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Mills, Kathy A. (2006) Critical Framing in a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies. In *Proceedings Australian Literacy Educator's Association/ Australian Association of the Teaching of English National Conference 2006: Voices, Vibes, Visions, Darwin.*

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Critical Framing in a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

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Abstract

Recent research and educational policies have alerted teachers to the importance of multiliteracies. Communication in society today is characterised by rapidly changing and emergent forms of meaning-making in a context of increased cultural and linguistic diversity. This paper responds to these imperatives, discussing key findings of a critical ethnography concerning interactions between pedagogy and access to multiliteracies among culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Data collection involved 18 days of lesson observations in a year six classroom over 10 weeks using field and journal notes, continuous audio-visual and audio recording, and the collection of cultural artefacts. Semi-structured interviewing was also conducted with the teacher, principal, and students. The data analytic tools included low and high inference coding and pragmatic horizon analysis. The findings concerned the use of critical framing – an important component of the multiliteracies pedagogy. The teacher's enactment of this pedagogy had a significant influence on the learners' ability to access Claymation movie designing. The conclusion addresses relevant literature concerning how to apply the multiliteracies pedagogy to enable meaningful designing.

The teacher of a grade six class had engaged her students in a shared reading of an illustrated Big Book entitled, *Lester and Clyde*, by James Reece (1976). This was followed by a guided discussion of the multimodal text.

Teacher: This author wrote a lovely book about two fat frogs who had a fight, because he wants you to get the point about not polluting the earth. Do you agree with him?

Children: Yes!

Teacher: You do agree? You don't have to. You don't have to agree with the author. That's the beauty of books. Do you agree that we should stop polluting?

This paper reports significant findings of a study that investigated a teacher's enactment of the multiliteracies pedagogy in the context of a series of media-based lessons in which students designed Claymation movies. The pedagogy of the New London Group involves four related components: Situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (New London Group, 2000). Situated practice involves building on the lifeworld experiences of students, situating meaning making in real world contexts. Overt instruction guides students to use an explicit metalanguage of design. Critical framing enables students to critically analyse and interpret the social and cultural context and the political, ideological, and value-centred purposes of texts. This practice stems from critical literacy, but is not synonymous with it (for work on critical literacy, see: Comber & Simpson, 2001; Knobel & Healy, 1998; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel, & Searle, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Luke, Comber, & Grant, 2003). Transformed practice occurs when students transform existing meanings to design new meanings (New London Group, 1996). A range of linguistic, visual,

auditory, gestural, and spatial modes are utilised when implementing the pedagogy, with the goal of enabling students to design hybrid texts for a diversity of real, cultural purposes (for more on the multiliteracies pedagogy see: Cope & Kalantzis, 2000a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; New London Group, 1996, 2000).

The focus of this paper is a teacher's use of critical framing and students' access to multiliteracies observed in a culturally and linguistically diverse class. The reporting of this research is timely, because the multiliteracies pedagogy, first conceived by the New London Group (1996) and further developed by Cope and Kalantzis (2000b), is already an important part of Australian educational policy initiatives and is being enacted in schools (e.g. Anstey, 2002; Board of Teacher Registration Queensland, 2001; Queensland Studies Authority, 2005). Furthermore, all syllabi across the six states and territories in Australia make reference to multimodal texts and the need for students to use texts for a variety of social purposes (see: ACT Department of Education and Training, 2001; Board of Studies New South Wales, 1998; Department of Education and Training Western Australia, 2005; Department of Education Tasmania, 2004; Department of Employment Education and Training Northern Territory, 2005; South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services, 2004; Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2005).

In 1996, the term "multiliteracies" was coined by the New London Group in a seminal article published in the *Harvard Educational Review*. Multiliteracies concerns rapidly changing forms of communication & meaning-making tied to mass media, multimedia, and the Internet. There is an increasing plurality of text forms that are often multimodal, that is, they combine words with visual, audio, spatial, and gestural modes to communicate meaning in a richer way (New London Group, 1996). Multiliteracies also concerns cultural and linguistic diversity and the wider circulation and variety of texts that result. This is a response to the movement of people and information across national boundaries, resulting in cultural globalisation. As society is becoming more globally connected, diversity within local contexts is increasing (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000b).

These changes to the global context have important consequences for the goals and pedagogy of literacy education, which should reflect the textual practices of the wider community. Students today will enter universities and a labour market that are fast becoming globalised. Students require competence in a growing range of meaning-making systems, such as internet transactions, website critique and construction, film and media, spreadsheets and databases, and PowerPoint presentations. These examples

point to the need for fresh approaches to literacy pedagogy and research (Kalantzis, Cope, & Fehring, 2002)

Kalantzis and Cope (2005) have recently extended the multiliteracies pedagogy through the Learning by Design model. The core knowledge processes – experiencing, conceptualising, analysing and applying – follow Kolb (1984), and Bernice McCarthy’s (1987) 4MAT model. The original model moved through four distinct phases of the learning cycle using both right and left-brain strategies for knowing. It was constructed along two continua, namely perceiving and processing. Perceiving occurs in an infinite variety of ways that range from experiencing to conceptualising, while processing occurs in ways that extend from analysing to applying. Similar models of cognitive processing have been devised by Herrmann (1989), and Atkin (1994).

The four ways of knowing have been extended to eight subcategories by Kalantzis and Cope (2005), and are intended to correlate to each of the four curriculum orientations of the multiliteracies pedagogy discussed above (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.72).

1. Experiencing: a) the known, and b) the new
2. Conceptualising: a) naming concepts, and b) theorising
3. Analysing: a) functionally, and b) critically
4. Applying: a) appropriately, and b) creatively

Experiencing involves personal engagement in sensations, emotions, physical memories, involvement of the self, and immersion in the human and natural world. Conceptualising is the translation and synthesis of experiences, conceptual forms, language, and symbols into abstract generalisations. Analysing is the transformation of knowledge by ordering, reflecting on, and interpreting the underlying rationale for particular designs and representations. Applying is the experiential application of internal thought processes to external situations in the world by testing the world and adapting knowledge to multiple, ambiguous situations (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). These knowledge processes are intended to enable teachers to analyse the learning that occurs when a pedagogy of multiliteracies is implemented.

Of the four main knowledge processes in the Learning by Design model, “analysing” is of most relevance to this paper. This is because the effectiveness of “critical framing” in the multiliteracies pedagogy is measured by students’ ability to analyse designs. Kalantzis and Cope (2005) further distinguish the knowledge processes as “analysing functionally” and “analysing critically”. Analysing functionally examines the functions of a design, considering its structure, connections, context, and causes and effects. Conversely, analysing critically examines the intentions of the designer of a text

(Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.96). Therefore, findings are reported here in relation to the degree to which the teacher's enactment of critical framing in the multiliteracies pedagogy enabled learners to "analyse" designs both "critically" and "functionally", applying both forms of analysis to their own and others' Claymation movie designs.

Research Site

The criterion for site selection was a culturally and linguistically heterogeneous student cohort in order to examine the multiliteracies pedagogy in a local context of diversity (New London Group, 2000). The research site was a year six classroom (aged 11-12yrs) in a suburban state school, preschool to year seven, in Southeast Queensland, Australia. The school was situated in a low socio-economic area, and twenty-five nationalities were represented in the student cohort. Eight percent of the school's clientele were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is significantly higher than the national figure from the most recent Australian Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003). The principal of the school was informed about current policy developments and professional development opportunities in multiliteracies, and sought to broaden the range of multiliteracies taught in the school.

A professional development coordinator in multiliteracies from a university identified potential teacher participants for this research through a multiliteracies project jointly funded by the Department of Education Queensland and a local learning and development centre. Participants were emailed to see if they were willing to be contacted by the researcher. A pilot study was conducted to trial the research methods and to identify a suitable teacher participant. The selected teacher participant had received professional development in multiliteracies through the Learning by Design project coordinated by original members of the New London Group – Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (2005, p.179). The teacher emphasised her belief in the significance of multiliteracies and the need for its application to the wider school locale.

The observed grade six class was streamed by the school administration on the basis of results in the standardised *Queensland Year Five Test in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy* (Queensland Studies Authority, 2002). The class was composed of twenty-three lowest-achieving students – eight females and fifteen males. The twenty-three students were divided into six small groups to design a collaborative, clay animation movie. Of the twenty-three students, eight average-achieving students in literacy were grouped together rather than integrated with the fifteen, low-achieving students because of the timetabling and streaming arrangements. The fifteen, low-achieving students were divided into male or mixed gender groups.

Research Design

The overall design of the study was an adaptation of Carspecken's (1996; 2001; 1992) critical ethnography, which builds on the work of Habermas (1981; 1987). Stage one of this critical ethnography involved eighteen days of monological or observational data collection over the course of ten weeks in the multiliteracies classroom. The interactions in the collaborative groups operating simultaneously were recorded on multiple audiovisual and audio recording devices. Stage two was the initial analysis of data, including verbatim transcribing, coding and applying analytic tools to the monological data (outlined below). Stage three triangulated observational data with dialogical data, which involved 45 minute, semi-structured interviews with the principal, teacher, and a group of four students of Anglo-Australian, Thai, Sudanese, and Aboriginal ethnicity. The criterion for student selection was cultural and linguistic heterogeneity in order to examine the multiliteracies pedagogy in a local context of diversity (New London Group, 2000). Informal discussion with participants was also recorded. Dialogical data were transcribed and analysed using the analytic tools used in stage two, comparing observational and interview data. In stage four, the classroom data were interpreted in the light of macro-theories about society & extant literature about multiliteracies.

Data collection tools used during the lesson observations included field notes to record verbatim speech, less rich journalistic notes to record information unobtrusively soon after the events, and continuous audio cassette and audio-visual recording to replay action and speech events after leaving the field. Cultural artefacts were collected such as school policy documents, CD-ROMs of the Claymation movies, and photographs. Data analytic tools included low and high inference coding. Low-level inferences were couched in *in vivo* terms, members' own terms, rather than the researcher's sociological terms. A list of raw codes and their reference details were compiled and later reorganised multiple times into progressively tighter hierarchical schemes. Carspecken's (1996) pragmatic horizon analysis, a detailed analytic tool that draws upon Habermas' (1981; 1987) *Theory of Communicative Action*, was applied to relevant segments of the data.

Description of Lesson Sequence

The lessons applied the multiliteracies pedagogy involving situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (New London Group, 1996). The aim was to enable learners to collaboratively design a Claymation movie - an animation process in which static clay figurines are manipulated and digitally filmed to produce a sequence of images of lifelike movement. The process occurs by shooting a single frame, moving the object slightly, and then taking another photograph. When the film

runs continuously, it appears that the objects move by themselves. Famous Claymation productions include the *Wallace and Gromit* films and *Chicken Run*.

The movie-making technique involved planning a storyboard, sculpting plasticine characters, designing miniature, three-dimensional movie sets, filming using a digital camera, and combining music or recorded script with the film clips. After filming, the students digitally edited the movies with teacher assistance using Clip Movie software. The movies were presented using Quick Time Pro software and a data projector. The students were required to effectively communicate an educational message to their "buddies" in the preparatory year level (age 4 _-5). The movies were also presented at a school event for the parent community, having real, cultural purposes, and demonstrating the transformation of resources to create original, hybrid texts. See Figure 1.0 for a schedule of lessons.

Claymation Movie-Making	Design	Time
View Claymation Movies Teacher displays movies from other students and discusses the strengths and weaknesses.	Visual/Audio/ Gestural/ Spatial	1 hr
Critiquing Claymation Movies Teacher guides students to analyse critically and functionally the Claymation movie "Chicken Run"	Visual/Audio/ Gestural/ Spatial	1 hr
Storyboard Discuss plan for movie plot, scenes, characters. Allocate roles. Record ideas using picture frames and labels. List materials required. Movie title.	Linguistic/ Audio/Visual	2 _ hrs per group
Set Design Plan & create 3D dioramas with backdrop, stage, & props using real objects & mixed media	Visual, Spatial	4 hrs
Character Design Create 3D characters by sculpting plasticine on wooden figures or by using mixed media	Visual, Spatial, Gestural	2 hrs
Rehearsing Rehearse movements, photo schedule & set up filming area, match set proportions to camera angles.	Gestural, Spatial, Visual	1 _ hrs
Filming Take 60-200 digital photos of the set/s using a tripod while moving the characters and objects gradually. Control lighting, change expressions and gestures of characters. Close ups & long shots.	Visual, Spatial, Digital Gestural	2-4 hrs
Sound Rehearse script, select music files, record sound digitally using computer and microphone.	Linguistic/ Audio/ Digital	2 hrs
Digital Editing Special effects, subtitles, title pages, movie credits, backgrounds, combine images & sound.	Digital/ Spatial Visual' Linguistic	_ h r per
Presenting movies		3 hrs

Figure 1.0 Schedule of Lessons

Findings

The findings reported here concern the teacher's enactment of critical framing, which involves interpreting the social, cultural, historical, political, ideological and value-centred relations of particular designs of meaning and textual practices (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; New London Group, 2000). Neither immersion in situated practice, nor overt instruction, specifically gives priority to the critical and cultural understandings addressed in the critical framing component of the multiliteracies pedagogy. Immersion and overt instruction pedagogy alone become socialising agents that render learners uncritical and unconscious of the cultural location of designs of meaning and social practices (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000). In critical framing, students are guided to analyse designs critically in relation to whose interests are served by the meanings (ideology), and by considering the audience to whom the meanings are directed. Learners consider how these meanings relate to the cultural and social context of designs. Furthermore, students must interpret how the immediate functions, structure, and design elements of the text work within larger social and cultural contexts to communicate the intended meanings of the designer (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; Kalantzis & Cope, 2005).

During critical framing, the way in which the teacher guides learners to interrogate the local and global functions and contexts of designs is important. For example, in the pilot study associated with this research, the teacher guided students to analyse a segment of a TV program in which nutritionists evaluated take-away choices in a shopping centre food court. Students were asked to identify the intended audience and challenge the bias associated with the sponsoring organisation. The effectiveness of critical framing is measured by the degree to which students can utilise information through questioning and critique of texts and their affiliated social formations, ideologies and value-centred purposes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; New London Group, 2000)

Several lessons were observed in which the teacher prompted students to analyse critically the cultural location of designs and practices in relation to the workings of power, ideology and values (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). This was demonstrated in a lesson in which students viewed the popular Claymation movie *Chicken Run*.

Video Transcript 7

147 Teacher: When the door opened and Mrs. Tweedie was standing there, the light spilled out onto the steps... Why did they use the lighting in that way? ...What effect did it give her that she was in shadow and the bright light coming behind her when it panned up her leg?

- 148 Jack¹: Strong
 149 Teacher: Yeah, it made her look powerful...!
 150 Ted: Scary
 151 Teacher: She did look a bit scary. Ok....How did the creators show that Mrs. Tweedie was in power? How did they show that she was the boss, Sean?
 152 Sean: The expression
 153 Teacher: The expression on her face. Did you hear the dog yelp? The door opened and the dog went...
 154 Ted: [barks]
 155 Teacher: Yeah, and did a little yelp – which means that he was definitely scared. What did you think?
 156 Darles: She had her hand on her hip.
 157 Teacher: Her hands were on her hip. Her body language showed that she was really very important.
 158 Damien: She yelled, “What is this chicken doing here?”
 159 Teacher: So, what she said was important.
 160 Robyn: You could see her face and her head.
 161 Teacher: Think of the angle. Where was she? Where are they [the chickens]? What did the creators do to make her look more powerful, Warren?
 162 Warren: Looking up [camera angle]
 163 Teacher: They were looking up at her, and she was looking...?
 164 Students: Down
 165 Teacher: Down....which made them look as if they were quite small.

The teacher used a series of critical questions to draw the learners’ attention to the particular multimodal design elements to communicate power. Learners were guided to analyse critically and functionally the representation of power through lighting and shadows (Lines 147-150), facial expressions (Lines 151-153, 160) and bodily movements or gestures (Line 156-157). They also analysed functionally the audio design elements (Lines 153-155), speech (Lines 158-159), and spatial elements, such as camera angles, spatial relations between characters, and how the viewer is positioned (Lines 161-165). The following is another powerful example of the teacher’s use of critical framing to guide learners to analyse critically the implicit ideology or values in texts.

Video Transcript 7

- 109 Teacher: What is the message that the movie creators are trying to get across to you? What does he really want you to think about during this movie, Warren?
 110 Warren: Not to stop trying
 111 Teacher: You’re not to stop trying. Don’t give up. Oh – excellent! What’s the other message do you think?

¹ All names in this paper are pseudonyms to maintain privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. The research from which this paper was drawn received ethical clearance from the Queensland University of Technology University Human Research Ethics Committee (Queensland University of Technology, 1999).

- 112 Child: They are prisoners.
113 Teacher: That the chickens are prisoners! What else, Ted?
114 Ted: That the chickens want to get free.
115 Teacher: To free the chickens. Do you think that is why they made the movie – to try to make you think about chickens that are in captivity?
116 Child: Don't lock chickens up.
117 Teacher: Don't lock chickens up. Where do you get your eggs from?
118 Children: Chickens
119 Children: Chickens in farms
120 Teacher: Are there chicken farms where chickens are allowed to run free?
121 Child: Yes

In this interaction, learners were required to analyse the intentions and interests of the designers of this movie. The learners gained access to designs of meaning by considering whose point of view or perspective was represented, whose interests were served, and what social and environmental consequences followed. The learners were assisted to analyse critically the social and environmental issue of animal captivity and the way viewers were positioned to empathise with the characters of *Chicken Run*. This was one of many instances in which the teacher stimulated students to analyse representations by making explicit the values inscribed in the text. When reading the Big Book *Lester and Clyde* (Reece, 1976) the teacher asked:

So why do you think that the author of this story was writing about two frogs living in a beautiful pool, and then one going away and finding a polluted pool? What was the message he was trying to get across to the people who read this book?

Within this lesson, the teacher restated the global message of the text, and challenged the assumptions of the author, taking the analysis further by stimulating alternate perspectives. This is illustrated in the transcript that introduced this paper, when the teacher asked the students if they agreed with the author that we should stop polluting.

- 231 Teacher: You don't have to agree with the author. That's the beauty of books. Do you agree that we should stop polluting?

Implicit in this pedagogy is the recognition that literacy is a social practice, ideologically linked to social power, and it should be researched with a critical dimension that calls into question ideological and social relations. The teacher's enactment of critical framing emphasised the social, cultural and ideological work of texts, modelling the critique of texts and their affiliated social formations and cultural assumptions (Luke, 1994, p.144; West, 1992, p.16). Texts were shown to represent particular points of view that silence other voices and are open to critique (Muspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997). In the teacher's questioning on many occasions, literacy was not regarded as an independent variable, but as inseparable from social practices and their effects, embedded within larger social contexts. Students were guided to see how designs of meaning are culturally specific, serving particular social and political purposes.

The second type of critical analysis involved identifying the immediate function of multimodal designs by analysing the use of particular design elements to effectively communicate meaning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). For example, in this lesson, the teacher guided learners to analyse functionally the intended audience of the movie *Chicken Run*.

Video Transcript 7

- 122 Teacher: All right, who was the movie audience? Jed.
123 Jed: Family
124 Teacher: The family
125 Bradley: Everybody
126 Teacher: Everyone in the family

The learners were guided to identify the overall function of the text and its representation of meaning. Again, the teacher guided the whole class to analyse critically the intended audience of the picture book *Lester and Clyde* and the axiological interpretation of the value of text.

Video Transcript 3

- 229 Teacher: Do you think this is a book worth reading to the other children?
230 Children: Yes
231 Teacher: Who else should read this book? Jared?
232 Jared: Adults
233 Teacher: Adults should read this book?
234 Rhonda: Everyone should. And like that pond – that’s how our earth will end up.

The teacher challenged the learners to make a subjective evaluation of the book’s value or worth, encouraging alternative reading positions and practices for questioning and critiquing texts. The learners concluded that the message of the text – not to pollute the earth – is a message also applicable to adults (Line 234-236). Rather than considering texts to have one meaning and unlocking the “correct meaning” of texts, the learners were encouraged to find multiple readings of the text. When alternative reading positions and practices for questioning and critiquing texts and their social assumptions are suppressed, teachers assume a reproductive model of meaning. Without critical pedagogy of this kind, comprehension becomes cultural assimilation, bringing readers’ epistemologies into critical alignment with those of a corpus of historically valued knowledge (Luke, 1994, p.144; New London Group, 2000, p.32).

A related and important finding was that the learners were frequently encouraged to stand back from their own design choices, considering their multimodal texts critically in relation to both forms of critical analysis. For example, the teacher assisted students

to analyse functionally the visual and audio design elements in relation to the message for the intended audiences of their movies.

Video Transcript 13, Section 1

- 619 Teacher: Who's going to be looking at this?
620 Bradley: We've got prep buddies!
621 Teacher: So do they know that this is a spoiler and that that's the exhaust?
Do you understand what I'm trying to encourage you to think?

Video Transcript 18

- 124 Teacher: Are you happy with that?
125 Girls: [nod]
126 Teacher: Are you sure? Do you think people would understand what you are saying, 'cause, remember – this is playing when your photos are coming up slowly at the end. So do you need to speak quickly?

The teacher encouraged learners to analyse the functional relationship between the duration of audio and moving visual images so that the modes were combined effectively. In this way, critical framing was closely linked to transformed practice, and critical framing became grounded in everyday social purposes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, pp.35, 240). [0]Through the enactment of critical framing, learners began to independently analyse their own designs functionally, recognising that the textual features of their own designs were not isolated from social meanings, but carry meaning primarily through their embeddedness in the wider system of meaning making and textual practice (Heath, 1999, p.103; Street, 1984; Wagner, 1987). For example, several boys designed an educational movie called *Slip, Slap, Slap*. In the following transcript, they analyse the clarity of the visual design elements of their storyboard in the context of the social purpose of their design.

Video Transcript 8, Section 3

- 86 Nick: What's that coming out of the shore?
87 Mark: Why don't we make that an illusion - where it's just a big rock?
88 Nick: What do you think?
89 Jack: I'm thinking...I don't think the prep kids would understand that.
90 Nick: Oh yeah!
91 Matthew: Good point
92 Mark: Yeah, good point [laughs]

Jack, as an expert novice, focused the group's attention on analysing how everyday designs of meaning and discourses work to communicate certain interests for certain audiences and cultural purposes. The teacher's consistent modelling of critical processes had empowered these learners to analyse independently how their own multimodal designs situate readers. Designs of meaning were understood by students to be culturally specific, serving particular social purposes.

Conclusion

Critical framing was the pedagogical strength of the teacher's enactment of the multiliteracies pedagogy, and this had important interactions with the learners' ability to access designs of meaning by relating meanings to their social and cultural contexts and purposes.

Firstly, learners were beginning to analyse critically the human intentions and interests, the underlying social, cultural, ideological, political, and value-laden assumptions of designs, and the workings of power. They were encouraged to consider multiple readings of texts and alternate points of view rather than unlocking or reproducing the "correct meaning". Secondly, they were able to access the structure, function, connections and contexts of design of meaning by analysing texts functionally. Finally, students were principally able to combine both of forms of analysing – critical and functional – to the cultural purposes and meanings of their own multimodal designs (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.21). Critical framing became linked to transformed practice, and was grounded in everyday social purposes, as intended by the multiliteracies pedagogy (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.35, pp.240).

The successful enactment of critical framing in this study serves as an example of how to enable students to interpret the social and cultural contexts of particular designs (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000). An outcome of critical framing in a pedagogy of multiliteracies should be the ability to analyse the general function or purpose of a text, making causal connections between its design elements ("analysing functionally")(Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). Of equal importance is the ability to analyse the explicit and implicit motives, agendas and actions behind a piece of knowledge ("analysing critically")(Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). The strength of the effective enactment of critical framing in this study was the linking of critical framing to the other three components of pedagogy – overt instruction, situated practice and transformed practice. For example, students were able to stand back from the design process to analyse both functionally and critically the purposes, context and connections of their own transformed designs (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.21).

The findings in this paper are important because this represents the first ethnographic research to investigate the effectiveness of the multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group, in particular, its critical framing component, in a culturally diverse classroom. Furthermore, the recently published Learning by Design framework by Kalantzis and Cope (2005), which is intended to supplement the multiliteracies pedagogy, was applied as a useful tool for analysis of the students' learning. In the difficult translation of pedagogical theory to teachers' praxis, studies that provide

explicit documentation of teachers' successful work in classrooms, particularly where cultural and linguistic differences between the learners abound, remain scarce. Such research is important in the light of educational policies, such as the English syllabi across the six states and territories in Australia that address the critical analysis of multimodal texts. The findings here provide exemplar practices for teachers who seek to address the current educational guidelines. As other teachers implement the multiliteracies pedagogy, it is hoped that they too will experience the deep satisfaction of seeing students engage more consciously in critical and reflective learning in the context of designing multimodal texts for varied cultural purposes.

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