club, “scaffolded learning opportunities emerged as important factors for the shift of a small group of teachers towards multiliteracies perspectives” (p. 370). Implications are geared towards a continuation of professional learning opportunities that need to be innovative and to position teachers as “collaborative literacy knowledge workers” (p. 370). Cloonan (2010), in her study, also concluded that teachers need to be seen “as knowledge collaborators and creators rather than as technicians” (p. 2) and that professional learning needs to position teachers as agentive. Whereas students are seen as knowledgeable producers and designers of knowledge and information, not simply consumers, within a pedagogy of multiliteracies, so too should educators be viewed as producers and designers of information (i.e., within curriculum), not merely consumers.

Bull and Anstey (2010) explored the professional learning of multiliteracies in practice and found that initiatives to promote multiliteracies at the school level, which are formal and job-
embedded, have positive influences on teacher pedagogy. These scholars, in their action research, created *The Multiliteracies Professional Development Program* to specifically target multiliteracies in teacher pedagogy by “supporting teachers as they changed their professional practice” (p. 143). Successful participation in the program, however, also relied on the participation of the educational leader within the school. The more supportive and involved the educational leader, the more participation by teachers (Bull & Anstey, 2010).

In her participatory action research conducted in a primary and junior level program in Australia, Cloonan (2010) aimed to explore teacher pedagogy with multiliteracies through interventions in how teachers teach literacy. Cloonan achieved this by putting herself in the role as an educational consultant in multiliteracies and multimodality. She posited that, “the affordances of a changing communications environment call for the development of professional learning that is directly related to increasing the teachers’ multimodal literacy and giving them the pedagogical resources to broaden their teaching in relation to multimodality” (p. 32). Through what Cloonan called a “pedagogical knowledge processes schema” (p. 226), which aligned with the knowledge processes of multiliteracies pedagogy as outlined by the New London Group (1996): Situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice, the interventions in participants’ practice influenced the teachers, “to become more pedagogically purposeful and to address gaps” (Cloonan, 2010, p. 226) in their practice, with attention to the “over-reliance” (p. 226) of some knowledge processes over others. The interventions in Cloonan’s study on the literacy practices and pedagogies of teachers, influenced change in the teachers’ practice.

These studies of professional learning in multiliteracies at the school level have found positive impacts of change in teacher practice through a pedagogy of multiliteracies. However, a
gap still exists in understanding the professional learning of teachers—the how and in what ways, meaning-making in multiliteracies affects a perceived change in pedagogy. Thus, it is still necessary to understand, more fully, the lived curriculum of teachers in their professional learning of multiliteracies to understand how and why this perceived change occurs. My study seeks to explore this issue.

Multiliteracies in Teacher Education

There is scant research on multiliteracies within initial teacher education. However, as Cope and Kalantzis (2015) and Kalantzis and Cope (2018) argued, education needs to continue to move forward beyond back-to-basics ideologies towards an education that is more transformative. McLean and Rowsell (2013) argued that literacy courses in teacher education programs need to be (re)designed. This need is because “teacher education programs can be places that convince students to broaden notions of what literacy is, or, they can be places that stridently and determinedly retain status quo” (p. 1). In 2008, when Rowsell, Kosnik, Potvin, and Hestermann made the call for multiliteracies to be included within teacher education, they also pointed out that “the objectives of multiliteracies pedagogy are ambitious and have rarely been achieved to a high degree: the understanding and skill required of teachers and the support needed in the system are considerable” (p. 116). However, in their study of preservice teacher education and early practicing teachers, Rowsell et al.’s findings suggest there is progress in teacher education when trying to prepare preservice language and literacy teachers from a multiliteracies perspective. However, Rowsell et al. found that new teachers are not immersed enough in the pedagogy, its theory and practice, to sufficiently incorporate multiliteracies into practice. Ajayi (2011), who also studied preservice teachers, as well as their perceptions of their preparation to teach from a multimodal and multiliteracies perspective, agreed with Rowsell et
al. (2008). Ajayi (2011) found that new teachers need more preparation in multiliteracies concepts, and after their teacher education program, she found that new teachers still needed, and still wanted, more professional learning opportunities in new literacies (multimodality and multiliteracies). The new teachers in Ajayi’s study were open to and wanting to continue in their professional learning in the area of multiliteracies because of the potential it held for their language and literacy teaching practices. Accordingly, professional learning that is more deeply focused on multiliteracies is needed in both teacher education and continued teacher professional learning.

Skerrett (2011), in her study of English preservice majors discovered that the likelihood of a new teacher to incorporate multiliteracies pedagogies into their practice relied on their early disposition towards new literacies and multiliteracies. She found, however, that engaging with new literacies is in tension with preservice teachers’ prior knowledge as they confront their own predispositions to more traditional language and literacy teaching and learning ideologies. This finding supports Heydon and Hibbert’s (2010) research and Feiman-Nemser’s (2001) claim that preservice teachers need to become critically aware and interrogate their existing beliefs. Additionally, Skerrett (2011) found it was difficult for some preservice teachers to see how multiliteracies fits within a prescribed curriculum. The implication here is that these students still considered multiliteracies as an add-on. The new teachers understood multiliteracies as only part of literacy instruction (i.e., focusing on the use of multimodality in their lesson planning), rather than understanding it as underpinning their pedagogy (i.e., understanding the knowledge processes). Some preservice teachers were not able to reconcile their already sedimented ideologies of what literacy meant, such as in traditional instruction as a basic skill to be learned or in what it meant to teach literacy through a multiliteracies pedagogical lens. Though Skerrett
saw her preservice students using multimodality, she stated that the literacy strategies preservice students used in their work were, “on the surface, framed within the discourse of multiple modalities. Nonetheless, they align[ed] with the conventional disciplinary processes into which pre-service teachers have already been socialized. They [were] not the new forms of participation in literacy learning” (p. 191). However, as her self-study progressed, Skerrett found that, “teacher educators should give prominence to the Situated Practice component of multiliteracies pedagogy to facilitate pre-service teachers’ development of dispositions towards multiliteracies pedagogy” (p. 196). By focusing on these components, preservice teachers are more inclined to understand the importance and necessity of bridging students’ funds of knowledge and lifeworlds from out-of-school literacies into the classroom. Skerrett (2011) also understood the importance of teaching from a multiliteracies pedagogy herself, and stated that it “strengthened [her] own multiliteracies pedagogy to demonstrate to the teacher candidates how they might successfully negotiate the barriers to multiliteracies teaching that they perceive” (p. 192).

As stated within my introduction, Jacobs (2014), Kalantzis and Cope (2010), and Rowsell et al. (2008) asserted that the teaching profession is in need of radical change: Now more than ever, because of recent world events that seek to harness progressive education, it is crucial to continue to introduce multiliteracies into teacher professional learning in both preservice and in-service as an underpinning theory and pedagogy of language and literacy learning. Understanding the importance of this task, and because of the dearth of literature on multiliteracies in teacher education, my study aims to fill this gap.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter I outlined my theoretical framework, which consists of multiliteracies as a pedagogical framework that includes the knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, applying, and analyzing, and as a theory: learning by design. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) conceptualized learning through design where “designing is transformational work” (p. 286). It is through a pedagogy of multiliteracies and learning by design that teachers can become “purposeful learning designers” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010, 210). I also outlined two theories of curriculum used within my theoretical framework: Aoki’s (1993) lived curriculum and Schwab’s (1973) curricular commonplaces. In the literature review, I discussed general concepts of professional development and learning and how they are oftentimes conflated within the literature. I attempted to parse out the qualities that make professional learning distinct and show how it aligns with the literature on adult learning, and thus, is a more apt concept of what teachers need in their continued learning as professionals. Professional learning, in its current ideation, is more transformative than professional development. I also reviewed the professional learning pathways for teachers, and acknowledged that between my two data sets: preservice and in-service educators, each group belonged to different pathways within their teaching career. I discussed the literature on multiliteracies and professional learning and multiliteracies within teacher education, suggesting that my study fills a gap within the literature as there is scant research in this area. In the next chapter I outline my methodology and the methods used for data collection and analysis.
Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

This dissertation research is built upon two qualitative exploratory case studies rooted in a theory of literacy and pedagogy called multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis & Cope, 2016) and two theories of curriculum: lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) and curricular commonplaces (Schwab, 1973). My aim is to understand the lived curriculum of preservice and in-service educators, both engaged in professional learning in multiliteracies. The preservice teachers participated in a language arts course in their first year of a two-year Bachelor of Education program. The in-service teachers participated in an online graduate program and were in their last year of a two-year program. The questions guiding this research are:

1. What is the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice and in-service educators participating, as learners, in multiliteracies education, and how do their respective curricula shape their perceptions, as educators, of literacy pedagogy?

   a) What is the intended curriculum of the Bachelor of Education program and the graduate program in multiliteracies pedagogy?

   b) How do the participants, through these experiences, come to know multiliteracies pedagogy, and how is this knowledge produced, if at all, through their designs?
c) What changes to participants’ developing literacy pedagogy do they perceive, if at all, as a result of their professional learning experiences in multiliteracies?

2. What are the implications for teacher professional learning to promote formal opportunities for meaning making of teachers in multiliteracies?

This chapter outlines my case study methodology and the methods used in data collection and data analysis.

**Exploratory Case Study**

To understand the professional learning of preservice and in-service educators, I used a qualitative, exploratory case study (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2012) methodology. I chose case study because it allows for phenomena to be studied in depth. To achieve this depth, case study is considered a *bounded system* (Creswell, 2013, p. 97), which allows for specific phenomena and events to be studied. Further, I chose case study methodology, because, for qualitative researchers, the “messy complexity of human experience” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 3) is what draws them in to conduct a case study. Researchers who employ this methodology are “interested in the meaning people make of their lives in very particular contexts” (p. 9), and it is within these contexts that meaning-making can be found as they are “the frameworks for interpretation” (p. 5). It is within this messiness that I aim to understand the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of teachers as they engage with multiliteracies in their professional learning and to explore whether these teachers perceive a change in their literacy pedagogy. I have identified my two cases as being the lived curriculum of educators engaging in formal professional learning,
specifically within a preservice course in language arts within a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program and an online graduate program in education, both with a focus on multiliteracies.

Stake (1995) focused on the context of a case and its particularities within the bounded system as being key, because “the uniquenesses are expected to be critical to the understandings of the particular case” (p. 44). To capture these particularities and uniquenesses, *thick description* (Geertz, 1993, as cited in Stake, 2010) is an indispensable characteristic of case study, as it strives for “the desire to derive a(n) (up-)close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of ‘cases,’ set in their real-world contexts. The closeness aims to produce an invaluable and deep understanding” (Yin, 2012, p. 4). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) also stated that, “context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects,” and researchers “investigate and report the real-life, complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events” (p. 289). Within my study’s design, my goal is to explore how the focal participants (preservice and in-service educators) experience their professional learning in multiliteracies as their lived curriculum.

Through purposeful sampling, I selected my two cases—preservice educators in a Bachelor of Education course and in-service educators in a graduate program in multiliteracies. The teachers within these two cases each “serve[ed] as the main *unit of analysis*” (Yin, 2012, pp. 6-7). These cases were explored with rigour and depth (Stake, 2008), through multiple data collected, to explore and understand the professional learning of educators in multiliteracies.

**Data Collection**

The following section outlines my methods of data collection, which include participant recruitment, in-depth interviews with focal participants, focal participant artifacts, interviews
with program instructors and personnel, curriculum and program documents, and a researcher reflective journal. I also outline my approach to analysis and discuss ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and transferability.

**Recruitment.** Recruitment began after gaining ethical approval from my institution’s Research Ethics Board (REB) (Appendix A). After ethical approval, a Letter of Information and Consent form (Appendix B) was sent to the institutions where the graduate program and Bachelor of Education course were offered. Each department within the respective institutions disseminated the invitation to participate in the study to the instructors, the administrative program manager, and language arts course program coordinator. For the Bachelor of Education program, instructors who granted me permission allowed me to conduct a presentation in their classroom regarding the aims and purposes of my study in order to recruit preservice teacher candidates. My Letter of Information and Consent form was distributed. Preservice educators who contacted me via email to volunteer for the study were included as a participant. Instructors in the online graduate course disseminated my Letter of Information and Consent within the online learning management system, and in-service educators who chose to participate emailed me directly. Each participant completed the Letter of Information and Consent form and participants were able to withdraw from my study. Purposeful sampling was also used to recruit instructors for both programs: a language arts program coordinator and the graduate program’s administrative program manager. For these participants, the same process of recruitment occurred: the institution sent out my recruitment email to the respective departments. For the purpose of understanding the intended, programmatic curriculum it was important to explore and understand how the administrative program manager and language arts course coordinator intended the program and course to be delivered.
Participants. My focal participants included both preservice and in-service educators who engaged in professional learning in multiliteracies, either within the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) language arts course or the online graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies. Additional participants also included instructors from both programs and program personnel. The total number of participants was 13: three focal participants in the B.Ed. who were in their first year of the teacher education program; three focal participants in the graduate program who were in their second and last year of the program; one graduate program instructor; four Bachelor of Education instructors; one graduate administrative program manager; and one Bachelor of Education language arts program coordinator (see Table 3).

Table 3.

Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor of Education, Language Arts Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created the language arts course curriculum; oversees language arts program and course instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the curriculum through the creation of appropriate instructional strategies and individual pedagogical decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the curriculum through the creation of appropriate instructional strategies and individual pedagogical decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the curriculum through the creation of appropriate instructional strategies and individual pedagogical decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the curriculum through the creation of appropriate instructional strategies and individual pedagogical decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focal Participants

Brittany • French-Canadian; French is her second language; volunteered in a French language school; novice French language teacher in primary & junior education in the French language stream; traditional schooling experiences; rich home and community literacy; uses Facebook to connect with her peers in the program; no prior knowledge of multiliteracies

Anna • Canadian; English is her first language; coached swimming with international students; traditional early schooling experiences; a competitive swimmer, she completed her secondary schooling independently; novice teacher in the primary & junior education, international education stream; uses Facebook to connect with her peers in the program

Tye • Canadian; English is her first language; struggled in reading and writing in grade school; learned Farsi and Arabic in university; taught overseas after university; traditional schooling experiences; novice teacher in the primary & junior education, international education stream; uses Facebook to connect with her peers in the program; no prior knowledge of multiliteracies

Online Graduate Program in Multiliteracies

Administrative Program Manager • Assisted in the organization and logistics of the program; worked with the Program Coordinator and corresponded with students

Instructor • Taught online in the graduate program using appropriate instructional strategies and making individual pedagogical decisions

Focal Participants

Jason • Canadian; English is his first language; attended concurrent teacher education in Ontario; traditional schooling experiences; rich home and community literacy; full-time,
early career teacher in an International Baccalaureate school overseas; access to extensive school-provided professional development; connects with program peers through social media (Twitter and Facebook); no prior knowledge of multiliteracies

Sarah

- Canadian; English is her only language; traditional schooling experiences; rich home and community experiences; mid-career, early childhood educator; partnered with an Ontario Certified Teacher in a kindergarten classroom within a public-school board; limited access to professional development through her school board; connects with program peers through social media (Twitter and Facebook); no prior knowledge of multiliteracies

Rachel

- Chinese; English is an additional language; traditional schooling experiences; traditional formal schooling in English; no formal teacher education training; early career teacher in a post-secondary institution in her homeland, China; teaches English as an additional language; access to faculty professional development within her post-secondary institution; connects with program peers through social media (Twitter and Facebook); no prior knowledge of multiliteracies

**Interviews.** Interviews are “the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research,” and they are “a very good way of assessing people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. Interviews are also the most powerful way we have of understanding others” (Punch, 2009, p. 144). Within case study research, interviews are considered the most apt way of collecting rich, detailed data of participants’ lived experiences, since “the researcher can research areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible such as people’s subjective experiences and attitudes” (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011, pp. 529). Further, “we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe and to understand what we have observed…we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intention” (Patton, 2015, p. 426).
I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with all participants, as “questions should be asked in a truly open-ended fashion so people can respond in their own words” (Patton, 2015, p. 446). This “allow[ed] the person being interviewed to select from among that person’s full repertoire of possible responses those that are the most salient…[to] use whatever words they want to express what they have to say” (p. 447). I chose to conduct interviews in this way, because I had “a specific topic to learn about, prepare[d] a limited number of questions in advance, and plan[ed] to ask follow-up questions” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 31). An interview protocol was used for the interview process (see Appendix C-G). An interview protocol is useful as it prepares the interviewer with a list of questions or “issues that are to be explored,” and “it prepare[s] one to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (Patton, 2015, p. 439). An open-ended interview protocol also allows for the conversation to flow in an emergent direction depending on what the participant chooses to speak about (Patton, 2015). The same interview protocol was used for the six focal participants, tailored to their specific professional learning experiences, while there was a separate interview protocol used for program personnel, as the questions were tailored to their respective programs. The same interview protocol was used for all four of the language arts course instructors, and a separate one used for the graduate program instructor; again, tailored to their respective programs.

During the interview process, as the questions were open-ended, the dialogue generated between the interviewer and interviewee, was “constructed in situ, as a product of the talk between interview participants” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 67). Thus, “respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge—treasuries of information awaiting excavation—as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers. Participation in an interview
involves meaning-making work” (p. 68). The validity of the interview then, came from “answers derive[d] not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent, but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible” (p. 71).

As the aim of this study is to explore the experiences of the educators in the language arts course and in the online graduate program, through their lived curriculum, my specific interview process for the six focal participants followed Seidman’s (2013) three in-depth interview series. In this way, the process allowed for “both the interviewer and participant to explore the participants’ experience, place it in context, and reflect on its meaning” (p. 20). Context is the most valuable piece of qualitative data, as Patton (2015) expressed, “context envelops and completes the whole. Without attention to and inclusion of context, qualitative findings are like a fine painting without a frame” (p. 69). Thus, it was important to gain a deep understanding of the focal participants through their experiences.

During the spring and fall of 2016 and the winter of 2017, I conducted my program personnel interviews and the three in-depth interviews with each of the preservice and in-service participants: The first interview for these focal participants, which lasted between 15-20 minutes in length, provided the context of teachers’ experiences with literacy and literacy education; the second interview, which lasted approximately 30-40 minutes in length, “allow[ed] participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs” (p. 21), which stemmed from participation in their professional learning in multiliteracies within their respective programs. Finally, the third interview, which lasted 15-20 minutes in length, “encourag[ed] the participants to reflect on the meaning their experiences holds for them” (p. 21). This last interview provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on how their professional learning experiences shaped, if at all, their literacy pedagogy. This interview
method for my six focal participants afforded the possibility for me to understand, in rich detail, their experiences—their previous literacy experiences, current lived experiences within their professional learning, and the meaning of these experiences with possible implications for their future as educators.

The following section outlines the design decisions used for each of the three focal participant interviews.

**Focal participant interview one.** The first interview included questions that explored an initial inquiry into the six focal participants’ previous experiences with literacy. This interview also included their knowledge of literacy pedagogy, as either an experienced teacher or as a novice teacher beginning their teacher education. It is important to understand these personal experiences with literacy, because teachers’ experiences, both personal and professional, contribute to, and help shape, their philosophies of literacy learning and pedagogy within the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kissling, 2014; Heydon & Hibbert, 2011). Also, I explored their sociocultural, linguistic, and historical backgrounds for context (Patton, 2015). During this interview, participants were invited to bring in artifacts, which they created throughout the program or course, for the second interview. They were also invited to bring in artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, projects, or reflections) that demonstrated the integration of multiliteracies into their practice.

**Focal participant interview two.** The aim of the second interview was to understand the emic perspective of the participant. While the first interview aimed to delve into the participants’ current experiences, in the second interview participants were encouraged to speak about their experiences within their professional learning (either in the language arts course or in the
graduate program). It was important to understand how participants engaged with their peers and instructors, program and course curriculum, as well as the learning management system for those in the online graduate program. In this second interview, participants were again invited to share their artifacts created through their respective programs for the third interview.

**Focal participant interview three.** The last interview provided an opportunity for participants’ interpretations and perceptions of their previous and current experiences. This interview was open to opinion, values, and feelings (Patton, 2015). I encouraged participants to reflect on where they saw these experiences taking them in the future in terms of changes to their pedagogy (Seidman, 2013), if the experiences indeed affected them in this way. Topics included participants’ perceptions of how their literacy pedagogy was or was not shaped by their experiences with multiliteracies, how participants interpreted their experiences, and where they saw these experiences leading them in the future.

It was important to conduct the interviews in this way so that I could “focus on the participants’ understanding of their experiences” (Seidman, 2013, p. 22)—their meaning-making. By conducting interviews as a method of inquiry, my aim was to collect rich, detailed data on the lived curriculum of participants in the Bachelor of Education language arts course and the graduate program, both focusing on multiliteracies. Considering emic versus etic data, interviews “are closer to the emic end of the continuum because they allow individuals to respond in their own words using their own categorizations and perceived associations” (Stewart & Shamdansani, 2015, p. 43).

**Focal participant artifacts.** Only one participant from the Bachelor of Education course offered to share her reflective journal, which she contributed to throughout her 12 weeks in the
language arts course. It is apt to include this data for further richness in detail for this research. The participant artifacts collected from the in-service educators in the graduate program included their course work designs and their final reflective practice project. The purpose for collecting this data is to understand how the participants are coming to know multiliteracies through their knowledge designs. It is my aim that these artifacts may provide further insight into how the participants perceive a change in their pedagogy through their program or course experiences focusing on language and literacy, framed through multiliteracies.

**Program and course documents.** The curriculum documents collected for this research included program outlines (from the institution’s website), course syllabi, and course and program learning objectives. It is important to understand the intended curriculum for both the Bachelor of Education language arts course and the graduate program. With this understanding, I can contextualize the interview responses from the student participants and understand how their experiences fit into the overall experiences of their respective professional learning opportunities.

**Reflexive research journal.** I kept a reflective journal throughout the research process. Keeping a research journal is used for, “engaging with the notion of creating transparency in the research process…the goal is to provide a research ‘trail’ of gradually altering methodologies and reshaping analysis” (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 696). This is due to the fact that, “since the researcher is the primary ‘instrument’ of data collection and analysis, reflexivity is deemed essential” (Watt, 2007, p. 82). According to Ortlipp (2008), “making the experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings visible is an acknowledged part of the research design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation process” (Ortlipp, p. 703). Watt (2007) concurred and stated that “getting ideas down when they occur is actually the beginning of analysis” (p. 83), and
through reflection researchers may become aware of what allows them to see, as well as what may inhibit their seeing…this entails careful consideration of the phenomenon under study, as well as the ways a researcher’s own assumptions and behaviour may be impacting the inquiry. (p. 82)

Throughout the process, I sat and wrote formally on the computer, working through my wonderings and questions that the literature or data generated. At other times my journal process was more spontaneous and written in the columns of my research notes and data transcripts to contemplate questions regarding my positionality as a researcher, teacher, and teacher educator. It is important that I engaged in this reflexive process throughout to remain aware of my biases, any assumptions, and to try and understand my explorations in an objective way.

Data Analysis

In this research I conducted a thematic case study analysis (Patton, 2015). In case study analysis, “qualitative data [is] organized to coherently tell the story of the case that has been purposefully sampled” (Patton, 2015, p. 551). For Patton (2015) this approach is suited to case study research as inductive thematic analysis, “refers to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 541). Further, my approach to analysis also followed a reflexive and iterative process, which “is key to sparking insight and developing meaning” (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009, p. 76). Srivastava and Hopwood’s approach to qualitative analysis suggests that “reflexive iteration is at the heart of visiting and revisiting the data and connecting them with emerging insights, progressively leading to refined focus and understanding” (p. 77). It is through this iterative process that I read through and coded data, first for the organization of my
findings, whilst constantly keeping analytic memos (Saldaña, 2015) as a way to continually reflect upon my data. These analytic memos differed from my reflexive journal, as these memos dealt directly within and across data for the purpose of analysis. Next, I read and re-read the data and my analytic memos and coded the data for recurrent and emergent themes. For Creswell (2013), “the process of coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code” (p. 184). By using Srivastava and Hopwood’s (2009) reflexive iteration (which built upon Patton’s self-reflexivity), I engaged in an iterative process of asking and exploring through the data: (1) What is the data telling me? (2) What is it I want to know? and (3) What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know. This process looked to the data and to answer my research aims, purposes, and questions.

I used the qualitative data tool, QSR NVivo, for data storage, organization, and security only. The data used in my analyses were the in-depth interviews (transcribed verbatim) from my six focal participants (preservice and in-service educators), the graduate program instructor, the four language arts course instructors, the administrative program administrator, the language arts program coordinator, artifacts from the focal participants, as well as data from program and course documents.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were central to this research. All ethical protocols were adhered to within my institution’s research ethics guidelines, and informed consent was procured from all participants. The purpose of informed consent is to ensure “that the participants understand the nature of the research, are always aware of risks [if any] it poses, and are not forced either
covertly or overtly to participate” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 91). Participants were afforded privacy in the form of pseudonyms and an effort to keep the institution(s) concealed throughout the data description process. All participants were offered the choice of participating as, “participants should be given opportunities to refuse participation in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 66); thus, participants could withdraw at any time without cause.

The benefits to participants in this study are the many affordances that multiliteracies offered them, such as becoming more purposeful in their pedagogy through the knowledge processes. Multiliteracies, both pedagogy and theory, may have offered the six focal participants the opportunity to “extend [their] repertoire” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) by understanding, through their experiences, ways in which to incorporate a pedagogy of multiliteracies into their practice.

**Trustworthiness**

The design of this study sought to establish trustworthiness. Regarding verification and bias, which can allow for subjectivity, “arbitrary judgment” (Flyvberg, 2011, p. 309) and “observer bias” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 293) were considered, as case study “contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry” (Flyvberg, 2011, p. 311). Credibility, then, is further demonstrated in case study research as the “researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (Stake, 1995, p. 12), and “qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying multiple views of the case” (p. 64). It is through triangulation
of data—multiple methods of data collection that I am able to capture, “the world into a series of representations” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3), and present these multiple lenses of participants’ lived experiences, which “adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (p. 5).

For triangulation of data, which Patton (2015) described as “providing diverse ways of looking at the same phenomenon…[which adds] to credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn” (p. 661), I conducted three in-depth interviews with six focal participants, collected participant artifacts, interviews with instructors and program personnel, and program and course documents for both the B.Ed. language arts course and the graduate program in education. Additionally, I maintained a reflexive research journal to reflect critically on the data and to maintain a reflexive stance. These multiple methods add richness of data and afforded me the opportunity to understand the six focal participants’ lived curriculum within the B.Ed. language arts course and the graduate program, both with a focus on multiliteracies.

Collecting multiple forms of data also aims to provide validity (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Flyvberg (2011) argued that it is in thick description, a hallmark of case study, that validity is achieved as it holds “some protection” (p. 311) against misunderstandings. Since it is in the rich detail of the case’s narrative that “has uncovered a particularly rich problematic” (p. 311) it cannot, therefore, be summarized into general propositions as “good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety” (p. 313) to “portray the richness of the case” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 290). Dyson and Genishi (2005) explained that the “weaving together the contextual threads so that a quilt of pervasive images – a coherent narrative – emerges” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, pp. 112-113). Based on the strength of case studies to provide such deep
description, Flyvberg (2011) contended that, “if you want to understand a phenomenon in any degree of thoroughness…you need to do case studies” (p. 314).

**Transferability**

The study design also aims to achieve transferability. In case study research, Flyvberg (2011) addressed the issue of generalizability by asserting that generalization is achievable in case study research and that, “formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development” (p. 305). Creswell (2013) posited that cases focus on issues and themes to flush out the “complexity of the case” (p. 101), and they are not for generalizing. An example is Stake’s (1995) intrinsic case study where the case itself is important, and he suggested that it is the particulars of a case that are essential, not the generalizations (p. 8); Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) agreed and stated, “a caveat of case study research is that generalizability is not the goal, but rather transferability— that is, how (if at all) and in what ways understanding and knowledge can be applied in similar contexts and settings” (p. 31). Flyvberg (2011) concurred and stated that “knowledge may be transferable even where it is not formally generalizable” (p. 305). Dyson and Genishi (2005) contended that it is the “assertions about the case…toward those that situate the case in broader professional conversations about the phenomena itself…how particular case studies may assume broader professional relevance…matters of trust–are central to the concept of generalizability” (p. 113). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) considered this a strength and explained that case studies are “a step into action” for they, “begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for staff or for individual development” (p. 292). For my research, my aim is to situate my exploratory findings within broader professional conversations about teacher professional learning in literacy education.
Further to the discussion of transferability, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) contended that it is in the thick, rich descriptions, as previously mentioned, that aid in addressing issues of transferability, and “with vivid detail, the researchers help readers understand that the account is credible. Rich description also enables readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p.129). Credibility, here, is key, as it lends a study its trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). For Creswell and Miller (2000) validity is, “how accurately the account represents participants’ realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them” (pp. 124-125). Thus, I am for transferability with my case study research.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I outlined and described my methodology and methods for my study’s design. My research methodology is designed as two exploratory case studies: one exploring the lived curriculum of preservice educators enrolled in a language arts course and one exploring the lived curriculum of in-service educators in an online graduate program—both focused on their professional learning in multiliteracies. I further outlined my recruitment procedure, which adhered to ethical procedures as required by my institution. Within data collection, I conducted semi-structured interviews. For my six focal participants, I conducted three in-depth interviews. This process was conducted to provide rich and detailed accounts of participant experiences: first, their previous experiences with language and literacy teaching; second, their current professional learning in multiliteracies within their respective program; and third, an interview that offered participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. I also collected participant artifacts from the focal participants. Additionally, interviews (one each) were conducted with course instructors and program personnel. Program and course documents were
collected as well, to provide a context to the intended curriculum of both the language arts course and graduate program. Next, I outlined my approach to data analysis, which included the process of case study analysis (Patton, 2015) and reflexive iteration (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Finally, I described how I strived to achieve trustworthiness and sought out transferability. In the next chapter, I outline and describe the data from the preservice educators in the first year of their Bachelor of Education program.
Chapter 4

Professional Learning in a Bachelor of Education Course in Language Arts

The findings in this chapter were gleaned by data collected from the exploratory case study on three focal participants in a Bachelor of Education course in language arts, who were in their first year of a two-year Bachelor of Education program. The findings were gleaned through an analysis of data that included three in-depth interviews with each of the three participants. Also included within this chapter is information from supporting documents, such as the program’s learning outcomes, the course syllabus, and interview data from the program’s coordinator and four language arts course instructors. These data helped me identify the programmatic and intended curriculum of the B.Ed. course, as well as the lived curriculum of the participants. In this chapter I organized the data according to Patton’s (2015) case study analysis: The first section discusses data from the first in-depth interview on participants’ early experiences with literacy and teaching. The next section discusses data from the second in-depth interview on participant experiences within their language arts course. It also includes data on the program and interviews with the instructors and language arts program coordinator. The last section discusses data from the last in-depth interview where participants reflected on their language arts course.

Early Experiences with Literacy and Teaching

In this case study, the three focal participants belonged to the same first-year cohort in a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program located in a university in Ontario, Canada. Belonging to

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1 To maintain anonymity of the institutions, I do not quote the documents directly.
an elementary teaching cohort, they each participated in a mandatory language arts course in their first year of the program, which is framed around multiliteracies pedagogies. The participants were not in the same language arts class and each participant had a different instructor. Each participant came to the B.Ed. with varying literacy experiences and with different conceptions of literacy teaching and learning. According to the participants, none of them were familiar with the concept of multiliteracies before their participation in the language arts course².

**Brittany**

Brittany was in her first year of the Bachelor of Education program. She entered the program after completing her undergraduate degree in English and in French. While she identified as French-Canadian and attended a core French language school starting in grade one, she did not grow up speaking the French language at home, and she shared that she was the only one in her extended family who speaks French. Brittany mentioned she was an avid reader in English when she was a child, and she remembered many times that her mother read to her. She also remembered reading to herself when she was very young, but clarified, “obviously not actually reading, but reading the pictures I suppose.” When thinking about her prior literacy experiences, she stated: “I’ve always known I wanted to be a teacher.” Brittany shared one of her earliest school memories with literacy:

Brittany: What I remember most was maybe in grade two I got in trouble from my teacher. We were supposed to be doing silent reading, and I wasn’t reading. And she [the teacher] said to me, “well why aren’t you reading, this is what you’re supposed to

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² All names are pseudonyms chosen by participants.
be doing,” and I said, “well, I’m sorry Madam, but I already read all of the books in the class” [laughs]. So, I actually had to have an EA [educational assistant] take me to a library so I could read chapter books. But, basically what I remember from school would be the silent reading periods, doing speeches…we did 

*Language Power* [English language textbook] a little bit, and I hated that. 

**Joelle:** What did you hate about it? 

**Brittany:** I just honestly, it’s kind of like with me and math. Usually in school things just kind of clicked for me. I don’t know what it was about *Language Power*, but I just couldn’t explicitly explain grammar rules and use them…Even now—so my background is in French, and that’s what I want to be teaching, so I know the French grammar. I came up with core French too, so that’s all we really focused on, and so that has helped me actually with English grammar—is understanding how French works. I would still say I know French a lot better than I do English in explaining, in explicitly explaining the grammar. Ya, I was never a fan of *Language Power*. 

**Joelle:** Why do you suppose you know the French grammar better than you do the English, because English was your first language? 

**Brittany:** My undergrad is in second language teaching, so we learned all about linguistics and how implicit and explicit grammar works. What I think, based off of what I’ve learned as well, is that with French grammar, it has always been explicitly taught to me and with English you kind of learn it—it’s my first language, so I’ve learned it since I was a baby. So, you just kind of absorb these rules without
having it explained to you...and so I think that’s why I can’t really explain the rules myself. I just know this sounds right or this doesn’t. (Interview one)

Though Brittany noted that the specific mechanics of English literacy were a challenge to her, when thinking about other literacy experiences as a child, Brittany remembered engaging in a lot of writing. She stated that she loved writing music lyrics: “I used to write songs all the time, ah, I used to be so proud of myself. I would write little stories and everything and I had a little journal.” When asked about her continued literacy experiences, Brittany recalled that she did enjoy her creative writing in elementary school though by high school, she noted the writing focused more on essays, and essentially, she stated that she enjoyed her out-of-school literacies more, because she could write what she wanted to write:

Outside of school is probably where I would identify more with literacy if that makes sense. Because it wasn’t, I don’t want to say, well it wasn’t forced upon me, I supposed. In school it really very much is, which was ok for me because I liked to read and write, but I was more so told what to read and what to write and I didn’t like that so much, whereas at home I could choose what I wanted to read; I could choose what I wanted to write, what type of writing I wanted to do. I remember in high school though my first essay was terrifying. I had no experience with how to write an essay, oh it was awful. (Interview one)

Brittany explained that in high school she started to learn the structure of an essay or writing up lab responses in science and math. However, she mentioned that she never considered these to be literacy, as they served a very functional purpose:
We did reading response logs…in chemistry, we did labs—well in all science we did labs, but I guess you’re writing when you’re answering problem solving questions in math, but I would say with English and history that’s where I really associate the writing, because other than that I mean, you are writing, but it’s not really to, for me it’s not to completely serve a purpose. You know, I know you’re communicating your answers in science and math, but I just don’t associate that with literacy, I am not sure why, I just don’t. (Interview one)

With these more functional-style literacy practices, Brittany noted that she associated real literacy events with English and history where she could write creatively. For example, she mentioned that she was assigned a project to write a research-based historical narrative: “I chose the Huron. I got to write a story about that based off of research, and it was really cool.”

Brittany continued to explain that she had limited digital learning experiences in high school: “We were told what we were going to write and what form we were going to write it in, and that’s how we did it. There wasn’t very much differentiation in that.” However, she noted that she was able to explore different media in an English class: “I remember we had to study a play, Hamlet and we had to act out a scene for Hamlet and record it in a video and edit it and stuff, so that was really cool.” In university, Brittany mentioned she did not consider her experiences with literacy were much different than previously:

In university, we did a lot of the same things. I had to do a lot of presentations, I actually was enrolled in a class called Technology in Education, so we learnt all about screencast-o-matic and how to do a presentation remotely, and ya…that being said I don’t think I’ve ever submitted a song (laughs) for an assignment. (Interview one)
In Brittany’s early schooling experiences, she noted literacy was mostly traditional reading and writing, with limited experiences with other modes of literacy for communication. Because of these traditional schooling experiences, Brittany noted that her initial understandings of literacy as a preservice teacher were based on her narrow schooling experiences. She noted her surprise when she learned about the more expansive views of literacy in education, especially those offered within multiliteracies pedagogies.

Brittany specified that her career path was rooted in the French language. She spoke about wanting to pursue a master’s in language, but instead choosing to enter the Bachelor of Education program. To prepare for this program, she described how she volunteered in a French-language classroom where she taught English as a second language. In this role, she described helping her grade five students with their oral presentations and recalled:

So, they would, they planned little presentations, just little 30 seconds on whatever they could speak about, we wrote out, [jotted] notes on their cue cards, it was really cute. There was [were] times where they would be working on worksheets—I don’t like worksheets as much—I think it’s a lot more fun to actually speak with them, but sometimes they were a little bit nervous. There was one little boy who had just immigrated from Africa actually, so, he was starting his presentation; he was writing on his cue card and I went up to him and I said, “that’s really good, but that’s supposed to be in French er, in English,” I was saying this in French and he said, “but Mme I don’t know any English,” and so I was hit with that wave of…oh where do I start? (Interview one)

Brittany described these early teaching experiences of helping students learn a new language as contributing to her wanting to be a teacher, as she stated that she wanted to teach French in an
immersion environment: “I’m hoping to go into French immersion, so that would be incorporating language arts in there everywhere, it would just be like language arts in French.”

While she stated previously that she struggled with articulating how she knew the English language, through its grammar and mechanics, she did acknowledge that because she had learned the French language structure, she felt more confident in teaching it:

Joelle: Do you think your choice to become a French teacher, specifically, is because you feel more confident, as you were saying, in the French language, the grammar? As opposed to maybe teaching in English?

Brittany: I’d never thought of that, but that makes a lot of sense, because I can actually explain, well, why do we say it that way? I can explain it in French, I can’t explain why we say that in English. That’s, I would honestly say, why I leaned more towards teaching French as a second language than English as a second language. I found that a lot in my experience volunteering in that classroom actually, because they would ask me—well why? Why do you say it like that? And I’d…I’d have to say, I don’t know, we just do. (Interview one)

Brittany communicated that her motivation to enter the B.Ed. program was due to, not only her love of the French language, but due to her positive experiences volunteering in a classroom.

When thinking of becoming a teacher, and, specifically her experiences in the language arts course, Brittany explained she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies. She stated that the concept was “pretty much new.” She further explained that she had limited knowledge of different types of literacy:
I had no idea that media literacy was playing such a big role in the curriculum nowadays, basically when we started the class, what I thought of literacy, I thought of reading and some writing. I didn’t think of oral presentations, I didn’t think of media literacy, I didn’t even think of—is there a listening strand in English? Or is that just French? So, just the idea, I mean, I always knew that people have different proficiencies in reading and writing and literacy and that they come from different backgrounds. We learned about culturally and linguistically diverse learners [in the language arts course] and that kind of played into what we’ve been learning about multiliteracies, but I’d never actually learned the term. Just, so, this [multiliteracies] is brand new to me. (Interview one)

With these limited notions of what literacy entails within teaching, in thinking about herself as a literacy teacher, Brittany explained:

I would say one of the most important things about literacy is the ability to communicate, especially in today’s society with written messages; a lot of times face-to-face is kind of taken away, so it’s a lot of emails, and even text messages and posts online, and that being said, preparing them [students] for that road is very important, but I love books [big smile]. And I want them to love books. (Interview one)

Considering these new types of digital literacies, Brittany further commented that it was not until her language arts instructor pointed out that people use reading and writing in diverse ways, such as using email, texting, and social media, that reading and writing is more than printed text on

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3 In the Ontario English language curriculum, the language arts strands are reading, writing, oral communication, and media literacy (Ministry of Education Ontario, 2006)
Brittany explained her reaction: “It doesn’t click until someone tells you. So, even now that still surprises me sometimes when she said that I was in shock. I was like, what?!”

Brittany noted that her first experiences with literacy in-school were mostly structured around traditional book reports, essays, and lab writing. She communicated that she was a proficient reader and writer in both English and French, though she noted that her creative literacy experiences happened mostly out-of-school. Expressing her love of her French heritage, she commented on how she continued to explore and learn about the French language. Brittany noted that her perceptions of literacy and teaching in the language arts before the B.Ed. were limited to thinking of literacy as focused mostly on reading and writing print. Before the B.Ed. course, Brittany had stated she had no previous knowledge of multiliteracies nor the diverse ways multiliteracies conceptualizes literacy.

**Anna**

Anna also started in the same Bachelor of Education cohort as Brittany. She commented that she began the program immediately after completing her undergraduate degree. Like Brittany, Anna stated that her early literacy experiences were full of reading books with her mom. She noted that her mother helped her with her language learning:

Honestly, a lot of my literacy experiences were through home…I just did a lot of reading at home. My mom did a lot of like…she took a lot of initiative when it came to my education, so reading we would do like word, kind of like word studies, we did study lists, spelling lists from school. So, we’d have like ten words a week or whatever and we’d study those and then we’d have spelling tests on them—both at home and at school. (Interview one)
In elementary school, Anna remembered her literacy practices as journaling, reader response, and writing fiction and non-fiction. Anna reflected that storytelling was a large part of her literacy at home, which she contributed to her literacy learning at school:

I think storytelling was a huge part of my development. At home we had these flashcards that we would use and they would have pictures on them, and we [Anna and her mother] would get like, we would draw a three and then we would have to make a story. But as a young mind you maybe you don’t know what it is that you’re actually trying to describe, so it makes it interesting and it’s us conceptually trying to understand how these things go together or how we can make them go together; you’re also learning new words that way, and I found that was a huge component of my school education, because I was able to get that balance from home and from school—it wasn’t just from home, it wasn’t just at school. (Interview one)

However, as Anna was a competitive swimmer, she described her schooling in grades 10-12 as “self-directed.” During this time, to fit school into her schedule, she described how she completed credit modules at home. Given an open time for completion, once the modules were completed, Anna noted that she could hand in the modules and then take a test at her local high school. She explained that, during this time of self-directed learning, she did not feel that she put much effort into her studies, and explained that she started to notice a gap in her learning once she attended university, but she did manage to be successful. She explained:

I ended up just kind of doing it [high school] as getting my assignments done. So once I was in university, I felt like I was very underqualified for (pause) being able to handle written work, essays…papers, things like that. And then it [her proficiency] kind of
increased from there while I was in university, which helped a lot. Ah, and also just speaking with people in the university setting helps. I mean you’re talking with other students who are working through their education as you are, so you’re going to be talking about world events, and engaging in that kind of dialogue that’s a little bit higher up than just high school talking about like interests and sports and drama or whatever it is (laughs), right? (Interview one)

Anna noted that, different from her self-directed study, discussions in her university courses assisted with learning.

When asked about her motivation to enter the Bachelor of Education program, Anna explained that teaching was not a career she thought she would be in:

Honestly, I kind of fell into it…so when I graduated, I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do. I worked for a year after graduating and then I was kinda like, well education opens up a lot of doors, and as far as a field goes, and academically I’m interested in education more so than teaching. I think it just increases an individual’s ability to be instrumental in their own lives, really, so, I don’t know, I thought teaching would be a good start anyways (laughs). (Interview one)

Since Anna “fell” into teaching, she mentioned that she had no prior experiences with teaching in a formal setting; however, she did note having opportunities to take on this role during her time as a competitive swimmer. She described that these teaching opportunities came in the form of helping to coach other swimmers during swim meets and swim camps. Through these experiences, Anna commiserated that she met a lot of students who were English language learners (ELLs). For Anna, while she stated that she did not give literacy much thought before
she started the B.Ed. program, the noted that her interactions with ELLs piqued an interest in language development. She also noted that, as an English speaker, she took knowing the language for granted:

I never thought about it [literacy] honestly at all. I think as an English speaker, like a native English speaker, I took a lot of it for granted. I don’t remember learning anything (laughs) really—this course [language arts] has been um extremely insightful—honestly, I don’t remember even, structured lessons, but also just like the intricacies of the balanced literacy program. Also how passive learning through literacy also is a huge factor in it—things that I don’t think about, like you’re reading you’re phone [e.g., texting, social media], you’re reading your emails or you’re reading books or whatever it is, but you’re not thinking about it being, it helping you, but really it has been.

Reading and writing…on the swim team there were a lot of international students, so I think I got interested in language development then. I took a linguistics course through anthropology, so I found it really interesting and working with a lot of my friends that are ELLs in particular, having them tell me how difficult English is, but then also having a lot of miscommunications as far as social norms and stuff based off of just what I would say or what they would say or what they would write or what I would write; there’s a lot of miscommunication. So, I’ve been interested in literacies as far as that goes…like it’s so embarrassing, like “what’s an adverb again?” Like I don’t really remember, because it felt passive, and it kind of comes more naturally, so I know I use them right, but I

4 “The balanced literacy program” as stated by Anna is not included within the language arts course curriculum. What Anna is referring to, as part of the language arts course curriculum, is a continuum of teacher support. Within this continuum, literacy instruction is considered as levels of teacher support during literacy instruction: High teacher support includes teacher modelling; low teacher support includes independent student activities; and the middle of the continuum includes shared and guided instruction and activities (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017).
couldn’t describe it. So, this course has been huge in helping me…I know how to actually explain the English language as opposed to just using it. (Interview one)

Like Brittany, Anna commented that as a native English speaker, it was a challenge to try to articulate how she came to know how to use the English language. She noted that her language learning was passive, because it was her native language—she stated that she knew how to use the English language, but she could not specifically explain the mechanics of how she used it.

With an interest in language development and working with English language learners Anna mentioned that she had the opportunity to specialize her teacher education to focus on internationalization in teaching. In this teaching stream, her courses were focused, “on internationalizing the curriculum, teaching in international schools, but also having a global citizenship focus within Ontario schools” (B.Ed. program information). Because of this focus, Anna specified how the language arts course addressed ways to use literacy in cross-curricular ways, however she stated that the concept of multiliteracies was new to her. She reflected on what she thought multiliteracies meant when she first learned about it at the beginning of the first term and tried to understand its complexity:

I think of like other languages, different ways of communicating—so verbal, non-verbal, written. Different ways of communicating even if it’s in English I guess, but I never thought about it as being, I don’t know, the way it was, just like writing, reading, oral, but all of the different things within each of these things I never had any idea. (Interview one)

Anna also reflected on her use of different modalities in her literacy practices and explained how she used them in her own life and in her previous educational experiences:
I know how to use all of it [social media] and everyone is definitely well versed in it, um I just find it’s real easy to get distracted. Like, I will...some days I will be on FB [Facebook]—not so much anymore, like the past six months not too much—but before then I’d be like on FB for two hours and you come out of it and you’re like, you read a bunch of gossip columns or whatever it is or this person did this and you’re like, I don’t know how I spend two hours of my life. So it’s pulling away from a lot of the social media…a lot of my forms, I don’t know, I would say I talk on the phone a few times a week, text daily, I FT [FaceTime] with my boyfriend pretty much all the time; he lives in the UK and emailing. (Interview one)

Anna mentioned that her early literacy experiences included creative writing, storytelling, and working with her mom to learn to read and write. She explained how she completed her high school alternatively through distance education, which was self-directed. In this experience, Anna noted that her academic development was lacking, but she commented that she was still able to become successful during her university career. Through her experiences with ELLs in her competitive swimming, she explained that she developed an interest in language development and international education. She stated that she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies.

Tye

Like Brittany and Anna, Tye was in her first year of the two-year Bachelor of Education program. However, unlike her peers, she mentioned that she had experience as a full-time teacher, teaching English as an additional language overseas in Japan after she completed her
undergraduate degree. Tye’s early literacy experiences also differed from her peers, as she described her struggles with literacy in elementary school. Tye recalled:

I will tell you that I had difficulty with reading and writing growing up, so I would have to say that my experience is probably not positive, because I hated it a lot. We were watching a video [in her language arts course] of students kind of presenting their work in front of the class and I mentioned how if that was me, and I would have so much anxiety and be terrified of that, because just, I didn’t feel comfortable with my ability to read and my ability to write. But with regards to activities…I don’t…particularly remember…I vaguely remember, you know, having the teacher read to us as students—shared reading—I don’t remember doing shared reading. Independent reading—that was just me probably just trying to read and being frustrated that I couldn’t read. (Interview one)

Tye mentioned that she was not identified with a specific learning disability, but that her at-home experiences influenced her literacy development: “It was stuff at home that was affecting me and my development—socially, academically, and emotionally, so I just I had other things that I had to deal with at home, that just…it affected everything.” She continued:

In grade five or grade six I was actually put in a separate special ed [education] class, and I didn’t enjoy that experience, because I was made to feel different than everybody else. There were some students who had behavioural issues—extreme violence, and there were other students that had developmental issues, who were exceptional, and then I just kinda felt—even in that class I felt that I didn’t belong, you know what I mean?…kids are kids and they are mean and they’ll make fun of you and I heard a lot of comments like:
“You’re stupid, and you’re retarded, and you’re…” all that stuff, so I guess what had happened was, grade seven it was a turnaround, a complete 180. And I guess it stemmed from the feeling of I’m not going to let anyone else make me feel stupid or feel dumb, so I just really began over the summer—I remember this—just, trying to read and putting a lot of practice into it, and then came grade seven, grade eight, I was on the honour roll, and I was just on the ball with everything. My reading was still, it was still getting better, but it was much better than what it was before actually, that—my experience in elementary school—that kind of gave the purpose for reading, so it was more of, you know I want to read this. It wasn’t more of the idea of like I want to read this book, because I find it interesting; I want to read, because I didn’t want people to think I’m stupid. (Interview one)

As she described, Tye’s literacy learning and language development experiences in school, unlike Brittany and Anna’s, were a struggle due to particular challenges at home. However, Tye voiced that her struggles with language development spurred her on to become more proficient in her reading and writing, but it was not for pleasure; it was to fulfill a function. Tye explained that she never participated in any other community literacy, such as going to the library, and the community messages she perceived, through these early experiences, were that reading was the most important thing if you wanted to be considered smart: “If you can read, you’re smart. That’s the experience I got. If you couldn’t read, then you were stupid.” Yet, now as an adult, Tye noted that she viewed literacy differently; literacy was more than fulfilling a function: “Now that with everything that I’ve learned, I feel like even that, reading for function, for functionality sake, it’s not, it should not be the purpose of why you want to read.”
While Tye mentioned that she perceived her childhood experiences as negative, she also noted that her experiences with literacy changed as she entered university, though most of these literacy experiences were traditional pen and paper activities and focused on essay writing. She expressed that there were no opportunities to create multimodal presentations. Tye commented:

There was just a lot of essay writing. That was it. A lot of reading—it was history and archaeology…having my essays that I had to write, that’s where my grammar and everything else had basically improved. I remember my first university essay, because in high school all of my essays were A’s, and my first university essay I got a C. And I was so shocked, and the professor actually asked if English was my first language? And I was shocked that he would ask me that. I said, no I was born here, so he was the one who was like, ok maybe you should like really focus on your grammar. So…all throughout my university profession it was just essays, essays, essays, essays, nothing else, there was no other form I could present my topics, I guess. (Interview one)

Tye described her early schooling experiences with language as challenging; however, Tye recounted that her university experiences led her, indirectly, onto the path of becoming a teacher through her study of languages. Tye described these experiences in depth when asked about her motivation to attend the Bachelor of Education program:

Whoa (laughs). You know I actually never wanted to become a teacher. In university I studied Arabic and Farsi, and I was actually pretty good at it and from there on that’s where I really learned a lot about grammar, and I found this common amongst a lot of other students, Canadian students here, were so horrible at grammar, but then foreign students, when they came here, they were excellent at it, and I was like: How is that
possible? So, I got really good at grammar and we formed study groups and you know, I
found that I was the one leading these study groups, and everyone was so, quite
impressed, so people would make comments: “Oh, you should be a teacher,” and I was
like “No way! I’m not going to ever be a teacher—that’s the last thing.

After I graduated, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, so I for sure wanted to travel, so I
decided to take a TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages] course and
I decided that I would go to Japan. I’m going to travel, and I’m going to see how
teaching’s like—how it is. So I did it, and I found that I loved [her emphasis] working
with kids and I just loved the satisfaction of watching them grow and you know, just
helping them how to read, and you know I kinda thought back to my days…I saw these
kids, and they’re so frustrated with their reading, and I was like, it’s ok, don’t worry, you
can do it, like you’re smart, you know what I mean? We’ll work through it together.

Then I moved to Kuwait. At that point, I wasn’t too convinced with myself that I wanted
to become a teacher, so I was interested in doing something else…I guess, I just fell into
it and I ended up falling in love with it [sounding surprised]. So, that’s why I decided I
really want to go back, because even though I was teaching kindergarten in Kuwait, I still
felt like there was so much that I did not know—I knew it [teaching], because everything
I had to learn was on the job, I was literally just like thrown into a classroom, like, here
teach these kids their alphabet and their sounds and teach them sight words…so I guess I
wanted to continue to teach. I loved the feeling I got from, you know watching kids
succeed and watching them grow. And, ok now it’s time for me to put the pieces of the
puzzle together and actually do these kids a service. So, that’s why I’m here. (Interview
one)
Like Anna, Tye noted that she just “fell” into teaching. As Anna commented on her interest in other languages through her exposure to English language learners led to her interest in language teaching, Tye, too, noted that she became interested in helping foreign students learn English.

Tye noted that, similar to Brittany who commented that studying the French language helped her understand the mechanics of grammar, her experiences of learning an additional language helped her in her teaching of English. She commented:

*Oh ya! Oh my god, definitely. Especially with doing the TESOL [teaching English to students of other languages] course, you have to know your grammar…Did I find it easy, easier? (sighs with a long pause) maybe, yes…cause I felt like someone sat down with me and we had a class…like they explained everything step by step. (Interview one)*

Tye explained how her experiences with language through her TESOL course were extensive. Thinking about literacy before entering the Bachelor of Education program, Tye noted that she considered communication as the most important piece, and in her teaching experiences overseas, she mentioned how she focused on the importance of communication with her students:

*I loved teaching them how to communicate in English and even when they didn’t form proper sentences, as long as they got their point across, and I told them, even to my older students in Japan I taught, I told them, “as long as I can understand you, and as long as you just keep on trying to refine your speaking skills, that’s what matters.” So…again that ties back into, I guess, just really encouraging someone and making them feel good about language. (Interview one)*
From her descriptions of her early experiences as a struggling student, Tye noted that she strived to make language learning a positive endeavour for her students. Still, Tye commented that her teaching experiences focused heavily on language acquisition and she did not incorporate multiple modes into her teaching of English.

When asked about her experiences with multimodality and digital technologies in her previous schooling or teaching, Tye mentioned that she used social media, texting, and email, but these were used for personal communication, and they were not integrated at all in her previous studies. During the B.Ed. program, however, Tye mentioned the opportunity to participate in a private Facebook group created for the preservice teaching cohorts within the B.Ed (though she did not know who created the Facebook group, specifically). Tye stated that she used this social media space to communicate with her peers and to work on group projects, but that it was not integrated into, and was separate from, her courses.

Tye’s early literacy experiences differed from Brittany and Anna’s, as she explained how she struggled with reading and writing. However, she described her determination to become a proficient English language user and this led her to earn a university degree as well as learn two other languages. Further, Tye noted how these experiences led her to teach overseas, where she described how she cultivated an appreciation for students learning other languages and who struggled with language learning as she had. Like Brittany and Anny, Tye mentioned she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies.

**Preservice Language Arts Education and Multiliteracies Pedagogies**

In this section I highlight the purpose of the language arts course within the Bachelor of Education program and why the course was designed to reflect a multiliteracies pedagogies
framework. This information provides the pedagogical and curricular context for the language arts course.

The Bachelor of Education course in language arts, designed around multiliteracies pedagogies, is a first-year, mandatory course that all preservice teachers in the primary-junior (kindergarten to grade six) and junior-intermediate (grades four to ten) education streams participate in. All B.Ed. programs in Ontario are required to be accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). The OCT, as the governing body for the teaching profession, mandates the design of teacher degree programs to be consistent with and reflect the OCT’s Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession (Ontario College of Teachers Act, O. Reg. 347/02, 1996/2016). Under the OCT, the Standards of Practice are: commitment to students and student learning, professional knowledge, professional practice, leadership in learning communities, and on-going professional learning, and the Ethical Standards include: care, respect, trust, and integrity (OCT, n.d.). In addition, Bachelor of Education programs must include: current research in teacher education and the integration of theory and practice in teacher education (O. Reg, 347/02, 1996/2016); as well as curriculum knowledge, pedagogical and instructional strategies knowledge, and the teaching context knowledge (O. Reg. 283/13, 1996/2013).

Initial teacher preparation programs allow students to become accredited to teach in one of the following streams: primary-junior (kindergarten to grade six), primary-junior (French core or immersion in kindergarten to grade six), junior-intermediate (grades four to ten), or intermediate-senior (grades seven to twelve). The specific B.Ed. program in this study also allowed students to focus on particular content in their accredited program, such as international or urban education, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), or inclusive
education. The two-year program included 27 weeks of in-class course work, 20 weeks of an in-school practicum, seven weeks in an alternative field experience placement, and on-going professional development opportunities offered by the institution.

In addition to the B.Ed. program requirements, for the language arts course, there were specific curriculum requirements. The curriculum for this course was designed by the Program Coordinator and it was built with multiliteracies as its underpinning pedagogy and theory. The Program Coordinator explained the purpose of designing the language arts course to reflect the tenets of multiliteracies:

So, in our preservice program we have a responsibility for OCT accreditation to offer a course in language arts for elementary students. We have it focused on multiliteracies, because we had to find a theoretical frame for guiding the course that could address the contemporary situation of students in schools. And, so multiliteracies, with its focus on cultural and linguistic diversity, modal diversity, and the diversity of literacies across domains, fit that bill. I think that it is an apt structure for addressing what we’ve got right now. The other thing is that in teacher education, we are responsible for teaching from what we know the literature says about good pedagogies and about apt pedagogies; so I think we’re pretty covered there as far as the multiliteracies is concerned, but we’re also responsible for helping our students to be able to understand what is required of them through the programmatic curriculum, and while the programmatic curriculum…is somewhat dated, I mean…you know the language document here [pulls out the Ontario language arts curriculum document], for example is from 2006, you know…Even still, with the various strands that are in the document and then the support documents that
have come out from the Ministry since, like *Many Roots, Many Voices*\(^5\), and that kind of stuff, it is definitely the programmatic curriculum that can be taught well through a multiliteracies framework, so the programmatic curriculum itself also lends itself to that.

(Program Coordinator)

She further explained how the language arts course, with its focus on multiliteracies pedagogies, fit within the Bachelor of Education program as a whole:

> Through the emphasis on multiliteracies, what we hope is that we can make connections with other courses, so that students can see that the principles of multiliteracies and language acquisition are happening across subject areas. So that they can see how subject areas can be grouped for instruction. (Program Coordinator)

With the responsibility to adequately prepare preservice teachers for teaching language and literacy in elementary school, the Program Coordinator commented that doing so from a multiliteracies lens, though “apt,” posed some issues and the multiliteracies pedagogies framework was “somewhat fluid and flexible.” She continued:

> How you teach, especially beginning reading and writing through a multiliteracies framework is not really something that’s been sufficiently researched, so that’s something that we continue to work with…what are those, those fundamental things that you need to teach so that somebody can read, right? And then how do you do that through a multiliteracies framework? That’s interesting stuff and stuff that we still work on...we do have to bring in research from other pedagogies or other literacy theories and things like

\(^5\) Ontario Ministry of Education (2005)
that, so that we can respond to that question of print literacy adequately. And I think it works, but it’s still something that we need more time with. (Program Coordinator)

The Program Coordinator also continued to comment on what she saw as the unique learning needs of teacher candidates within language arts courses. She commented on the learning opportunities, which were outlined for the language arts course:

The learning opportunities are related to programmatic curriculum, and all support documents relative to literacy, knowledge of the six language arts, and how to acquire them, with an emphasis on diversity in terms of the students and how the students will acquire them.

She further noted that new teachers tend to dismiss the importance of the language arts course if they have had successful literacy experiences themselves. Specifically, she stated:

It’s harder to get students to attend in language arts class than it is in areas where they don’t feel they have as much experience. So, that’s kind of this funny little thing that we know from the research, which is that because many of our teacher candidates have been, have had a degree of success with their own literacies and courses in literacy, they tend to think there’s not much learning that they need to do in the area, and it’s where they think where they don’t have the experience, where they think they need the learning that they’re better able to attend. So, like in math class, for example, but because they can read and write, they think they’ve pretty much got it sewn up—like we know that from the literature…We do know also that teacher candidates will default to the way they are taught, especially when they’re stressed out. (Program Coordinator)
A further challenge posed by the Program Coordinator was the course load for students, which she described, can affect the depth students can achieve in their learning, especially within language arts:

I find that the students, they’re in too many places at once. They can’t even keep their classes straight, and it’s really hard to go deep and to dwell with things when you’re running all over the place. I think there needs to be like more intensive time you know instead of taking everything all at once. And that is something that we know from the research literature too, that like the deeper you can go with something, or the more intense you can deal with it that the more, the easier it’s going to be for people to learn.

So, that’s a (sigh), that’s an issue too. (Program Coordinator)

Another challenge posed by the Program Coordinator was aligning the knowledge gained during the language arts course with preservice teachers’ practical experiences through practicum. She acknowledged that opportunities to implement some of the tenets of multiliteracies, or even other strategies within language arts education, within the teacher candidates’ practicum experiences, may be a challenge. She explained:

I don’t know what they’re going to be able to do on their practicum to be honest, you know, but they’re going to have to fit it into whatever their AT (Associate Teacher) are doing. I certainly hope that they’re able to use the course materials as resources as they work, and that they’ll be able to enact these pedagogies, and to be able to use their professional discernment to decide what’s in the best interest of their students at the time… The feedback that I get from students when they’ve been supply teaching is that, you know, they don’t have opportunities to actually make decisions about what’s going to
happen in the classroom, and that mostly they end up just kind of sending out worksheets and stuff like that. So, it may be a long time before some of these students (pause) they’re able to actually use these things. (Program Coordinator)

The language arts course was taught by six instructors, each with the same syllabus that reflected the courses’ curriculum content. However, as the Program Coordinator explained, each instructor had a degree of autonomy when delivering the content for the course. She explained:

So, we are a team, and we’ve been working together for a long time. We occasionally have grad students who might teach…so it used to be we would have a big long meeting before we would do the course outline. Everybody would give me their input and then I would draw it [the syllabus] up and send it out, and everyone would check it…the course outline is a contract—we’ve been told that by the university, so we can’t make like radical changes once we have that outline established, but you know, but there is wriggle room for things. (Program Coordinator)

The language arts course, within the B.Ed. program, was designed to help teacher candidates understand and learn about their role as language and literacy teachers and how to teach literacy and language to students. The programmatic curriculum, as explained by the Program Coordinator, was designed around the tenets of multiliteracies pedagogies. The course also included research and theory from a variety of other scholars and instructional strategies to inform candidates’ understandings and knowledge of literacy and language teaching and learning (e.g., Vygotsky, Cambourne, early literacy, assessment practices, teaching spelling and grammar, etc.). While the language arts course had one curriculum, each instructor was able to make their own pedagogical choice for how to implement that curriculum.
Instructors’ Perspectives in the Language Arts Course

As this research project seeks to explore the lived curriculum of students in the language arts course, it was important to include instructor perspectives of teaching the programmatic curriculum. Six instructors taught the language arts course to preservice educators in the elementary panel. I interviewed instructors about their experiences. Topics of inquiry, which I report on here, included: exploring topics about teacher candidates’ opportunities to engage with and come to understand the concept of multiliteracies, multimodality, and digital technologies, the overall challenges instructors faced within the delivery of the course, and especially the challenges they perceived that arose in teacher candidates’ (mis)conceptions of multiliteracies.

Engaging with multiliteracies and its challenges. The instructors all commented on some form of challenge, either as an instructor or in their perceptions of their students’ understandings of multiliteracies. For Instructor A., she noted it was important for preservice teachers to realize literacy in a holistic way, where “no matter what you’re teaching, you’re teaching language arts, it’s on your reading, writing, your listening, your speaking, you’re, hopefully, looking at all the various media around.” One way for Instructor A. to cultivate this understanding was through an activity where students were asked to trace their own literacy practices from childhood to adulthood: “That was one of my favourite ones for coming at the multiliteracies, because they came in and they just looked at themselves, and not with how that would impact what was going on in our class.” This instructor assisted the preservice teachers in understanding their relationships with various literacies and how it fit within multiliteracies pedagogies. Instructor C. similarly commented that helping the candidates understand their own literacy use was important, so they could understand their own biases towards literacy learning. She noted, that “where they were starting with themselves first was really key [to acknowledging
Along with this literacy tracing activity, which was included as an assignment in the syllabus for each language arts class, Instructor H. incorporated diverse digital technologies. She described how she used centers that assisted preservice educators to explore and use different digital apps. Instructor H. noted that this activity was to help candidates see how each could promote different kinds of literacy. However, Instructor H. stated that print literacy was still privileged within the course, by both herself and her students, even as she tried to continually center the activities within a multiliteracies lens. She commented: “I think the students were confused that multiliteracies is only when you use the digital.” Instructor H. noted that before going out on their practicum, multiliteracies was a difficult concept for them. Instructor H. commented:

Before the first practicum, we did a lot of work around, well what is multiliteracies? And they really didn’t understand it, and then when they went into, into their practicum, I had a student email me and say, “ok, now I understand what you’re talking about.” So, I think, ya, there are opportunities and it is laying out how to introduce people to the concept, but especially, since the students are coming at it from so many disciplinary areas, they really don’t have any kind of a sense. (Instructor H.)

Like Brittany, Anna, and Tye stated, Instructor H. commented that most of the preservice candidates did not know anything about the concept of multiliteracies before they entered the language arts course. For Instructor A., she also stated that students were challenged by multiliteracies concepts: “If you were to ask them, I bet you they can’t answer that because I don’t think that they, they even really understand that.” She continued:
They tend to think in tunnels…the fact is about language arts is you have turn horizontally and vertically and all over the place and realizing that they don’t necessarily connect. I think that the secondary school and certainly the segregation of subjects at university and that, they have been trained to look at the one piece of the puzzle in isolation for so long that making those connections, and even though you might harp on them…we all go back to our comfort zone. I also think…that they don’t have a lot of the basic knowledge themselves, especially when we’re talking about grammar, and talking about how to teach writing and the rest, but they just go into it…what are you teaching them? And they had no idea. They couldn’t even tell me how they learned to write: ‘Oh, I just did it’…and I said, what skills did you develop? ‘Oh, paragraphing and capitals and like that,’ so the very basic rudimentary things. (Instructor A.)

This led to several challenges, as stated by the instructors, to incorporating multiliteracies into the language arts course. One challenge stemmed from learning about expanded notions of literacy found within multiliteracies pedagogies, which differed from the more traditional literacies experiences the students themselves experienced. Instructor H. acknowledged, as did the Program Coordinator, that seeing multiliteracies in practice during practicum may not happen, because Associate Teachers may not be familiar with multiliteracies or new technologies and expanded literacies themselves. Instructor H. continued:

I don’t think that they really believe in multiliteracies. I think they do on some level, but I think it’s confusing when that’s not what they’ve experienced in school as students and in many cases it’s not what they’re experiencing in their practicum. So, they’re coming back and they’re telling me about how their job in practicum was to get all of their students on Starfall (phonics-based reading program used in kindergarten to grade one), which I don’t
have a problem with explicit skill instruction, but that is not multiliteracies, really. And I don’t know why that would be anybody’s job, because it’s pretty easy, the kids can do it themselves. And I don’t think that they understand the fluidity between reading, writing, oral language, media literacy. And, I think also that they look at multiliteracies, because they’re confused by that digital component, and they think about it [multiliteracies] as media literacy… And I also think that, on the term thing, that multimodal literacy—practicing teachers don’t know what that means. Multiliteracies, as a word—many teachers in practice don’t use that word. Right? So the jargon is different…gesture, intonation, communication—all of those things that are a part of communication; you know about it, but multimodal literacy, multiliteracies?...And so, when they (preservice teachers) hear about it here and then they go out—they’re speaking a different language. (Instructor H.)

Instructor H. described the juxtaposition between the language of multiliteracies the preservice teachers are exposed to and are expected to use within the course, and the language their Associate Teachers used in their practice, which are different. Further, Instructor H. expressed that practicing teachers may not be explicit in making their instructional or pedagogical choices clear with preservice teachers:

What I’m feeling is that there are a lot of things that teachers do in their practice, that they don’t know why they’re doing it and it is not in the curriculum, but the students interpret those language arts practices as being a part of the curriculum, because they never see their teacher open the curriculum, because they kind of have it memorized, sort of, and probably it’s tacit to the teachers themselves. (Instructor H.)
In terms of the disconnect between what the students learn within the faculty of education and what they experience in the classroom during practicum, Instructor O.’s strategy to combat this challenge was to explain to her preservice educators that they needed to focus on the students:

One of the things I try to do with my students is have them become children’s allies, and to try to have them really [her emphasis] listen to the expressions of children, and have them be invested in helping children acquire literacy, literacies so that those children can make better meaning of the world, you know and tell people what they know…So it’s mostly, it’s through the children that I hope to, you know, get them to listen. (Instructor O.)

Another challenge as noted by all the instructors who were interviewed was the classroom space and class size. Each of the instructors mentioned that it affected their pedagogical choices. Instructor H. identified that though there was a lot of talk about multiliteracies there was not enough of students practicing multiliteracies. Due to the constraints of class size versus room size, Instructor H. commented that this kept her from demonstrating multiliteracies. Instructor H. emphasized that this caused her tension. She stated:

The tension I think too, with the multiliteracies even in the language arts course is that, yes multiliteracies encompasses all of this, and I do speak to multiliteracies concepts every single time, but it is mostly print we’re talking about—you know literature circles—multiliteracies pedagogies are embedded in that, and I try really hard to stop and point that out. So, I’m also looking for this—it’s not just about the reading, but what they want to do is the print…like when we do centres or something like that; then they can kind of get a view, but the amount of content that we have to cover and the congestion in
the room, we do a lot of talking about it and that really, really [her emphasis] frustrates me as a teacher, because I’m saying we want to design and we want to experience and we want to do this bottom up, emergent kind of curriculum, and I’m standing up at the front of the classroom most of the time…then when we have been able to, to do kinds of multiliteracies-kinds of things, it’s been hard, because we always have to move out into the hall, the students have no place for their things, and they have their computers with them, and so they’re climbing over tables and things to get to where they need to go, and I constantly have to think of: well is it worth it? (Instructor H.)

The instructors commented that the class sizes (approximately 45 candidates for each class, respectively) limited their ability to effectively demonstrate some of the pedagogies they would have the candidates use within an elementary classroom. Instructor A. stated:

We don’t actually have the physical space to be able to do those kinds of things. So, like I don’t have the physical space for them to do a gallery walk. I have to try to approximate that, but they can’t experience it. We can’t do drama, because we don’t have space for it, you know…so…I’m ok with the number of students, but the physical space isn’t set up for me to really be able to model these things, because there’s too many of us in a room. (Instructor A.)

Because of the large class sizes—particularly in relation to the physical space, which prohibited movement—as indicated by Instructor H., the other three instructors commented that the class became more lecture-style than they preferred. Instructor A. commented, “there was too much talking on my part.”
Further, according to the instructors, the rooms had recently been renovated and the *look* of a real classroom was gone. The participants mentioned that previously the classrooms included anchor charts on the walls, candidate work displayed, and book shelves for curriculum documents and activity supplies. However, after the renovation, the instructors noted that the rooms were bare, with only tables (that could be organized for collaborative discussion), and one computer for the instructor at the front of the room that was attached to a Smart Board. As noted by the instructors, they were not allowed to put anything up on the walls. Instructor C. stated, “I think it’s a poor model for classroom teachers.” She further commented, “you need to be able to read the room to construct and build anchor charts, and the images you might have…in an elementary classroom you wouldn’t want it generic, because you’d be constantly building with the children.” Instructor A. also lamented, “they’re just walls…it’s sterile…to be told that nothing goes up on the walls. Nothing goes up on the walls.”

Included within the course design, which was delivered face-to-face, was an online learning management system available for instructors and students to use. But in terms of this technology, however, Instructor O. mentioned that she used the LMS as more of a repository:

They can supplement the face-to-face in whatever way that they chose, and we do have an online platform that they can opt into. I find that the students, they’re in too many places, at too many times, they have too many demands on them. I don’t want to put more demands on them by having them have to do additional work or in an additional place where they have to go. So, I simply use the online space as a repository for sharing notes, sharing readings. (Instructor O.)
Other instructors also mentioned that they used the LMS as a space to post resources or for students to post reflections on their readings.

With digital technologies as a large component of multiliteracies, Instructor C. commented that some teacher candidates were intimidated by new technologies. She noted:

They were either completely intimidated by any new technology or were so focused on it that they couldn’t get the bigger picture, that there are a lot of different ways to represent and to do this…others went so far into the technology and loved it, but they were beginning to lose sight of the learner, so the whole issue of the balance of…of technology in teaching and what the individuals responses to that technology. And we talked, people talked ad nauseum about it being in the classroom, but they are not talking about teachers’ response to it and how that shapes what they end up doing. (Instructor C.)

Another challenge, which the instructors noted similar to the Program Coordinator’s comment, was that the entire program, as it was designed, was very stressful for the students as they had eight courses throughout the year, with an additional course for those students who wanted to teach in the Catholic public-school system. Instructor H. commented that the amount of stress placed on students may interfere with their preparation for class:

It is a struggle to get people to read. I don’t think that the structure of the program helps students. I think that they are spread too thin and their heads are going in too many different directions. And so, when they’re telling me they have to read 40 pages per course and they have eight courses. They’re not doing it.
Due to the nature of the students being overwhelmed, Instructor H. also mentioned that candidates “wanted a paint-by-numbers” approach to language arts instruction. Instructor C. also made comment on the stressful nature of the program:

The students are overburdened, the year two students in particular are over loaded, that they have with the course set ups, and too many courses, they really are just going from assignment to assignment to final assignment, all of those due at the same time and I don’t know if they are able to consolidate their learning. I think they’re so stressed, one of my students said to me, she said I’m used to doing my best work, I’m willing to work really but it is frankly impossible to do our best work. There isn’t enough time and still sleep and eat.

Each of the instructors interviewed from the language arts course expressed challenges to incorporating multiliteracies, as the framework for the course, into their practice. The instructors all stated that they understood the importance of teaching from a multiliteracies approach, but the instructors commented that it was a challenge to get students to identify the tenets of multiliteracies. Further, the language students used to talk about literacy was different from their practicum experiences, which some instructors noted as a disconnect between what students were learning within the course and what they were seeing and experiencing within practice with their Associate Teachers. Other challenges included class size and the affects this placed on the instructors’ instructional strategies, which became more lecture-style and teacher-centered.

**Participants’ Experiences within the Language Arts Course**

Understanding how the participants themselves experienced and perceived the language arts course with a focus on multiliteracies pedagogies is important as part of their lived
curriculum. In the second interview, which took place near the end of the participants’ first year in the Bachelor of Education program, each participant discussed their experiences working through an understanding of the concepts of literacy and language arts teaching, through the lens of multiliteracies pedagogies. In the following sections, for each participant, I describe their experiences, which emerged through the second interview. These experiences included participant interactions and collaborations with their cohort peers in a face-to-face setting, their instructor, the course content, their experiences teaching in their first practicum, and opportunities to practice multiliteracies.

**Brittany**

Brittany identified as bilingual in both English and French and described in the first interview that she always wanted to be a teacher. Her previous teaching experiences before the B.Ed. program included volunteering in a French-language classroom teaching English as a second language. As she described in the first interview, these experiences led her to want to teach in a French immersion environment. She stated she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies before her experiences in the language arts course.

**The course, peers, and instructor.** At the time of the second interview, Brittany centered a lot of her learning on balanced literacy, even though this concept was not part of the language arts curriculum. She further commented that her language arts course work focused on creating lesson plans that included literacy strategies, which addressed the continuum of teacher support (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2017). Further, class discussions centered on prior literacy experiences through the creation of a literacy map assignment. Brittany explained:
We’ve also kind of talked about how our experience with literacy affects how we teach literacy, so when we started the program the first assignment, what we had to do was a literacy life map, which was really fun, because I made an actual map with stickers and pictures. I believe what she [the instructor] wanted from us was at least eight to ten events, I think, in our lives just to do with reading and writing, and some high points and some low points if we had any—low points or high points, just to explain where we were coming from. (Interview two)

When thinking about creating her literacy map and the opportunities to engage in multimodality, within the course, Brittany explained:

Ok, in language arts, specifically, the literacy map is probably the most multimodal it got, or I guess reading our textbook. We had online quizzes that we had to complete, or we had reading circles that we do, so she [the instructor] gives us questions like a 12-word or less summary of the chapter that you read, post it in your reading circle on [the online learning management system]. So, basically, it’s all just reading group discussions, so, [the instructor] gives us a question every week; I can probably give you an example, cause it’s every week [laughs], um….[looks through notes]…so for example media literacy, what we had to do was, we went through the guide to effective literacy, media literacy, and we had to read from pages 33-46 [from the course textbook]; we had to look at the language arts curriculum strand, the preamble for a junior grade and an intermediate grade to look at the difference, then on [the LMS] we had to post our summary of what we read in ten words or less, and then we went to MediaSmarts.ca and then we had to post an aspect of media awareness from the site that resonated with you.
So, it’s just kind of like little postings every week just to show that we’re participating…it’s not too interactive. (Interview two)

Brittany also explained that her course learning involved several classes on how to teach literacy in a cross-curricular way, as well as ways to assess literacy. She also noted learning about media literacy, though because the course was only 12 weeks long, and two hours per week, only one class out of 12 was devoted to the concept; she recalled what she had learned from that particular class:

All that we really, that I take away from it [media literacy] that we’ve learnt is that times have changed (laughs), and that media literacy requires so many different kinds of literacy, because it’s not just reading a text on the screen, it’s going through hyperlinks and knowing where to click, how to interpret pictures and graphs, and how the language is completely changed—if it’s a text message, there are short forms and all of that stuff. And just the fact that it’s so prevalent today, and that kids don’t really understand that media literacy is really a thing (laughs); they don’t understand that they’re reading and writing, but they are when they’re on FB [Facebook] and when they’re tweeting and posting on Instagram and stuff, so, that’s basically what we focused on. (Interview two)

Brittany also expressed surprise at how much there was to learn in the language arts course:

I honestly didn’t think there was that much to learn. It’s crazy. Different approaches to teaching, reading…one of the things that we learnt was different theories on how people construct meaning when they’re reading, so if they come from the words, or if it comes from the context that you’re in, whether it’s culture or just the social context around you. (Interview two)
Considering the content learned within the language arts course, Brittany spoke about the face-to-face structure and the ability to connect with her peers. Brittany described the experiences as very collaborative, “like, collaboration-heavy I would say.” She further explained that in her language arts course, they were arranged in table groups to facilitate collaboration. She noted that she and her peers worked on graphic organizers, such as a placemat activity. She explained that,

we do a lot of group work, it’s not just sitting and listening to a lecture, it’s learning from each other, and I think our instructors, kind of use that as a model for how they expect us to be teaching. (Interview two)

However, even though there were opportunities for collaboration with peers during class activities, Brittany still considered the course as instructor-centered: “I would still say it’s instructor driven, because they’re telling us what we’re supposed to be focusing on. Um, in language arts especially…in language arts it’s very, very instructor driven.”

When considering digital resources, other than the learning management system (LMS) for the course, specifically, Brittany mentioned that most of her experiences before the B.Ed. program were with PowerPoint, though she did not learn how to use one until she was in grade 11, and she never saw an interactive White Board used until grade 10 or 11. Brittany mentioned that using a White Board on her first practicum was a learning curve. Though there was little opportunity for multimodality within her language arts class, she did mention that she had many opportunities within other courses, such as using the program PowToon and Mindomo to create artifacts of her learning.
**First practicum experiences.** At the time of the second interview, Brittany had already been on her first practicum, which was four weeks in duration. She described how she felt to be teaching literacy: “I had the pleasure of doing a novel study. I was so excited.” Brittany was in a French immersion school and had the opportunity to plan and implement literacy activities for her students, such as the novel study. She also used the program *PowToon* as a way to introduce the novel to the class through its cartoon images and she set up reading circles with role cards (i.e., question master, fortune teller, word wizard, artist, and connection specialist). Brittany mentioned she got most of the ideas for her literacy activities off of the author’s website for the novel they were studying.

When thinking about how her practicum experiences aligned with what she was learning in her language arts course, Brittany explained:

I would say that they were actually very similar to what I’ve been learning in language arts, just because…I used, I blended things that I learned from language arts to plan what I was doing for this novel study. So, their [the students] reading strategies, I got from the class [language arts]. The idea of the novel study, I mean, I’d seen it done in my grade seven classroom, I did that too, but not in the same way…I saw, she [the teacher] did shared reading with them and she would be checking their pronunciation, oral literacy, especially if it was French, she would be checking that; she did guided reading. I saw her do reading conferences, I got to sit in on some guided reading, I got to run some. It was very close to what I’ve been learning, in my practicum. (Interview two)

Again, Brittany referred a lot to the notion of a balanced literacy approach, which her instructor included in the course, even though it was not a part of the language arts course curriculum.
Multiliteracies in practice. While Brittany did not discuss multiliteracies with her Associate Teacher “explicitly,” she did mention that the class “use[d] it all the time.” Brittany mentioned that along with more traditional-style literacy activities, such as silent reading, writing, and reading groups, the students also conducted research online, conducted research in the form of a survey, used critical literacy for viewing online information and identifying credible sources, and for creating blogs. She also commented on code switching between English and French within the immersive setting and how she connected this to multiliteracies:

And then of course, in French immersion, they’re always dealing with French and English at the same time, and I would count that as partially multiliteracies just because it’s two different languages, and I don’t count that as the same literacy; in my mind we never fully discussed it [French language in the B.Ed. course], because what we discuss in class is language arts and English, right? And culturally and linguistically diverse learners, yes, and how they would come to the English language differently, but we don’t really talk about French. (Interview two)

In terms of addressing issues of cultural diversity, Brittany said it was not addressed, since there were no visibly diverse students in the class. And while Brittany stated that she saw little practice of making connections to the children’s out-of-school lives, her AT used the app Seesaw to engage with parents and post pictures and videos of her students and their work in-school.

Language and literacy pedagogical development. When considering how the language arts course, specifically, affected Brittany’s understanding of her pedagogy development in language and literacy, Brittany stated:
It has opened me up a lot more to the fact that things have changed since I’ve been at school, and so, it’s maybe not the best idea to teach the way I’ve been taught—that’s probably one of the main lessons I’ve learned, that and just cross-curricular is just amazing! (laughs) I really didn’t get that option—the opportunity to learn like that.

(Interview two)

When thinking of multiliteracies as affecting her perception of change in her literacy pedagogy, Brittany shared:

Knowing that multiliteracies is a thing, that’s a huge change for me; although [pause] it sounds kind of weird, but I would say sub-consciously I already knew about multiliteracies—just because, I already knew that everybody has a different level of literacy and that each kind of literacy skills—so viewing, representing—that’s different from reading and writing and that still is equally as important, especially with media. I didn’t realize that media literacy was actually a strand in the curriculum, so that’s good to know; if anything that means that I would incorporate technology more into education than I probably would actually like to, but I’m going to because it’s important for them, but I like to do lots of arts and crafts…I’m going to have to try to find a balance between those two things, because media literacy is very important, and I think they need to know how to find the right information. My point of view from multiliteracies is that a lot of it comes from different languages, just because that’s my background in my undergrad, and that’s what I’m interested in. And then everyone comes from different backgrounds and I think that’s important; depending on what you know when you’re growing up is going to affect how you can understand texts. I’m very big on knowing, thinking about if you don’t have any previous experience, for example, like I had no previous experience with
linguistics, so reading a linguistics text was almost impossible to understand because I
had no idea what I was reading about, I could read the words, but I could not get the
summary to save my life, I think that’s very similar for students coming from different
backgrounds, maybe coming from different places, is that they’ve never experienced, but
it’s like to…say live in a place where there’s snow, how are they going to understand a
story with that has snow in it?…they’ll tell you what the word is because they can sound
it out but they won’t be able to really picture it, which I think is very important, I think
it’s one of the most important strategies for me is visualizing, so I don’t know if that
plays into multiliteracies— something that we learnt in our class and it kind of just makes
sense. I guess it’s common sense, but you just don’t think about it until someone
explicitly tells you. (Interview two)

Brittany commented on her learning experiences within both the language arts course and
her practicum. She noted her surprise at the depth of knowledge that was incorporated in the
learning of literacy and language, having been successful herself in her own literacy experiences.
She noted that the course, though she saw it as teacher-centered, was built on a lot of in-class
collaboration with her peers to discuss and work through the content. She also noted that, while
she did not discuss multiliteracies with her Associate Teacher, she could identify components of
multiliteracies, particularly digital technologies. Most of her comments regarding literacy
learning and teaching centered on what she called the balanced literacy instructional approach
even though it was not part of the language arts curriculum.

Anna
Anna noted having a lot of out-of-school opportunities to engage in literacy as a child. Her experiences as a competitive swimmer allowed her to be a self-directed learner in high school, but also this experience offered her opportunities to coach students, especially English language learners. As noted earlier, these experiences helped kindle a love of language, and in her B.Ed. program, Anna was specializing in the internationalization of education. Before her language arts course, Anna considered literacy as basic reading and writing, and she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies.

**The course, cohort peers, and instructor.** For Anna, when questioned about her language arts course experiences, like Brittany, she also noted the interaction and collaboration opportunities with her peers:

The class is interactive, so it’s nice that you get other people’s opinions of their schooling…It’s nice to have that discussion component to the course work for sure, but also, just like for the assignments…we have duo-tangs, and every class we have these worksheets we have to do based off of a certain literacy activity or a discussion, or even just like a brainstorming session, based on our thoughts. And I find that really beneficial, because I’m able to reflect on my knowledge, but also because we’re in groups of four, reflecting on what my colleagues are also kind of reporting. So, that has helped strengthen I think my literacy from my language arts experience within just the coursework, for sure. I would definitely say it is student-centered, for sure. There’s a lot [her emphasis] of information, the slides are very dense, but it’s presented in a way that…again we’re seeing ourselves through the learning. So, we’re drawing from personal experiences, or relating to another person’s experiences, or if they have a
resource, then we have another resource, they might not be as good by themselves, but together—so I find it very collaborative that way. (Interview two)

Considering the collaborative and interactive atmosphere during the language arts classes, Anna noted there was an online component to the course to post reflections to instructor prompts and complete textbook quizzes:

So, we post online sometimes to discussion groups, so [the instructor] will leave a question…a prompt and then we’ll answer it or we have the quizzes through the textbook that we have, which I think are beneficial just because then you’re actually reading (laughs). (Interview two)

However, considering opportunities for to engage multimodally within the course, Anna explained that most of the course was print-based:

So, again for language we have like the quizzes that are online for the most part, and the group work, and then we also have a huge written component. So, twice a year we have a reflection based off of our learning; so far and we did our literacy life maps [see Figure 1], so that was written. Not a lot of, I guess there haven’t been a lot of videos. We’ve done some music through language, some poems, which kind of, I’m going to link those two together (laughs). (Interview two).
First practicum experiences. Anna’s first practicum already ended at the time of our second interview. She remembered how she felt: “Oh, my gosh (laughs), I was so nervous.” Her experiences during practicum also focused around language arts, and, similar to Brittany, Anna was involved in teaching a novel to her students. Like Brittany, Anna commented that she constructed her lessons around her notions of balanced literacy instructional strategies with reading aloud and shared reading along with journal questions for the students to work on independently. Anna also tried to help students make connections to the book, which was written almost a century ago and construct a multimodal book report:
We would kind of engage in some further dialogue that wasn’t just on the book, but because *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* was published, like I think it came out in the 1930s, 1940s they were able to kind of contextualize their learning based off of their own experiences, but also within the context of the book…Each page [of the book report] had a different prompt whether it was, there was focusing on vocab, there was always vocab, non-fiction, fiction, personal experiences, re-write the ending of the story, do you agree with the ending as it is? Different components of the book that they were looking at and also some understanding, like comprehension. (Interview two)

Thinking about how her practicum experiences aligned with her learning experiences in the language arts course, she explained:

So, we’ve been, just tossed a lot of information. So…again it’s great to have a lot of these different resources, but when you’re in the context of the classroom…it’s tough, to like bridge that gap, and that’s not like something you can really teach, it’s not something really—like you can’t have these two experiences separate, you know you kind of have to build on those together as time goes on. (Interview two)

Anna also made connections, in the second interview, between the literacy strategies she was learning about in the language arts course and her experiences during practicum. She was disappointed that some of the literacy strategies she had been learning about in the language arts course were not visible in her Associate Teacher’s classroom:

So, in my language arts class we talked about reading conferences, writing conferences, small group, shared reading, stuff like that. We didn’t do any of that [in the practicum], so that was kind of a gap between what we were learning, because I still want to have
those experiences, because I’ve never really seen even one-on-one conferences. It was kind of, this is your grade, come to me if you have a question, but we’re going to kind of keep moving on. And that was, not a wake-up call, I don’t want to say, but it was...enlightening I guess, having that experience in the classroom and being like look, being realistic, like how much time do we really have? We have a lot of stuff we need to cover, we have a lot of different students, there’s only so much you can do, but at the same time, like there are a bunch of different resources you can utilize that won’t actually be that intrusive. So, I’m still trying to figure that out (laughs). Because we do have all these resources, but in the classroom, it was—there was a gap there. (Interview two)

**Multiliteracies in practice.** In her practicum, Anna stated there were limited opportunities for a multiliteracies approach, such as little use of multimodality within the literacy block, other than drawing pictures as a supplemental activity or watching a movie after a novel study. Other subjects during her practicum, like science, used the same low level of multimodality as in literacy, and math consisted mostly of worksheets without the use of manipulatives. Though Anna did note that the AT did use a Smart Board during some direct instruction.

When asked about critical literacy opportunities, Anna mentioned she worked with the students to uncover different gender roles as produced in their novel study, *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* [Atwatter & Atwatter, 1992], which are different now then at the time the book was written. Also, similar to Brittany’s experience, Anna stated that addressing issues of cultural or student diversity were not noticeable in their Associate Teachers’ practice. Anna stated,
we don’t have a lot of immigrants, we don’t have a lot of students on any kind of IEPs\(^6\),
we don’t have any—there were no ELLs in the classroom, or really at the school
either…there could have been another step, I think, to incorporate some kind of diversity,
or even just a sense of citizenship I think in general. (Interview two)

Further, Anna noted that there were no real connections made by her Associate Teacher between
a students’ home life and school. She stated that,

when I was speaking with my AT about, you know equity issues, and maybe different,
like, cultural diversity and stuff, he kind of just reflected and said, “Well, we don’t really
have a lot of diversity,” but in the classroom, visually, or you know, you could tell that
there was diversity whether or not he chose to acknowledge it as that way or not, so,
again like culturally I don’t know, so maybe it was fairly homogenous, but as far as even
like skin colour goes, they definitely had different cultures in the community…
classroom. (Interview two)

Though Anna did mention that she had a positive experience, she noted that she understood the
experience as one where, “we’re kind of going to learn this and this is how it’s going to be.” In
this way, she stated she was limited in what she could do relating to her learning within the
language arts course, and she noted that she did not witness the multiliteracies practices that she
had been learning about.

\(^{6}\) Individual Education Plan
**Language and literacy pedagogical development.** Considering the multiliteracies pedagogies framework within the language arts course, Anna spoke about her pedagogical development in terms of understanding how important focusing on student interest was:

I think just inspiring interest. And that’s like a huge, like it’s a really good umbrella summary of the whole thing. If you’re interested in something, you’re going to explore it. Again, like that first life literacy map—it was all about me, talk about me—what I like, what I don’t like, my own experiences and I think that is something that I’ll take away for sure and use into my practice with my students. (Interview two)

Anna noted that the language arts course was very collaborative within the in-class group discussions she was able to have with her peers, though she had limited opportunities to engage with them within the LMS or to engage multimodally. She appreciated the daily worksheets, she was given by her instructor on instructional strategies for literacy and the reflection component. She did, however, acknowledge that there was a gap in her experiences—from what she was learning within the language arts course and what she was witnessing within her practicum. She mentioned she was disappointed not to experience some of the components she was learning about within the language arts course in her practicum.

**Tye**

Tye’s literacy experiences were different from those of her cohort peers, such as Brittany and Anna. As a child, Tye explained how she struggled with literacy and language achievement at school and was segregated into a special education class where she could get language support. With the desire to achieve academic success, Tye described how she worked hard to improve her language and literacy skills. Through this process, she considered reading and
writing as functional skills, which were needed for academic success. Having achieved success in high school, particularly with her English language skills, she explained how she majored in Arabic and Farsi in university. She was also able to leverage her abilities in these foreign languages to teach English as a foreign language in countries like Japan and Kuwait before she started her Bachelor of Education degree. She stated that she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies.

The course, cohort peers, and instructor. From Tye’s early literacy experiences and teaching English as a Second Language abroad, she wanted to “excel” in the language arts course. Similar to Brittany and Anna, Tye also noted the collaborative nature of her class, even though they had different instructors, and Tye’s particular comment on the collaborative nature of the program was to identify and relate to those peers who may be struggling:

It’s really positive actually, it’s great. There’s a lot of collaborative work at our table, and it’s comforting to see the other people you think are not struggling are struggling so you’re helping each other out, and I find that we are all pretty helpful for each other, we’re all pretty encouraging. So…the program is pretty stressful, and I think it takes a mental and emotional toll on a lot of people so. I think a lot of us relate, and we kind of see and notice and feel kind of when we’re struggling a bit, so it’s a really good community I think as well. It’s a good way to get to know your peers. (Interview two)

Tye’s experiences within a collaborative classroom, as described in her interview, included in-class discussions and activities that she and her table groups (of four students) completed. She also mentioned an online component through their online learning management system, but
similar to Brittany and Anna’s experiences, Tye stated she and her peers were required to complete online quizzes, and there were no further opportunities to collaborate online.

**First practicum experiences.** Like Brittany and Anna, Tye had been out on her four-week placement prior to the second interview. However, her experiences were not as positive as her peers. Tye was placed in a kindergarten classroom, and while she had opportunities to witness literacy in practice, Tye did not consider it a challenging experience. Tye remembered how she felt:

Teaching literacy (sighs). In my practicum, it was in a kindergarten class. So, it’s different from like elementary grades one through six. With regards to literacy, just it was more me having the kids learn their letter names, their letter sounds, connecting with that. Watching the teacher do, what is it—small group…guided reading, I guess—seeing her use different strategies, so that’s one thing. And I remember picking up a few strategies, thinking, like adding to them what I already had picked up from the past. (Interview two).

Having had prior teaching experience, Tye did not consider her first placement as any different from her previous teaching and felt that it was not a new experience. When thinking of how her language arts course aligned with her practicum experiences, Tye mentioned that most of what she was learning in the course was for grades one to six, and not for kindergarten, and therefore did not really pertain to the early years environment. She stated: “I find with what we’re learning, I think, pertains more to grades one to six, so um, ya, I guess that’s a difference right there.”

**Multiliteracies in practice.** When asked to speak about her practicum experiences through the lens of multiliteracies, Tye, like Brittany and Anna, could not fully describe her
understandings of multiliteracies in particular. Though she did mention that her practicum AT did use digital technologies, Tye did not identify other modalities within the literacy component of the practicum:

Technology was definitely a big focus there as well, but other than that, it was just, you know, reading through books, there was—we had journals, journal time as well, so they basically, one time they drew whatever it is they had to write. (Interview two)

Placed in a kindergarten classroom during her placement, Tye expressed there were limited opportunities for critical framing, but there were connections to the children’s home lives and experiences. To further connect with the children’s homes, Tye explained that the teacher used the children’s agendas as “communication books,” a class website, and she also used parent volunteers. While there was this opportunity to connect with parents, Tye noted that there were limited opportunities to connect with the child’s lifeworld, though Tye did make this home to school connection through a map-making activity she facilitated: “We talked about the things that we have in our communities, so for example a swimming pool, ice rink, park, and we did a read aloud, we talked about all those different things, what a city needs.”

Considering issues of cultural diversity, Tye explained that while the school community was culturally diverse, she did not see any attempts to address that diversity within her classroom:

Well, my school was predominantly, well actually no, my class was predominantly white, there was a few students who were like Korean, one Korean and one was half Portuguese and half Chinese, so that was interesting. Ah, around the school there was a few Syrians
um, maybe I saw, like two black students, that’s it. Um, but diversity, I didn’t really, didn’t see that presence there—whatsoever. (Interview two)

While multiliteracies places a large focus on student diversity, such as culturally and linguistically, Brittany, Anna, and Tye all commented that they did not see their Associate Teachers incorporating or addressing various diversity issues within their classes, even if their classes and school communities were culturally and linguistically diverse.

**Language and literacy pedagogical development.** Tye struggled to articulate how the language arts course and its concepts of multiliteracies were influencing her developing pedagogy because, as she stated, “I’m still learning.” But she did note one concept that stuck with her,

Making meaning. That’s the most important thing. I never really think about, I never really looked at literacy in that manner, just like you know reading was—you have to read this and you have to take the information from it and that’s it. But, making meaning and relating it back to yourself and just engaging in critical thinking, I think that’s the most important thing as well. Just, that’s the only answer I can give you. (Interview two)

Both Brittany and Anna noted they had positive literacy experiences as children, while Tye described how she struggled with her language learning. However, all three preservice educators had successful secondary and post-secondary schooling experiences, as well as previous opportunities to perform in a teaching role. While there were some limited opportunities for these participants to observe some tenets of multiliteracies during their practicums, it was mostly considered through digital technologies. Brittany, Anna, and Tye, were able to, in some ways, articulate their pedagogical development as it was at the time of the second interview, but
they did not use multiliteracies-specific language. For Brittany, the most important aspect of literacy was the balanced literacy that her instructor incorporated into the language arts course, for Anna it was student interest, and for Tye it was having students make meaning in their language learning. All three participants commented that they did not realize that how complex literacy was as they were new to learning about expanded literacy opportunities beyond print literacy.

Participant Reflections of the Language Arts Course

In the third interview, each participant was offered an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, as a whole, throughout their language arts course. The final interview for participants occurred between four to eight weeks after the second interview, respectively. By the third interview, all participants were out in their second practicum placements, were finished their first year of the Bachelor of Education program, and were finished the language arts course. The purpose of the last interview was to offer participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences as they continued into their second practicum. In the last interview, the participants spoke about their opportunities to practice multiliteracies, the concepts of multiliteracies and its challenges, and how their peers were, if at all, instrumental in their overall learning in the face-to-face setting. The last interview was also an opportunity to offer participants time to reflect on their philosophies of teaching and how, if at all, they perceived a change in their literacy pedagogy as a result of engaging with multiliteracies and participating in the language arts course.

Brittany
For Brittany, the most important aspect of literacy teaching that she noted several times was the concept of balanced literacy. As this was not incorporated in the language arts curriculum, it was an instructional strategy included by Brittany’s specific instructor. In her second practicum, which was a core French environment, Brittany followed her Associate Teacher’s lead to use a balanced literacy program as well, but in French. Brittany’s practicum students also used Chrome books to complete research and other work, and Brittany mentioned that her AT used a lot of technology, such as the use of a green screen, iPads, and QR codes for students to link to information. Her AT also used Google Hangouts to connect her classroom with other classrooms around Ontario, so the students could work in collaboration with other students globally.

Brittany also mentioned that this second practicum was a positive experience, in that she could see her Associate Teacher’s use of multimodality. Brittany noted that typically in French immersion (and in her French course at the Faculty of Education) the focus was on oral communication, more so than on reading and writing. Brittany noted that she liked the multimodal approach used by her AT and mentioned that she would continue to use a multimodal approach if she were to teach in a core French school: “So, it depends on where I am. If I’m doing core French…I would definitely follow the multimodal—I think it just makes more sense, and it makes for a more, well-rounded student.”

In terms of the language arts course aiding in her understanding of literacy and multiliteracies, Brittany noted, though not necessarily using multiliteracies concepts, that the course’s focus on a continuum of teacher support and cross-curricular literacy was important to her. Brittany also spoke about her weekly learning logs, where she reflected on the concepts
discussed in collaboration with her peers in class, as well as going onto their learning management system periodically to answer questions about the weekly readings.

According to Brittany, the language arts course created opportunities to connect with fellow preservice teachers following their practica, to discuss and compare what they saw in the field relative to what they were being taught at the faculty. She stated:

Especially after our first practicum, just discussing how what we learned was being played out in the classroom or if it wasn’t being played out in the classroom was really interesting. Um, it was surprising that some students didn’t see it. (Interview three)

While Brittany stated that she did not rely on her peers to further her understandings of the course content outside of classes specifically, she did mention there was a cohort-based Facebook group. In this private FB group, teacher candidates would post:

A lot. A lot of students or teacher candidates post…or I guess we’re not really students any more, we are…posted: ‘Ok I have to do a lesson in this subject for this grade somebody help me out,’ [and] ‘I need to find an idea for this,’ or so in that sense, we’re a very supportive group for each other, because we’d just throw ideas out there. I gave an idea for a science experiment or something like that, I don’t know, so it’s not specific to language arts, it’s for every teaching subject basically…it is very helpful that way. (Interview three)

In her third interview, Brittany again focused on balanced literacy, but now combined it with “media literacy.” When asked if multiliteracies was transformative in her literacy learning, Brittany agreed, but conflated multiliteracies with balanced literacy and media literacy. She said,
Definitely…balanced literacy…that’s a huge thing that I didn’t know about before. Oh, yes, definitely. I had no idea that that was a thing. To be honest with you I had no idea what balanced literacy was, I didn’t know what shared and guided [reading and writing] was that kind of thing…just learning that media is part of literacy now is, I mean it makes sense, it’s common sense to me, but I didn’t know that was something that needed to be taught. I thought that was something that teachers taught because they felt students need to know…So, that’s what I took from media and I didn’t know it was in the curriculum…I would say the balanced literacy is the biggest thing though, really the biggest thing. I had no idea it existed and I came in Sept. thinking that I knew everything about teaching French, and I had no idea. (Interview three)

At the end of the interview, Brittany reflected on how she wanted to practice as a new teacher and spoke about her teaching philosophy:

Hm (laughs), every time somebody asks me about that I have to tell them my philosophy, I freeze up…I would want to support my students in any way that I could. And so, multiliteracies—keeping in mind their background and all of these different aspects they need to touch when they’re learning, and making sure that they’re well-rounded, is a good way to do that. Also, the balanced literacy, that’s—you have to support them—that’s what you do; gently taking away your supports, basically, so…I would say, in that sense my philosophy hasn’t changed, because I very much wanted to be that one person that that student could count on. I think that the one way that it has changed though in the sense that it’s more specific; I have more tools in order to do that and be that person for my students; academically anyways. Personally, I just want them to know that my heart is in teaching and so—it’s something that my AT said that I really liked—that they know
that my heart is there for them, and so if they feel they need someone to talk to or they’re having a hard day, you know, they can come to me. But ya, in terms of multiliteracies and balanced literacy I would just say that it’s just given me more tools in order to be that person to support my students. (Interview three)

While Brittany spoke at length about her learning in the language arts course and through her experiences within her practica, it was difficult for her to fully articulate what multiliteracies meant and what it specifically consisted of that contributed, if at all, to her literacy pedagogical development. Brittany was very interested in the notion of what her instructor termed a balanced literacy and equated this instructional strategy as a way to explain her multiliteracies learning. However she noted that building on her students’ “backgrounds” (e.g., situated practice) was now important within her practice. She also mentioned the use of multimodality and its importance to her practice.

Anna

Anna’s second practicum was placed in a full-day kindergarten program. Her interview comments suggest that she was able to witness rich literacy opportunities, such as an inquiry on castles, and reading and writing centres where the children co-created with her to create word cue cards with pictures. Unlike Tye, who considered her kindergarten experiences with literacy to be very traditionally based, Anna noted that she was surprised at how much literacy was involved in the kindergarten setting as opposed to her first practicum, which was a grades four and five split:
I thought it was going to be we’re going to be building letters, like A or let’s try to draw an A and practice, but when I came in, most of them already knew how to do that, so it was really cool to see what we could do with them. (Interview three)

Compared to her first practicum, Anna also noted that the literacy she saw was more interactive, whereas in her first practicum, “it was just really passive, it felt very passive.”

Reflecting on the language arts course and how it helped her understand literacy and language learning, Anna mentioned that journaling throughout the course was an important part of her learning. Her particular course instructor assigned the students a reflective journal duo-tang, which she shared with me during the third interview. Anna explained:

So, every class we had, like she [the instructor] gave us a sheet [photocopied worksheet] and then we would do a different instructional strategy basically…we got pretzel letters and we did build words and things like that, so we did all of those things in class, so this [referred to the duo-tang], when I have my own classroom, I can just go through it and her slides [PowerPoint] were so dense, which for a class is like a lot, but I’m like, I’ve saved all of them, and I’m taking them with me, because there are so many different strategies. So, it was a lot of information, but this was great, because it was group work and individual, so you’d do it individually, but then every—after every activity we would talk about it as a group then we would share it as a class. So, individual, small group, whole group after everything, so that really helped—like it continually reinforced that knowledge. Then sometimes you’d do reflections after whatever, a few weeks and then consolidate. So, just the whole structure of it, if I could somehow structure my teaching after this, how this class is structured, that would be perfect. Just cause of the way, like
I’ve learnt so much…This has probably been the best or one of the best courses that I took the entire year, cause it’s so foundational, and again that’s something that I didn’t realize, how foundational it was. (Interview three)

In thinking of her course reflections and noting how they helped in her understandings of literacy pedagogy, Anna also considered how her peers were instrumental in her learning:

It’s kind of a community of educators I guess, with having it in class and having the discussions; knowing that there are people that you can go to…because it can be very inundating [sic] like very overwhelming that there are so many expectations that you have to reach, especially coming in and not having like a single lesson plan or not knowing how to even do a lesson plan…just knowing how to access resources and people as resources as well, and colleagues as resources. (Interview three)

Anna also reflected on the fact that, while the course had an online learning management system, it was utilized for answering questions or doing quizzes. The LMS did not have an online discussion component where she could connect with her peers online as she was experiencing in other courses:

The online component of other classes, I thought was great, because again you got to see their [peers] experiences, ‘cause there’s this dialogue that could happen. Like in class there’s only so many narratives that you can hear, but online, like everyone had to post [in other courses]—so you could read one, but you could also read 200 [posts] if you wanted to (laughs). So, it was seeing all these different unique experiences that really helped shape what I’m going to be doing. So, a lot of people—oh we didn’t do this, we didn’t do this, but then some people had really cool, like unique
experiences, and you can pull from those. So, the online component of other classes helped. (Interview three)

Continuing along the conversation of having an online space to connect with peers, like Brittany, Anna mentioned the private cohort Facebook group:

So, we have a Facebook group for our class. Like the whole—everyone in the first year is in this FB group. I haven’t really used it. I feel like I’ll be using it once I graduate more, cause right now it’s just like homework help (laughs)—something like that, but I will be using it after, because a lot of people just post great links, like literacy or math education or whatever it is, and that’s a great resource. (Interview three)

When thinking about any concepts that she was still struggling with, Anna mentioned she had yet to see small reading or writing groups within the notion of a “balanced literacy,” which her instructor also incorporated into the language arts course, similar to Brittany’s experience. Anna stated: “I haven’t seen a lot of small groups, I feel like that might be a struggle, just because I don’t know how to implement them.” She also lamented that she still did not have enough experience in knowing how to create meaningful literacy feedback for evaluations,

I think it’s pretty easy to give a book report and then I’m going to write a mark on it, and you’ll get it back and you’ll get a letter, then that’s fine, but what is that really accomplishing? I want it to be meaningful, so creating, again, creating meaning in that feedback, so that they’re actually going to do something different. (Interview three)

Considering the language arts course as transformative for the development of her teaching practice, Anna stated:
Well (laughs), in every way, I guess—in every way. I remember practicing [early literacy experiences in school], you know, like letters and cursive and doing like Haikus and stuff—poetry—but it’s like, my memories are very limited from what we’ve explored this year. And as I learn more about it after this course I see how intentional that education was *then* [her emphasis], but it still kind of, I don’t even know where to begin, like everything in here [referring to her reflective journal] I guess, everything in here [opens it, flips through it casually] um, it’s exciting, I always thought it was just passive and, and in the grade 4/5 it still felt kind of how I pictured it was going to be—we’re going to do it, we’re going to read a book, and we’re going to write a response on it—like that’s how I always pictured it. But after this course, there’s so many ways you can go with it [language arts] and in every subject. Like just different projects, different resources, and that online component, I think or not even online, but like just having Google, like you can search different things, and I think that’s what I’m most excited about—you can do anything with the curriculum, so I’m excited to kind of build my own units that way; cause there are so many things that you can do. The year was great. It was really good. I learned a lot, a lot, a lot. And I feel I need to consolidate it, because even like, walking over here I was like oh I don’t know, like how much have I learned? But then when I opened this [reflective journal], I was like oh my gosh this is, and I’m so happy we did this, because I can look back on this cause it’s like class one in September—how far I’ve come and all the strategies; this has like everything I feel, like, plus slides, that it’s nice to see that progress for myself as well. (Interview three)

In a roundabout way, Anna was able to articulate what the year of learning meant for her within her language arts course. As she reflected on her developing teaching philosophy, she described
the importance of student interest and incorporating cross-curricular and diverse modalities within that student interest:

First interest; getting students interest and then comprehensively exploring that interest in…a multitude of ways, so if they’re interest is birds, ok we’re going to somehow find a way, and obviously like you can’t do individuals, but kind of gage the class—find like a general kind of interest, and find ways that you can incorporate all the different curricular expectations into this kind of study or even if it’s cross-curricular—like it could be a social studies element that they’re really interested in—we’re going to pull that and make it cross-curricular. And not just have journals, like if they’re like writing, let’s write a story or let’s do a response—that’s fine, but if they’re more visual we can make a poster, we can make art, if they’re like technologically inclined, again, doing it. Like different modalities for that and different deliverables—like it just doesn’t have to be standard for everyone. (Interview three)

Like Brittany, Anna did not use the language of multiliteracies, specifically, to describe her learning within the language arts course, even though considering multiliteracies in her learning was what she was reflecting upon. Student interest was a major theme in Anna’s conceptualizations of her language and literacy experiences, and building on student interest, in different modalities, was key.

Tye

In Tye’s second practicum, she was placed in a grades one and two split, and she shared that she did not have many opportunities to teach literacy except with a small unit on procedural writing, where she created a “How-to” book with the children. Tye explained:
I found it [her practicum] was a good experience, some kids towards the end got to really help question themselves, like how do I do this? What do I do next? Have I seen anyone else do it? And, I even had some people who were doing similar things kind of pair up and ask each other questions, like what would you do? So, it’s just building on other people’s funds of knowledge as well. So I guess that’s one thing—funds of knowledge—building up on their own funds of knowledge and communicating and building up on other people’s funds of knowledge, because this, the students you know they came from, some of them came from different backgrounds, (sigh), one was Lebanese, no she’s Palestinian and, let’s see, the other ones, where are they from? A lot of them come from single-parent families as well, so it’s, I don’t know, but I just, we tried to build upon that, so. Just funds of knowledge. (Interview three)

For Tye, building on a student’s funds of knowledge (e.g., situated practice) was important and she considered it a part of a multiliteracies pedagogy.

In her practicum, Tye had limited opportunities to teach literacy. Most of Tye’s experiences in her second practicum were in teaching science and math, though she did try to the continuum of teacher support with a read aloud and also writing within those subjects: “I had the chance to teach procedural writing. And that was pretty much the only thing I would teach out of literacy, because my AT was focusing me more on teaching math and science.” Though she did not have the opportunity to teach the main language arts, she was able to witness reading conferences, reading and writing centers, and small student vocabulary centers for students who were struggling with word building. Tye noted:
One thing I didn’t like is that she [the Associate Teacher] was trying to teach these students short vowels and long vowels, or reteach them, and they just, they weren’t getting it—she’s using worksheets—and they weren’t getting it, and I could tell that they just weren’t interested and because they weren’t interested I could see that she [AT] was getting frustrated…and uh, I just, I felt like these group of kids, maybe they could have used something a bit more interactive, instead of a worksheet. So, that’s one thing I didn’t like. She is going to retire in two years, so maybe this is just something for her that she’s used to, but I probably would have done something different, something more interactive.

(Interview three)

Reflecting further on the literacy activities she witnessed on practicum, and the implications for her own teaching, Tye noted that she wanted to interact with the students with literacy in a different way than her Associate Teacher interacted with the students. Specifically, with writing assignments the students were, “always encouraged [by the Associate Teacher] to erase—they were erasing, erasing, erasing, erasing, erasing, and you know I really like the idea of just crossing a word out and learning from the mistakes.” Having previous experiences struggling with literacy, Tye said she could relate to students feeling frustrated by their mistakes. In this empathetic way, Tye stated she wished that she could teach different coping strategies in literacy to “encourage no erasers or very minimal erasers, you know what I mean?” However, Tye understood that she had to follow what her Associate Teacher’s routines were in the classroom, even if she did not really understand the pedagogical decisions her Associate Teacher was making. Tye explained this challenge of following her Associate Teacher’s pedagogy and continued to express how she would have wanted to make the lessons more interactive:
There are somethings that I would do differently that would suit (her emphasis) me, and maybe what was in that classroom, those are things that she did that suit her…you know what I mean? It caused me some anxiety (laughs), but again it’s her classroom, and it’s, you know, she’s doing things, maybe for a specific reason, for specific students. So, you know I’m only going to be there, for what, four weeks? So, technically I don’t know anything, or her reasoning behind it, and I don’t really expect her to explain them all to me…I could do what I wanted to do, essentially. She was pretty laid back, you know, she had 20 years of teaching experience and she didn’t plan, like she didn’t really plan any lessons, like she just knew it—it came out of this magical area, and I was like wow. So, definitely I did things a lot differently. For example, with science lessons, I think in all of my lessons it was a bit more interactive, more interactive, more hands on, especially for sciences kids got to do experiments and the kids loved it…and she said, I would never have done that, because I don’t trust them. (Interview three)

For Tye, as she reflected on the important parts of literacy learning, she again noted that making meaning through student interest was important to her. She commented on the importance she placed on understanding a student’s funds of knowledge and how they can draw on it to create meaning within the curriculum. She explained:

Building on kids’ funds of knowledge and especially with making literacy, making it mean something, you know?...So, just making meaning is definitely very important again for that, because sure for some kids could just write and talk about anything, but if interest is not there and they’re already struggling, you know, it’s and kids know that they’re struggling…and you can see it on their face—they get upset and they begin to
cry, but if you see something that they’re excited about, then I guess making a mistake…in the area of their interest won’t be as bad. (Interview three)

In addition to her second practicum experiences, Tye reflected on her year in the language arts course and working through the content with her peers in the face-to-face environment. Tye mentioned that while it was important to have collaborative discussions, she preferred more “hands-on” experiences in her learning. She considered the role her peers played in her coming to understand the content and noted:

I don’t, you know what, no. I was at, my group at my table—not really. I don’t think they were very helpful. I think we’re just all on the same page, learning as a whole class. You know some people had some really great ideas, that was great, but again, my way through learning is through experience and hands-on, being in that moment, teaching it, seeing what works, what I’m comfortable with. So, I’d say most of the learning, had all this information, that was great, but it was just there floating, but it wasn’t until it just floated down into the experience, and I could start working with it that was when I best learned what to do…You know, it’s trying ideas in the end, sharing experiences, I think that’s more important—sharing experiences as opposed to just ideas alone. (Interview three)

After reflecting on her experiences within her practicums and the language arts course, Tye struggled to articulate in a clear way how she perceived the language arts course as contributing to her developing literacy pedagogy:

I’m thinking that it’s [teaching literacy] hard, it’s difficult and no one wants to do it, you know what I mean? And, you have to write just because you have to write and read and that’s it, you know what I mean? You do it for a purpose, and definitely there’s a purpose
and for example, the How-to books, that was very exciting for the kids. They were really excited about that, you know? They had ownership; that was *their* thing…So, definitely making meaning of it all and just looking at the different aspects of what they’re seeing especially from someone who came from a background where you know it was hard for me at one point, and um, why did I have to learn it? Because I was told to…So, definitely as a form of expression, you know I never really saw it as a form of expression…again that’s all just making meaning and connecting things to your own life, and how you want to communicate and what you want to communicate. (Interview three)

While Tye was able to talk about funds of knowledge and meaning making as an important aspect of literacy teaching and learning, it was difficult for Tye to explicitly express components specifically related to multiliteracies, other than multimodality, or how the course in general contributed to her developing pedagogy.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I described the programmatic curriculum of the language arts course gleaned, in part, from a synthesis of interview data with the course’s program coordinator and four language arts course instructors. I shared the findings concerning the three focal participants’ experiences, which I constructed with the help of the interview data with the focal participants. The first interview included participants’ early experiences with language literacy teaching, the second interview included their current experiences within their language arts course and their first practicum. The third interview offered participants an opportunity to reflect on their experience within the language arts course, which was 12 weeks long, as well as their second practicum. Within the language arts course, participants described their experiences
engaging with their peers, instructors, and course content. They also described their experiences in the field with their Associate Teachers. They described some of the aspects of components from their language arts course that were present in their first two practicum experiences. While the three focal participants attempted to articulate their burgeoning pedagogy, they did not use multiliteracies-specific language. While they all took the notion of language arts teaching for granted, stating that they did not realize the complexity of literacy other than print literacy, they each mentioned the importance of multimodality as part of multiliteracies. Brittany, Anna, and Tye all spoke of wanting to connect with students’ backgrounds and funds of knowledge as a way to engage their students as part of their pedagogy. In the next chapter, I outline and describe the data from the in-service educators in the graduate program focused on a pedagogy of multiliteracies.
Chapter Five

Professional Learning in a Graduate Program in Education

In this chapter I share the findings from the data on participants in an online graduate program in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. As described in the previous chapter, these findings were gleaned through an analysis of data, which included three interviews with each of the three focal participants and the artifacts the participants created throughout the two-year program, including their final reflective practice projects. Also included are highlights from supporting documents from the program’s learning outcomes, interview data from the program’s administrative manager and an instructor, and syllabus information pertaining to the last course the participants participated in, their reflective practice project (RPP). These data helped me identify the programmatic and intended curriculum of the graduate program, as well as the lived curriculum of the participants. In this chapter I organized the data according to Patton’s (2015) case study analysis. The first section discusses data from the first in-depth interview on focal participants’ early experiences with literacy and teaching. The next section discusses data from the second in-depth interview on participant experiences within their graduate program and includes participant artifacts created during the program. It also includes data on the program and interviews with the instructor and the graduate program’s administrative program coordinator. The last section discusses data from the last in-depth interview where participants reflected on their graduate program, and I also include artifacts from their reflective practice project.

Early Experiences with Literacy and Teaching

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7 To maintain anonymity of the institution, I do not quote the documents directly.
In this case study, the three focal participants belonged to the same cohort and attended the online graduate program in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Each participant was located in a different geographic region, and the online venue for the graduate program was ideal for each of the participants’ professional learning experiences. Each focal participant also came to the graduate program with varying early literacy experiences and with different experiences in literacy teaching. According to the participants, none of them was familiar with the concept of multiliteracies before the program began.

Jason

During the first interview, Jason explained he was born and raised in Ontario, Canada and his initial teacher education experiences were in a concurrent Bachelor of Education program; he noted that he received both his undergraduate and teaching degrees simultaneously. Other than a small amount of time spent in itinerant teaching positions after he received his degree in education, the majority of his eight years of teaching experiences were obtained overseas. First, he taught a Canadian provincial curriculum in Asia with a Bedouin student population. At the time of his participation in the graduate program, he mentioned he was working in Africa at a private school, where most of his students came from a variety of nationalities. At this private school, Jason said he implemented the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Within the IB program the curriculum is structured in a transdisciplinary way and is referred to as units of inquiry. Jason explained that, unlike his experiences in Asia where the students and their parents had limited schooling experiences including proficiency with the English language, his students at the American IB school spoke a variety of languages, including English, and came from parents who were highly educated.
Jason’s early experiences with literacy were, as he stated “very basic.” Attending elementary school in the 1990s within the Ontario school system, Jason spoke of his experiences as a very traditional kind of schooling where, “everything seemed very segregated—there was your English time, your science time, your math time, and I think they were a lot more compartmentalized that I didn’t really make any real attachments when I think of my schooling.”

According to Jason, his home experiences, however, were very different and had much more of an impact on his perceptions of literacy. Growing up in a two-parent household, Jason described how his mother took him to the library on regular visits:

We spent tons of time going to programs at the library, from when we were little and being read to and doing the crafts and games, and all those library experiences, and then as we got older we were the reading buddies and we ran, sort of, the volunteer program. So, I think that really shaped…that’s sort of a lot of the reason why I became an educator, just from being around literacy and doing those things. And that sort of translated into other teaching experiences, that for literacy mostly, I think growing up around the library and around books and having parents who were avid readers, and seeing them read and being read to sort of shaped that for me. (Interview one)

During his experiences as a preservice educator, Jason noted that it was the language arts course within his B.Ed. program that “became something [he] attached himself to.” As Jason mentioned, language arts, which in Ontario includes literacy in the areas of reading, writing, oral communication, and media studies\(^8\) became his “bread and butter of teaching,” because, as he

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\(^8\) Under the United States federal curriculum, Common Core, the Language arts curricula are comprised of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language (grammar and usage).
stated, “that’s where I’ve gone on and taken more courses outside, and you know I lean way more towards literacy—and yes I teach math and inquiry in science and social studies, but languages, you know, that’s where my heart is.” Due to his immersion in his Bachelor of Education program, which extended over his four-year university experience, Jason expressed that he was adequately prepared to teach literacy. He attributed this readiness to the extended amount of time he was able to spend in a variety of classroom settings with a variety of mentor teachers during field placements offered throughout his B.Ed. program. Because of these experiences, Jason expressed that he had the experience necessary to start his own classroom. Further, he described his mentor teachers as being “with it,” “up to date,” and were using, a lot of technology…that’s when the Smartboard [interactive whiteboard technology] was coming out and they were, like a lot of them were very fluent with using like, you know, all these multimodalities that I’m learning about now [his emphasis] almost and they were already with it, so I felt I had a good game coming into teaching. (Interview one)

This positive perspective, according to Jason, contrasted with the experiences of the new teachers he worked with while in Asia. As he was working as a curriculum coordinator and lead teacher, Jason stated that the new teachers at his school, who had only completed a one-year Bachelor of Education program after their undergraduate degree, were complaining: “I didn’t learn anything—I don’t know what to do.”

Jason said he was lucky that the school board he worked for afforded their teachers extensive professional development (PD) opportunities, which included funding assistance for his graduate program. Because the island where he worked had limited PD resources, Jason stated that he was offered as many PD courses or training days as he wanted on the mainland—
all expenses paid. Those teachers who attended these mainland PD opportunities then offered teacher-led professional development to their colleagues who did not attend. These teacher-led PD sessions occurred on early student dismissal days each Wednesday throughout the school year, and as Jason recounted, he was often a lead-teacher during these PD sessions.

Jason stated that his motivations for enrolling in the graduate program began with an interest in leadership. He explained that his career goal was to pursue an administrative position in education. He noted, however, that his ultimate career goal was to obtain his doctorate and work in a Faculty of Education. Though he was interested in leadership as a future goal, Jason said he decided to enroll in a literacy program, because “literacy is where my interest was, so I just thought, for me it was a better choice…So, I went with what I was most interested in rather than the leadership.” Following his interest, however, Jason noted he was unprepared for the program’s heavy focus on the concept of multiliteracies even though a pedagogy of multiliteracies was in the program title. Jason noted that his early perceptions of the program before he started were that it would focus more on literacy instruction:

We [the cohort] heard literacy [his emphasis] and kind of latched onto that and I remember reading the first few articles in the new literacies studies, and multiliteracies, and multimodality and being like, this is not what I thought I was getting into. I mean it worked out in a great way, and I value those connections, but I remember being a bit overwhelmed and like being, this isn’t exactly what I thought this was going to be.

(Interview one)

Jason’s early experiences with literacy, as described through his home and community, more so than his schooling experiences, helped develop a love of reading, and he stated that this
interest spurred him onto becoming an educator with a love and focus on literacy teaching. Jason was offered extensive opportunities for professional development to further his learning and professional knowledge through his workplace, and through this love and interest in literacy, he began his journey within the graduate program in multiliteracies.

**Sarah**

Sarah worked in education for over 20 years as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE). After many years working in child care centers, she was now employed within a provincially-funded school system in Ontario, working within its Full Day Kindergarten program (Ontario’s Early Years curriculum). In this setting, she described how she worked in partnership with the Ontario Certified Teacher to implement the provincial curriculum, to set up the classroom environment, and to plan lessons collaboratively.

Similar to Jason’s early literacy learning experiences, Sarah expressed that growing up in Ontario her schooling was “traditional.” She stated:

> I think my school experience in elementary [kindergarten to grade eight] obviously was very traditional; it was in the 70s and 80s you know, so that connection to home probably was very limited and that as long as I was completing the tasks that were assigned in the classroom, and completing them, you know, successfully and effectively, then that was all the engagement I’d have with my teachers. (Interview one)

Also similar to Jason’s experiences, Sarah spoke about how, for her, meaningful literacy happened at home and in the community where she would visit the library and explore stories by her favourite authors. In these community spaces, she noted how she loved to write stories,
complete their illustrations, and read Dr. Seuss. Even into her adolescent years, she described how the library became a social place to hang out with friends. Other literacy activities, Sarah mentioned, included participating in school science fairs and drama plays where she was interested in created scripts. Though Sarah was very interested in reading and writing, she said she did not major in literacy education in university, but eventually sought out a career in early childhood education.

As an early childhood educator, Sarah described how her ECE program was focused heavily on literacy. She also noted that her experiences with literacy teaching, as an ECE, also involved a large focus on multimodality, since,

we [ECEs] were already beyond print…working with infants to school-aged students…print is the last thing and it’s not really relevant to our little ones, so that reading and the love of reading and just having photos and things for the children to look at and touch and, you know, play with…I know that I’ve always wanted bags and bins of books and things for the children, like even the little ones to crawl in and just experience and talk about and look at, and it’s not so much reading from cover to cover, but exploring things together. (Interview one)

Though Sara worked in the public school system, she explained that professional development opportunities were not offered to the early childhood educators as fully as they were offered to her other teacher colleagues. She explained that the School Board typically offered professional development to provincially certified teachers only, and even when PD was extended to the ECEs, Sarah said she was constrained by the types available:
I think that you’re really tied working in the school system, you’re really—your hands are really tied and where your professional development goes based on your school and the improvement plan\(^9\) that they dictate, right? So, I know in [our School Board] everything is math, and our school is math and most of the [Board] is math, so it’s all math, you know? Like I proposed to do even my own networking, and they’re like, well we’d prefer if you did it with, like, go to the math people and do some math, and I’m like—OK (laughs uneasily), so ya, it’s a challenge. (Interview one)

This limited opportunity to network and engage in professional learning at the board level, as Sarah stated, was an important piece in her decision to enroll in the graduate program. She mentioned that her motivation to understand more about learning and literacy was key to her pursuing continued professional learning: “I just wanted to understand more. I wanted to be able to support my students in ways that I didn’t even know about…and I knew that there were better ways to support my students.” As such, before beginning the program, like Jason, Sarah noted she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies. She did mention that her early notions of multiliteracies were that it encompassed multimodality, as she was familiar with literacy including a multimodal experience for children in their early years of education through her ECE training.

Sarah spoke about how literacy was an integral part of her early experiences. Her home and community connections were important to her, and she noted how they paved a way to begin a career in early childhood teaching and learning. However, moving into the provincial school

\(^9\) In Ontario, the school improvement plan, currently titled *The K-12 School Effectiveness Framework (2013): A Support for student improvement and student success*, uses student assessment and evaluation evidence to inform pedagogical changes within the school.
system was a challenge because of the change in roles. As an ECE working within a child care center, she was afforded the role as lead ECE. Within the provincial school system, she was no longer a lead educator; she noted that she was now in partnership with a provincially certified teacher in the FDK program. Even when the term “teacher” was used to describe her role, she corrected this usage to say she was an ECE, but did agree that she was indeed an “educator.” As her role as an ECE differed from the teacher in the classroom, professional development opportunities were not only limited to access, but she noted that they were limited in content. Sarah stated that the lack of professional development opportunities was a catalyst for continuing her professional learning and enrolling in the graduate program in multiliteracies.

Rachel

Rachel’s teaching experiences were very different from both Jason and Sarah’s. Rachel was born and raised in China. At the time she was enrolled in the online graduate program, she described that she was working at an institution in China within English language acquisition. Rachel noted that her academic background was in economics and business management, and she did not have a formal degree in education. She mentioned she had been teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) for six years. The graduate program was her first experience in a formal program in education.

Rachel described her early experiences in learning English as a foreign language, which began when she was in grade five. However, her experiences mirrored the traditional literacy experiences both Jason and Sarah shared, where literacy learning was decontextualized from personal experiences and not rooted within their funds of knowledge. As Rachel stated, “the English classes were always memorizing lots of words and we studied grammar, but we didn’t
have the skills to use English in the real context, you know the proper context.” She described how she had the opportunity to travel abroad and study English as she got older, which helped with her English language proficiency, though she explained that she was more confident in writing English rather than in speaking English. Rachel explained that her childhood experiences in learning a new language were not ideal, but that she strived to expose her students to a different way of language learning than she had experienced: “My learning method was not suitable for me when I was a child, and I’d like to use my learning experience to teach my students and to teach them with a better method.” Rachel commented that her focus with her students in English as a foreign language learning was to contextualize the language, so that her students understood how to use the language in a meaningful and practical way. A large concern for Rachel, as she noted, was that her students would be applying to study abroad after the EFL program, and she wanted to make sure her students could use enough English language to be able to navigate their way in an English-speaking country.

Rachel spoke about her access to professional development. Within her institution, Rachel shared that the professional development within her faculty consisted of “teaching and research activities on a weekly basis, and…academic paper competitions.” These activities were then shared with her colleagues. However, Rachel expressed that she still wanted to further her professional learning and earn a graduate degree in education as a way to support her teaching of EFL; her particular area of interest was in literacy and English language teaching. Though she had no prior knowledge of multiliteracies, she described how she found the program description interesting enough to enroll: “Every student enrolled in this program has a learning desire to literacy education…and I think multiliteracies is a new knowledge to us. I don’t think many
universities offer the program like this. So, maybe all the educators want to learn something new to develop their instructional pedagogy.” Rachel further explained:

I didn’t have any educational background in literacy teaching before I entered this program, so I like to take the opportunity to study literacy education to improve my teaching experience theoretically and systematically, and I also want to learn from the native English speaking teachers, about how they teach English to native English speaking students and to ESL [English as a Second Language] students…Language acquisition in China [is about] improving test scores, TESOL [Teaching English to Students of Other Languages] scores being important part of curriculum, because students need certain scores to go to meet college admission requirements [post-secondary admission requirements in foreign countries]. So…multiliteracies, this kind of pedagogy, is ignored in such training organizations and the course duration is very short in training organizations…and we teach a lot of examination techniques rather than the real literacy. (Interview one)

In the initial interviews with the focal participants, they expressed how their literacy learning experiences influenced their further education, professional learning, and motivations to seek out their own professional learning opportunities, specifically the graduate program in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. The next section provides information about this program and the programmatic curriculum for the in-service educators.

**Graduate Education in Multiliteracies**

In this section I highlight the purpose of the graduate program as indicated by the program’s administrative manager and how it was designed for those wanting to pursue a
graduate degree focused on a pedagogy of multiliteracies as part of their continued professional learning. I also focus on the reflective practice project (RPP), which the focal participants created as it was the last course within the two-year program.

The graduate program in multiliteracies was a two-year, course-based, cohort model graduate program. In an interview with the program’s administrative manager, she indicated the purpose of designing the program to be cohort-based was to create a collaborative environment where,

students [would be] learning from each other from the start to finish…students begin to build networks and bonds with the students that they’re taking the courses with, because they’re all compulsory courses, so you know, they kind of break down the barriers that they might be faced with in online learning and make it a little more even ground to what we experience in a classroom setting. (Program Manager)

This consideration was of importance to the Program Manager, as she stated: “I really have come to understand how important it is to build bonds with people in your class, because it gets to be a lonely journey if you’re doing it all alone.” As a cohort, participants completed eight courses together throughout the two years. As indicated on the institution’s website, the overarching purpose of offering a graduate program in a pedagogy of multiliteracies was to attend to new expanded literacies and ways of communicating in an era of significant technological innovation, as well as to acknowledge changes to educational environments brought about through globalization. The program was also designed to address professional and personal initiatives surrounding curriculum design and implementation; making critical, pedagogical decisions
within curricular implementation; and to expose students to academic research and scholarship in the area of language and literacy teaching and learning.

There was a specific target audience for the graduate program in multiliteracies. According to the Program Manager, the target audiences for the online graduate program were teachers or other professionals in a role dealing with literacy education, including aspiring teachers:

The target audience is mostly teachers, but we’re really looking at anybody who’s in a role that might be influenced in some way by literacy, so it could be somebody in a role—a training role at an organization—it could be somebody who’s just interested in literacy, but for the most part it is just teachers in the program—or aspiring teachers.

(Program Manager)

The goals of the program, according to the Program Manager, were “to be able to bring the practice together with the theory and to look at ways to address the issues that they might see out in the classroom, for instance, and using theory to do that.”

As this research project seeks to explore the lived curriculum of students in the graduate program, it was important to include an instructor’s perspective of teaching in the program. According to the instructor, the mandatory courses within the program dealt with such themes and topics as understanding language and literacy within a curriculum context, understanding pedagogies that forward multiliteracies as a pedagogy, language and literacy relative to student diversity, research methods in education for educational professionals, and the independent, open-ended reflective practice project. The courses, according to the instructor, were “fairly structured” and “practice-based,” and were facilitated through the institution’s online learning...
management system (LMS). In the LMS, students were able to access courses, course documents, library databases, an asynchronous forum for interaction between students and professors, and the opportunity to contact the professor and other members of their cohort through email from the site. The instructor also described the online forum as a method of holding students accountable for the content readings. According to the instructor, the online forums were,

fairly conversational and was a way to kind of keep accountable for the readings, so there were readings, but within the reading there were also—I called them readings and viewings because sometimes there was a YouTube video or a podcast, or something like that that I wanted them to attend to—so there was always something to read, but there was often more than just something to read, so that was kind of, sort of one kind of thread of the course and it’s a thread that’s kind of been there since I’ve started teaching online courses…but it seems to me the more you get going within that forum the more engaged the students are and every time I try to make it a little bit more manageable for them, we seem to lose engagement. Because you [instructor] don’t have to be there. (Program Instructor)

As this particular course was taken by the participants in their second year, the instructor recognized that the students were using multiliteracies concepts within their course work:

I could see that they were using, they were very adept with multiliteracies…when you start looking at what the research topics were, and the questions they came up with, they carefully came up multiliteracies questions…So, very different from, say, if you’re in the
general curriculum program, where you can really pick up anything in curriculum…the multiliteracies guys were choosing multiliteracies topics. (Program Instructor)

However, the instructor commented that despite the program’s online component and its structure as being heavily technology-based, within her courses she felt the students did not necessarily have all the knowledge needed to use this technology. She stated,

I discovered…that although they’re quite adept at putting PowerPoints together and giving nice backgrounds and things like that, that…many of them didn’t have the first idea how to search databases…it just struck me as one of those, when I think about…an unexpected flipside of online learning in that it is so technology-based…and, we’ve got people in the, in the grad office who are helping to set up so that nobody has to look further than one click for their reading, and if they do have to look further than their one reading, they get a little bit touchy about it. Because they get this idea that that is not what the course is about, and therefore they shouldn’t have to [search for readings]…the level of knowledge about information literacy is really, really much lower than the level of knowledge about presentation software…information literacy was one of the literacies that I think we assume and shouldn’t. (Program Instructor)

Thus, though students within the program were using multiliteracies concepts, which included multimodality and technology, digital technologies to use the learning management system, as identified by the instructor, were still a challenge to some of the students.

The Reflective Practice Project
The final course in the program was the reflective practice project (RPP). This two-term project was meant to, as outlined in the syllabus, synthesize the information curated from all previous courses students participated in and as a culmination of knowledge and experiences with multiliteracies pedagogy. According to the RRP course syllabus, the course was designed as a way to “reflect” on the learning throughout the program and to “synthesize” and apply their learning to “real-world” contexts. As per the syllabus, the RPP was designed to afford students space to design and create their own “open-ended” project.

Included in the syllabus for the RPP were the learning outcomes developed by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies. These outcomes were approved by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Council of Ontario Universities, 2011) and were put in place to “guide the development of degree programs and courses” (p. 10). Specifically, the learning outcomes, “define what a student should know, and be able to do, after successful completion of an assignment, activity, class, course or program” (p. 7). The seven learning outcomes are: depth and breadth of knowledge, knowledge of methodologies, research and scholarship, application of knowledge, communication skills, awareness of the limits of knowledge, and autonomy and professional capacity (p. 16). These outcomes were then specifically tailored to the content of the reflective practice project.

The purpose of the RPP, as outlined in the syllabus, was not structured around course readings, but was built upon a project based on student choice and rooted in practice. The students, all working on unique-oriented projects, continued to engage with each other through the online forum, uploading samples of their work at specific milestones throughout the project process, and they offered and received feedback from their peers.
The reflective practice projects the focal participants were expected to create during their final course could be designed and created in various formats (as stated in the course syllabus). They could, for example, create a substantial literature review of research connected to program content, they could design and create curriculum, a professional workshop, a digital artifact used to highlight and synthesize their learning, or they could create an in-depth reflection portfolio on the learning achieved throughout the program, which would be connected to research literature. To assist students with the project, the project curriculum outlined five specific milestones to aid with completion: identifying the problem, project proposal, submission of project, and the final project reflection.

Next, I describe the participants’ experiences within the program and their experiences through the creation of their reflective practice projects as uncovered through the second interview.

**Participant Experiences within the Program**

In the second interview, the focal participants each discussed their experiences working through an understanding of the concepts of a pedagogy of multiliteracies; this was within the program itself and the courses they participated in. In the following sections, for each focal participant, I describe their experiences that emerged through the second interview. These experiences included their interactions and collaborations with their cohort peers, instructors, and the online learning management system. Also, participants shared their experiences and perceptions as they engaged with some of the tenets of multiliteracies, such as making home to school connections (situated practice), considering issues of diversity and equity (critical framing), and engaging in multimodality (transformed practice). Included are the examples of
artifacts they were producing throughout this process, as well as their final reflective practice projects.

**Jason**

For Jason, as mentioned in the first interview, in the beginning of the program, the concept of multiliteracies was not what he had envisioned as the focus for his continued professional learning. As further uncovered in the first interview, Jason anticipated the program would focus more on what he perceived to be literacy instruction—how to systematically instruct students in their literacy education. This misunderstanding, stemming from his unfamiliarity with the concept of multiliteracies, as he acknowledged, caused some tension for Jason. He recalled, “I didn’t quite know what I was getting myself into.” Jason also expressed that it was especially disconcerting to find out that *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* had come out in 1996 by the New London Group; yet all these years later he was only hearing about it for the first time. Jason recalled his sense of feeling overwhelmed:

I remember when I started, that one feeling—super overwhelmed. Like, to be fair, that’s my own fault, because I don’t think I really knew what multiliteracies was, like someone who’s into literacy education like phonics and like, probably more traditional literacy, I’m like, ok, this is what I like to teach, this will be good; then all of a sudden I started reading into all of the like all the New London Group stuff and this and that, and I was like—wow, this really isn’t what I thought it was, but again, not in a bad way—but for my own lack of research before buying into the program. (Interview two)

Jason recalled the first courses he took as a process of “making sense of what multiliteracies was before moving on…the whole first year was just introducing us, introducing it to us, and like
having us make sense of it,” and he credits his first instructor with guiding him and his peers so that “it all started to make sense, and I think [the instructor] really did guide us through that issue.”

Jason noted that he particularly enjoyed a course linking curriculum and leadership within the specific area of language and literacy, as the course weaved multiliteracies pedagogy and leadership together. Jason said his specific interest was how this particular course incorporated discussions about using multiliteracies in practical ways—in one’s role as a curriculum leader: “That really did put things into context, and now that you know what multiliteracies is, here’s what you can do with it, from a classroom setting here’s what you can do with it, [and] from a leadership setting or an administration setting.” Jason commented that having his early courses introduce multiliteracies concepts was important for him, so he could see how he was able to apply these concepts in practical ways in his other courses.

The cohort, instructors, and the online space. In the second interview, Jason was able to elucidate his perceptions regarding his cohort, his instructors, and his experiences working within the online space. Jason explained that due to student attrition, what started out to be a larger cohort, ended up to be only six peers. Yet Jason appreciated a small cohort, and described his cohort as a “strong” one, and that they were instrumental in “pushing” him through the program to produce quality work:

There’s a lot of emails where it feels like it’s a community, we all seem to know each other, we’ve added each other on Facebook, we’ve gotten together here and there with some of us who are local, I feel pushed…I have this group that actually engages me and
works hard, I feel like I’m pushed to do more…I feel like my learning stretched more.

(Interview Two)

For Jason, he expressed that a small cohort was ideal and contributed to his positive experiences.

Another benefit Jason mentioned, of belonging to a small cohort, was more time available to interact with instructors and more time to read and engage in discussions with peers in the forums, which were part of the online learning management system (LMS). When asked about his experiences within the LMS he commented on peer support and time with the instructors:

There was more time, like our instructors would message us individually or you know, there was just better conversations cause there wasn’t—there was less to read [posts in the LMS]. Like, [in previous professional development programs] when I’m in these big courses with 50 people, or a MOOC [Massive Open Online Course], you don’t get to know people. You’re all posting; you have to post three times a week, rather than engaging in discussion with these people that you’ve been learning with for two years. So, I really felt that the fact that there were six of us made a huge difference to these courses, [and] adding on social media and talking here and there, I really do feel like I know these people. (Interview two)

The opportunity to work more one-on-one with the instructors, and the affordance of having fewer posts to read and respond to thoughtfully, contributed positively to Jason’s experiences, as noted in his second interview.

**Home-school connections.** Jason noted that making connections between his students’ in-school lives and their out-of-school experiences was important to him. Jason explained that
the inclusion of home–school connections within the program courses were that each instructor had their own way of addressing the issue. Jason recalled one course instructor who overtly made this connection for him:

One of the things that [the instructor] got me on this year was incorporating youth culture. So, we worked together and I sent a whole questionnaire home on what literacies, or what artifacts, your kids use at home and how can I use that in the classroom. And that started this enormous Lego project that pretty much became a whole unit, because all of my students, but two, use them. There were all these digital tools, and that was my stop-motion [animation]; they wrote these stories and these amazing stop-motion Lego projects and made videos and this and that…I learned how to make a website and add videos and stuff to that—so I have my classroom website, and I blog and put newsletters and all of that stuff there…the parents are able to see what I’m doing in my class and then be able to incorporate what we’re doing at home, and…[students] to be able to comment and say “we did this” [at home] and for me to be able to incorporate that into my class.

(Interview two)

In this way, Jason noted that home–school connections were made more explicit in his classroom practices, which he attributed to a specific course in the program.

**Diversity and equity.** In the second interview, Jason stated that he questioned the connection between diversity and equity and how it related to the graduate program. One example was in his course on diversity. Though multiliteracies emphasizes learner diversity, including cultural and linguistic diversity (New London Group, 1996), Jason stated that he did not see the particular relevance to what he was learning in the course:
I liked this course, I don’t know how—after learning all about multiliteracies and what it was, this course felt more like it was more on student diversity than the actual multiliteracies, so it was great and it did show you—like there were modules where it was about how we can help culturally and linguistically diverse students by using multiliteracies, by using videos or things, but a lot of it, I found, was a lot more on student diversity; it didn’t really focus so much on multiliteracies. (Interview two)

However, because Jason worked in an international school where his students’ funds of knowledge were globally situated, he commented that addressing cultural and linguistic diversity was common:

So, I have 16 kids that speak, that come from 14 passports and speak 17 languages, so diversity is just, it’s frequently brought up. And I’m also working with the International Baccalaureate PYP [primary years programme]…there’s just so many transdisciplinary themes that work towards diversity, and why that’s good and how that looks, and so I think that’s frequently brought up. And also most of these kids’ parents are working for UNICEF or Water Aid or USAID or an embassy, so diversity is a frequent part of their lives. So, it’s something that is discussed frequently but not something that I really feel like I overtly need to teach about, because it’s just so, just a part of their life and a part of my teaching that it’s so frequent that I don’t notice; teaching a lesson on diversity? They’re well aware of that. (Interview two)

Therefore, though Jason and his students were afforded abundant opportunities to engage with issues of cultural diversity, Jason did not address it in explicit ways.
Engaging with multimodality. Jason considered himself a “digital native” who can easily engage with digital technology, such as social media apps like Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter and comfortably use a variety of computer and digital technologies. However, despite this knowledge he mentioned that, “a lot of them [digital tools] that were brought in [to the courses] were new to me. So, there’s a lot of things that people [his program peers] are using in their classrooms that I’d never used before, so there was definitely a learning curve…I’d never created a website in my life.” Because of this introduction to new technologies, Jason commented that there were many opportunities for him to engage in multimodality within the courses. However, he mentioned that he did not necessarily think all of the courses were presented multimodally, specifically those with multiliteracies as the overarching focus:

What I will say is I feel like we’ve done a lot of presenting in our projects that are multimodal, but I don’t know if the content is always presented to us multimodally. I feel like the profs have been very straightforward, with the exception, actually I should mention, the [another program] stream have been more about uploading videos, and giving multimodal resources, whereas I find the multiliteracies strand, ironically, it has been a lot more just readings and um, discussing back and forth in the forums for the most part. (Interview two)

Though he stated that not all courses were implemented multimodally, he did mention that one instructor used a graphic novel as the course text, which Jason noted he really enjoyed. Jason also expressed that most professors encouraged him and his peers to represent their work multimodally. Other instructors also created assignments that required students to apply their learning into their current practice and for the participants to create multimodal opportunities for their students:
We had a few projects where we were asked to do something in our classroom, so I really had to think about how I was going to use that technology and incorporate it into my unit plans and now that I’ve done that, I wouldn’t change it. So, there’s a lot of, I kind of like that I was forced into using some of them, like: “You will do this in your class—take photos; send them to us.” So that was something [our instructor] did a really good job of in our last class, like I want you using some kind of tool, so that’s when I did my stop-motion digital stories, but other teachers were using Twitter with the parents. Like everybody took on some kind of multimodal tool, or digital tool, and had to incorporate it and present it to each other, so the whole course was pretty much, find a tool, use it, and present it three times to your class. So it was neat to see, not only to be forced to use it for myself, but it was great to see how other people used it in their classrooms, so I feel there’s a lot more I’ll do next year…now that I’ve seen it, I’ve seen it be successful and how it’s integrated and can be presented. (Interview two)

Jason described how he continued to explore and use digital tools throughout the program. He learned to create and use digital tools that were significant to him:

I’m creating a website for my final project, and that’s something I learned how to do and grown through that, we created videos—the amount of things I’ve learned how to do online, multimodally, have been huge with this course.”

Thus, Jason perceived that his experiences in the program afforded him opportunities to explore new digital tools that he had never used before.

**Multimodal artifacts.** Throughout the program, along with multimodal postings (i.e., visuals and videos) to the online learning management system, Jason created several multimodal
artifacts during his coursework. When invited to share the artifacts he created, he chose to share artifacts that comprised of: a resource tool for teachers (digital text), a PowerPoint, an essay (text and visuals), a website, a Prezi, and a digital infographic.

For the resource tool, Jason created a digital text on “Developing Effective 21st Century Educators.” In this resource, Jason attempted to better define 21st century learning for both students and for teachers (see Figure 2).

![Skills 21st Century Students Require](image)

*Figure 2. Excerpt from Jason’s perspective on student skills for the 21st C.*

Jason described for teachers how reflection, such as journaling or peer coaching, implementing practical theories, and understanding design approaches can assist them in improving their practice in order to prepare themselves, and thus, their students, for the future.

Jason prepared a PowerPoint for a course that outlined an action plan project he implemented in his class, which focused on digital storytelling using stop-motion animation. The
action plan questions he explored addressed student engagement to bridge the gap between students’ home and school interests; all with a central focus on multiliteracies (drawing on the New London Group, 1996) and multimodality. As his research questions show, Jason was concerned with exploring the home–school connections (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Jason’s Lego PowerPoint action plan questions.

Throughout this project Jason’s students were guided through the process of digital storytelling through: peer-mentoring where students were paired with students who had prior knowledge of the technology; the creation of hand-drawn storyboards where students, through synaesthesia\(^\text{10}\), were able to reconceptualise text and imagine their stories in new modes; the

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\(^{10}\) Synaesthesia is a term used in multiliteracies pedagogy, which means “a capacity to make meanings in more than one mode – language, image, gesture, and spatial and tactile understandings – and to switch backwards and forwards between these modes” (Kalanztis & Cope, 2012, p. 27).
creation of a story plan, which included students “acting out” the story sequence, and working through the creation and design process of stop-animation, using iPads to add voice and visual effects. Through this action plan project, Jason made connections between his students’ home and school experiences, and encouraged parental involvement through a class newsletter, email correspondence, and a film festival where parents were invited to see their child’s stop-motion Lego digital stories.

Next, Jason prepared a reflective essay titled, “Representing Educational Spaces and Relationships: A Conversation on my Experience as a Reader, Educator and Person.” In this “conversation” Jason’s abstract highlighted the following:

While engaging with the readings from the first few weeks of this course, I have reflected on the memories of my own experience as a teacher, educator, reader, and human. Through inspiration from Lynda Barry, I have adopted a creative approach in questioning why reading experience matters. I have divided my reflection into three sections, childhood, love and self. I draw my reflections from words written in children’s literature, and present them through a collage of images, photos, and words to spark imagination, and help the reader better engage with my memories, as I relate them to the course readings. Through this conversation, I intend to reflect and revise my understanding of self as an educator, and reader by understanding the relationship these practices have with reading and representation. (Jason’s reflective essay)

Included in the reflection were pictures of himself engaging in literacy activities with his mom, both at home and at the library, and pictures of his continued journaling with literacy as a young
To incorporate technology within his science curricula, Jason created a class website for the unit on “Understanding Life Systems.” It was comprised of information for both teachers and students (see Figure 4) and offered content information, a unit plan with modules to complete, and a culminating task.

Figure 4. Jason’s science website.

Jason also created a Prezi, which used the opening theme music for the futuristic movie *Back to the Future* (1985). This soundtrack for Jason’s Prezi, “Integrating Technology:

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11 Due to the personal nature of the photos, they are not included here.
Incorporating Technology in an Unknown Future,” was apt; through his presentation, Jason explored the unknown future of education with the following topics: Technology in Multiliteracies Pedagogy, the Flipped Classroom, Video Games, and Social Media; adding this note about using technology in one’s pedagogy (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Jason’s Prezi section on technological tools.

Jason also created an infographic on “Learning Theories,” created through the website Venngage, which was a guide to briefly introduce the reader to four learning theories: behaviorism, constructivism, cognitivism, and connectivism. Jason stated in this infographic that he identified mostly with constructivism as his “background in inquiry-based education, makes [him] strongly believe that we learn best through experiences” (see Figure 6).
Figure 6. Jason’s infographic on learning theories.

Through these multimodal artifacts, Jason made content and design decisions to demonstrate how he was coming to understand multiliteracies pedagogy. His artifacts were rooted within the current research literature and made practical applications to his own pedagogy, while providing resources for other educators and students. The last major project, which was, according to the course syllabus, meant to encapsulate all of the learning Jason engaged within throughout the program, was the reflective practice project.

**Jason’s reflective practice project.** For the final reflective practice project Jason created a website (see Figures 7 and 8). Jason commented that he designed the website as a way to assist administrators, teachers, and students in successfully attending to the needs of Syrian refugee students when they arrived at a Canadian school. Jason’s stated purpose for the website was:

To teach kids before their Syrian refugee gets there to give them this background information—to kind of build empathy and discuss why. I’m not saying use multiliteracies only for these Syrian refugees, but it’s about how to help your entire class, but also be able to use these digital tools and you know tie into their original language and stuff, to help them succeed. (Interview two)
This project was research-based with a goal to provide a “comprehensive” resource for elementary school educators in “applying multiliteracies pedagogy” to support Syrian refugees into their schools.
Figure 7. Reflective practice project website (video from YouTube).

Within this resource website, Jason described that he included a variety of information pertaining to the tenets of multiliteracies and the importance of multimodality because, educators and society also need to stop seeing literacy as an individual, monomodal, pen and paper task, but rather as a sharing process, in which people learn by, and through collaboration, and dissemination of information, through text, images, videos, and a plethora of other modalities afforded to us by technology…Multiliteracies pedagogy takes that one step further, by focusing on issues of social justice, so that students can become well-rounded problem solvers, and global citizens, ready to take on the problems of the future. (Jason’s website)
Figure 8. Jason’s RPP website section on multiliteracies (video from YouTube).

Included with the text are infographics, pictures, and videos (i.e., from YouTube) related to the website’s textual content. He also included a section on the importance of technology and lists examples for how educators can incorporate digital technologies into their practice, such as, mobile phones/texting, cameras/photos, QR [quick response] codes, iPads, social media (wiki’s,
Twitter, Facebook), game-based learning, and digital storytelling. Also included in this project were a series of lesson plans for teachers categorized by grade level: primary and junior and high school (at the secondary level Jason further categorized the lessons by subject, i.e., English).

On the website, Jason outlined the teacher’s role within a “multiliteracies focused classroom” and explicated the need for teachers to be prepared for the inclusion of multiliteracies pedagogies and multimodality. He stated:

When engaging in multiliteracies pedagogy, it is most important that educators not limit students to pencil and paper tasks, but rather encourage them to show their knowledge in modes that suit their abilities and understanding. In order for student to become multiliterate, they need to be instructed on how to engage, interact, and understand how multimodal texts convey and produce meaning. Educators need to deliver a pedagogy that provides students with the skills to be self-reliant critical thinkers and communicators in a society that demands this kind of literacy.

Educators need to be confident in their ability to promote this type of learning through multiple modes in order to create a classroom environment where students can effectively create, learn and think critically about the media and modalities that they are using, in order to create a society that will be able to function in the future…

Through the integration of a multiliteracies pedagogy, students learn how to engage with the world, and the global community that they are very much a part of. They need to learn how to collaborate, and work with others to create, design, and perhaps most importantly, solve problems.
Multiliteracies pedagogy has exploded a necessary shift in culture that allows teachers, and others in the educational field, to look at the way that we are educating students for tomorrow, and rethink educational and curriculum practice. Students need to discover and inquire with guidance, in order to make their own meaning, through the use of technological tools. They need to be active citizens in their learning communities and beyond. (Jason’s website)

As demonstrated above, Jason’s website contained extensive information on how he conceptualized multiliteracies and applied it to how teachers would be able to build on multiliteracies for all students, not just his website’s target student group—Syrian refugees.

In the “About” section of the website, Jason explicitly outlined his goals and objectives for the website as his project. His five objectives for the project were categorized under Advocacy, Creation/Presentation, and Dissemination (see Figure 9).

**Section A – Advocacy**

This section of my project plan outlines my intended approach for meeting objectives 1-3.

**Objective 1** – Introduce multiliteracies pedagogy to unfamiliar educators.
Objective 2 – Express the significance of technology in multiliteracies pedagogy and outline the affordances of different technologies.
Objective 3 – Redefine the roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers in a multiliterate classroom setting.

Objectives 1-3 – Multiliteracies advocacy

I plan to advocate the importance of incorporating multiliteracies pedagogy, technology and a new role for teachers, by providing sufficient information through the use of text, graphics, research, and videos on my website. By providing educators with information on multiliteracies pedagogy and the technological tools that assist it’s implementation, I am confident that there will be more educators ‘buy in’.

Below are a list of resources I plan on using to help me successfully meet these objectives

**Research**

Figure 9. Jason’s reflective practice project objectives.

Jason also included his presentation and project plan, the course rubric, the project timeline, and his annotated bibliography. He detailed his design decisions for the project’s “Creation and Implementation Format” so he could,
create a learning artifact that encapsulates my learning on multiliteracies and can be used to teach others about the topic. I decided to use Weebly to create a website as my learning tool to disseminate my knowledge. I chose Weebly because it allows me control over the use of modalities from text, to video, to audio to external links, making my website multimodal and giving me creative control. (Interview two)

According to the website, Jason stated that the “affordances” of using a website for the project were that,

- a website is a powerful communication tool to share information. By disseminating information through a website, I can reach a wider number of members of my target audience. The format of a website affords me to use different modalities in order to shape and present my research and message. I am able to use videos, documents, pictures and text to engage my audience by presenting my information in purposeful ways for optimal learning. (Jason’s website)

The website was organized to tell the story of multiliteracies and lead the audience through not only content, but also an argument towards the importance of multiliteracies within the classroom. Once the audience clicks through this journey (the end of each page links to the next section), Jason invites them to his resources for planning with Syrian refugee students in the classroom. These resources include: background information on the Syrian crisis, preparing yourself and your classroom, preparing your students, lesson plans, Syrian education in the news, and helpful documents; these were direct links to the Ministry of Education, Ontario’s documents on creating safe and accepting schools, mental health in schools, and curriculum for all levels. The resource documents were also in Arabic, which were provided on the Ministry of
Education in Ontario’s website. To incorporate engagement with other possible educators and administrators, Jason created a “Community” page to the website. Here he initiated some discussion on technology and invited the community to post lesson plans or ask questions.

A required component of the reflective practice project was to reflect on his experiences throughout the entire process. Included in Jason’s website were his on-going reflections through the design and implementation process where he reflected on his knowledge of multiliteracies.

For Jason, he mentioned that an exciting aspect of creating the project as a resource for administrators, teachers, and students was that he saw his project as “continuing” beyond the graduate program:

At the end of it I sent out a letter to every principal in Ontario, an email as well as a letter because [the instructor] said that it would be better off sent on paper; people would be more receptive to it. And I’ve received thousands of emails over the past year from teachers and educators. It’s up on a lot of multi-resourced places for each board, so I think it’s really neat that even though it’s over I constantly have people asking me about multiliteracies or asking me about the activities or how they can incorporate things, so I feel like it actually brings me back to thinking, ok, what about this? or…back to those concepts, so it’s actually, it’s keeping me sharp with the multiliteracies practice, and I’m so happy it’s actually helped people and done something, so it wasn’t just this paper that was never looked at again. (Interview two)

Jason’s experiences in the graduate program involved coming to know multiliteracies through the course content, his peers and instructors, working within the online learning
management system, as well as creating multimodal artifacts that demonstrated his knowledge of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Sarah

In the first interview Sarah mentioned that she did not have any prior knowledge of multiliteracies pedagogy. However, she stated that she soon recognized the strong connections multiliteracies had with her current practice, drawing on her knowledge and experiences as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE). The connections Sarah made between her own ECE training and multiliteracies continued throughout the program.

Sarah noted she was very excited to make new connections to her current practice. This new connection centered on the global connections multiliteracies promoted through technology. She explained how she was very intrigued by Twitter and its affordances to connect teachers and students to a more global audience; however, she did note the challenges with trying to implement this global connectivity:

I’m excited about that global piece. I think that’s the most challenging one to actually practice. I’ve done a little bit with some of my peers through Twitter, but I get…you do get more backlash within that [from parents, the school, and the Board] and there’s things about confidentiality and privacy and even though were not, we don’t post faces or names on stuff, there’s still I think—people fear technology, right? When they don’t know about it, they fear it and they…all of a sudden, it’s this bad thing, and then your hands are tied, it’s like well, ok. And sometimes administration, I have a good administration now, but in the past the administration sometimes is like, that’s not what this is for and that’s not what you can do. (Interview two)
According to Sarah, global connectivity was a large piece of her work throughout the rest of the program, as it was a way for Sarah to link a student’s home and school connection.

**The cohort, instructors, and the online space.** Sarah’s perceptions of her cohort, instructors, and the online space were positive. Though she stated being apprehensive in the beginning, having never participated in any previous online learning, Sarah explained that because of the connections she developed with her cohort her feelings about being in the program evolved:

> It was so exciting, as I progressed through with my cohort, I think that was the biggest thing…we’re a small group, but that the six of us are still really tight and have gone through the whole course together and been able to, to contact each other throughout the year, even when we’re in different courses [Sarah also took courses in ECE and Curriculum and Leadership] and just sort of touch base, and you know give each other advice or ideas or to use each other, you know? (Interview two)

Sarah attributed the structure of the online program as what created the program to be conducive to an encouraging and supportive environment. When asked to describe the structure of her online experiences with the courses, she explained:

> It depended a little bit on the professor. I think that each one had sort of their own way of doing it. Generally, there were readings and then some would post questions or a couple of questions that could be reflected on, and you could choose which ones to reflect on. There was another professor that would post, sort of for each reading, it would be just your general ideas, reflections, connections to yourself, connections to other researchers, and connections to the world, and then so we would all do that. And then in the second
part of it we would start discussing and sharing and exploring what each other said, kind of thing, and then that would be sort of interspersed with interactive projects. (Interview two)

Sarah further described the program structure as being very “student-driven.” In her multiliteracies courses, Sarah described how the instructors created an environment where the students came together through group work, which included co-facilitating modules, and discussions with her peers. Sarah stated this contributed to creating these personal connections. She noted:

I think that because it was so participant driven and just so student driven and that the way, you know, with [the instructor] in the beginning had created the classroom where she wasn’t to jump in immediately and offer her every little detail and guidance, like micromanagement I say, you know? That it was created where the environment was safe to explore and take risks, but there was just so much dialogue with each other and every once in a while she would just pop in and say: “Hey, I really like this,” and whatever, but that we were really I think, pushing each other to ask questions and to find out about each other. (Interview two)

Sarah also mentioned how she appreciated the online program and its affordance for the possibility to have peers who could participate globally, since, according to Sarah, only two of the six in her cohort were based in Ontario. Acknowledging this geographic diversity, Sarah said she appreciated the richness of different perspectives brought to the collaborative online discussions in the online learning management system’s forum:
I think to be able to see their lens as we go through our discussions and as we go through our readings and making connections to our practices and ourselves, I’ve been able to see into so [her emphasis] many different practices and so [her emphasis] many different ways of seeing things, it’s just been an amazing journey that way. (Interview two)

According to Sarah, this online environment was important as she was building on her prior education and experience in early childhood education where the classroom becomes the third teacher (after the classroom teacher and the children). For Sarah, the online environment became the third teacher, as she explained, “the environment is the third teacher and I really feel the way the multiliteracies program is very intentional in how it was structured and how it was implemented and delivered, to create that environment, even though it is online.” Sarah described her perception of the way the online environment was set up by the instructors throughout her program, from the readings and discussions posed, to the assignments and assessments, all created the space where,

your voice was valued and respected, and your learning was—your funds of knowledge were acknowledged and supported, and the curriculum was enacted in that way based on us [her emphasis]. I don’t know if the course would be the exact same for another group of people going through. I mean, like to some extent, yes, because of that participant-driven, but a very different sort of experience…it’s never the same way twice, it’s never the same experience, it’s never the same materials, and it’s because of the students, right? (Interview two)

In this way, Sarah noted that her experiences with her cohort, her instructors, and the online space afforded her opportunities to engage further with the content of the program; having the
support of her peers, her instructors, and her perception that the online environment created a space that was centrally student-driven.

**Home–school connections.** For Sarah, in her interviews, the home–school connection had always been important in her practice. However, being able to connect her students globally through digital technologies was a new and important piece to incorporate into her practice. She said she developed this interest in global connectivity within her classroom practice by tapping into the affordances of using Twitter, the social media, micro-blogging app, and used it as a way to extend the in-class activities outside of school. During Sarah’s course work she created an action plan for the purpose of implementing Twitter in the classroom. Her teaching partner from the Full Day Kindergarten classroom she taught in was supportive of Sarah’s professional learning, and as Sarah’s teaching partner was pregnant at the time, they collaborated on Sarah’s action plan and incorporated the use of Twitter into an emergent unit on babies. Because the program courses encouraged the use of digital tools and concepts learned within the program in their application in practice, Sarah said she was able to use her professional learning to collaborate on a project with her partner, the classroom teacher:

We did sort of a multimodal project using Twitter…we started off by just sort of playfully exploring Twitter with the families and with the students and my teaching partner and I would post some questions on, like on the Twitter account, of something we were doing—of a picture and a question of what we were doing in the classroom and then over a long weekend, it was the Family Day squarespace piece 12 weekend, and I think parents were encouraged to post with their kids on activities they did and then when we got back to

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12 Family Day is a statutory holiday in Ontario.
school there’d be, we would share our, you know, everybody’s tweets and what they did and then we ended up doing a whole baby project, not just—using Twitter also, but I mean there was a lot of stuff in the classroom where the children watched a video, we watched a video of babies, a documentary, we watched the documentary for it, and then the children, we did small group activities where we drew pictures and had discussions about what we saw about the babies, what we noticed about the babies from different parts of the world.

And so the kids came up, the Kindergarten kids came up with questions that they wanted to explore about their life as a baby. So, we came up with a list of questions and then we tweeted, the kids tweeted out, once, ah, maybe once a week—maybe every other week we tweeted out those questions. So then the parents, so they went home to their parents and said: “We tweeted something and we wanna investigate that,” so they made, some of them made videos, some of them took pictures of their photo albums and it was things like: Where did I sleep when I was a baby? What activities did I do when I was a baby? Things they’ve noticed from the movie [on babies from different countries] that were, that they weren’t sure about or they wanted to find out more. And then it led to—we actually made a book about babies, in the classroom. They had gone around to all the classes in the school and talked to different teachers about what it was like when they were a baby, and they did little interviews and things—all on Twitter, it was absolutely amazing. (Interview two)

Sarah stated that using digital social media technology in her classroom had a huge impact on the home-connection—connecting parents to their children’s learning and connecting the children to their experiences at home. She explained:
That was the big piece that I really wanted families to understand...this really tells a story, and this really gets the parents being involved and understanding that literacy is not just writing and that [their child is] communicating and doing it, writing pictures and kids writing stories and sharing them.

And it’s led to some other engagements—I don’t know if you’re familiar with Jane’s Walk? It’s um, so they [the children] go into our community...so the students do all this work where they investigate owners in the community and businesses, and all sorts of things, and then after months of learning more about our community, they do a bunch of map work and things, and each group investigates a certain business and introduces that person, and then they go on a walk and they invited the school to go on the walk, and we went on the walk—nobody else went on the walk, but WE [her emphasis] went on the walk and our kids loved it. We tweeted it out and Jane’s Walk is done all over Canada, so we were connected with other classrooms that were doing the walk. And the kids were so excited and talked to all the owners and were like, “I come here and I like your store,” you know, so it was really neat. So that’s another outreach to our community as we try to constantly try to go out in our community. (Interview two)

Sarah also explored other ways of communicating with parents online, other than using email. Sarah used an education app called Remind. This app allows parents and classroom teachers to connect online in a secure way. Messages can be sent to the parents as a group, and parents and teachers can also communicate privately. Further, videos and pictures can be shared privately between the parent and teacher:
The Remind app was something that was really good that came along that was fabulous and the Board has all been supportive of that. So I really push that for people [other teachers] who are uncomfortable and for people who are not sure how to connect with families…it’s sort of a way to be very private about, but sort of blogging and interacting and moving up beyond communication, because you can post pictures, you know pic-collages and conversations and things like and put little links on that and…I posted a YouTube video on Remind and I posted like on the Twitter and email too, so we get everybody. So it’s a good way, sometimes it’s hard globally to connect…and honouring all the voices can be challenging when, in the school setting I find it more challenging just because the curriculum, you know the curriculum, and we need to touch on all of this, and even though I’m a big proponent of…I see that as good practice…it sometimes doesn’t always seem that way, that it’s, you know, that multiliteracies is that side dish, right? Like, well we need to cover this and then if we have time, or for those other students we can do this cause those are frills and those are add-ons when actually that’s where the meat and potatoes of learning is. (Interview two)

With the use of social media in the classroom and the multimodality that Sarah and her teaching partner explored, not all the parental feedback was positive, as she noted there were still parents who valued traditional pen and paper tasks as literacy. Sarah explained,

that was one thing with this Twitter thing. I did a survey before and after, and there was still a couple [parents] that were like, well I just think that this takes away from the real, um, real learning that children should be doing in the classroom. I had one comment that had said that they wanted the worksheet! They should be focusing more on writing and reading. And, I’m like, well you know what? We do read. We read the tweets and they
talk about the tweets and they are typing some of their tweets—the kids are. (Interview two)

But Sarah stated that she and her teaching partner were adamant that including “worksheets” was not what their pedagogy would include:

My teaching partner and I had one thing that we always, like ya, no worksheets, like, when we first started together, I said like I just can’t do it. I said, so tell me how you feel, because this might make or break our marriage (laughs)...in FDK unfortunately, there’s still a lot of people that are, for some reason, feel that that’s the way students learn, you know, copying and filling in the blanks. I think that goes back to how Freire said you know, their view of the child is very different and they feel that child is an empty vessel to fill, or a blank slate to write on, so that’s how their practice is enacted...somehow some people will still, I think, enact a very traditional view, where literacy is reading and writing and that’s my job to get the student there. (Interview two)

Through the digital tools Sarah was introduced to within her graduate program experience, Sarah stated she was able to incorporate these tools into her practice in successful ways.

Diversity and equity. Sarah continued to make connections between her early childhood education background and multiliteracies, as shared in her second interview. Specifically, she stated that her ECE background aligned well with issues of diversity and equity in the classroom. Sarah noted that her emergent Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education meshed with the aims of inclusion for a diversity of learners in the classroom. She noted,
my Reggio emergent sort of side and multiliteracies are just so [her emphasis] connected and intertwined and just such a positive way to support culturally and linguistically diverse children and students and being able to let them express themselves and share their experiences and their knowledge in a safe way, and in their own way, and in a way that other peers will also engage with them too, you know? One of my students is autistic and he loves to do Legos and loves play, so whenever he gets out some of that stuff, they [the other children] come over and will sit and talk to him and they will build things with him and talk to him, and you know, I don’t think that if I was saying, well you know it’s time to sit down and do our worksheets that anybody would be learning and anybody would be engaging, and he, most of all, would get nothing—he’d probably have to leave the classroom, because he can’t sit and do something like that, but he’d sit for half an hour and model clay, you know—visual interest. (Interview two)

To Sarah, the emphasis of diversity was inclusive not just of cultural and linguistic diversity but of learner (dis)ability as well.

In one of Sarah’s courses, she created an assignment drawing on the Ontario Ministry of Education document, “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Toward Equity and Inclusivity in Ontario Schools” (OME, 2013), which provided definitions from “Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy” (OME, 2009). The 2013 document lists diversity as, “the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society” (p. 1), and equity as, “a condition or state of fair inclusive and respectful treatment of all people” (p. 1). Further, the document defines inclusive education as one that is, “based on the acceptance and inclusion of all students” (p. 1). Sarah added that one must acknowledge their own biases within the endeavour of inclusivity and open “ourselves to new understanding of our students and
ourselves as co-learners [which] helps to create pathways to learning and break down walls of disengagement.”

**Engaging with multimodality.** In Sarah’s practice as an early childhood educator, she mentioned that multimodality was already a large part of her work as an educator. She noted that this was especially evident within her own pedagogical documentation as an early childhood educator; students would be working on and producing multimodal artifacts, and the documentation was integral to observing learning in action through artifact creation. This is an important practice within early childhood education, and Sarah described her documentation as including:

> A lot of written words, observing students and documenting either conversations or documenting my reflections on what was going on. A lot of use of photos and a lot of use of children reflecting on the photos and time for self-reflection and goal setting and that sort of thing. So, I used, I mean we used an iPad a lot, like that sort of technology and those applications. (Interview two)

As Sarah was aware of the multimodality within her classroom, she reflected on her own personal use of multiple modes in her personal and professional life, which included digital technologies. She stated that she used email and Facebook and had the ability to upload pictures, but her use of other digital technologies were not as expansive. In the graduate program she said she started using more diverse digital modes, personally and professionally, such as social media

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13 Pedagogical documentation is an important part of Ontario’s Early Years program as a “means to value, discuss, and make learning visible” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 16)
and video creation (i.e., iMovie). This ability to expand her digital technology repertoire that could reach a global audience was integral to her experiences, because, as she mentioned,

then it [digital technology, i.e., Twitter] really opened it [the home-community connection] up: the biggest piece was that global connection and connecting outside the four walls of the classroom, right? And just really being able to connect to educators and classrooms and students beyond. (Interview two)

Another part of the global connection that Sarah described as the “biggest piece” was being able to connect with her peers within the program in the online learning management system, as well as connecting with her program peers through social media, like Twitter, which she had never used before the program. She and her peers would follow each other, not only through their personal Twitter accounts, but through their teaching accounts. Sarah noted that she also began connecting to other educators within her own professional education community—Twitter helped Sarah establish, what she agreed was, her own professional learning network (PLN):

Twitter was a big one to connect with people, like outside of the classroom and some of my peers from my peer group too, like follow my classroom so we can make connections and sometimes talk, like post tweets to other classrooms, which is so exciting for the students. Just even within our Board, like being able to connect with other educators that use that venue, and I think that I learned through my class too, to reach out and connect, and that you know, I’m not always going to find the solutions like between me and my teaching partner, you know (laughs)?...Then it pushed me to use more technology and more modalities in our classroom. (Interview two)
Sarah recalled other technologies she began to use in the program, such as Tumblr, Mindmeister, Popplet, Piktochart, Prezi, Bitstrips, WordPress blogs, Thinkalink, Padlet, Moki, Powtoon, and a Screencast-o-matic. Further, she learned how to create and upload YouTube videos for “use in this program, but also for my students and families” (Sarah, email correspondence). Learning about these new apps to use within the FDK program, PowToon, a site to create your own animation presentations, was one her students liked a lot. After presenting this to her peers in the graduate program, they were interested in how to use it also. Sarah stated that this interest among her peers was a catalyst for her to create her own YouTube video tutorial on how to use the app, something she had never done before the program.

Sarah mentioned she was engaged with a variety of modalities within the program and within her practice. When her Board offered professional development in technology use in the classroom, she tried to explain to her colleagues that what they were engaging in could be considered a part of multiliteracies, however,

they call it like tech, but they don’t consider it multiliteracies, but they are using things like ThinkALink and Padlet and Prezi for the first time with their students, so even they’re engaging in it, you know? I’d say something like this is like multiliteracies, this is, cause you know—we’re looking at the different, not just the print the reading and the writing, and they’re like, “Well, that’s still important,” and I’m like, ya, well, ya, but look at these things too?—“Well that’s just tech.” But I think it’s a first step. I think that they need to look at it, and experience it, and practice it, and then more of those discussions, right? (Interview two)
Throughout the graduate program, Sarah stated she had many opportunities to use a diversity of modalities to not only create her course work projects, but to extend these project tools into her practice. Most of the digital technologies she was able to use now developed through her experiences in the graduate program.

**Multimodal artifacts.** Sarah stated that most of the digital technologies that she used in the program were unfamiliar to her before the graduate program. At the beginning of the program, Sarah noted she had never created websites or used Twitter, but as she was nearing the end of the program, she explained that her experiences with new technologies and apps had expanded. In one of the courses, her instructor assigned her and her peers the task of maintaining a reflective journal of their experiences throughout the course. Seeing what her peers were producing with digital technologies, Sarah said she chose to create a digital reflective portfolio. Sarah used the site Tumblr, an online blogging site, to create her reflective portfolio (see Figure 10).
Figure 10. Sarah’s reflective portfolio homepage

In this multimodal artifact, Sarah documented her entire two-year experience within the program. Within these reflections were research-based citations, pictures, videos, and commentary on theory and practice, course content and research, and reflections on how to improve her own practice through her professional learning. Though this blogging experience documented her journey through the program, she said she continues to use this site as a tool for her own practitioner reflection.

Sarah noted she also created other digital artifacts in the graduate program, such as different blogging website creation tools like WordPress. One website she created was to be used as a teaching and learning resource tool by other educators (see Figure 11). Sarah stated that this website was created and was used,

to examine teaching and learning for today’s educators and students. The purpose of this tools is to examine theories of teaching and learning, decision making, reflection, and
pedagogical strategies for practitioners working with diverse students in an ever-changing global society. (Interview two)

Throughout the blog, she outlined her understandings of different learning and teaching theories, decision-making and reflective practices, working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, and pedagogical strategies for her audience (the instructor and her program peers).

Figure 11. Sarah’s teaching and learning resource tool website homepage.

Another tool Sarah created was designed for exploring the roles between family and assessment (see Figure 12). She noted the purpose of this resources was, “to offer professional reflections on my problem of practice: The role of family in assessment.”
Figure 12. Sarah’s mind map: The family’s role in assessment

With this app, Sarah stated she was able to organize her conceptualization of the topic under exploration.

By designing these artifacts for her coursework, Sarah also used them as opportunities for professional learning and reflection on her practice:

As a resource and a support, and ongoing, and it’s one thing that I’m really encouraging of others, it’s just so organic, and it’s more of an experience, these website blogs where people can talk and post, and you know learn from each other and question themselves, and question each other, it, you can change it—like nothing is static and permanent, right? It’s just you know, it’s a living document kind of (laughs). (Interview two)
Through these artifacts, using them as tools for reflection, Sarah noted how their use became embedded in various aspects of her practice.

**Sarah’s reflective practice project.** In the culminating reflective practice project Sarah created a website. According to Sarah, a large part of the connections she was making in the program were between her previous practices in the classroom and multiliteracies. Her stated purpose of creating the website was to “weave together the journey related to [her] master’s studies with a focus on multiliteracies” (Reflective practice project website). Further, Sarah stated on her website:

> My hope is to open dialogues and discussions with educators, to explore, multiliteracies pedagogy, academic research, policy documents as well as my reflections as an educator using Twitter in the classroom for a year with families, as a tool for collaboration; giving parents a voice in student learning and to support their child’s learning and engagement.

(Interview two)

Sarah continued to use digital tools to demonstrate her knowledge of multiliteracies and for Sarah the RPP was a way to demonstrate her knowledge of multiliteracies. Specifically, Sarah’s goals and objectives, as listed on the website for the project, were the following:

> Understanding literacy is not just reading & writing; Create new ways to support student literacy learning and engagement; Recognize the importance of parent’s voice in student learning and engagement; Use Twitter as a tool to connect and collaborate in literacy learning (with families, communities and globally); Develop confidence and a positive attitude toward the use of ICT tools (specifically Twitter) in the classroom; Value the multiple voices (student, educator, families/community) in student learning; Plan, and
construct a collaborative project and/or mini lesson using Twitter; and Construct learning community outside of the classroom (reflective practice project website, see Figure 13 and 14)

**Figure 13.** Sarah’s reflective practice project website: Project objectives and goals
The website is categorized into the following sections: Research and reflections, multiliteracies, building a learning community, Twitter, and bibliography. Under research and reflections, Sarah outlined her action plan, which was to bring “together [her] passion and career in Early Childhood Education and [her] strong belief and understanding of Multiliteracies Pedagogy.” Included throughout the website were pictures and videos related to textual content, and her Twitter account was embedded within the site with current postings visible. The site also provided links to course content requirements, such as progress reports to account for her progress within the RPP. For each of these stages she used a different mode of presenting her information: a Prezi, a YouTube video, and an essay.

The multiliteracies section of her website included information on 21st century learning and skills, a diverse world, collaborative learning, digital storytelling, and gaming. Each section carefully connects to research, provides Sarah’s synthesis of the literature and content she is
engaging with, and incorporated information from the internet, such as videos, diagrams, and infographics to assist the audience in understanding multiliteracies as the overarching concept within her project. Also, Sarah had created some of the multimodal content, such as creating YouTube videos (see Figure 15).

![Kindergarten Literacy Through a Multiliteracies Lens: Some Classroom Examples](image)

*Figure 15.* Sarah’s YouTube videos linking multiliteracies to her classroom.

Sarah also included links to her other classroom activities that she posted on Twitter (see Figure 16). She included a slide share of tweets as well as a how-to YouTube videos for those in her audience that would be interested in knowing how to utilize Twitter. To Sarah, these tools afforded her an opportunity to create, “a way for everyone who could not physically come together in the classroom, construct and build a community of learners. Twitter as a multimodal tool, tapped into diverse ways of representing students’ thoughts, ideas and feelings.”
During Sarah’s experiences within the graduate program, she described how she was able to engage with multiliteracies throughout her courses, with her peers and instructors, and through the multimodal artifacts she designed and created. Her reflective practice project was a digital artifact designed and created as a way to assist teachers in creating a bridge between students’ out-of-school family life and in-school practices.

Rachel

Rachel had never before participated in a formal literacy education training program. Her experience with literacy involved teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to adult students in China who wanted to learn English for the purpose of attending college or university overseas in countries such as Canada. Her academic background was based in economics, and she had no prior post-secondary education in the field of education itself until the graduate program in education with a focus on a pedagogy of multiliteracies. It was also her first experience
participating in an online program.

Through the institution she worked for, she was offered opportunities for face-to-face professional development and learning with her colleagues. However, she specifically appreciated the unique opportunities afforded to her through the online graduate program for her learning, as she noted,

I think an online program also offers me a good opportunity to facilitate my professional development and I think there are many things I can learn from this program and I can use in my teaching practice. Maybe sometimes I can run online courses for my students and also keep them engaged and motivated during the learning process. (Interview two)

In the program, she was able to learn with native English speakers and she was also able to participate in a new technological way of learning.

The cohort, instructors, and the online space. Rachel’s perception of her cohort, instructors, and the online space was that it was unexpectedly “engaging.” She appreciated the flexible structure afforded to online learning, especially in the professional program where she taught throughout the day, yet still had time to participate in her own professional learning:

One great thing of this online program is I was able to arrange my own schedule, plus if I have many classes during the day I can just spend like one hour in the evening to read the course materials or participate in online discussion, and if I was less busy during the day, I can spend more time learning in this program, and like post more to discussions on the forum. (Interview two)

As Rachel was new to online learning and to multiliteracies, she engaged with and relied on her
peers and instructors to help navigate her progress:

I have learned a lot from this program—I mean from the course contents and the discussions with my peers and instructors of different courses…Sometimes I’m not sure whether I’m on the right track, like on writing a report. For example, in the first course I was required to develop a literacy and multiliteracies metaphor and this is a new concept to me, and first I was really worried about whether my assignment met the course requirement, but after discussing with my peers and watching their presentations of their literacy metaphors, and with the suggestions and feedback I got from the instructor, I feel less stressful and more confident in expressing my views. (Interview two)

The metaphor for multiliteracies and literacy Rachel used in the example above was transportation. She explained that,

early literacy learning can be forced by parents, like the baby learns to work and the basic literacy is like walking on foot and you can reach your destination, but you won’t get very far, and once literacy is needed to help us, like to go farther and the advanced literacy is like modern transportation, making it possible to like travel to long distance…and like social-cultural factors should be considered in literacy and in transportation metaphor, like transportation is often dependent on geography, climate, and culture…and transportation has revolutionized international trade and made contribution to globalization. I think literacy, if you are illiterate, you can’t get the benefits of globalization. (Interview two)

However, being a non-native English speaker, there were areas of her learning that were challenging. One such instance she recalled was a resource text for one of her courses. In this
course, the text was designed similar to a graphic novel where most of the text was written in capital letters. For Rachel, this was a challenge because the shape of the letters was difficult for her to read. She recalled:

It’s very interesting that as a non-native English speaker I think I have different feelings when I read capital letters, especially for less-frequently used words. The distinction between reading capital letters and small letters seems simple, but it doesn’t exist [in Mandarin]. I think this reflects the spatial representations and in this case the size and the shape of the capital letters were different from small letters, because small letters have like these centers, so this is a possible reason why non-native English speakers find capital letters difficult to read. But my peers who are native English speakers, they didn’t find it is noticeable—so we had like a lot of interesting discussions on this throughout that course. (Interview two)

For Rachel, the online forum was a space where she and her peers could discuss these learning issues, such as language and its representation as symbols. Rachel described the online forum as one where she could openly or privately (through email) discuss these challenges, “we discuss, like I discuss with my peers and professors on the forum, and when I have problems and difficulties in learning—I send emails to course instructors and otherwise to improve my work.”

**Home–school connections.** Rachel was very interested in making home and school connections for the students she taught in her English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. She stated that in her teaching, it was difficult to make connections between the students’ home and school lifeworlds, because these students, as English language learners, “don’t speak English after they are done class.” However, Rachel mentioned that the home to school connection was a
large focus of the multiliteracies program. Rachel strived to build on her students’ funds of knowledge, and one way to do this was by exploring technology in the classroom; she was able to incorporate smartphone applications into her pedagogy and engage her students:

Cell phone games are a great way to bridge school and home learning as well. Students, they like playing cellphone games at home and from some games perhaps, they’re still learning. I can think of one example with the Elevate app. It is a brain trainer [for] English native speakers, used to improve memory and precision of expression and like math abilities. I initially intend to import this for entertainment, but after training for a few days, I felt it was good to improve language skills in many dimensions. For example, one game of it helped students to work more precisely, and the other game of it helped students enlarge their vocabulary and improve their language accuracy. So, I think introducing these games to students might bridge their home and school literacy learning. (Interview two)

Another example of Rachel using digital apps in her teaching practice was in her use of an app called Beautiful Sentence (this specific app is not available in English):

When you use this app you will find several words arranged on the cell phone screen and students must arrange those words in the right order to do the sentence and this app provides lots of assistance if students make mistakes, so with assistance of these games they can learn about usage of certain words. So, they don’t like to just memorize the word and they know how to use it in a proper context. (Interview two)

Rachel’s use of technology within the classroom afforded her the opportunities to use a technology her students were already using and bring that technology into her classroom
practice. In this way, her students were using a classroom tool they were familiar with and had experience using.

**Diversity and equity.** In Rachel’s teaching practice, using diverse learning tools, while being mindful of her students’ abilities, assisted her in addressing issues of diversity and equity. Through multiliteracies, she was able to draw on her students’ funds of knowledge in a way that allowed their modes of learning to be highlighted in her pedagogy:

All of my students are EFL students. Most of them from secondary high school, sometimes they are university students, and I think this program [MEd] provides me and my students with multiple digital tools and frameworks to enrich teaching and learning activities. Some students they may have, limited English proficiency, but they have a strength and confidence in life experience, technology, or different subjects other than English. So, using different [modes] of representation provides students who were not strong writers (like in their confidence in their writing skills or were not motivated to produce written products) [with] an alternative way to express their understanding. So, I think implementing [multiliteracies] pedagogy offers them alternative ways to express themselves is a way to deal with student diversity in my class. (Interview two)

Rachel explored issues of diversity with her peers in the graduate program as well as her colleagues in her teaching practice. However, while Rachel found success in using diverse technologies and tools to engage her students, her institution’s administrator was not as supportive of her focus on diverse modes:

And another method I tried was to explore pictographic word approach and whether it helps EFL students who are dyslexic in English in terms of vocabulary memorization and
communication. I conducted a mini-research in the student diversity course, but I didn’t reach an exact conclusion, and I still haven’t reached it yet. I interviewed the Director of Study in my Language Institution and he believed that pictographic word approach was for the research, but he didn’t think this approach was effective enough to teach in EFL. He preferred to integrate lexical resources with situated cognition theory and he attached more importance to fundamental language skills. He argued that some English words could not be represented pictorially and more effort is needed in preparation if this approach is implemented in EFL classes. But I found it interesting that one of my peers in this program, he suggested even when teaching native English speakers, pictographs are extremely helpful. And this peer also suggested pictographic can also help students understand complex vocabulary words that may be abstract or have more than one meaning. And the reflection of this peer and my Director indicates the different first languages of my peers might have in their perception, their selection to the approaches adopted in the teaching of English—I will need more research and references on pictographic word approach. But I believe it’s a good method to address student diversity and help students learning in difficulty. (Interview two)

Despite this experience, however, Rachel continued using diverse digital tools and multiliteracies in her teaching practice.

**Engaging with multimodality.** During the program, Rachel was able to engage in a variety of multimodality in the design and creation of her artifacts and the exposure to the designs of her peers. Multimodality as a concept was also new to her, yet she had already been interested in how visual representations were utilized in foreign language learning as, “language textbooks sometimes come with illustrative images and my students need to make associations
between the images and the linguistic semiotics. So, I think, like visual representation has always been integrated in the language learning and teaching,” and she was already using mobile apps in her teaching practice:

I didn’t realize at that time I was actually implementing multiliteracies pedagogy—promoting multiliteracies pedagogy in practice in my class—I just saw that the apps can be used as a teaching tool, and like, students may have an interest in the games or like cellphone apps…multimodality was a new concept to me in the field of EFLT (English as Foreign Language Teaching) before I join in this program. But if I think about pedagogical practice, in my EFL classes, I realize multimodality has always been incorporated into my learning and teaching practice. This one scholar, his name is Neville [2010], he argued pedagogical practice that simply promote[s] the other shape of digital or multimodal texts, like adding multimodal to existing approaches does not automatically advance effective pedagogy or authentic literacy practice…And I think in the practice I need to think about if multimodal representations are really integrated and if I developed my cognitive awareness while using new modes to facilitate my learning ability to solve like more complex problems and the same thing for students. Like one of peers suggested, in the previous course, that multiliteracies pedagogy practice requires some overt instruction and ask for modelling. (Interview two)

Through the graduate program Rachel was able to explore different technological modalities and concepts. Digital resources she used within the program were Prezi, PowerPoint, Popplet, mobile apps (e.g., WeChat), QR [quick response] codes, and video (e.g., YouTube). She also was exposed to the digital tools her peers were using, which influenced her practice: “My peers have
introduced several digital tools/platforms through this program and I’d love to integrate them into my multiliteracies pedagogical practice in the future.”

**Multimodal artifacts.** Rachel used a variety of digital tools to create her artifacts within the courses in the program. She used such programs as Prezi and Popplet to organize, communicate, and present her knowledge and ideas to her instructor(s) and peers in the program.

In a PowerPoint presentation she created (see Figure 17), Rachel showcased her understandings of multiliteracies by applying it in her teaching EFL context. Outlined in the presentation was how she was going to implement multiliteracies into her practice, the digital tools used with her students (such as mobile apps), her methods of assessment, and her reflections on the process. All of her work was rooted in current theory and relevant research literature. Rachel’s project set out to “design personal methods for engaging in interdisciplinary study, synthesizing ideas from different perspectives, and establishing collaborations among students and between educators and students.”
02 | Rethinking Multiliteracies Pedagogy

Multiliteracies and Traditional Literacy Pedagogy

According to Rowsell et al. (2008), “in keeping with their emphasis on continuity as well as newness, the New London Group speak of multiliteracies pedagogy as ‘supplementing’ (rather than replacing) traditional literacy pedagogy” (p. 111).

This suggests that -- traditional literacy pedagogy cannot be completely abandoned, multiliteracies pedagogy should facilitate basic language skills, multiliteracies approach is critical and inclusive.

This is particularly important for EFL students since -- they are language minority groups when they study abroad they need to strive to become members of certain social discourse

In EFL classes, the proficiency of traditional language skills affects the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy because even students are familiar with digital tools; however, they may not be able to design and negotiate meanings with the integration of high technology.
3. Using the “Shanbei Listening” app to Dictate

- “Shanbei Listening” app unifies the traditional teaching method and multimodality through the use of technology.
- This app provides various listening materials that are applicable to learners of different stages.
- Learners need to fill in all the blanks to move on to the next sentence. Their mistakes will be marked in red.
- One interesting factor of Shanbei Listening is its scratcher ticket design, which increases the fun and enhances the appeal.

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03 | Futuristic Multiliteracies Practice in the Listening Classroom

**Precision Game**

A. There is a game in Elevate called “Precision,” which “helps [players] recognize errors in speech [and] to speak more clearly and accurately” (http://elevateapp.com/).

B. Corpus

Cope et al. (2011) suggest that “a cloud computing environment in which every learner’s work is anonymously stored will become an over-mightful resource over time” (p. 88).

C. Integration

I have an idea to integrate the Precision game with the concept of corpus to create a game for learners to improve listening skills collaboratively.

D. Editing the Record and Marking the Mistakes

Firstly, students’ speaking samples can be recorded as the materials for error correction. Then, teachers will mark the mistakes students make in the recording. Next, imitating the design of the Precision game, we will provide learners with several chances to mark the mistakes by themselves.
03 | Futuristic Multiliteracies Practice in the Listening Classroom

Focus, Name Recall, and Retention

Multimodal texts
Deep reflection (E. Abel, 2015)

Metacognitive competence
Deep understanding of the subjects’
Reflective thinking (B. Gardin, 2015)

The Elevate app games

“Videoscribe”

“Self and Peer Reflections”

“Wonder Wall”

“Writing a Children’s Story”

Inspired by peers’ multiliteracies practice and situated learning theory, I decide to ask learners to retell in their own words what they have heard in the listening class; by creating a multimodal project with the integration of background supplemental knowledge that they thinking is necessary. Their work can be represented in extracurricular tutorials and assessed by peers, as we do in our course.

Post questions or thoughts
Extend our learning through inquiry research (M. Mitches, 2015)

Learning through teaching (21 foundation, 2012)
Knowledge internalization
Learners’ identity is shifted and the power is reinforced.
(K. MacCormac, 2015; 21 foundation, 2012)

05 | Reference

Postscript Note

Besides an academic report, I will also create an official account on WeChat and submit Assignment #4 by Q8. Code as well. My idea of this was inspired by my colleagues, who create official accounts to provide information on English learning resources for students and parents who follow these accounts (see Figure 11). It is no exaggeration that all students and their parents in our training studio have WeChat personal accounts. After submitting this assignment, I will create another official account to share multimodal resources in order to continuously facilitate students’ learning after they finish their courses in our training studio and promote “community of practice” which “[develops] a shared repertoire of resources” for lifelong learning (Wenger, 2006, p. 2).

Thanks to the Champion Animation Team (Flash Maker) and (Draft person of the headset model) for their animation production and drawing based on my ideas.

Figure 17. Rachel’s PowerPoint presentation: Examples
One method Rachel used in her project with her students was a mobile app: WeChat, which was a text messaging app that allowed her to follow her students’ vocabulary growth by reviewing the text messaging threads. This app is an instant messaging similar to any other instant messaging technology that allows for voice call, texting, uploading pictures and videos (see Figure 18). Students can log into WeChat through a QR code and connect with other WeChat users in the classroom.

Figure 18. Rachel’s WeChat example.

This project was an opportunity for Rachel to incorporate technologies her students were already familiar with into her classroom pedagogy.

Rachel’s reflective practice project. Rachel chose an essay format as the design for her reflective practice project. The project was titled, “Compiling a Sample Interdisciplinary
Textbook for TOEFL Vocabulary Classes,” and it was a way to include “interdisciplinary fields of knowledge and multiliteracies pedagogies” together. Thinking about multimodality and the design of her project, knowing her peers were creating digital projects, Rachel felt her work was still considered to be multimodal, as she explained:

I used to believe that printed books are mono-modal texts if there are no visual representations, but as I learnt more knowledge of multimodality I began to realize, at least, spatial representations, such as spacing and layout are encoded in written texts and some of my friends prefer reading printed books [and] tell me the printed books give them a better sense of um—I think this corresponds with tactile response—representations of touch and skin sensations. They suggested page turning of a printed book made them feel forward and accumulated [progression]. So, I realized traditional written texts can be taught effectively in multiliteracies pedagogical method. (Interview two)

In this way, Rachel chose the essay format as she believed it best suited her purpose and audience (her instructor, peers, and other English language teachers) for representing and communicating her ideas for comparing interdisciplinary textbooks in vocabulary teaching. The reflective practice project was designed to act as an interdisciplinary textbook for other English language teachers to use with their students who were preparing for the test of English as foreign language (TOEFL). Her aim was to,

compare simple interdisciplinary textbooks for TOEFL vocabulary classes. And I think I can take this up in detail to promote pedagogy of multiliteracies and accomplish collaborative curriculum design and promote critical literacy, because I want to compare
an interdisciplinary textbook and to explore interdisciplinary fields of knowledge to help students be aware of the connection, interrelatedness of the world…I think and I hope this simple textbook will improve students’ learning experience. (Interview two)

As a way to innovate pedagogy for English language learners (ELLs), Rachel aimed to use “scenarios” or case studies to act as a bridge for students’ out-of-school funds of knowledge and use students’ lifeworlds to help “to improve students’ learning effectiveness and facilitate their applicative competence of TOEFL scenario vocabulary in real-life contexts.” She decided to use this method because, in Rachel’s opinion, “TOEFL tests are based on both survival in authentic situations and academic contexts.” She also used WeChat from both students and educators for input into the design of the sample interdisciplinary textbook (SIT). Other apps used were the “Baicizhan app (which literally means cutting down thousands of words) and Bubeidanci app (which literally means no rote for words), as reference materials in compiling the SIT.” She also incorporated pictures that she “took in the past few years in different cities and countries, along with one picture that I drew as the illustrative image for the word ‘sketch’ (tactile representation).”

Rachel outlined what she perceived as the significance of her project for educators in English language teaching. Because TOFEL tests were becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, Rachel wanted to assist teachers in developing their confidence in this area. She explained in her essay, “educators feel less confident in developing curricula that deliver interdisciplinary knowledge,” therefore her project will help teachers to, “undertake pedagogical innovation to improve teaching quality.”

Throughout the essay, Rachel used multiliteracies research to support her ideas of creating a curriculum that draws on pedagogical change in English language learning, and she outlined the
process of implementing her project in practice with her students. As she was not initially trained in literacy or language teaching, Rachel drew on her funds of knowledge in the creation of her project:

I found that, while implementing this project, I was able to use my expertise when I explored interdisciplinary background knowledge. For example, economics and business were compulsory courses of my undergraduate major, and I had accumulated a lot of background knowledge of frequently tested scenarios during the teaching process. (Interview two)

This background knowledge was necessary for Rachel to bring to the design and implementation of her reflective practice project, which sought out pedagogical innovation in her area of language teaching. Rachel also stated that she presented her work to her colleagues in the institution where she worked and asked for their feedback: “I presented my paper to three of my colleagues during a teaching and research activity and invited them to rate my paper using an assessment rubric for an academic paper.”

An integral part of the project process was feedback from peers within the reflective practice project course. Throughout the planning, design, and implementation of the RPP, each part of the process was posted to the forums for peer review. Rachel’s peers were able to review her work in progress and give feedback, and it was at the student’s discretion whether or not to incorporate that feedback into the design of their individual projects. Rachel explained,

when we finished the project proposal, we post it on our forum and we give each other feedback and you can decide whether you take that feedback or not. And it’s…we have built a, like a learning community—very supportive. And some of my peers give me very inspiring feedback about my project. (Interview two)
Peer feedback was integrated throughout the RPP project process, but was only required at certain milestones during the process, such as the proposal as Rachel mentioned above. As Rachel explained that peer support was a large part of the program through the two years, the RPP did not follow the same outline as a typical graduate program course with content readings and related discussions. This meant that during the two-course period, members of the cohort were not regularly connecting in the forums. This prompted one of Rachel’s peers to reach out to her:

At the beginning of this course, this project, I received a message from one of my peers in the multiliteracies cohort, and he asked whether I needed some help with the project, and he really missed our conversations in the forum, because like it had been nearly a month—we were on a break, so we didn’t have communication in the forum. And I replied, a message like: I think the multiliteracies cohort and all the discussions on the forum are an integral part of my life, and I think I will really miss my peers after the program was completed. But we decided to exchange personal emails and other social networking to keep in touch with each other and support each other’s professional development in future. (Interview two)

This ability to connect through personal email and social media, an aspect also mentioned by both Jason and Sarah, afforded the cohort an ability to stay connected outside of the online learning management system to offer peer support even when they were no longer communicating regularly through the LMS.

Throughout their experiences within the program, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel were able to design and implement research projects within their current classroom practices, share their work
with their program peers and instructors, and design and create multimodal artifacts that demonstrated their knowledge and understandings of multiliteracies pedagogy.

**Participant Reflections on the Graduate Program**

In the third interview, the participants were offered an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, as a whole, throughout their graduate program. Through Jason, Sarah, and Rachel’s experiences in the two-year program, they engaged with research and course content, interacted with peers and instructors, navigated through the online learning management system, and designed and created multimodal artifacts as ways to learn the why, the what, and the how of multiliteracies pedagogy; all while continuing in their professional practice to share and implement their new knowledge with their colleagues and students.

The final interview for participants occurred between four to eight months after the second interview, respectively. By the third interview, all participants had completed the program and graduated with their graduate degree in Education. The purpose of the last interview was to offer participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences as they continued a new year into their practice: Jason as an elementary teacher in Africa, Sarah as an Early Childhood Educator in Ontario’s Full Day Kindergarten Program, and Rachel as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in a post-secondary education institute in China. The last interview was also an opportunity to offer participants time to reflect on their philosophies of teaching and how, if at all, their perceptions of literacy pedagogy had changed as a result of engaging with multiliteracies and participating in the program.

**Jason**
In the beginning of the graduate program, Jason was tentative about what multiliteracies had to offer him for his professional learning. Jason had been working overseas for eight years in elementary education in the International Baccalaureate’s Primary Years Programme (PYP). Thinking he was in the graduate program to learn how to teach literacy in a more traditional sense, he was surprised to learn about multiliteracies pedagogy. This pedagogy, which was new to him, began to expand his ideas of literacy and what constituted a teacher’s role within literacy teaching and learning. In thinking about his teaching philosophy, he described it as such:

My philosophy has changed a lot since starting this course on multiliteracies, and it’s more about my role as a teacher has changed, not that I was fully in a transmission mode before, but it’s—I’ve really kind of taken a step back, and it’s a lot more about mentorship and guidance and inquiry than, here’s what we’re doing—let me tell you how to do it—it’s a lot more, what tools can you use? How can you find them? And helping kids navigate the world. And a lot more with my philosophy ties heavily with inquiry right now. And like again I’ve just started with the PYP and that’s sort of what it’s all about, and I sort of realized how much kids actually want to learn and find answers…I’m in a setting where I’m able to do that so it’s really nice, and having 16 kids, I can guide the mentorship…I would say that inquiry-based learning with sort of a, I don’t want to say a back-seat role (laughs) I don’t want to make it seem like I’m hanging out back there, but it’s more a mentorship role or a guidance role and helping students, you know, follow their own inquiry. (Interview three)

As the International Baccalaureate program was rooted in transdisciplinary inquiry, Jason was able to incorporate his multiliteracies learning into his practice, similar to Sarah and the connections she was able to make between her early childhood education training and
Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy. Looking back on his experiences, Jason explained that he saw aspects of multiliteracies in his philosophy and practice before he had started the program, but now his practice was more intentional. This was specifically in his use of diverse modalities with his international students. Now that he had more knowledge and more diverse tools (i.e., digital technologies) framed within multiliteracies, his practice became more purposeful: “I was doing a lot of those things, but actually doing them purposefully was totally different.” Now he could purposefully describe and name what he was doing within his practice through a multiliteracies pedagogical framework.

Contributing to his perception that his practice was now more purposeful, Jason explained that having the theory and research helped him to make choices in his practice:

There’s a lot of things that I was doing before, but now that I know the why or the—rather than the how, I’m able to apply technology differently, or I understand why we’re doing it—collaboratively or even just explaining to parents. Because like with all of these new things, you know so many people are used to rote learning or this or that, I can go and say to them, like here’s the research, like this is why I’m doing this, not just: “Well, it’s fun to use the iPads to tell a story.” So I really can say, this is good for your child, because he’s working in his second or third language, or this is good for your child because of you know, it’s, I mean it’s—literacy is social, like learning to read and write is no longer enough; when they’re older they’re going to need to be able to create websites and videos, so I’m able to say like this is why I’m doing what I’m doing, rather than just
saying, well this is the way of the future, you know, so I really feel like I have that purposefulness behind what I’m doing. (Interview three)

Having a purpose to what he was doing in the classroom with his students was key for Jason and how it affected his practice.

When thinking about what multiliteracies encapsulated for him, Jason described it as “an approach to literacy that looks at reading and interpreting,” and while multimodality is highlighted, it is more so to allow students the freedom to choose their modality:

I think a lot of it [multiliteracies] was founded in multimodality, so actually being able to use so many different tools in different ways for kids to express themselves, and I think that something my colleagues might see in my classroom, maybe more than someone else, rather than the basic research report, you know, my kids are making websites or they’re behind the green screen doing a report or just explaining their information in a different way, but also in a way, like choice was also part of that too, so being able to choose your modality and not just saying you have to do this assignment and this is why we’re doing this—there’s the option of here’s what you know and how are you going to show me what you know? (Interview three)

For Jason, he described multiliteracies as a way to offer his students the opportunity to choose modalities that suited their purpose in communicating knowledge. In this way, Jason became a “mentor” and “guide” and allowed his students to show him what they knew rather than it being more teacher-directed.
An important part of the graduate program, which Jason appreciated, was his perception that the instructors allowed him to make his own meaning through multiliteracies. Through his engagement with his peers, instructors, and the content—along with the design of his artifacts and implementing his knowledge into practice—it was important that multiliteracies be meaningful to him, “through the courses I really liked that there were so many ways to sort of construct [our] own meaning of what we were doing…we sort of had to come up with this definition of what is multiliteracies and what does that mean to us?” Further Jason explained that within the program,

there was a lot of reflection and analyzing, and you know comprehending of a lot of different texts while applying our learning in different ways, so it comes back into what we were doing with our students. And I remember for some courses I made websites and for some it was PowToon—we were just reading and creating like a variety of different texts and I feel like we were making our own meaning from that. So, I really liked that.

(Interview three)

Because the aspect of creating his own meaning from the course content was important and became a part of his practice within the classroom, he stated:

I have my students reading a lot more, I mean I say reading or interpreting or you know like whether it’s videos or graphic novels, they’re reading and creating a lot more different texts, and I think all the time—I’m questioning, like “what does that mean to you?” Like when it comes back to the NLG [New London Group], like students—we need to have that shift to developing our own meaning, so rather than me sort of telling them this is what this is or this is what this means, I do a lot more asking you know, my
students to sort of come up with their own meaning and critique their own learning, and apply it to new contexts…Now you know this, what can you do with it? (Interview three)

The ability to make his own meaning, and therefore guide his students to make their own meaning, was important for Jason.

Within his own meaning-making, Jason also contributed his change in practice to his engagements online with his peers in the program. He explained that,

it opened doors to seeing what people were doing in other places, you know, I think one of the girls was in China and somebody else was in Canada and it was just, you know, talking about how multiliteracies means the same thing no matter where we are and seeing all of these projects and hearing about what they were doing really sort of pushed me to talk to them and ask more questions and improve my teaching based on how theirs was. Like it really transformed my teaching, like “oh that’s cool, how do you do that?” and being able to have those discussions, I think they changed the way I think and the way I teach. (Interview three)

Working online with his peers, Jason perceived it to be very collaborative and through this collaboration, he was able to see how his peers were interpreting multiliteracies and using it in their own teaching. This ability to hear about successful implementations in practice urged him into using more diverse modalities in his own practice.

Another big perceived change in his practice was the idea that there was a need for more complex and diverse pedagogy instead of the basic skills in literacy instruction, as Jason noted:
I don’t want to downplay reading and writing, because that’s essential to making it all multimodal, but before I really did think that like teaching kindergarten or grade one—it was about producing readers and writers. Like, by the time they leave they need to be traditionally and functionally literate, whereas now I’ve realized how much more, not more important, but how equally important it is for students to be able to create things digitally, or you know, the importance of their pictures or their cartoons or their Bitstrips or their, you know, being able to make iTunes and videos and sounds…I really try to incorporate all of that together, rather than really just being like getting kids out of this class that can read and write efficiently…So, I’d say that’s the biggest change. (Interview three)

This idea of literacy is very different from how Jason perceived literacy instruction to be in the first interview where he entered the program thinking that he was going to learn about more traditional or systematic ways of in literacy teaching. In the first interview, Jason expressed his tentativeness at the beginning of the graduate program due to the fact that as he was unfamiliar with multiliteracies pedagogy and its role in language and literacy teaching and learning. However, as uncovered in the second and third interviews, through Jason’s experiences in the program, his collaboration with his peers, the space to make his own meaning through courses rooted in theory and research, his expanded use of diverse modalities used both in his practice, and in the artifacts he created for his coursework, Jason perceived a change in his pedagogy as a result of his exposure to the program in multiliteracies.

Sarah

Similar to Jason’s first experiences in the program, Sarah, as stated in her first interview,
also felt some trepidation in participating in the online graduate program. She too was unfamiliar with multiliteracies, but she was also new to online learning. However, she soon realized that multiliteracies and her early childhood educational experience meshed well together and she quickly began to see the connections to her ECE training. Specifically, multimodality was a large part of her current practice. However, her exposure to the multiliteracies program expanded the modalities she used to include newer digital technologies, such as Twitter, which afforded her and her students to make home-school, and even global, connections.

Sarah believed her teaching philosophy really began to change shape near the end of the program. This was due to the engagement with multiliteracies and the incorporation of digital technologies in her kindergarten classroom:

I think my philosophy has really evolved in the last year and a half for sure (laughs). I think I had a good philosophy in the fact that you know literacy was not just reading and writing, but I think it’s even opened up more so…part of my work right now is working with Twitter and getting my, these, you know four- and five-year olds using Twitter and using digital mediums and social media to express themselves in various ways. And I think the big piece is expression too, so I can see that being, and you know sculpture and that being and drama, and dance, and not just photos and videos, it’s even beyond that.

(Interview three)

Understanding how multiliteracies and her ECE background were connected, Sarah was able to expand her repertoire to include multiliteracies theory and research and to incorporate more diverse tools into her pedagogy.

In conjunction with how the program helped shape her philosophy, Sarah also perceived a
change in her confidence as an educator:

I think it’s given me huge confidence. I knew I had it before, but I think now I can, I have so much, the research and the experience with my other peers…I think as an ECE, I kind of lacked all of that sort of that research, like we practiced it and we, I guess I kind of knew it, but being able to really dig in over the last two years and really have the opportunity to reflect on the research and with other professionals and just set aside that time to really explore it, gave me the confidence to express that to others, and share that with others, and also in different ways to share with others too, right? (Interview three)

This is similar to Jason and how he described having more purpose now that he had the theory and research to inform his practice. The program also boosted Sarah’s confidence as she expanded her use of digital technologies. The ability to share her work in different ways was new to her, and the confidence it gave her, sharing her work within the online forums, also helped her use new technologies in her practice:

I’ve been able to like, post some of my, like a YouTube blurb or something on the conference [forum], or whatever, so how do I explain something like that before? You know, I did a digital story retell of the snowy day…where all the kids did a page from the snowy day book, and they did it in any medium they wanted to, so some of them made puppets and some of them used clay, some of them did um, like used different things from the art table to make pictures, like it was just a whole bunch of different art mediums that they all used to create the snowy day book. And then I took, we did pictures and they did an iMovie, anyways, putting that up and talking about and just sort of quietly saying this is what we made, and this—you know we did a lot of art, and a lot
of talking, and we did a lot of writing, and we did a lot of reading, and just posting that as a YouTube thing on the conference, and it shows so much—and I think I would never have had that confidence to do that, I wouldn’t have had the knowledge to do that, I wouldn’t have had the, like, I knew it before, but I really feel so much more strongly about that student agency and recognizing the family and the social side of learning that, ya. I’m not going back (laughs). (Interview three)

Having the confidence to use new diverse digital tools to express her knowledge in practice was a large part of creating a perceived change in her pedagogy.

**Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy.** Multiliteracies was integral to Sarah’s current practice. She also expressed that multiliteracies changed her on different levels: “It changed the way I practice as an ECE and how I view myself even as a parent.” She explained further:

I just see my kids and just the ways that I’m encouraging them to find their path and make their meaning and have their voices heard. And I feel that I advocate for them when I talk to their teachers and stuff, as a parent, and as a professional too, I guess. But in alternative ways of learning for my kids too, and you know, have they thought about this and those sorts of things, so, that way. Yep for sure in my practice and I continue to try to voice that. (Interview three)

And again, Sarah stated that the program gave her more confidence and afforded her new knowledge to share her work as an educator within her School Board:
I just finished doing a mentorship program I’m piloting with the [Board] for ECEs, and a big piece, what I was bringing to the table was my multiliteracies background and encouraging that connection with the community and the student voice…that seems to be my big thing now, is that it’s just a really big touchstone for me from my program.

(Interview three)

Sarah described in her second interview that professional development was limited to the ECEs within her Board. She was able to now leverage this knowledge and confidence to get involved in a leadership role within her School Board.

Another example of expanded confidence was when Sarah’s teaching partner left on maternity leave and a novice teacher, without Kindergarten experience, filled in for the long-term occasional position. Sarah explained:

Sarah: I said my passion is the community and the families. So, I kind of of said this is what it is and this is a passion of mine and this is why this is a passion of mine, and I am going to show you the research and I’m going to show you this and so they usually are on board (laughs).

Joelle: Did you feel more confident?

Sarah: I definitely did! I never would have said that before. I never would have done that before! We were at a big in-service [Board provided professional development] for the new document [FDK] and there were some nay-sayers, and I got up on my soap box; I wasn’t liked, but I was listened to, and then it was near the end it was like, some head nodding…Well it was the assessment piece, and we’re talking
about the assessment piece; now it’s is called the Parent and Communication in Kindergarten, and I think it’s beautiful. I said it’s a learning story about a child’s growth and development that you’re sharing with the family: How?—Like honestly? Like I can’t see anything more beautiful than that, and um, an educator at the table was like, “Well where do I put what I did? And what I taught and what they didn’t do?” (pause) and I said, well I guess that’s because it’s not about you. And I got a really dirty look and then started explaining my background and my research and stuff, you know. (Interview three)

Sarah attributed her new-found confidence to being rooted in the knowledge and experiences she gained through the graduate program.

Beyond her participation in professional development and learning for her Board, after the graduate program was completed, Sarah obtained an instructor position at a post-secondary institution in an ECE program. Here, she was also able to draw on her multiliteracies learning and incorporate it into her practice within higher education. One focus was on making meaning and allowing the ECE students to,

really understand and make their meaning and you know, how we discuss the curriculum document [Full Day Kindergarten] and what their ideas are and what that means for them may be different from how I see it and just being able to have those conversations and those dialogues. (Interview three)

The program, therefore, assisted in Sarah’s abilities to take on more leadership roles within her educational community as well as within her Board.
For Sarah, a large part of multiliteracies was the community connections, student voice, and student advocacy. This was evident in her reflective practice project, which focused on making connections with parents and families. Sarah reflected on this importance as explained it as,

being able to connect to the community and get a better understanding of my students’ communities and families…and for sure student voice. I think I’ve been an advocate, but not in this way, like it really opens up to listening. I was really, in one of my courses I was really touched by the mosaic approach\(^\text{14}\) and Alison Clark talks about listening. And you know, what an honour that is to listen to these children, and that even it’s the observations and listening and documentation that we do with them, is such a big piece to their learning and how honoured we are to be able to be a part of that and to not sort of put ourselves on top of them for that, but to have that space to listen and how special that is to honour their voice and their thoughts and their learning and how they’re going to express it. (Interview three)

Sarah also felt that the idea of honouring one’s voice was also used in the courses where she and her peers became facilitators. Even within the online space, they were offered the opportunity to teach their peers and make meaning from the content:

I think that was the biggest thing in how that happened, how those courses were done like that—we became the leaders in the course and our [her emphasis] voices were honoured and used and were created and recreated to make meaning and understanding for each other in the program. (Interview three)

\(^{14}\) Clark and Moss (2011)
This is similar to how Jason described being able to make his own meaning, which both he and Sarah perceived as being imbedded into the structure of the program as student-driven.

Within this student-driven space, Sarah felt that her peers were instrumental in helping her understand multiliteracies through forum discussions, sharing of resources, artifacts, and classroom practices, as well as outside of the online space through social media, such as Twitter and email. Sarah reflected:

I probably wouldn’t have finished the program without some of them. Just to have that—to be able to reach out to them. Maybe it was because we were so small, but I have a feeling it was just the way the whole program was delivered, and just the whole underlying pedagogy of multiliteracies where you are so personally connected and there was so much of our work, it was looking back on ourselves and our experiences and we got to the point where we knew each other so well from sharing all of our personal experiences, we often, you know, in our connections with the readings or the assignments and things, refer to each other and go back and “oh do you remember?” I wouldn’t, I probably wouldn’t have finished the program without their connections and their…..it made it so much, I guess more real, you know? To be able to connect with other people and to share our struggles and celebrate our accomplishments and all those things together. (Interview three)

This community of learners atmosphere in the student-driven structure of the program was echoed by both Jason and Rachel in their interviews. This aspect of the program, as perceived by all participants, had a large impact on their perceptions of change in their learning of literacy pedagogy.
Online learning and the concept of multiliteracies were both new to Sarah. However, the connections she made to her prior educational training and with the support of her peers and instructors, her confidence grew as an educator. Engaging in new theory and research within a multiliteracies framework also contributed to her perception of pedagogical change within her increased confidence.

Rachel

In the beginning of the program Rachel had no previous knowledge of multiliteracies or any background in a formal education in literacy or language training. Rachel’s background was in economics, yet she taught English as a foreign language to young adults in a post-secondary institution. She chose the online graduate program so that she could continue teaching while she continued her professional learning, and the online method was ideal as she could choose an institution outside of China.

For Rachel the opportunity to take an online course with native English speakers was key. This aspect was important when she reflected on her role in her students’ English language learning, as she described her teaching philosophy was one where she could make connections with her students to improve their language learning:

I like to share my learning experience with my students, and I really hope that they can learn English or other languages, like learning the first language, so that’s why I applied to a master’s program abroad rather than in my home country; so I think I can learn something from the native language teachers. Because we don’t have much difficulties in learning the first language, but when we learned the second, we feel it’s very difficult to use it freely. (Interview three)
Learning alongside native English speakers afforded her the opportunity to see how they approached their literacy teaching and offered Rachel different perspectives about how literacy, in English, was taught.

Similar to Jason’s experience, Rachel felt she had already been using components of multiliteracies in her practice before the program. And like Jason, through the program she was able to support her practice with theory: “As I said, I already adopt some multiliteracies pedagogy in my teaching practice, and at that time I didn’t have the theoretical foundations, so now multiliteracies provides me with these theoretical foundations.” And similar to Sarah’s experience, through this new knowledge Rachel gained a new confidence: “I have more confidence in my teaching method…because I formed theoretical support in this program.” This confidence, as uncovered in the second interview, also extended to her ability to challenge her administrator with her new ideas of language learning, even though he did not agree with her new methods. Her confidence allowed her to continue to explore these new methods with her students.

**Multiliteracies in practice and perceived changes to pedagogy.** Rachel perceived a change in her pedagogy in language teaching after participating in the program. She reflected on her experiences and stated:

While learning multiliteracies I reconstructed my knowledge of literacy learning. As I said before this was the first time I learned a literacy education-related major. I found theoretical foundations for my previous teaching methods, and I learned some new assessing methods for EFL students, like formative assessment, and I understood if
curriculum pedagogy and assessment have not been aligned in the same direction we won’t be able to optimize learning opportunities for all the students. (Interview three)

This new knowledge also informed her position on teaching critical thinking skills in foreign language learning. Her exposure to multiliteracies informed this change in practice as:

Now I realize EFL students, they could be critically literate as well…like in my vocabulary class we discuss about the topic of astronomy and when international astronomers announced that Pluto was no longer a planet, and there were only eight planets in the solar system, some of my students say that Pluto has remained precisely the same, what had changed was the identification criteria—the definition of a planet. So, this reflection corresponds with a scholar, his name is Love, he indicated in 2008 that knowledge creation is an entirely human-dependent process. So, we set discussions, I realize, I recognize that EFL students can develop critical literacy skills, through the learning process of linguistic competence. (Interview three)

Now having expanded her theory and research within multiliteracies, Rachel was able to make changes to her pedagogy in ways where she could engage the students with expanded digital technologies (as shown in the artifacts she created), and in her assessment of her students’ knowledge and use of the English language.

Peer support, as perceived by Jason and Sarah, was also an important aspect of the program. Rachel’s connection with her peers to provide support in her learning and working through the process of implementing multiliteracies in practice was key:
I had many opportunities to connect multiliteracies theory with my practice through compiling [sic] like action plans or reflective activities. And I also discuss multiliteracies theories with my peers and instructors in the forum; it’s kind of collaborating learning. My peers develop both…thinking and sense of responsibility for having each other in understanding concepts and theories, so I think knowledge reconstruction, theory and practice connection, and collaboration are all very important components of transformative learning. (Interview three)

Peer support was integral to Rachel’s experiences, and the connections to her peers extended beyond the online learning environment within the graduate program, as Jason also mentioned in his last interview. Rachel stated:

I contact them with different social media. Social media, for example Facebook or Instagram or WeChat; they use different social media so I connect with different ones…And I met one of them at [the institution] when we attend[ed] graduation ceremony. And we were very excited, because that was the first time we met in person. But I feel very close to them…the group is an integral part of my life, so I believe anytime I need their support they will provide it for me. (Interview three)

Rachel, like Jason and Sarah, perceived that the student-driven, community of learners aspect, which they perceived as being integrated into the structure of the program, had a large influence on their learning.

Rachel perceived a change in her pedagogy as a result of her participation in the program. Though she had been experimenting with new technologies in the classroom before the program, she now had the theory and research, along with new expanding digital modalities that she could
use in her pedagogy. Peer support in the program was integral to her experiences and growth in pedagogy, as she was able to collaborate and receive feedback from her peers.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I highlighted the programmatic curriculum of the online graduate program, and included an interview with the program’s administrative manager, as well as offered an instructor’s perspective who taught in the program. I also described, in depth, the findings from the three semi-structured, open-ended interviews with three focal participants, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel, in the online graduate program focused on a pedagogy of multiliteracies. These interviews were intended to showcase participant experiences with early literacy learning and teaching, as well as their experiences within the two-year program. From their first interviews, all three participants, including Rachel who is from China, and Jason and Sarah from Canada, mentioned a traditional schooling paradigm, particularly in their literacy learning. Through their second interviews, participants described their experiences of engaging with their peers and instructors, as well as navigated through the online learning management system. They were able to articulate the components of multiliteracies that were present in their courses and in their practice (such as making home–school connections, their awareness of diversity and equity, and multimodality). For each of the participants, I included examples of the artifacts they produced while in the program as they were working through their understandings of multiliteracies, and specifically focused on their last reflective practice project. This last, two-course project was designed, as outlined in the syllabus, to encapsulate their holistic learning within the two-year program: Jason created a website geared towards schools in Ontario and the need to be inclusive of the growing Syrian population (mainly refugees). Jason used multiliteracies pedagogy as a way to incorporate this student population within Ontario schools.
Sarah created a website that focused on the home–school connections, drawing on her students’ community and home experiences and bridging these experiences into the classroom. She used the digital participatory app, Twitter, as a way to connect globally to a broader teaching community, as well as with parents and students. Rachel created a textbook geared towards use in an English as a foreign language classroom. She was especially interested in making connections with her students and their English literacy learning through their digital apps. By using the digital technologies students were using in their out-of-school lives, Rachel bridged their learning within the classroom. Lastly, the participants offered reflections on their experiences in program, and their perceived changes the program had on their pedagogy. All three focal participants described how their learning of a pedagogy of multiliteracies contributed to changes in their literacy pedagogy. They mentioned how they appreciated the opportunities to create their own meaning-making within the two-year program. They also relied on their peers, as a community of learners, to assist with their professional learning. As each participant was able to create successful learning experiences for their students and share them with their peers in the program, the participants explained that this helped them build confidence to use more strategies in their own practice as well, such as using more digital technologies with students.

In the next chapter I will discuss the analysis and interpretation of data from both case studies. Next, I will offer some recommendations that emerged from the data and make my concluding remarks.
Chapter 6
Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

In this exploratory case study, I investigated the lived curriculum of educators during their professional learning experiences in the area of multiliteracies pedagogy. The aim of this study was to investigate how educators engaged with multiliteracies in their professional learning. A further aim was to understand ways to promote multiliteracies education in both the preservice and in-service levels. Specifically, this exploration sought to understand if these professional learning experiences—rooted in and framed around multiliteracies pedagogy—contributed at all to educators’ perceptions of literacy pedagogy in general and to the development of their own pedagogy in particular. A further goal was to generate new knowledge of teacher professional learning. A second goal was also to understand what meaning-making opportunities are created during educators’ professional learning experiences, which may contribute to their developing pedagogy. This understanding may have implications for the professional learning of educators in the area of language and literacy education.

I collected “comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information” (Patton, 2015, p. 536) about my six focal participants (three in-service and three preservice educators) through three in-depth interviews and artifactual data. Data were also collected on their individual course and program, respectively. Further interviews were conducted with four language arts course instructors, the language arts course program coordinator, a graduate program instructor, and the graduate program’s administrative manager. I also collected the programmatic curricula of both the language arts course and the graduate program. I collected these data with the aim to explore and understand how each of the six focal participants experienced their professional learning in multiliteracies pedagogy as their lived curriculum.
In chapters four and five, I established my case studies as portraits of the three preservice and three in-service educators through detailed descriptions of their literacy experiences, current educational experiences, and a reflection of those experiences after the completion of the first year of the Bachelor of Education program and the end of the second year of the graduate program.

My summary of findings based on each of my research questions is presented below. I start by looking at the intended curricula of the language arts course and graduate program, then I describe the experiences of the six focal participants and how they shaped their literacy pedagogy through a coming-to-know multiliteracies through their lived curriculum. I also discuss the implications for meaning-making opportunities within educators’ formal professional learning, and lastly, I will conclude with suggestions for future research.

The Intended Curriculum

In this section I set out to discuss the intended curriculum of the preservice course in language arts and the online graduate program. The specific research question I address is: What is the intended curriculum of the language arts course within the Bachelor of Education program and the graduate program in multiliteracies pedagogy?

The Bachelor of Education Language Arts Course

The intended curriculum for the language arts course is multifaceted. The programmatic curriculum in the province of Ontario, which teachers implement in practice, is The Ontario Curriculum: Grades 1-8 Language (Ministry of Education, 2006). In this document, the four strands of literacy learning in the language arts are: reading, writing, oral communication, and
media literacy. This document is one the preservice teachers need to know and understand deeply, as it is the foundational curriculum for language arts teaching in Ontario. Further, the Bachelor of Education program as a whole is required to follow standards set out by the Ontario College of Teachers’ *Standards of Practice* and *Ethical Standards* (OCT, n.d.). In addition, according to the OCT, Bachelor of Education programs must include: current research in teacher education and the integration of theory and practice in teacher education (O. Reg. 347/02, 1996/2019). These OCT standards are integrated into the syllabus for the language arts course. Furthermore, the language arts course’s learning outcomes included being able to respond to subject matter and readings in *multimodal ways* to assist with their learning and synthesis of theory. For the focal participants, Brittany, Anna, and Tye, though they were exposed to current research and theories of literacy learning, there seemed to be limited opportunities to demonstrate their meaning-making with this knowledge in multimodal ways. All three focal participants had a different instructor for their language arts course, and all participants mentioned collaborative discussions with peers during class, with the opportunity to reflect on their learning through peer discussions and in writing. One particular example is from the artifact shared by Anna. The artifact is a portfolio of her reflective learning throughout the course. It was print-based only and focused heavily on instructional strategies rather than how to navigate teaching through the lens of the pedagogical components of multiliteracies. While there were opportunities to engage in situated practice, drawing on Anna’s prior knowledge and experiences with literacy, the reflective portfolio did not include critical framing or the opportunity for transformed practice—designing or creating multimodal artifacts. Based on some of the challenges mentioned by the instructors, this reliance on print literacy may further be accounted for because, as Instructor H. commented, print literacy is still privileged within the course by
both the instructors and students. As demonstrated through the instructors’ interviews, all of the instructors noted they were constrained in the ways they could deliver the course content in class due to the high number of students and the limited space available to promote movement for instructional activities. A reliance on print literacy may be due to this constraint. Further, because of the number of teacher candidates within each of the classes, the instructors noted that their teaching style became more lecture-based, where the teacher candidates were not able to practice multiliteracies or multimodality within that space. Instructor A. and O. commented that there was no room to move around and organize active leaning strategies such as a gallery walk or drama. Though there were opportunities to utilize the online learning management system for the language arts course, it was used as a resource repository; it was not used as a space where teacher candidates could create multimodal texts.

Emphasis within the language arts course curriculum focused on the ability to critically evaluate and analyze course content for the purpose of understanding its use in practice. Within the syllabus for the language arts course, speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing, and representing are included as a focus of the attention for the course. Also, as the course is framed around multiliteracies pedagogies, students learned about a variety of other literacy learning pedagogies. Thus, when describing their ideas of literacy and language teaching and learning, the participants mainly drew from foundational theorists, such as Vygotsky and Cambourne, rather than on the specific theory (learning by design) or the pedagogy of multiliteracies (the knowledge processes). None of the preservice participants described the pedagogical components of multiliteracies when discussing their literacy teaching in their practicums nor in their literacy learning within the course. At the same time, however, preservice educators did not explicitly see or discuss multiliteracies pedagogy with their Associate Teachers during their
practica. In this way, the preservice educators created learning opportunities for their students based on their practicum experiences, more so than from their in-class language arts course. The exception is that they noticed differing levels of multimodality used within their practicum classrooms. In their interviews, the participants were also able to identify more traditionally-based literacy teaching as the reliance on print-based activities, such as through worksheets, and identified this practice across the curriculum.

The intended programmatic curriculum for the language arts course, like the graduate program, centered on the learning of theory and research to build upon preservice students’ professional knowledge as teachers of literacy. A course requirement is to demonstrate their knowledge in multimodal ways and articulate their knowledge of language and literacy teaching and learning. Due to constraints within the architecture of the classrooms to accommodate a high number of students, the three focal participants experienced multimodality in limited ways.

The Graduate Program in Multiliteracies

The intended curriculum for the graduate program is also multifaceted. First, there is the broad, overall program intent, as outlined by the institution’s website, within the overall purpose of the graduate program. Within the program, participants were introduced to the concept of multiliteracies, which helped them attend to literacy in expanded ways so that they could understand how to communicate in an era of significant technological innovation. The next overall intent of the program was for students to address professional and personal initiatives surrounding curriculum design and implementation, making critical, pedagogical decisions within curricular implementation, and to expose students to academic research and scholarship in the area of language and literacy teaching and learning. The in-service focal participants, Jason,
Sarah, and Rachel all connected their graduate studies to their professional and personal interests and motivations for pursuing this particular graduate program in multiliteracies. Additionally, all participants, as demonstrated through the interviews and artifacts, built their new knowledge upon the academic research and scholarship they studied throughout their two years in the graduate program and the collaboration they experienced with their peers.

Along with the overall program purpose, the graduate program’s specific learning outcomes followed the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies and were approved by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Council of Ontario Universities, n.d.). These learning outcomes are tailored to each specific course within the graduate program. Specifically, I looked at the foundational learning outcomes for their final two courses, which set out to produce their reflective practice project:

- **Depth and breadth of knowledge**—designing a project of “value” to address an authentic practice-based, educational problem. Each of the participants created several projects, with the reflective practice project as their major and final work. These RPPs built upon a practice-based problem for each of the participants: Jason created the website for administrator’s to address the issue of Syrian refugees in Ontario classrooms; Sarah created a website for parents to bridge the gap between home and school and to build deeper connections with family; and Rachel explored the development of a particular textbook resource to use with her English as a Foreign Language students and to share this resource with her colleagues.

- **Research and scholarship**—to synthesize theoretical and practical knowledge and apply it to the problem. In each of their RPPs, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel built their work from current and relevant literature and applied it practically to their problem in practice.
which their RPPs aimed to address (i.e., home–school connections, Syrian refugees in Ontario schools, and resources for EFL students).

- **Application of knowledge**—to demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate literature, which supports the project (overt instruction). In each of their RPPs, Jason, Rachel, and Sarah made many references to the scholarly literature in language and literacy research. These resources built on their academic knowledge and they applied this knowledge to the creation of their projects.

- **Communication skills**—to share their work with their peers and “appropriate stakeholders.” Each of the participants’ created their RPPs for more than the instructor or peers as their audience. Jason published his website for administrators and distributed it to hundreds of administrators across Ontario; Sarah published her website and made it available to her school board and to parents; and Rachel shared her resource ideas with her supervisor and colleagues.

- **Awareness of the limitations of knowledge**—to engage in the process of reflection throughout their graduate program journey as a whole. Each of the participants engaged in extensive reflection, as demonstrated by their RRPs.

- **Autonomy and professional capacity**—to design and create (transformed practice) an RPP rooted in their own interests, funds of knowledge, and problem in practice (situated practice and critical framing). Jason, Rachel, and Sarah each designed and created an RPP that attended to their individual interests and their specific needs as educators within their specific educational contexts.

Thus, the intended programmatic curricula for the graduate program set out to build students’ professional knowledge, grounded in theory and research. The programmatic curricula
required participants, in their final projects, to design and create an artifact that built on their funds of knowledge—their interests, experiences, and expertise in practice with the ability to reflect on these experiences, not just within project design and creation, but to reflect on their entire two-year program experiences. The final RPP, rooted in practice, is a project shared with other stakeholders, such as parents (Sarah), administrators (Jason and Rachel), and colleagues (Rachel).

Another intended aspect of the program, mentioned by the Program Administrative Manager, is its cohort-based structure. As evidenced throughout the interviews with Jason, Sarah, and Rachel, belonging to a small cohort was an important part of their experience and contributed to their overall success as they called on each other for support, to share ideas, and to give and provide feedback during their program courses and their final RPPs.

In the next section I discuss the experiences of the preservice and in-service educators as they engaged in their professional learning in multiliteracies.

**Coming-to-Know Multiliteracies as Lived Curriculum**

In this section I aim to answer the following main research question as it pertains to the preservice educators enrolled in a Bachelor of Education course in language arts, which built on multiliteracies pedagogies and the in-service educators enrolled in an online graduate program with a focus on a pedagogy of multiliteracies: (1) What is the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of preservice and in-service educators participating, as learners, in multiliteracies education, and how do their respective curricula shape their perceptions, as educators, of literacy pedagogy? It also seeks to answer these sub-questions: (a) How do the participants, through these experiences, come to know multiliteracies pedagogy, and how is this knowledge produced, if at all, through
their designs as artifacts? and (b) What changes to participants’ developing literacy pedagogy do they perceive, if at all, as a result of their professional learning experiences in multiliteracies education? Triangulation of data helped me understand, in a holistic way, the lived curriculum of focal participants by seeing how their experiences were entangled within the curricular commonplaces.

**Preservice Educators**

Brittany, Anna, and Tye experienced literacy in different ways, which led them into the teaching profession. The experiences of each of the participants is important and contributed to early understandings of language and literacy teaching and learning: Brittany’s French heritage and learning of the French language influenced her views of literacy; Anna’s exposure to early coaching and working with English language learners fostered a love for wanting to teach English; and Tye, though she struggled as a language learner throughout her early schooling, she excelled in university, studied different languages, and taught overseas.

Brittany and Tye, through their learning of other languages, commented that they knew their second language better than their native English. Yet all three focal participants acknowledged they took the learning of English for granted. They spoke about never really paying attention to how they learned English in school. Because of this notion of inherently *knowing* English, their exposure to how multifaceted language arts is as more than reading and writing print surprised them. This taken-for-granted stance to their literacy learning challenged their understandings of language and literacy. This is similar to the findings of Heydon and Hibbert (2010) in their study of preservice students within a language arts course. They found preservice students, as privileged native English speakers, need to address this privilege
explicitly, because otherwise, when they became classroom teachers, they may not necessarily understand how students struggle with language. Only Tye, because of her experiences as a struggling language learner, spoke about her affinity for struggling students, as it mirrored her experiences as a child.

**Coming-to-know through the language arts course.** The language arts course used multiliteracies pedagogies as its underpinning theoretical framework. Even though the course included several other theorists in the field of language and literacy learning, multiliteracies framed the curriculum content. Nonetheless, confusion existed among the focal participants about the components of multiliteracies, specifically. Because, there needed to be a blending of other important theories and concepts of language and literacy teaching and learning, as specified by the Program Coordinator, the preservice participants often conflated other theorists’ ideas with the notion of multiliteracies; the participants struggled to parse out the particularities of a pedagogy of multiliteracies, such as the knowledge processes. When asked about their understandings of multiliteracies, Brittany and Anna spoke about a balanced literacy approach, even though balanced literacy as its own concept is not included within the course curriculum. As all of the focal participants had different instructors, this suggests not all instructors followed the curriculum as designed by the Program Coordinator. Nonetheless, the instructors, too, commented on the confusion amongst their students as to the particularities of multiliteracies and how it is designed in practice, even when instructors framed class discussions around multiliteracies. This confusion was specifically noted by Instructor H. However, knowing that the language arts course is one of many courses the participants take, and knowing that the 12-week course is only two hours per week, it is not surprising that the students experienced this confusion.
Further, during their practicum experiences, Brittany, Anna, and Tye rarely saw multiliteracies in practice. They tried to identify aspects of multiliteracies in their Associate Teachers’ (AT) practice. Most commonly mentioned approaches, which participants attributed to the notion of expanded literacies as multimodality, which centered on the use of digital technology. Brittany, excited about learning new digital tools, such as Mindomo and PowToon, incorporated these apps into lessons during her practicum, though she learned about these apps through other courses and not in language arts. As such, the focal participants spoke a lot about multimodality as part of their understanding of multiliteracies. This is supported in the literature by Skerrett (2011) who found that preservice educators’ discussions are “framed within the discourse of multiple modalities” (p. 191) and lacked any deeper discussions of the knowledge processes.

Acknowledging this disconnect between preservice educators’ connections to multimodality rather than the pedagogical components or knowledge processes of multiliteracies, Instructor H. noted that she did not think the students in their practicum ever see how their Associate Teacher comes to design learning opportunities for children. Tye commented that it was like “magic”—that the teacher just knew and did things in the classroom; Tye never saw the teacher refer to curriculum documents, notes, nor did she explain her pedagogical choices. Olson (2000) argued that associate teachers need to “explicitly articulate their curriculum choices and acknowledge that there are multiple ways to enact curriculum” (p. 11). As such, having ATs practice in many different ways, the preservice educators had limited to no opportunities to see new concepts and ideas from the language arts course enacted in practice. The participants simply followed their ATs pedagogical examples and adopted them their own, even if they saw these strategies as being more traditional.
Novice teachers are learning for practice (Ward et al., 2013). Because of this, the focal participants are at the beginning of their professional learning continuum by learning how to teach, whereas in-service teachers, through their professional learning, are “developing knowledge of practice” (p. 73). This may be why each of the focal participants, as novice teachers, struggled to articulate their knowledge of multiliteracies. However, they did understand the notion of multimodality and how digital technologies create the need for more expanded ideas of literacy, particularly in teaching and learning in language arts. Their dialogue in each of the three interviews tended to be verbose, talking about a variety of general knowledge related to teaching without using specific course-based language to discuss their ideas of multiliteracies. Concepts mentioned, such as funds of knowledge, a student interest-driven pedagogy, meaning-making, and multimodality suggest that Brittany, Anna, and Tye, though they were building their knowledge for the teaching of language and literacy through various theories, did discuss these ideas as part of their understandings of multiliteracies. They accepted these ideas of expanded literacy and, thus, developed a disposition (McLean & Rowsell, 2013; Skerrett, 2011) to teach with multiliteracies, as moving away from more traditionally-based literacy teaching, in mind. This disposition is despite not yet having the specific language or not necessarily having opportunities to see multiliteracies in practice. This is further demonstrated by their observations of their Associate Teachers’ practice as they identified more traditional types of literacy and at times a very limited range of multimodality or digital technologies used with students. Rowsell et al. (2008) argued that the “objectives of multiliteracies pedagogy are ambitious” (p. 116) and that new teachers are not immersed enough in its theory and pedagogy for them to sufficiently incorporate multiliteracies into their practice. However, if the preservice educators gained some knowledge of multiliteracies, enough to have a disposition towards the teaching and learning of
language and literacy in expanded ways, then this early disposition is important in the building of their “basic repertoire for teaching” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1018). Additionally, as this course took place during the first year of the two-year B.Ed. program, preservice educators still had another year and two more practicum placements to further develop their dispositions and build their teaching repertoire.

**Constraints.** The Bachelor of Education program created different constraints for both the instructors and the focal participants. The Program Coordinator stated that in general, the preservice students were in “too many places at once.” Through their hefty schedule of courses, Brittany, Anna, and Tye, as novice teachers, tried to understand how to build their foundational knowledge of what it means to be a teacher and to learn how to teach—in all courses not just the language arts course, such as lesson planning, using a variety of instructional strategies, and assessment and evaluation. During the interviews, all of the focal participants noted that the program was stressful.

For the instructors, due to the large number of students in the classroom in relation to the classroom space, stated that the course became more lecture-style. The instructors stated that many times they lacked opportunities to show the students multiliteracies in practice or to make meaning of multiliteracies through the design and creation of multimodal texts, even though learning through multimodality is part of the language arts curriculum. Due to these constraints, Instructor H. commented that print literacy is still privileged in the course by both the instructors and the students. Even though opportunities to use the digital platform through the online learning management system existed and offered the potential for students to create and share multimodal texts, it existed as a place to post text-based resources only, and it was used as a supplementary space for preservice students. However, with their students in mind, the
instructors did not want to further contribute to their already stressful schedules. Unfortunately, this suggests that access to a digital technology is still considered more of an add-on for some instructors rather than an integrated part of a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Skerrett (2011) found similar data with preservice educators who understood multiliteracies as a multimodal instructional strategy and did not connect in a deeper way with the knowledge processes as pedagogical components.

Though the language arts course instructors noted their issues of constraint in using multimodality, other course instructors were using multimodality through a variety of digital tools in their practice, as commented on by Brittany. Instructor H., even though she wanted to demonstrate more multiliteracies in practice, did incorporate new technologies (i.e., the green screen) into her practice and introduced preservice students to instructional apps they could use with their students. This suggests that, while there are constraints that interfered with some of the language arts instructors wanting to use multimodality in their instructional strategies, other instructors worked around those constraints.

**Coming-to-know with peers and through reflection.** Though limited in opportunities to create multimodal texts, Brittany, Tye, and Anna all commented on the collaborative nature of the course with many opportunities to engage in discussions with their peers and engage in regular reflections of their new understandings of language and literacy. These reflections are necessary in teacher learning (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). However, as shown through Anna’s portfolio, many of her discussions centered on print-based instructional strategies. However, through the literacy life map that Anna shared—a reflective assignment included within the syllabus for all course sections—the participants had opportunities to explore their early literacy experiences. This opportunity engaged Anna in reflecting on her history with literacy and helped
her to interrogate some of her assumptions about language and literacy. This necessary interrogation of previous literacy beliefs is supported in the literature by Heydon and Hibbert (2010) and Feiman-Nemser (2001).

**In-Service Educators**

Jason, Sarah, and Rachel, as in-service educators, worked in very different teaching contexts: Jason, educated in Ontario, taught overseas with access to extensive professional development opportunities provided by his school community; Sarah, an early childhood educator, worked within the Ontario public-school system in the Full Day Kindergarten program with limited professional development opportunities in the area of literacy—her school board provided professional development, but often excluded ECEs by only offering these PD sessions to Ontario certified teachers; and Rachel worked as an English as a foreign language teacher in her native China, without formal educational training. Her institution regularly offered in-faculty professional development with colleagues. Each of these educators commented on their traditional style of language and literacy learning experiences in school; Jason and Sarah, commented on the rich literacy experiences they received, both at home and in their community. None of these participants knew of multiliteracies before they started the graduate program. In the program, these focal participants engaged in extensive opportunities to design and create multimodal texts and to collaborate and engage in discussions with their peers to provide and receive feedback. Further, by the end of the program, the participants used multiliteracies-specific language to talk about multiliteracies and multimodality within their learning and the artifacts they created.
coming-to-know through bridging theory and practice. As early to mid-career educators within their professional learning, the in-service focal participants gained a deeper knowledge of practice (Ward et al., 2013). As experienced educators, they drew on a wide repertoire of knowledge, and chose a “line of inquiry” (Roe, 2004, p. 34) that suited their particular needs in practice. As adult learners in their professional learning, the focal participants developed, “an independent self-concept” and “direct[ed] his or her own learning;” and “accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning” (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). Further, participants engaged in work that “is problem-centered,” where they are “interested in immediate application of knowledge,” and where they are “motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors.” (p. 5). Additionally, leveraging professional judgment (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009) is an affordance for experienced teachers, as they are able to recognize, verbalize, and justify their pedagogical decisions, as it is rooted in theory and research. With a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the participants stated that they became more purposeful in their practice (Cloonan, 2010; Kalantzis & Cope, 2010).

Throughout the program, participants incorporated new concepts into their teaching repertoire. Through an explicit process of taking what they learned and immediately trying it out in practice—with opportunities to see them successfully implemented—participants noted changes in their practice. For Saydam (2019), this is a key component of effective professional learning, as it is imperative to root learning in practice and use the classroom as a site for professional learning. Through their new knowledge of multiliteracies and multimodality, specifically, they now used specific language from a pedagogy of multiliteracies to talk about their learning and their use of this new learning in practice. Jason was able to demonstrate, through his interviews, a well-articulated sense of what a teacher’s role within a multiliteracies
pedagogy must be, and how that, in turn, affects student learning with multiliteracies. Jason noted that the program encouraged him to create multimodally. His practice changed because, as he commented, his teaching repertoire expanded to incorporate more multimodal tools within the classroom, such as his use of live action animation in his Lego project with his students. Sarah created projects for her students using digital participatory technologies, and Rachel expanded her repertoire of apps that assisted in the language learning of her students. Each of the participants noted that this new knowledge created a more purposeful and intentional pedagogy. Kalantzis and Cope (2010) supported this transformation of teaching within multiliteracies where the teacher becomes a purposeful learning designer with the need for teachers to “become more pedagogically purposeful” (New London Group, 1996, p. 266). Instead of simply being a disseminator of knowledge through instruction, these in-service educators became discerners (Hibbert & Rich, 206) through their deeper understanding and knowledge of their literacy pedagogy, rooted in multiliteracies. While much of the discussions on a change of practice included discussions of multimodality, they used multimodality to leverage the learning of their students in more expanded ways, such as when Jason noted that he and his students were reading more with diverse texts, learning how to view them and understand them critically. Sarah was using multimodal tools, such as Twitter as a situated practice, to connect her students with their home community. Rachel was leveraging popular apps her students were already using to engage them in their English language learning.

**Coming-to-know through their artifact designs.** A large part of the graduate program encouraged students to create multimodal artifacts as part of their continued and life-long learning as educators (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ontario College of Teachers, n.d.). Thus, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel came to know multiliteracies through their multimodal designs. These designs
built upon their early experiences with language and literacy and connected to themselves as students in the program and as teachers. These designs, rooted in teachers’ lives and histories, is supported by Kissling (2014) who stated the importance of teacher experience in shaping practice; where teachers’ “living curricula experiences shape their teaching” (p. 90), as well as “across all times and places of their lives, not just classroom moments” (p. 81). This notion of teacher experience becoming intertwined within their practice is further supported by Mezirow (1997) who claimed that new information is entangled with a person’s history. In some of the artifacts, Jason connected his personal literacy journey, connected to his students’ experiences between home and school connections, and made connections to his beliefs for what teachers needed in their practice within the 21st century. Sarah incorporated a lot of aspects of herself and her expertise as an early childhood educator into her work. She even considered the online learning management system as the third teacher (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007), a term used within early childhood to consider the classroom as the third teacher to understand how the learning space affects students’ learning. She utilized new communication tools, such as Twitter and the Remind app, after discovering their potential from her peers through her program courses. For Sarah, the global connectivity piece afforded a bridge between home and school through social media and this was key for expanding her practice. Sarah’s artifacts built on the creation of this home–school connection. Sarah’s particular professional practice is unique to her peers as she worked closely in collaboration with the classroom Ontario certified teacher. Sarah was able to use her new knowledge of multiliteracies in her practice, and also share her new knowledge with her teacher partner. Rachel, on the other hand, already used various apps in her practice as a way to connect to her students and use the technologies they used as part of her instruction. Through the graduate program, her peers exposed her to different apps and through
her peers’ work, she found new ways to use them within her practice. Her artifacts focused on
the funds of knowledge of her students and how she could capitalize on the use of various apps
to assist her students in their English language learning. Rachel worked through her own English
language learning as a student within the program, which helped her better understand the
perspective of her students as foreign language learners.

The reflective practice projects are artifacts that consolidated focal participant knowledge
gained within the program. The RPP built upon each participant’s funds of knowledge and the
connections they made with themselves as learners as well as themselves as teachers. Each
participant came to their professional learning with a specific need within their educational
practice, which they wanted to share. These projects were the synthesis of their previous and new
knowledges and incorporated in-depth reflection on the program, the process of design, and
creation of the RPP. Their peers’ continual feedback was crucial to the development of their final
projects. In the end, these multimodal projects served to position Jason, Sarah, and Rachel as
teacher leaders within their respective educational communities.

**Coming-to-know through online peer support.** Throughout the graduate program,
conducted completely online, the three focal participants (with the other peers in the course)
made friends and relied on each other for peer support. This included peer feedback on
assignments and conversations through the online learning management system’s forum; as well
as reaching out to each other for support through email and social media. Kennedy (2016) and
Heubner (2009) saw collaborative discussions with other teachers as key to professional
learning. The participants discussed problems of practice within these discussion forums, gained
feedback from their peers, and bridged those problems with theory and research from the courses
(Kabilan, 2004). This creates a powerful connection of *sensemaking* (Heubner, 2009) that
teachers can make within their practice. Being able to work through implementing multiliteracies in practice, while engaging in the graduate program as part of their professional learning, the opportunities for the participants to see their peers as successful incorporating new concepts in practice are paramount. Olson (2000) noted that teachers rarely, “have the opportunity to see how other teachers create lived curriculum with students” (p. 11). Therefore, having the online space where the educators could share classroom success stories and share pictures of the activities with their students in progress became an opportunity for these educators to “value, articulate, and examine their curriculum stories with others” (p. 11). Lock (2006) supported online spaces in teacher professional learning as these spaces become a “networked community of inquiry” (p. 670) and even assisted in helping teachers learn more about technology when they use it for their learning.

Hibbert and Rich (2006) considered online spaces as communities of practice where teachers can share their repertoire of knowledge with peers. Sharing successes in practice with their peers encouraged the participants and gave them the confidence to try out new strategies with their students, for example, working with digital technologies that they may have been hesitant to try before the program. Seeing the success of their peers improved their confidence. Hibbert and Rich (2006) found online learning brings professionals together, which “informs their professional practice” (p. 564). Participants also established connections outside of the program through social media, such as through Twitter and Facebook. By connecting with peers through social media, they established an out-of-program professional learning network, where they could connect as professionals and not just graduate students. By the end of the program, the participants all commented that they were still in contact with their peers through social
media and intended to continue this professional networking as part of their continued work as educators.

**Coming-to-know through teacher autonomy.** Jason, Sarah, and Rachel were afforded autonomy, which is an important component of adult learning (e.g., Knowles, 1996; Merriam, 2001), particularly in continued professional learning in literacy (Poulson & Avramidis, 2003). This autonomy is important, not only in their professional learning, but in their practice as well. Jason’s extensive access to board-led professional development positioned him as a teacher leader within his school as he shared his knowledge with other colleagues who did not attend PD sessions. Additionally, as an International Baccalaureate school, Jason made strong connections between how the IB program is structured and a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Thus, this connection to practice afforded Jason the confidence to use multiliteracies within his practice by making those connections to the IB program for support. Located outside of practice, Sarah, on the other hand, did receive some challenges. Sarah and her teaching partner worked together with Sarah’s ideas and practice in multiliteracies; thus, she and her partner created learning opportunities based on the new knowledge Sarah gained through in her professional learning. However, Sarah did not always have an opportunity to be included in board-led professional development, nor did she have opportunities within the board to pursue her own further learning in literacy. Furthermore, her colleagues did not understand the ways multiliteracies informed their practice. As Sarah noted, they shrugged multimodality off as “tech.” However, her new knowledge, according to Sarah, made her feel more confident; she now had the language to describe her pedagogy and justify it to those OCTs who disagreed with her approach to practice. Furthermore, after graduating, Sarah became an ECE instructor in a role where she taught from a multiliteracies pedagogical approach. Rachel also faced pushback from her institution’s
administrator who relied more on traditional styles of teaching a foreign language. Because of Rachel’s autonomy in creating her own pedagogy and using more innovative instructional strategies, she continued to use multiliteracies in her teaching, despite the pushback. Having support for more innovative pedagogies, such as multiliteracies, whether by other teachers (McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006) or administrative support (Cloonan, 2010) is important.

Moreover, As Timperley (2011) suggested, teachers need to be decision-makers in their learning process, and it is evident through the graduate program that the participants were actively involved in what they learned and how they chose to learn it. They had the autonomy to choose projects built from their funds of knowledge, and they also had the autonomy to design learning opportunities for their students within their classrooms. Through their ability to be autonomous in their teaching practice and in their professional learning, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel were able to expand their pedagogy to include multiliteracies as demonstrated from their professional learning within the graduate program.

**Coming-to-know through reflection.** Reflection is a key component of adult learning (Mezirow, 1997), and is also an important aspect of teacher professional learning (e.g., Heubner, 2009; Heydon & Hibbert, 2010; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Ward et al., 2013). A large component of the reflective practice project, was built on reflection. This reflective process was demonstrated in the participants’ final projects, where it was woven within practice, feedback and dialogue from peers, and theory and research. Shulman and Shulman (2004) argued that critical reflection is “at the heart of that learning is the process” and is “the key to teacher learning and development” (p. 260).
By the end of the graduate program, all three focal participants perceived a change in their literacy pedagogy and embraced a pedagogy of multiliteracies as their own. They became more purposeful and intentional in their practice to create meaningful learning opportunities for their students. This change in pedagogy occurred through participants’ process of design through a multiliteracies pedagogical lens and the creation of a variety of multimodal texts.

Implications for Teacher Professional Learning

In this next section, I discuss the last main research question: (2) What are the implications for teacher professional learning to promote formal opportunities for meaning making of teachers in multiliteracies education?

Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Ward et al. (2013) both suggested it was important for new teachers to understand and focus on pedagogy, not just instructional strategies or content knowledge; preservice educators need to understand the “when, where, how, and why to use particular approaches” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1019). While multiliteracies pedagogies is included in the curriculum for the language arts course, the focal participants concentrated on discussing various instructional strategies (overt instruction/conceptualization) they used or saw in practice. Participants struggled to articulate their pedagogy and often conflated other literacy theorists with a multiliteracies approach. Also, Associate Teachers did not articulate their pedagogical choices and obstructed the focal participants’ opportunities to understand pedagogical decisions made in real time. Thus the participants’ practica focused mainly on the creation and implementation of lesson plans or instructional strategies, with no discussion of the why behind design choices. Thus, more focus on pedagogy is needed in professional learning in preservice education. New teachers need to identify and to articulate, even in their early career,
their design choices for the learning opportunities for their students. With this articulation, new teachers can be intentional and purposeful in their practice.

Further, professional learning in multiliteracies at the teacher educator level is needed. Not all instructors within language and literacy may be familiar with multiliteracies or have current knowledge of a variety of new technologies. As mentioned by Anna and Brittany, there were also concepts introduced within the language arts course that were not a part of the course curriculum. Further, there were limited opportunities for the participants to engage multimodally with course content. While the instructors explained this was a particular challenge, it is important for instructors to find ways to navigate various constraints. If instructors are to teach curriculum underpinned by multiliteracies pedagogies, which includes multimodality and learning by design, they need to teach with a multiliteracies pedagogy in mind. Skerrett (2011) found that to teach multiliteracies effectively, she needed to teach with a multiliteracies pedagogy herself. In this way, students not only learn about the pedagogy, they are also immersed in the knowledge processes in purposeful and explicit ways. Thus, teacher educators, teaching from a pedagogy of multiliteracies, can perhaps explicitly identify their own pedagogical choices within the knowledge processes for preservice educators to identify multiliteracies in practice.

Another implication is for Associate Teachers is to make their pedagogical choices more explicit to preservice educators. By identifying these choices, preservice candidates have the opportunity to understand how experienced teachers interweave their own subjectivities, curriculum expectations, and instructional strategies within their pedagogy. It is important for preservice educators to discuss pedagogy with their ATs. By openly discussing and identifying the pedagogy, preservice educators may better understand the development of their own.
On the other hand, the participants in the graduate program had opportunities to be fully immersed in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. The program was designed as student-centered and there were multiple opportunities for Jason, Sarah, and Rachel to collaborate, provide and give feedback, and connect outside of their program in their own professional learning network. As the participants noted in their interviews, they were offered the opportunity to make their own meaning from the courses as they made connections to multiliteracies. The participants, throughout the program and in the last reflective practice project, had ample opportunities to design and create multimodal texts to showcase this new knowledge. As they were all in-service educators, the participants were afforded the chance to use their theory and new knowledge from the program and integrate them immediately into their practice, and they had the autonomy to do so. They were able to identify their own needs for their professional learning and designed knowledge artifacts accordingly. Each of their respective classrooms became a place to practice using a pedagogy of multiliteracies with success; they could actualize their new professional learning immediately in practice. Further, as a pedagogy of multiliteracies was the main focus of the program, the participants had two years to be immersed specifically in this concept. There were no competing concepts, while the preservice teachers experienced several other content courses, not just language arts. Also, each of the in-service educators were experienced and had a foundational knowledge of their practice. They understood how to create lesson plans and design appropriate instructional strategies, they understood assessment and evaluation, and the importance of creating authentic, rich learning experiences for their students. As such, it was easier to focus their attention within the graduate program and add a new layer to their professional learning, situated within a pedagogy of multiliteracies. These opportunities created deeper meaning-making for Jason, Sarah, and Rachel. As identified in the literature on
professional learning, rooting professional learning within the classroom is key (Saydam, 2019). Easton (2008) and Wells (2014) argued that it is only through this kind of long-term, practice-based professional learning that teacher change is affected. At the end of the program, Jason, Sarah, and Rachel’s perception of their literacy pedagogy as rooted in multiliteracies was clear. They had the language to articulate their pedagogy from a multiliteracies approach. They were also able to design a variety of multimodal texts and become leaders within their own education communities, respectively.

For the participants in the Bachelor of Education, because they were novice teachers, they worked through not only the depth and breadth of content in the language arts course but the stress of the program as a whole. In this first year, preservice educators are introduced to new content, at times challenging their previous beliefs, such as believing that language arts includes only reading and writing print (Heydon & Hibbert, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). However, at the end of the language arts course, all of the participants did have a more expansive view of literacies and attributed this to multiliteracies. This supports the notion of creating a disposition towards multiliteracies perspectives (Gardiner, Cumming-Potvin, & Hesterman, 2013) in teaching for preservice educators. Thus, multiliteracies is still an important inclusion in the language arts curriculum if it helps preservice teachers recognize that literacy is more fulsome and multimodal.

However, an implication is that teacher educators also need to teach from a multiliteracies perspective in order to create more opportunities for preservice students to see multiliteracies in practice and to engage in the design and creation of multimodal artifacts as an important way to come-to-know multiliteracies (Skerrett, 2011). Also, as Ontario has moved to a two-year Bachelor of Education degree, perhaps adding a specific course in multiliteracies
within the second year for elementary teachers would be prudent. In this way, they have a year to gain foundational knowledge of language arts teaching and learning, along with two practicums of experience. The second year could be used to further develop and sediment these dispositions in multiliteracies pedagogy and guide preservice teachers further in their learning and understanding of the knowledge processes and how to apply them purposefully in practice.

Jacobs (2014), McLean and Rowsell (2013), Kalantzis and Cope (2010), and Rowsell et al. (2008), all commented on the need to re/design teacher education, and they looked towards multiliteracies’ role in making this change. They called for a “transformation of the teaching profession” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010, p. 204). I argue that for a transformation to happen in the field of literacy towards a pedagogy of multiliteracies, there needs to be more substantive moves in language arts courses towards a professional learning model that helps new teachers root their theory in practice. This change is particularly focused on helping novice teachers begin to articulate their developing pedagogy, building on the knowledge processes. Novice teachers need opportunities to support this development through witnessing it in practice within their language arts course, as well as witnessing and discussing pedagogical decision-making with their Associate Teachers. This suggests the need for a closer partnership between faculties of education and practicum experiences, so that there is a coordinated effort to work towards building pedagogy. Heydon and Hibbert (2010) offered this suggestion in their study of literacy and preservice teachers:

Further inquiry is needed to consider how teacher education might take up the challenge of creating relationships between the field and faculties of education so as to create optimum learning opportunities for candidates in this era of changing literacies and student demographics. (p. 803).
Considering distinctions between professional development and professional learning, the Bachelor of Education language arts course in this study seems to work from a model closely tied to a professional development of teacher learning, where the content is delivered top-down by experts without much autonomy given to the students in their learning experiences to create diverse opportunities for meaning-making. Understanding that teacher education for preservice educators and a graduate program for in-service educators is very different in the learning needs of those students, how can the professional learning of new teacher candidates be rich enough for them to be able to begin their careers with a deeper sense of new ways of teaching and learning? As supported in this study, through a pedagogy of multiliteracies, in-service educators perceived a change in their pedagogy, while the preservice teachers still struggled to understand or articulate what their pedagogy was, since they are still in the process of developing one. Yet, what immersive, diverse, and multimodal ways of creating meaning can be designed to make multiliteracies more meaningful for preservice educators? Given the learning environment from the graduate program suggests that preservice students need to be creators and designers of content, not just recipients of content. Also, adding a course in multiliteracies in the second year of the two-year program may help focus on the components of the pedagogy and the theory of learning by design.

Kalantzis and Cope (2010) argued, within a pedagogy of multiliteracies, the teacher is a designer. In the graduate program, it is evidenced from the data that Jason, Sarah, and Rachel were active learning designers in developing their pedagogy in multiliteracies. For Brittany, Anna, and Tye, though there were active learning opportunities within their course and within their practicums, these two experiences aligned in limited ways. Within the course, the participants were limited in their opportunities to become designers. In Cope and Kalantzis’
(2015) continued model for changing education, it is clear that the language arts course’s curriculum and instruction created a blending between the didactic and authentic pedagogy for instructors, whereas in the graduate program the focal participants experienced a more reflexive pedagogy within its program design.

**Other considerations.** In both cases there was a large focus on multimodality within a pedagogy of multiliteracies. As Collier and Rowsell (2014) identified as part of their critique of multiliteracies, there did not seem to be a large focus on the critical aspect of multiliteracies, particularly with the preservice educators. Further, it was interesting in the preservice cases how little attention was given to the issue of cultural or linguistic diversity. All three participants acknowledged that there were visible minorities within their classroom or schools, yet their ATs did not feel it was an issue worth addressing, since the majority of the classes appeared white. This becomes problematic when Ontario’s classrooms are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. This also suggests the need for critical framing and cultural and linguistic diversity to be given much more attention within professional learning in a pedagogy of multiliteracies.

**Issues of diversity and equity.** Critical framing or analyzing is an important inclusion within the pedagogical components or knowledge processes. Yet, addressing issues of diversity and equity, for most of the focal participants, was lacking. While participants acknowledged that either their schools, for the preservice educators on practicum or the in-service educators’ schools, identified culturally or linguistically diverse students, none of the participants addressed it explicitly. When asked about diversity within their classroom, all the participants, except for Jason, did not know off-hand the cultural representation in their schools, but upon further reflection identified students who were not white. In Jason’s class, as it was an international
school, he stated that there was so much diversity that he took for granted the notion of addressing it outright stating that by nature of the diversity it is just inherently addressed. For the preservice students, their Associate Teachers also did not address cultural diversity. For example, during Anna’s practicum, her AT did not feel that he needed to address his culturally and linguistically diverse students, as they were are a minority, and therefore Anna did not address it either. This poses a significant oversight within all levels of teaching. By not including the critical in multiliteracies, Pribhai-Illich (2011) argued that the omission of curricula that attends to linguistic diversity and is culturally appropriate, “perpetuate[s] an ideology of cultural inferiority, which is common among oppressed people” (p. 257). Therefore, particularly as outlined in the introduction, it is crucial to more explicitly center the critical framing piece within the teaching of a pedagogy of multiliteracies.

**Opportunities for Further Research**

Preservice educators with a disposition in multiliteracies want more professional learning after their initial teacher education (Ajayi, 2011; Rowsell et al., 2008). A sensible inclusion of this continued professional learning within the continuum of teaching, is the induction period. This is a critical stage for new teachers as they make the transition to in-service educator. This is also the phase where new teachers can move from competent to proficient (Ward et al., 2013). In Ontario, with the Ministry of Education’s New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), adding a goal to further the development of pedagogy in addition to an instructional practice goal is apt in order to build on new educators’ *pedagogical stance* (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). At this juncture, new teachers, now outside of the stress and constraints of the teacher education program, may be able to see multiliteracies applied directly in practice or use multiliteracies in practice themselves, even within occasional work. Research into the incorporation of multiliteracies at
this phase, and particularly research into the developing of pedagogy during induction, is important.

More research exploring the lived curriculum of teachers in their professional learning is needed. By understanding how both preservice and in-service educators make meaning is essential if professional learning opportunities hold the potential for teacher change (Easton, 2008; Wells, 2014). In this study, through their lived curriculum, a more reflexive pedagogical approach to professional learning, which flexibly moves across didactic and authentic pedagogies, contributed to in-service educators’ perceived change in their literacy pedagogy.

**Conclusion**

This research study set out to explore and understand the professional learning experiences of both preservice and in-service educators in multiliteracies through their lived curriculum. In the language arts course, preservice educators collaborated with peers in a face-to-face learning space and reflected on their learning throughout the 12-week course. However, due to a variety of constraints as noted by their instructors, participants experienced limited ways to engage with multimodality, designing and creating multimodal texts, or opportunities to see multiliteracies in practice. As the course is designed around multiliteracies pedagogies, which attended to a variety of theories of literacy learning, preservice educators conflated many different literacy learning theories with multiliteracies and could clearly parse out the language of multiliteracies at this early stage in their teaching professional learning. However, they did create a disposition of teaching from a multiliteracies perspective, which built on the premise of a more expansive view of literacy to include multimodality, students’ funds of knowledge, student interest, and the need to create a variety of active learning opportunities for meaning-
making for their students. In this study data showed that the graduate program offered rich and varied opportunities for the participants to use their funds of knowledge to design and create a variety of multimodal artifacts as they worked through their coming-to-know with multiliteracies. Through the online forums, participants engaged in in-depth discussions with their peers, which centered on problems of practice. Through the graduate program, these participants perceived a significant change in their literacy pedagogy.

This study supports the literature on professional learning, which argues that in order for a perceived change in pedagogy to occur in rich and meaningful ways, educators need to be immersed in the pedagogy and its theory and be able to implement their new knowledge and meaning-making in practice (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Heubner, 2009; Saydam, 2019). This opportunity to see the components of a pedagogy of multiliteracies successfully used in practice is key. Thus, for preservice teachers to witness multiliteracies in practice, more professional learning in multiliteracies for in-service educators is needed. Teacher education holds different challenges for the professional learning of preservice teachers compared to the graduate program. Further research is needed to explore different ways to structure teacher education programs that build on a more reflexive, learning by design framework, where preservice educators can build their foundational knowledge, while working towards building their pedagogy. Focusing on pedagogy affords the possibility of new teachers to begin their teaching careers with a more purposeful and intentional practice. In-service educators, having already developed their foundational knowledge, have the luxury of engaging in pedagogical development in deeper ways.
If multiliteracies is needed to attend to the diverse technologies, culturally and linguistically peoples, and multimodal ways that people communicate, then deeper and richer opportunities for professional learning in a pedagogy of multiliteracies is paramount.
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International Journal, 14*(1), 33-61.
Appendix A

Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board

NMREB Amendment Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rachel Heydon
Department & Institution: Education/Faculty of Education, Western University

NMREB File Number: 107626
Study Title: Multiliteracies in Teacher Professional Learning

NMREB Revision Approval Date: January 31, 2017
NMREB Expiry Date: March 07, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

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<td>Revised Western University Protocol</td>
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<td>Revised Letter of Information &amp; Consent</td>
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The Western University Non-Medical Science Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the amendment to the above named study, as of the NMREB Amendment Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCP52), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00002091.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Robyn Hinson, NMREB Chair
FIO: Rita Karl  Nicole Rankin  Grace Kelly  Katelyn Harris  Nicola Morphet  Karen Gopaul
Appendix B

Letters of Information and Consent

Dear Participant,

My name is Joelle Nagle and I am a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the professional learning experiences of educators who are participating in programs with a focus on Multiliteracies, and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The aims of this study are to explore and understand the lived curriculum and experiences of educators participating in both an online graduate program in Literacy Education, and in a Bachelor of Education program course in Multiliteracies.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in 3 semi-structured interviews (approximately 30-45 minutes in length per interview) and/or a separate focus group (approximately 1 hour in length) with your peers in the course to be conducted via Skype, FaceTime, or Collaborate or face-to-face. In the interviews you will be asked to talk about: Your previous experiences with literacy education as a student, current experiences that are helping shape your literacy pedagogy, any previous knowledge of multiliteracies, experiences within the Multiliteracies course, your engagement and facility with multimodality, and how you will address diversity and equity in your practice. You will also be invited to provide artifacts created through the course that you feel are relevant and would like to share with the researcher.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only and neither your name nor information, which could identify you, will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. While I can ensure anonymity through data collected in the interviews, I cannot ensure anonymity for those participating in a focus group. Pseudonyms will be used for all aspects of data collection, and will be audio recorded for transcription purposes. The data will be stored on an encoded
university website and secure qualitative data analysis program. Data will be used for journal articles and academic conference presentations, and data will be destroyed after 5 years as per Western Ethics protocol.

There are no known risks for participating in this study. There may be no direct benefits, however there may be benefits to society for educators who may expand their pedagogy by employing a multiliteracies approach; this will benefit students in classrooms who are culturally and linguistically diverse and who communicate and represent knowledge in multimodal ways. It may also benefit the teaching profession by understanding what teachers need in their professional learning experiences that aid in promoting this inclusive, multiliteracies approach.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, refuse to be audio or video recorded, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status. You can volunteer for either the interviews or focus group, or both. Further, if you choose not to participate, no online data from the course observed that is created by you or referring to you will be collected or recorded in the researcher’s field notes. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research, and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Joelle Nagle at [joelle@uwo.ca] or Rachel Heydon at [rachel@uwo.ca].

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Joelle Nagle
B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., OCT
CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): _________________________________________________

I agree to be video-recorded    Y           N
I agree to be audio-recorded Y           N

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________________

Researcher Name: _________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________________
Dear Participant,

My name is Joelle Nagle and I am a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the professional learning experiences of educators who are participating in programs with a focus on Multiliteracies, and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The aims of this study are to explore and understand the lived curriculum and experiences of educators participating in both an online graduate program in Literacy Education, and in a Bachelor of Education program course in Language Arts.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in 1 semi-structured interview (approximately 30-45 minutes in length). In the interview you will be asked to talk about: How you envisioned/intended the course to be implemented into practice and your goals for your students in the course.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only and neither your name nor information, which could identify you, will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all aspects of data collection, and will be audio recorded for transcription purposes. The data will be stored on an encoded university website and secure qualitative data analysis program. Data will be used for journal articles and academic conference presentations, and data will be destroyed after 5 years as per Western Ethics protocol.

There are no known risks for participating in this study. There may be no direct benefits, however there may be benefits to society for educators who may expand their pedagogy by employing a multiliteracies approach; this will benefit students in classrooms who are culturally and linguistically diverse and who communicate and represent knowledge in multimodal ways. It may also benefit the teaching profession by understanding what teachers need in their professional learning experiences that aid in promoting this inclusive, multiliteracies approach.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to
answer any questions, refuse to be audio or video recorded, or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status. Further, if you choose not to participate, no online data from the course observed that is created by you or referring to you will be collected or recorded in the researcher’s field notes. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research, and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Joelle Nagle at [joelle@uwo.ca] or Rachel Heydon at [rheydon@uwo.ca] This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Joelle Nagle  
B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., OCT
Multiliteracies in Teacher Professional Learning

Joelle Nagle
Western University

Dr. Rachel Heydon
Western University

Dr. Zheng Zhang
Western University

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): _________________________________________________

I agree to be audio-recorded    Y    N

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________________

Researcher Name: _________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________________
Appendix C

Interview Protocol: Course Coordinator and Program Manager

Preservice Course in Language Arts, Bachelor of Education Program: Coordinator

1. Why create a course on Multiliteracies in the teacher education course for preservice students not majoring in elementary education or literacy specifically?
2. How does this course fit into the Bachelor of Education program as a whole?
3. What were your goals for creating the course? What were the outcomes for students?
4. What do you identify as the learning needs of students in this program? In what ways was the course designed to meet the learning needs of students?
5. What relationship do you see between the course outcomes and how teachers will potentially use multiliteracies in their daily practice?
6. How does your course fit into the scope and sequence of the program?
7. How were the course assignments chosen and how will these assignments help students come to know multiliteracies pedagogies?

Graduate Program in Education Focused on a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Program Manager

1. Who is the target audience for this graduate program?
2. What are the goals for creating an online graduate program that focuses on literacy, and especially multiliteracies?
3. How do the specific courses within the program link together that meet the outcomes of the program?
4. What do you identify as the learning needs of students? In what ways was the program designed to meet the learning needs of students?
Appendix D

Interview Protocols: Instructors

Language Arts Course: Instructor

1. How many students do you have in your class?
2. Based on the learning expectations outlined in the course syllabus, what kinds of learning opportunities are created that help students understand multiliteracies in practice?
3. What opportunities are there for students to engage multimodality?
4. What types of design decisions do the students have in the creation of their course assignments?
5. In what ways are the students themselves able to engage in multiliteracies?
6. What challenges, if any, do you notice students experiencing when it comes to either general language arts concepts or specifically multiliteracies?

Graduate Education Program: Instructor

1. Based on the learning expectations outlined in the course syllabus, what kinds of learning opportunities are created that help students understand multiliteracies in practice?
2. What opportunities are there for students to engage multimodality?
3. What types of design decisions do the students have in the creation of their course assignments?
4. In what ways are the students themselves able to engage in multiliteracies?
Appendix E

Focal Participants: Interview One

Interview One: Preservice Educator

1. What were your experiences with literacy or language in school when you were a child? What kinds of literacy activities did you engage in?

2. How do you think your community, personal, or professional experiences shaped your perceptions of literacy?

3. Why did you decide to do your Bachelor of Education? Do you have any previous experience in teaching and how have those experiences shaped your ideas of literacy?

4. What is your subject focus in your teacher preparation program? Even if your subject focus is not in Language Arts, how will your Language Arts course inform your teaching in other content subject areas?

5. What has been your prior knowledge of Multiliteracies?

6. What types of different modalities did you engage with before you started the program?

7. Describe your initial philosophy of literacy teaching at the beginning of the BEd program.

8. Is there anything you’d like to ask me or add to our discussion?

Interview One: In-service Educator

1. What were your experiences with literacy or language in school when you were a child? What kinds of literacy activities did you engage in?
2. How have your prior experiences with content-area classes, other than Language Arts, such as science or math, shaped your perceptions of literacy pedagogy?

3. How has your community, personal, or professional experiences shaped your perceptions of literacy pedagogy?

4. What have been your teaching experiences with literacy?

5. How long have you been teaching?

6. What was your subject focus in your teacher preparation program? What was the teacher preparation program like for literacy and/or Language Arts?

7. Describe your philosophy of literacy teaching.

8. What is your prior knowledge of Multiliteracies?

9. What types of professional development in language and literacy have you been offered and participated in? What were your experiences with this PD?

10. Why did you decide to participate in the online graduate program with a focus in multiliteracies?

11. Is there anything you’d like to ask me or add to our discussion?
Appendix F

Focal Participants: Interview Two

Interview Two: Preservice Educator

1. What have been your experiences within the Language Arts course thus far?

2. What opportunities have there been to engage in multimodality within the course? In other courses?

3. What are your experiences within the program, specifically in participating in the course with your peers and your instructor?

4. What have been your experiences with teaching literacy so far?

5. In your opinion, in what ways are your practicum teaching experiences in literacy similar or different to what you are learning within the Language Arts course?

6. How do your practicum experience reflect, if at all, the tenets of multiliteracies?

7. In what ways have you noticed your practicum teachers trying to make connections between a students’ home and community lifeworld and their experiences within your classroom?

8. How do you see your practicum teachers address issues of diversity and equity?

9. What are the opportunities you have experienced for students to engage in critical pedagogy?

10. How do you perceive the development of your personal pedagogy/practice to be a direct result (if at all) to your involvement in the Language Arts course?
Interview Two: In-service Educator

1. What have been your experiences within the program thus far? What courses have you taken and what were your experiences within them?

2. What opportunities have there been to engage in multimodality either in the online interaction or with your own course work/designs?

3. What modalities were you familiar with and had experience with, and what new modalities were you introduced to through the program?

4. What are your experiences within the program, specifically in participating in the courses online: with your peers and your professor?

5. In your opinion, in what ways is your teaching of literacy similar or different to other teachers in your division?

6. In what ways do you try to make connections between a students’ home and community lifeworld and their experiences within your classroom?

7. How do you address issues of diversity and equity?

8. What changes in your pedagogy do you perceive to be as a result of your involvement in the online graduate program?

9. What other professional development or professional learning are you participating in currently?
Appendix G
Focal Participants: Interview Three

Interview Three: Preservice Educator

1. What were your experiences with literacy teaching in your practicum, and in what ways, if at all, did these experiences align with your literacy learning at the faculty?

2. In what ways, if at all, were you able to use multiliteracies pedagogy in your teaching? What, if any, are the concepts of Multiliteracies pedagogy that you may struggle to incorporate into your practice? Why?

3. What are the most important aspects/components of Multiliteracies for you as you become a new teacher?

4. What are some aspects of Multiliteracies pedagogy or theory, if any, that you still find troublesome or challenging? Or that you found most challenging while in your program?

5. Do you think learning about Multiliteracies pedagogy was a transformative learning experience for you, why or why not?

6. In what ways do you think your peers were instrumental in helping you understand multiliteracies?

7. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experiences within the program?

Interview Three: In-service Educator

1. Do you think learning about Multiliteracies pedagogy was a transformative learning experience for you, why or why not?

2. What are the most important aspects/components of Multiliteracies for you?

3. What, if any, are the concepts of Multiliteracies pedagogy that you struggle to incorporate into your practice? Why?
4. What are some aspects of Multiliteracies pedagogy or theory, if any, that you still find troublesome or challenging? Or that you found most challenging while in your program?

5. How would you explain Multiliteracies (e.g., to a colleague)?

6. What were the opportunities to engage in critical framing within the courses you participated in, and how do you approach this aspect of Multiliteracies pedagogy in your teaching practice?

7. In what ways, if any, has your participation in the online graduate program, engaging with a community of learners, transformed your teaching practice?

8. Do you think your peers were instrumental in helping you understand multiliteracies? If so, how and in what ways, and if you think this was a transformative experience (or that multiliteracies transformed your practice) did you peers contribute to this perceived change?

9. In what ways, if at all, have your peers, as your online learning community, been able to provide support for you now that the program is over?

10. Other than your peers in the program, are there other colleagues you work with that provided you with support in your teaching practice? How and in what ways?

11. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your experiences within the program?
Curriculum Vitae

Name: Joelle Nagle

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:

University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Western University
London, Ontario, Canada
M.Ed. (2009)

University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, Canada
B.Ed. (2001)

University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, Canada
B.A. (1999)

Related Work Experience:

Sessional Instructor, Faculty of Education
Western University
2015-2016; 2018-2020

Sessional Instructor, Faculty of Education
University of Windsor
2018-2020

Sessional Instructor, Academic Studies
St. Clair College, Chatham
2016
Sessional Instructor, School of Language and Liberal Studies
Fanshawe College
2015

Classroom Teacher
Brant Haldimand-Norfolk CDSB
2001-2003
Waterloo CDSB
2003-2006

Windsor-Essex CDSB (Occasional Teacher)
2009-2013

Publications:


