

“IT’S NOT *JUST* A PICTURE BOOK!”: EXPANDING IDEAS OF MULTILITERACIES THROUGH THE CREATION AND ASSESSMENT OF A MULTIMODAL ASSIGNMENT

CLAIRE AHN, REBECCA S. EVANS, JANE CHIN *Queen’s University*

Article History: Submitted 07 Sep 2022 | Accepted 12 Jan 2024 | Published 13 Jul 2026

ABSTRACT. Grounded in a multiliteracies framework, this article interweaves the authors’ experiences through narrative inquiry, exploring the integrating of multimodal texts and multimodal approaches of assessment within their practice. The article is organized as a conversation between two educators and a former student, and is centred around a multimodal assignment in a secondary English teacher education class that asked teacher candidates to create a digital picture book and use video annotation in peer assessment. Our shared conversation highlights the importance of multimodal texts such as sophisticated picture books in the secondary English classrooms, as well as thinking about alternative multimodal approaches to assessment.

« CE N’EST PAS *QU’UN* LIVRE ILLUSTRÉ ! » : ÉLARGISSEMENT DE LA CONCEPTION DES LITTÉRATIES MULTIPLES GRÂCE À LA CRÉATION ET À L’ÉVALUATION D’UN DEVOIR MULTIMODAL

RÉSUMÉ. S’appuyant sur un cadre théorique axé sur les littératies multiples, cet article entremêle les expériences des autrices à travers une démarche narrative, explorant l’intégration de textes multimodaux et d’approches d’évaluation multimodales dans leur pratique. Cet article prend la forme d’une conversation entre deux enseignantes et une ancienne étudiante, et porte sur un projet multimodal réalisé dans le cadre d’un cours de formation des personnes enseignantes d’anglais au secondaire, dans lequel les futures enseignantes devaient créer un livre numérique illustré et utiliser l’annotation vidéo pour l’évaluation par les pairs. Notre conversation met en évidence l’importance des textes multimodaux, tels que les livres illustrés sophistiqués, dans les cours d’anglais du secondaire, ainsi que l’importance de réfléchir à d’autres approches multimodales en matière d’évaluation.

© 2026 McGill Journal of Education / Revue des sciences de l’éducation de McGill. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License ([CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)).

The New London Group (1996) coined the term *multiliteracies*, with one of their key notions being *multimodality* (Dallacqua, et al., 2015), which stresses that we engage with multiple modes of reading and understanding. Examples of multimodal texts include graphic novels and film, and are increasingly recognized by English educators as invaluable resources for teaching about content and literary devices such as foreshadowing and irony (Dallacqua, et al., 2015). One multimodal genre that is rarely introduced in secondary classrooms is the picture book because such texts are often viewed as not being rigorous enough (Clarke & Broders, 2022). Yet, sophisticated forms of picture books can offer “gentle entry points” to introduce youth to important social justice issues and complex ideas (Clarke & Broders, 2022, p. 149). We argue that it is not so much about reading and analyzing picture books, but engaging students in a creative process grounded in what the New London Group (1996) refer to as *transformed practice*, in which students can apply newly learned skills and then demonstrate what they learned. We also highlight the value of multimodal approaches to peer assessment in the English classroom.

To begin, we provide some context around the assignment that the two authors of this article, Claire Ahn and Jane Chin, implemented in the course that they taught. The course assignment invited secondary English teacher candidates (TCs) to create a picture book using a digital tool and to peer assess books using video annotation software (VAS). We then ground our discussion in key aspects of the multiliteracies framework (New London Group, 1996), focusing on multimodal approaches. The final section provides a brief overview of our methodology: narrative inquiry. We position our methodology section in such a way so that it precedes and helps to introduce our narrative dialogue between the two educators, Claire and Jane, and one of Claire’s former students, Becca Evans, where we discuss the importance of the picture book assignment. The data presented in this article represents our collective memories and a descriptive (re)telling of our experiences through narrative.

CONTEXT: THE CLASS AND THE ASSIGNMENT

Claire and Jane both have decades of experience as secondary English language arts teachers (Grades 9–12) in Canada. They bring their experiences into one of the university classes they both teach, a required methodology course for all secondary English TCs in a Bachelor of Education program at a university in southeastern Ontario. The full-year course is structured such that TCs are first introduced (September–December) to more traditional ideas of teaching English such as choosing and vetting resources; teaching novels, poetry, and short stories; and

considering the value of different pedagogical approaches such as literature circles. For Claire and Jane, this underpinning is necessary for TCs to first be able to apply their learning during their first practicum experience (October–November), but to also then be able to consider alternative forms of literacy and texts. In the second term (January–April), the focus of the course is on multiliteracies; some of the topics include the integration of graphic novels, picture books, and film, as well as developing critical digital literacy skills. One of the main assignments for the second term is for students to create a picture book on a topic of their choice (appropriate for a high school audience), to use a digital application of their choice (e.g., PowerPoint, Canva, Book Creator, iMovie) to present the book, and to peer assess the book and presentation using a VAS program called WeVu.¹ At the time, we chose VAS to introduce TCs to an alternative approach for students to not just complete presentations but also to consider different and more engaging approaches to assessment.

MULTILITERACIES: THE VALUE OF DIGITAL PICTURE BOOK CREATION AND PEER ASSESSMENT

In their groundbreaking article, the New London Group (1996) noted that the ways in which people were communicating and engaging with literacy and text were shifting due in great part to technological advancements. The term “multiliteracies” was introduced as a literary and pedagogical theory to highlight the importance of multimodal ways of meaning-making along with the need to increase diverse perspectives in the classroom. We acknowledge that the New London Group’s article now seems dated, and there have been more recent extensions of their work (e.g., Clarke & Broders, 2022; Dallacqua et al., 2015). However, we believe that the concepts the New London Group proposed still hold true today, and what is needed is to continue to acknowledge their original work while advancing discussions in related fields, such as with the ideas presented in this article. The edited volume by Serafini and Gee (2017) titled *Remixing Multiliteracies: Theory and Practice from New London to New Times* highlights the importance of introducing multimodal theories and frameworks, as they point out how scholars have extended the New London Group’s ideas through, for example, considering video games and social media. In relation to the context of this article, Serafini and Reid (2022) developed specific multimodal analytic frameworks for contemporary picture books that can be used in the secondary classroom to read and analyze picture books.

As noted earlier, it is not just about reading and analyzing books but engaging in the process of creation or what the New London Group (1996)

refer to as the design and transformed practice. They observed that “the design of meaning occurred in the act of interpreting texts as well as creating them, a point often overlooked” (p. 4). Serafini and Gee (2017) posit, however, that the notion of design and transformed practice requires more attention. Further, what appears to be limited in discussions of multiliteracies are notions of integrating multimodal approaches to peer assessment that can afford invaluable opportunities to not just heighten students’ digital literacy skills (e.g., awareness of navigating certain platforms) but also to develop important communication skills using multimodal platforms such as VAS.

Our discussion is thus firmly rooted in the original notion of multiliteracies, with the intent of complementing the field with an innovative approach to multimodal praxis. What follows is an overview of the notion of multiliteracies, particularly in relation to multimodality, with a focus on picture books and approaches to peer assessment.

Multiliteracies and picture books

The importance of including a variety of genres of texts has been stressed time and time again for English educators. This emphasis is often seen in curricular documents and related expectations such as in the secondary English (Grades 9–12) curricular documents mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007a, 2007b). However, upon reviewing these documents, references to “picture books” are only included twice in the Grade 9 and 10 documents, one as a prompt to develop reading comprehension and the other as an example of “forms of literary text” (2007a, p. 113). In the recently revised Grade 9 de-streamed curricular documents, there appears to be no explicit mention of picture books other than as an example of a multimodal text in the glossary, with many of the specific expectations providing vague directions to integrating what they refer to as different “text forms” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023); arguably, most of the expectations and examples still point to more traditional forms of reading and writing. “Picture book” is only mentioned once in the current Grade 11 and 12 documents as an example of a type of text. At the secondary level, including sophisticated picture books or even the creation of picture books is often viewed as not being at grade-level (Clarke & Broders, 2022). Yet, the complexities of a good picture book cannot be dismissed. In fact, picture books that engage readers in print text and visual images are much more complex than reading traditional print novels (Serafini, 2011; Smith & Pole, 2018), as they require critical engagement with multiple modes in order to understand the story and also be aware of the nuanced effects of the combined modes.

In the last decade, there has been an increase in the publication of sophisticated picture books, some of which might be considered to be more suited for secondary students. Referred to often as post-modern picture books, these picture books "highlight design features such as strategic text placement, varied font sizes, dimensionality of illustrations, non-traditional plot structure, all of which invite readers to read complex text in strategic ways" (Ciecierski et al., 2017, p. 124). *Black and White* (1990), an award-winning book by David Macaulay, exemplifies such a structure; each page of the book includes four panel plots that read as individual stories, but also intersect to contribute to one main storyline. The book combines a complex plot and use of subtle visual images or cues that help connect all the stories together but require careful notice of the details. The intricacies of the book are very subtle, and while the book can be read in an elementary classroom, the complexities of the book may be best appreciated by secondary students. Other sophisticated book titles include Shaun Tan's wordless book *The Arrival* (2006) and *The Rabbits* (2003), or Margaret Wild's *The Fox* (2001) and *Woolvs in the Sitee* (2007). Wild's books also play with the visualness of textual fonts, deploying visual semiotic tools onto the overall meaning or theme of the book.

While reading diverse genres of books is important, it is equally as important to engage students in the processes of creation. As most English teachers are aware, we are expected to place a high value on students writing the "perfect" paragraph or five-paragraph essay to not only develop good writing skills but to also be more critical readers. However, less attention is placed on the creation of other genres such as picture books, and perhaps even less so on the creation of digital picture books. We argue that the creation of a good picture book requires a high level of creativity and critical thinking. How can we effectively guide students to develop their critical visual literacy skills, for example, if they are not invited to create various kinds of multimodal texts? Engagement in the creation of design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) is an important pedagogical component. The New London Group shared four pedagogical steps. In our experience, these steps do not always occur in a linear fashion, but are more fluid and should be viewed, perhaps, more as a spiral where the educator can move up and down as needed. The four steps outlined by the New London Group (1996) are:

1. Situated practice: educators draw upon students' background knowledge, experiences, and interests.
2. Overt instruction: guided instruction from the teacher.

3. Critical framing: opportunities for students to analyze or reflect and apply their learning.
4. Transformative practice: extending beyond application of learning to transform their learning by engaging in creative processes to create something new.

Transformative practice is often the most difficult and the least likely step to be implemented in the classroom (Serafini & Gee, 2017). But this step, what Cope and Kalantzis (2009) refer to as the “the redesigned” (pp. 176–177), is important in the development of students’ critical analytical skills, especially when it comes to multimodal texts and digital media. This idea of engaging students in the process is not new. Theorists such as John Dewey long advocated for students to be engaged in this way because it not only results in more lasting effects on learning, but can also enhance critical skills (Cunningham, 2009).

In line with the New London Group, creating picture books affords opportunities for students to broaden perspectives, including raising their awareness of important social justice issues. While many picture books are short in length, “they have tremendous potential for being complex and inspiring sophisticated thinking” (Ciecierski et al., 2017, p. 133), offering highly accessible and engaging opportunities for youth to begin exploring “deeper issues related to social justice and equity” (Clarke & Broders, 2022, p. 149). Many of these topics are difficult and challenging, but introducing literature can provide a much needed segue. Specifically, for the secondary English classroom, reading or creating sophisticated picture books can open larger, more challenging critical discussions about important social justice issues. The abovementioned titles by Tan and Wild, for instance, integrate important social justice topics. In Tan’s book *The Arrival* there are strong themes of immigration, sacrifice, strength of family and friendships, and issues related to trauma. Tan’s book *The Rabbits* speaks to the history and ongoing issues of colonization and its continuing effects on the environment. Wild’s *Woolus in the Sitee* explores issues of anxiety and survival in an apocalyptic environment. For their books, many of the TCs in Claire’s and Jane’s classes chose topics such as climate change, depression, hidden exceptionalities, LGBTQ+ issues, racism, Islamophobia, and decolonization. After completing this assignment, students realized that the creating and reading of multimodal texts offers accessible opportunities for discussing difficult and important social justice topics.

Multiliteracies and assessment

Claire and Jane decided to integrate WeVu, a VAS, into their multimodal assignment. Students video recorded their presentation, uploaded it to WeVu, and provided feedback in WeVu on their partners' picture book and elements of the presentation. VAS continues to evolve to facilitate student interaction with video content and other learners, especially in online and blended learning contexts (Mirriahi et al., 2016). Many such platforms exist, although how the user interacts with the software differs depending on the design. What most hold in common is time-coded recordings that enable users to annotate or comment on a video at a specific point in time (Evi-Colombo et al., 2020). While Becca will elaborate more on using WeVu in later sections, Figure 1 shows a screenshot of Becca's opening page on WeVu. The uploaded video is located in the centre, and upon pressing play the video begins. At any time, users are able to write a comment in the box directly below the video; when users provide comments, the video pauses and the user then presses play again to continue. While we could not share all the peer feedback in the image below due to ethics, one can see in the "Comment Map" the orange stripes that indicate where most of the comments were written; the darker the colour, the greater number of comments in that section of the video. Becca was also able to reply to the feedback, which is reflected in blue stripes in her account.

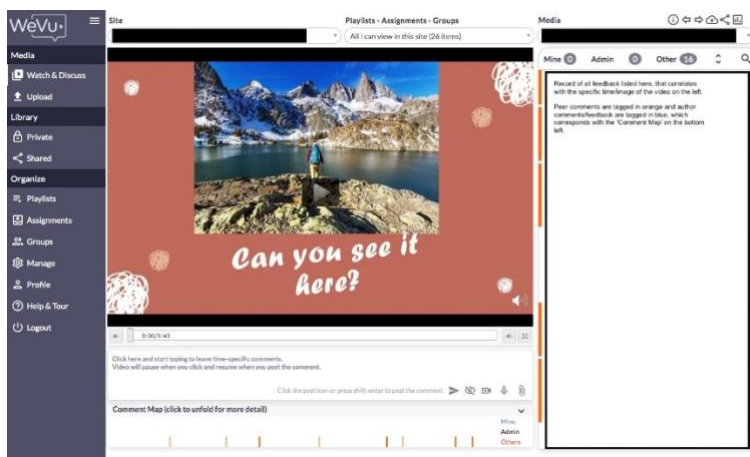


FIGURE 1. Screenshot of Becca Evans' WeVu account and title page of her digital picture book. Photo: Trip Tips (n.d.).

Since this screenshot (and others below) were taken from Becca's account, we are only able to view the layout from an administrative perspective and so are not able to see the blue stripes. Feedback from students other than Becca has been removed or redacted for anonymity.

As tools such as WeVu anchor annotations to a segment of video, they allow for granular analysis and multiple convergent conversations (Colasante, et al., 2014). VAS design characteristics, the pedagogical design, the use of scaffolding, and the availability of guidance from instructors all play important roles in supporting positive learning outcomes (Evi-Colombo et al., 2020). Currently, VAS is predominately used in higher education settings (Yousef et al., 2014) across multiple disciplines such as medical education (Colasante et al., 2014), teacher education (McFadden et al., 2014; Ellis et al., 2015), and the performing arts (Mirriahi et al., 2016). Some teacher education programs implement VAS, but it is primarily used to facilitate reflective thinking and support feedback cycles during teaching practicums (Mirriahi et al., 2016). Yet, considering the benefits of VAS, its implementation in other in-class activities with TCs or even in high school classrooms is presently very limited to nonexistent. Our purpose in highlighting video annotation is to draw educators' attention to the benefits of VAS and to consider its implications for classroom use. Implementing tools such as WeVu not only develops students' critical digital literacy skills, but also can develop and enhance different forms of communication skills such as working in groups and developing the ability to provide and respond to constructive feedback.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY: ENGAGING IN THOUGHTFUL CONTEMPLATION ABOUT MULTILITERACY PRACTICES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Teaching often requires many opportunities for reflection to consider how our pedagogical practices can be improved to continue to better support the academic success of our students. Many educators, ourselves included, engage in these reflective processes individually and collaboratively (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). These conversations can occur in a purposeful manner (e.g., professional development days and department meetings), as well as in informal, casual conversations (e.g., after a class, "hallway conversations," and text messages).

Reflection through story enables teachers to connect to others through shared experiences and understandings. As educators, our professional lives and identities are often shaped through shared narratives of our praxis, where these stories can be "first and foremost a way of thinking

about experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477) and so are "well suited to addressing the complexities and subtleties of human experience in teaching and learning" (Mertova & Webster, 2020, p. 1). Storying can happen through self-reflexive or collaborative communications where we think about questions such as "Do I do enough to facilitate learning?" (Mertova & Webster, 2020, p. 39). It is through our narratives in this article that we aim to "embody and convey meaning," thus "provid[ing] an important way to think about curriculum and teaching" (Eisner, 1988, p. x). Such a narrative process is accompanied by "an ease [and] a relatability ... to connect with and share experiences through (re)telling stories" (Pillay et al., 2022, pp. 4-5), thus better resonating with other educators.

What follows is a narrative dialogue where Claire, Jane, and Becca share their thoughts, perspectives, and experiences and discuss the value of the digital storybook assignment, including its assessment process. After Claire and Jane first implemented the newer multimodal version of this assignment, they too engaged in a narrative dialogic reflection, and through their collective experiences both realized the value of implementing video annotation as an alternative method for engaging students in peer assessment.

The inspiration

JANE CHIN: Upon completion of my doctoral research on multiliteracies, I was grappling with ways to introduce this "new" way of thinking about literacy to secondary English TCs. I wondered about how I could move beyond just telling my teacher candidates about the use of multiple genres and modes of communication to create one message — and actually show them?

Inspiration struck me with the picture book *Adventures of Cow* (2005) by Lori Korchek and illustrated by Marshall Taylor, which was a gift to my young son who was 4 years old at the time. The book is about a toy cow who is trying to find its way home, but during the journey needs to find direction from different animals. However, when the cow asks a group of cats for directions, the image shows a group of ducks. It was upon reading this book every night and being met with my son's uproarious laughter that I realized that this book was the perfect model for showing multiliteracies. The book is not funny if you just read the words, or if you just look at the pictures — the humour relies on the interplay between both; yet there are still three distinct stories. I found my multiliteracy assignment hidden in a silly children's book! A multimodal literacy activity should offer both theoretical insights and important shifts in instructional

planning and practice for beginning teachers responsible for adolescent literacy instruction. Hence the digital story book assignment was born, and aptly referred to as “The Cow Book” assignment, both in honour of the inspiration, and as a reminder to teacher candidates of the important nuances (which can be humorous) of multimodal picture books.

CLAIRE AHN: When I started working with Jane and she first introduced the assignment, the book, and story with her son, I was immediately hooked. And I LOVE the actual book; it is so funny! One might think that a group of secondary teacher candidates may not appreciate this book or find the book funny especially because it is much more of a “kids’ book,” but whenever I read the book to my class as an introduction to the assignment, they absolutely loved it because it shows, as Jane mentions, the nuanced interplay of multiple modes at play that contribute to the overall mood and theme of the book. While “elementary,” the book serves as a really quick and accessible reminder for teacher candidates about the interplay of three different stories.

Connecting to pedagogy

JANE: Prior to The Cow Book assignment, talking about multiliteracies in the classroom was largely theoretical. It was great in theory but how would it be assessed? How would we possibly report on multiple genres at the same time? What kind of classroom literacy assignment could we possibly do? The Cow Book assignment, as alluded to in earlier sections of this article, engaged teacher candidates in the creation process, in the “doing” rather than just in the reading and talking. I was not expecting the task to be quite as challenging as it was in those early days. Teacher candidates loved the challenge but grappled with how to use the interplay between words and images to communicate a third message. Their overwhelming responses were that if they had to just talk about it, that was easy. But it was in the making of their own Cow Books that they really began to understand the nuanced differences involved in communicating using multiple forms or genres.

CLAIRE: I have to agree with Jane. Still, many students underestimate the complexity of creating a picture book. Part of the idea that picture books are “simple” and “not at grade level” for secondary students is perhaps part of the reasons why many secondary English teachers still do not include them in their classrooms, though this does seem to be changing. The creation of the picture books also allowed many of our students to think more critically about the choices they were making that would contribute to the overall intention of the book, whether it was to teach a lesson about a social justice topic, to highlight the irony, or to create a surprise ending;

they realized through this process the importance of engaging in this kind of creation, especially if they want to develop their students' critical media or digital literacy skills.

BECCA EVANS: Creating my Cow Book was a *very* complex process. I was worried about doing an assignment that was unlike any other in my academic journey up until that point. I felt very self-conscious about my idea because I was in a more serious place at the time. I was preparing to work in an English as a second language (ESL) class that was predominately composed of new students who spoke Somali and Arabic and were just beginning to learn English. I was thinking about the different journeys these students had taken to get to high school. I wanted my message to portray hope, beauty, love, or spirit and hold the lesson that such a sentiment can sometimes be more powerfully felt by a child. And that the child's view holds power. No English words fully captured the sentiment I wanted to convey. It felt like any word I tried lessened the meaning. That is when I had my multiliteracies epiphany. I did not need the perfect word. My images would transcend the written language barrier. I titled my book *Can you see it?* and started planning out how I would set up the pages and build the storyline.

I decided to use photos (both my own and that were part of Creative Commons), and I decided, too, that the book would be a conversation between a child and an adult. At the beginning, the child is questioning the adult and asking if they can see "it" in different evocative images (e.g., a beautiful olive tree, an orchard in blossom). Halfway through, the adult starts to hesitate in their responses as the images become more bleak (e.g., a garbage dump, a boy walking in solitude). I chose different fonts and colours to differentiate between the child and adult. At the start of the book, the child's text starts at the top, asking the question to the adult whose text appears at the bottom. Halfway through, to reflect the idea that the child can now see "it" and the adult no longer can, I chose to switch the placement of the text to reflect how the adult becomes the questioner, and the child offers the answer. I really had to think about how to show who was speaking without using a lot of words (see Figure 2). This assignment challenged me in a number of ways. I understood the idea that images stay with us longer than words, but I was not used to including visuals in storytelling formats. I struggled to include images to tell part of the story, but as I kept planning and creating it seemed more manageable. In the end, it was really useful for me to think about how to use images in a powerful way.

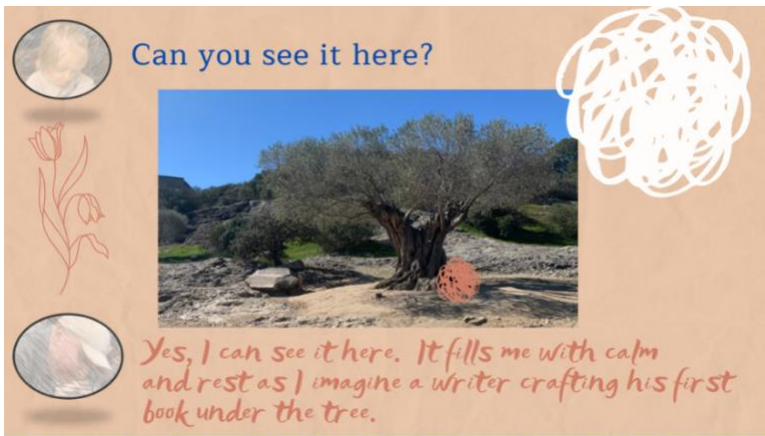


FIGURE 2. From page 5 of Becca Evans' book, *Can you see it?* – Child questions adult. Photo taken by Becca Evans.

Cow Book 2.0: The assessment reboot

JANE: Jumping from the descriptions that have been provided already above, when we had to move to online learning during the first COVID lockdown (April 2020), we were really taking a chance on using WeVu. I had never used it before or anything similar.

CLAIRE: Yes, Jane was really trusting me with this! I had some ideas of how it might work; however, we were really going in blind, but we were both willing to try it out and see, and make adjustments or scrap it the next year.

JANE: While I had to learn about a new program and also guide students through the process, the outcome was much more beneficial than I had expected. After our students completed all components of the assignment, they all mentioned that they really enjoyed using WeVu. Many commented that it was very user friendly, that navigating the site was very intuitive. But what they mostly appreciated was the ability to provide time-specific comments (see Figure 3).

CLAIRE: Yes, my students said the same as well; that especially with assessing formats such as videos in such a way was very helpful because as the creator you knew exactly what the assessor was referring to. I think many also appreciated that the platform also gave them time to pause and really think about their comments! Many students mentioned that when they read or view texts, they often need time to think about the ideas to

formulate a thoughtful response where in-person presentations, for example, often do not provide this kind of space.

JANE: I agree, and I also found that because of the benefit of time, the ability to pause and think and work at one's own space, the feedback was so thoughtful, more so than when we had students complete in-person feedback in conference-type settings in previous years. The quality of feedback seemed to be better and definitely more constructive using WeVu for this assignment.

CLAIRE: And it allowed for the more quiet students to be able to contribute more as well! While we may not always have the opportunity to "pause and think" in providing feedback, affording these types of opportunities not just in an education course but in secondary classrooms can begin to scaffold and develop these kinds of skills.

BECCA: Yes! I definitely felt that it was easier to contribute. Using WeVu was a great fit. Like Claire and Jane mentioned, I benefited from having an opportunity to pause and think about my peers' work before providing feedback. I would sometimes go back to my lecture notes on multiliteracies before responding to someone's book. I kept my comments professional, but admittedly, I made many aesthetic comments, like "love this" or simply "ha ha" because it was fun to just play around because the platform felt like a social media forum, so it took some self-discipline.

CLAIRE: Great self-discipline, Becca! I did notice a few other students provide some "gut responses" such as to beautiful drawings or funny remarks or to include a simple "LOL," which was also great to see! It seemed like the class was engaging in a conversation about the book, which we do not often see in formal types of assessment in face-to-face classes.

BECCA: To further echo Claire and Jane's comments, I felt WeVu facilitated deeper self-reflection and better targeted constructive feedback. It was also much easier to give feedback than in a live setting because my comments could easily be contextualized, and I did not have to scramble at the end of a live presentation, for example, to make sense of my notes. I realized through this process that I was able to comment more thoughtfully on assessment strategies, scaffolding techniques, and spin off assignments, versus writing a quick generic comment.

My peers offered ideas of how I could further integrate my book and also asked prodding questions about my choice to assess content, which helped me think more thoroughly about what scaffolding I would need to prepare my students for such an assignment. As I played my video back after it was reviewed, I could see my peers' inserted annotations come up in sequence. I could also respond at the same point in time on the video. It felt very collaborative. In Figure 3, in the right hand column, you can see two of my responses.

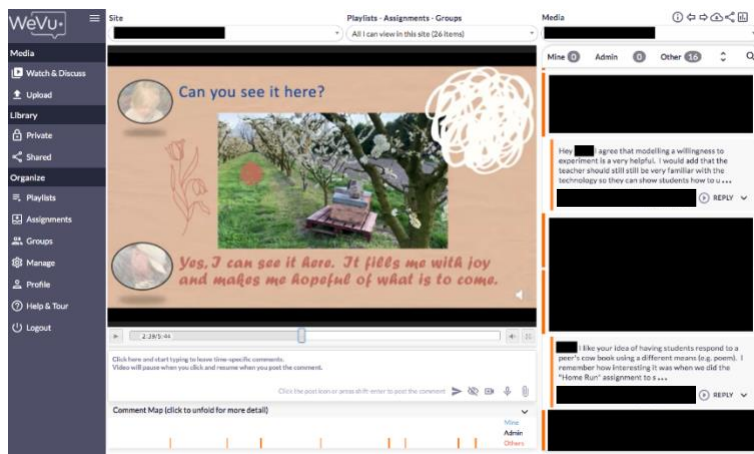


FIGURE 3. Becca's screenshot her responding to peer feedback on WeVu.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We have shared our experiences here with the hopes of (re)highlighting the New London Group's (1996) notion of multiliteracies by providing more recent and relevant approaches to integrating multimodal assignments and assessments practices. We hope to have been able to inspire English educators to more seriously consider the benefits of integrating sophisticated picture books in their classrooms, specifically to invite their students to create multimodal picture books. As discussed throughout, picture books offer a stepping stone and gentle entry into larger, more complex topics, many of which our students are exposed to and engage with every day. Engaging students in alternative, multimodal ways of assessment can also have much more far reaching and lasting impacts than the more traditional forms.

As we have shared, not all educators may be aware of how to integrate multiliteracy pedagogy and/or multimodal texts and text creation in meaningful ways; it is very challenging. Further, more often than not,

preliminary understandings of multiliteracies tend to be associated with technology, whereas, as shared in this article, multiliteracies is far more than simply using technology. It involves considering the interplay of multiple modes of meaning in both digital and more traditional texts (e.g., picture books), engaging students in the creation processes of designing such texts, and providing opportunities to understand challenging and complex social justice topics. Implementing multimodal approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment can support students in becoming critical thinkers, thoughtful collaborators, and responsible advocates and allies.

NOTES

1. Since the time of writing this article, unfortunately the WeVu platform is no longer available.

REFERENCES

- Ciecierski, L., Nageldinger, J., Bintz, W. P., & Moore, S. D. (2017). New perspectives on picture books. *Athens Journal of Education*, 4(2), 123–136. <https://www.athensjournals.gr/education/2017-4-2-2-Ciecierski.pdf>
- Clarke, C., & Broders, J. A. (2022). The benefits of using picture books in high school classrooms: A study of two Canadian schools. *Teachers and Teaching*, 28(2), 149–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2022.2058482>
- Colasante, M., Kimpton, A., Hallam, J. (2014). A curriculum model to promote (chiropractic) clinical thinking with video-case annotation. In M. Gosper & D. Ifenthaler (Eds.), *Curriculum models for the 21st century: Using learning technologies in higher education* (pp. 181–210). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-7366-4_10
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (3rd ed., pp. 477–489). Routledge.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. Teachers College Press.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4, 164–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15544800903076044>
- Cunningham, C. A. (2009). Transforming schooling through technology: Twenty-first-century approaches to participatory learning. *Education and Culture*, 25(2), 46–61. <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/eandc/vol25/iss2/art6/>
- Dallacqua, A. K., Kersten, S., & Rhoades, M. (2015). Using Shaun Tan's work to foster multiliteracies in 21st-century classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(2), 207–217. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1395>
- Eisner, E. W. (1988). Forward. F. M. Connelly & D. J. Clandinin (Eds.), *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience* (pp. ix–xi). Teachers College Press.

- Ellis, J., McFadden, J., Anwar, T., & Roehrig, G. (2015). Investigating the social interactions of beginning teachers using a video annotation tool. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 15(3), 404-421. <https://citejournal.org/volume-15/issue-3-15/general/investigating-the-social-interactions-of-beginning-teachers-using-a-video-annotation-tool/>
- Evi-Colombo, A., Cattaneo, A., & Bétrancourt, M. (2020). Technical and pedagogical affordances of video annotation: A literature review. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 29(3), 193-226. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/215718/>
- Korchek, L. (2005). *Adventures of cow* (M. Taylor, Illus.). Tricycle Press.
- McFadden, J., Ellis, J., Anwar, T., Roehrig, G. (2014). Beginning science teachers' use of a digital video annotation tool to promote reflective practices. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 23(3), 458-470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-013-9476-2>
- Mertova, P., & Webster, L. (2020). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to critical event narrative analysis in research, teaching and professional practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Mirriahi, N., Liaqat, D., Dawson, S., & Gašević, D. (2016). Uncovering student learning profiles with a video annotation tool: Reflective learning with and without instructional norms. *Education Technology Research and Development*, 64(6), 1083-1106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-016-9449-2>
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2023). *The Ontario curriculum: English: Grade 9, de-streamed* (ENL1W). <https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/fbd574c4-da36-0066-a0c5-849ffb2de96e/49263d58-aae3-4fbc-9ab2-8f1f2b124a35/English9PDF.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007a). *The Ontario curriculum grades 9 and 10: English*. <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english910curr.pdf#page=70>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007b). *The Ontario curriculum grades 11 and 12: English*. <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english1112curr.pdf#page=92>
- Pillay, T., Ahn, C., Gyamerah, K., & Liu, S. (2022). Considering the role of social media: #BlackLivesMatter as a pedagogical intervention to decolonise curriculum. *London Review of Education*, 20(1), Article 14. <https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.14>
- Serafini, F. (2011). Expanding perspectives for comprehending visual images in multimodal texts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(5), 342-350. <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.54.5.4>
- Serafini, F., & Gee, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Remixing multiliteracies: Theory and practice from New London to New Times*. Teachers College Press.
- Serafini, F., & Reid, S. F. (2022). Analyzing picturebooks: Semiotic, literary, and artistic frameworks. *Visual Communication*, 23(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14703572211069623>
- Smith, J. M., & Pole, K. (2018). What's going on in a graphic novel? *The Reading Teacher*, 72(2), 169-177. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1695>
- Trip Tips. (n.d.). Roteiro. <http://triptips.com.br/roteiro/>
- Yousef, A. M. F., Chatti, M. A., & Schroeder, U. (2014). *Video-based learning: A critical analysis of the research published in 2003-2013 and future visions* [Paper presentation]. The Sixth International Conference on Mobile, Hybrid, and On-line Learning, Barcelona, Spain.

CLAIRE AHN is an associate professor of multiliteracies in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. As a former high school English teacher, part of her research focusses on exploring the integration of multimodal texts in secondary classrooms, specifically in English classrooms. She has researched and published on topics around the implementation of film analysis, the importance of critical digital and visual literacy education, the effects of media on people's understanding of issues and events, and critical social justice education. claire.ahn@queensu.ca

REBECCA S. EVANS is an academic manager in continuing teacher education in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. She completed her Bachelor of Education in English and French, focusing on multiliteracies. Rebecca teaches history of education and environmental education in teacher education. She contributes to research and publishing with the [Social Studies and History Education in the Anthropocene Network](#) and [Thinking Historically for Canada's Future](#). Rebecca is on the Board of Directors for Beyond Classrooms Kingston, which offers civic learning for young people in community spaces. Her research interests include civic learning in community organizations, youth climate action, and outdoor learning. becca.evans@queensu.ca

JANE CHIN is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Some of her work explores digital literacy, teacher education, and the evolving role of technology in learning. Before entering academia, Jane taught secondary English, where she observed the rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) beyond school walls and recognized the need to bridge students' digital lives with classroom learning. Her research and teaching focus on helping teacher candidates critically engage with digital spaces, examining how online environments shape literacy, communication, and identity. Dr. Chin is committed to preparing future educators to use technology thoughtfully, ethically, and creatively while fostering critical thinking skills that support meaningful participation in contemporary digital culture across educational and community contexts. jane.chin@queensu.ca

CLAIRE AHN est professeure associée de littératies multiples à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Queen's. En tant qu'ancienne enseignante d'anglais au secondaire, une partie de ses recherches porte sur l'intégration des textes multimodaux dans les classes du secondaire, en particulier dans les cours d'anglais. Elle a mené des recherches et publié des articles sur des thèmes tels que la mise en œuvre de l'analyse cinématographique, l'importance de l'éducation à la culture numérique et visuelle critique, l'influence des médias sur la compréhension des enjeux et des événements par le public, ainsi que l'éducation critique à la justice sociale. claire.ahn@queensu.ca

REBECCA S. EVANS est responsable pédagogique dans le domaine de la formation continue des personnes enseignantes à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Queen's, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Elle a obtenu un baccalauréat en sciences de l'éducation en anglais et en français, axé sur les compétences de littératie multiples. Rebecca enseigne l'histoire de l'éducation et l'éducation à l'environnement dans la formation des personnes enseignantes. Elle participe à des travaux de recherche et à des publications dans le cadre du [Social Studies and History Education in the Anthropocene Network](#) et du [Thinking Historically for Canada's Future](#). Rebecca siège au conseil d'administration de Beyond Classrooms Kingston, une association qui propose des activités d'éducation civique aux jeunes dans des lieux communautaires. Ses recherches portent notamment sur l'éducation civique au sein des associations locales, l'engagement des jeunes pour le climat et l'apprentissage en plein air. becca.evans@queensu.ca

JANE CHIN est professeure associée à la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Queen's. Une partie de ses travaux porte sur la culture numérique, la formation des personnes enseignantes et l'évolution du rôle de la technologie dans l'apprentissage. Avant de se lancer dans une carrière universitaire, Jane enseignait l'anglais au secondaire, où elle a constaté l'essor fulgurant des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) au-delà des murs de l'école et s'est rendu compte de la nécessité de faire un lien entre la vie numérique des élèves et leur apprentissage en classe. Ses travaux de recherche et son enseignement visent à aider les futures personnes enseignantes à aborder les espaces numériques avec un regard critique, en analysant la manière dont les environnements en ligne influencent la littératie, la communication et l'identité. Dre Chin s'engage à former les futures personnes enseignantes à utiliser les technologies de manière réfléchie, éthique et créative, tout en développant leur esprit critique afin de leur permettre de s'impliquer pleinement dans la culture numérique contemporaine, tant dans le milieu éducatif qu'au sein de la communauté. jane.chin@queensu.ca