

# **Lights, Camera, Re/Action: Exploring Transformative Music Engagement Through Music Video Production with Inner-city Youth**

by

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MMus., Thames Valley University, 1999

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## Abstract

This research brings together two contemporary ideas in classroom music pedagogy: the use of multimodal composing practices involving collaborative music video production (MVP), and the creation of a learner-centered and youth-led environment for fostering transformative music engagement (TME). The main aim of this research is to explore the learning processes, multimodal composing practices, and transformative engagement of ten young music artists (aged 13-16 years) as they participate in a 12-week music video production (MVP) program. Specifically, the research aims to: 1) identify the practices and learning opportunities that emerge through the MVP program, 2) examine the affordances of multimodal composing practices using MVP, and 3) explore the potential of transformative music engagement as an approach to music pedagogy that is capable of fostering a sense of agency, autonomy, and empowerment among music learners.

To address these aims, the study uses a practical action research design, which affords an opportunity to enrich MVP pedagogies and improve the work of the researcher-teacher as an MVP educator. A qualitative constructivist approach was used to examine the process and emergent outcomes of the MVP program. A multimodal microanalysis was used to analyze the completed music videos and the constant comparative method was used to analyze structured interviews with eight of the participants.

Findings indicate that MVP students are empowered, inspired, and engaged as active agents within the creative collaborations that occur within all stages of music video production. MVP processes and technologies were found to be autonomous, providing music learners with the freedom and control to create music videos that reflect not only each student's individual voice, but also the beliefs and values of the entire class. The music video as a *musical production* provides opportunities for students to express their ideas in a unique manner that would not be possible within songwriting or music composition alone. These affordances also create expansive learning opportunities associated with transformative music engagement, with prominent characteristics including agency, autonomy, and empowerment. It is also hoped that the research will forge new ground and further our understanding of the composing practices occurring within collaborative music video production with youth.

**Keywords:** Music video production, multimodal composing practices, transformative music engagement, multimodal social semiotics, music pedagogy

## **Dedication**

To Blake Dobie, my partner in crime, the love of my life, and my best friend.

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## List of Acronyms

DSLR	Digital single-lens reflex camera (also called a digital SLR)
MVP	Music video production
SFU	Simon Fraser University
TME	Transformative music engagement

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

### 1.1. Overview

This research brings together two contemporary ideas in classroom music pedagogy: the use of multimodal composing practices involving collaborative music video production (MVP), and the creation of a learner-centered and youth-led environment for fostering transformative music engagement (TME). The main aim of this research is to explore the learning processes, multimodal composing practices, and transformative engagement of ten young music artists (aged 13-16 years) as they participate in a 12-week music video production (MVP) program. Specifically, the research aims to: 1) identify the practices and learning opportunities that emerge through the MVP program, 2) examine the affordances of multimodal composing practices using MVP, and 3) explore the potential of transformative music engagement as an approach to music pedagogy that is capable of fostering a sense of agency, autonomy, and empowerment among music learners.

To address these aims, the study uses a *practical action research* design (Schmuck, 1997), which Schmuck conceptualizes as “a design in action research in which educators study a specific school situation with a view towards improving practice” (as cited in Creswell, 2008, p. 600). As a practicing music educator, I am interested in improving both my students’ learning and my own professional practice. Using a practical action research design affords an opportunity to enrich MVP pedagogies to enhance and improve on my work as an MVP educator. My role of teacher-researcher in this research facilitated an inquiry process involving both reflective practice (Brookfield, 1998) in my teaching and reflexivity (McKernan, 1991) in my research. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) point out, teachers’ questions do not arise solely from theory or

practice but from “critical reflection on the intersection of the two” (p. 6). The study uses a *qualitative approach to research based on a social constructivist* (Creswell, 2008) perspective to examine the process and emergent outcomes of the MVP program. This approach is based on three assumptions: 1) as we engage with the world we construct our own meanings and interpretations, 2) the sense we make of the world is based on our own historical and cultural backgrounds, and 3) meaning is generated through social interactions with others in our community. These assumptions underpin the qualitative approach used in this research in three main areas: 1) by creating opportunities for participants to share their own views, 2) by considering the context in which the MVP program takes place and the role of the researcher in shaping the interpretations provided, and 3) by generating meaning through a mostly inductive or emergent process that was responsive to both the educational program and the study process. Few studies have examined MVP with a focus on both pedagogical approaches and learner engagement. It is hoped that this research will address this gap in the literature and broaden the scope on classroom practices and pedagogy for engaging young people effectively in collaborative music video production. It is also hoped that the research will forge new ground and further our understanding of the composing practices occurring within collaborative music video production with youth.

## **1.2. Research Context**

This research explores multimodal composing practices within a particular form and medium (music video production), music genre (popular music), and music practice (songwriting). An original song, written by one of the research participants entitled “It’ll Never Be” provides the departure point for research that explores how ten young music students engage in the development and production of a music video using an existing, pre-recorded song. The research sample consists of a group of at-risk youth within a specific educational context involving a non-profit, independent music school with classes taking place during after school hours.

The study of this local practice seeks to improve students’ learning as well as my own professional development. Designed to reflect changing attitudes within the research site, which have become increasingly aligned towards participatory or



collaborative teaching models, this practical action research design encouraged collaboration among students and the teacher-researcher. Attempting to transform educational practices within the MVP program, this small-scale systematic study afforded opportunities to explore the teacher-researcher's existing model and theory of learning using a variety of inquiry tools and qualitative data sources. Created as a pilot project in the 2012 to 2013 school year, the MVP class provided an opportunity to incorporate my expertise in youth-led video production within the popular music curricula at the research site. In reflecting upon both the shortcomings of the pilot project, as well as the various educational insights gained within the first year of my PhD studies, a curriculum for the 2013 to 2014 school year was created, functioning not only as an improved version of the pilot, but also as the host program for the research study.

My role within the study was that of active participant and reflective practitioner (McKernan, 1991). Central to the study design was a collaborative engagement with the participants, who acted as members of the research team. Participants were involved in the documentation of classroom activities using video cameras. This footage served a dual purpose: 1) gathering research data (classroom observations), and 2) engaging the students in reflecting on their own learning through the production of short behind-the-scenes documentaries or *mini-docs* that captured their MVP process. Participants were also responsible for assembling the production space for the structured interviews, which involved backdrops, lighting, and camera settings appropriate for the capture of interview footage. Including the participants within research procedures and data collection facilitated the active and informed participation of the students in the research study.

### **1.3. A Note About Terminology**

A distinction is required with regards to the use of the words *student*, *learner*, and *participant*. They serve different functions within the writing and refer to different roles within the study. When referring to the young people who are members of a class that I instruct, I refer to these individuals as my students. Here is an example of how the word *students* might be used:

- A number of my students from the MVP class expressed a desire to engage with the DSLR cameras.

When referring to a more general sense of education, using the term learners is a more appropriate choice. Here is an example of how the word *learners* might be used:

- In the 21st Century, music learners may be more engaged with technology than previous generations.

This same reasoning applies to the use of the term *learner-centred*, as compared to *student-centred*. The use of the term *learner-centred* within this research study emphasizes the pedagogical focus on participants' learning experiences.

Also relevant to this discussion is the use of the word *participant*. This term is used when relating to the individuals who participated in the research study. When describing the young people involved within the various aspects of the research, such as the interviews, production of the *It'll Never Be* music video, or the producers of the four final videos used within the analysis, the term *participants* is used to emphasize their role in the research process.

## **1.4. Research Subject Areas**

This research focuses on two main subject areas that have not featured together previously in past research: the use of multimodal composing practices involving collaborative music video production (MVP), and the creation of a learner-centered and youth-led environment for fostering transformative music engagement (TME). It was hoped that by bringing these two subject areas together, it would provide a more complete picture. Although these subject areas are interrelated processes that both inform and are informed by each other, they are separated here to clarify the assumptions and literature associated with each, which enables a closer examination of their key features.

### **1.4.1. Multimodal composing practices**

The impact of new media technologies has resulted in a generation of music learners who are creating musical texts that are becoming more multimodal than previous generations (Gall & Breeze, 2005). Today's youth are actively engaged in what

Miller and McVee (2012) refer to as *multimodal composing practices*, extending the *semiotic reach* (Kress, 2010) of music as a mode of representation and meaning making. Simply put, musical ideas can be expressed and composed through sounds, words, images, gesture, or movement, and new media technologies provide compositional resources that enable music learners to create *multimodally* across a spectrum of traditional and newly emerging genres.

#### **1.4.2. Transformative music engagement (TME)**

Personal expressions of self-awareness, captured in lyrics, melodies, and moving images can provide the musical artist with a cultural grounding and context for the world within which he or she lives. Using multiple modes, often simultaneously, songwriters now have the means to write the stories of their lives into their songs and videos, becoming producers of their own artistic development and even the creators of their own careers as musicians. As music learners begin to sense ownership of their ideas and their creative output, they also become inspired and empowered. O'Neill (2012) refers to this as a form of *transformative music engagement* — a learner-centred approach that fosters agency and empowers learners to be autonomous, self-directed learners. According to O'Neill (2014), “transformative music engagement occurs when learners reflect critically on their values and make conscious efforts to plan and implement actions that bring about new ways of transforming themselves, others, and their community in relation to the music activities they are involved in” (p. 20). Through this theoretical lens it is possible to glean possibilities for understanding and fostering among today's music learners a sense of independence, autonomy, and agency that is unprecedented in the history of music education. O'Neill (2012) also refers to transformative music engagement as capable of “acting as a vehicle or catalyst for change across a broad and diverse group of music learners” (p. 164).

The ways in which these two subject areas are related to the main factors explored in this research (program and study) will be explained in Chapter 3, where the rationale for the study follows a discussion of exiting related literature. These two subject areas are examined further in relation to the following two main research questions:

1. What are the specific semiotic affordances provided by new media technologies, and how might they best enable music learners to achieve music-oriented multimodal literacy through the production of collaborative music videos?
2. How might music video production (MVP) pedagogy provide expansive learning opportunities associated with aspects of transformative music engagement (TME)?

## **1.5. Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of eight chapters, including this introduction chapter. This section outlines the contents of each chapter, describing the literature review, methodology, data analysis, findings and interpretation, discussion and implications for music education.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide a review of relevant literature and the theoretical basis for the research. In particular, Chapter 2 focuses on multimodal social semiotics and its relationship to MVP pedagogy. Chapter 3 focuses first on literature relating to TME, followed by a justification for the research, the research purpose, and the research questions.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methods, including the objectives, learning outcomes, program development, research site and participants, data collection procedures, and issues relating to ethics, reciprocity, and trustworthiness.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide an analysis of the research data. In Chapter 5, a multimodal social semiotic approach is used to conduct a multimodal microanalysis of four music videos. In Chapter 6, the structured interviews are analysed through the lens of TME using the constant comparison method, outlining the five main themes that emerged from the analysis.

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the findings, situates them within the literature, and then describes the limitations of the research and suggests areas for future research. Critical and reflexive insights are also included within this chapter, as are the implications for education and a conclusion.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Literature Review Part 1**

#### **2.1. Multimodal Composing Practices And The Changing Landscape Of Literacy For Today's Music Learners**

The concept of literacy has evolved and changed rapidly over the past two decades (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Multimodal texts are now accessed as frequently as traditional print texts, and these new literacy practices have become a part of everyday living (Miller & McVee, 2012). Today's learners represent meaning more often in a multimodal manner than previous generations, using image, colour, and sound interchangeably and simultaneously within multimodal texts that are created using new media technologies. These new literacy practices compliment the traditional communicative medium of written text (Kress, 2010), and facilitate new ways of conceptualizing what it means to be literate in today's world. Furthermore, today's age of multimodal literacies has encouraged musicians to communicate and express ideas using multiple modes simultaneously, such as text, sound, and moving (or still) image. This has led to new understandings of what it means to be a composer or songwriter in the 21st century.

Literacy, in the current educational landscape, requires educators and their students to rethink what it means to be a creator of 'texts' and to engage in what McVee (2012) refers to as "new literacies – literacies that go beyond linguistic texts to draw across the multiple modes that we make use of every day in our attempts to understand the world" (p. x). According to this line of thinking, a text can function as a multi-faceted carrier of meaning, a tool for communicating ideas, or a multimodal ensemble. Songs are often initiated as hand-written texts, and it is now possible for music learners and amateurs to translate written texts first into sound recordings using inexpensive music

editing software. MVP technologies, such as video cameras and video editing software afford even further translations of songs into music videos, which we might refer to as visual texts. As such, the exploration of what it means to be musically literate in the age of these new literacies is of interest to both researchers and teachers in music education, and there is a need to examine the impact of multimodal composing practices on learning, creativity, and collaboration within the context of music pedagogy.

How can multimodal composing practices be incorporated into the music classroom, and how does this approach differ from traditional teaching paradigms in music education? A multimodal approach to music pedagogy provides access for all types of music learners. Miller, Thompson, Lauricella, Boyd, and McVee (2010) refer to this as *multimodal literacy pedagogy*, a new theoretical framework for teaching in 21st century classrooms. Purposeful multimodal activities have the ability to support social spaces and change classroom and learning ecologies by integrating theoretical explanations (of multimodality) with classroom practices. Multimodal literacy pedagogy incorporates youth culture and students' out-of-school identities with classroom practices and curricular design and development, creating openings for learner-centred, multimodal learning.

Bezemer and Kress (2008) reflect upon the concept of new literacies and how the writing of a text has changed profoundly for today's learners. Still and moving images have become more common carriers of meaning. Further, the design of many texts now incorporate a blending of modes such as text, imagery, sound effects, and music. These new literacy practices, explored within various academic papers, reflect a rapidly changing literary world (Kress, 2010; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008; Miller & McVee, 2012), requiring new explanations of how a text can be used socially, pedagogically, and semiotically.

In a time of such thriving media, with new and unprecedented forms of creative collaboration occurring online, it is crucial that we think about how we want to design our classroom curricula to incorporate new literacy practices. Collaborative online forums such as YouTube, Wikipedia, Facebook, Instagram, and Google are prolific web 2.0-based communities that are having a profound impact on the manner in which today's

youth exchange ideas, learn, and become literate (Bean, 2010). To address an ever more expansive conception of literacy, Bean refers not only to new literacies but also *multiple literacies*, which includes the incorporation of multimedia, the Internet, and other non-print media. Multiple literacies resources, in particular computer software for editing music and video, provide opportunities to share ideas in new and innovative ways. It is the dawning of a new age of expression and communication for today's singer-songwriters. Music artists can create and distribute their own music videos using consumer grade technology and home computers. Most of these musical practices take place outside formal or traditional music education contexts. Many young people now upload their homemade music videos to online video sharing sites such as YouTube or Vimeo. Interaction within these sites allows for members of the online world to hear and see their songs, comment and give constructive feedback, and even share the work with peers all over the world. Given the momentum and intensity of young people's engagement in creating and sharing music videos, how might these forms of multiple literacies find a place in music education alongside the strong traditions of orchestral, choral, and band paradigms? This research attempts to address this question through the development and implementation of multimodal literacy pedagogies for introducing students to composing practices using digital technology.

## **2.2. Affordances of Multimodality**

Music video production pedagogies differ from other forms of music education; they offer more potential representations of music contained within a variety of modes, such as sound, text, and image. Other secondary modes come into play as well, such as harmony, melody, orchestration, movement, colour, layout, gesture, gaze, and focus. The quantity of modes employed within the creation of a music video can far outnumber those used within the live performance of music or the sharing of a song as an audio file (i.e., on iPods or CDs). Kress (2005) defines affordances as "distinct potentials and limitations for representation of the various modes" (p. 12). He explains that some modes communicate better than others, depending on the medium and genre of the message and intentions of its creator. A music artist is capable of communicating ideas through the creation of a song, which capitalizes on the affordances of the modes of text,

sound and melody. The mode of music alone is limited in its ability to communicate specific thoughts or concepts, whereas the modes of text and speech, captured within the vocalized melodies of a song affords a more direct representation of the creator's ideas. Furthermore, the medium of the music video affords opportunities to develop and express music in more ways than the medium of music alone, affording opportunities to express ideas using the modes of text, sound, and image. The affordances of the mode of image increase the communicative potential of the product (the music video) to effectively communicate the creator's messages. Considering the number of modes employed within the production of a music video, one could state that the multimodal affordances of the music video outweigh that of the song on its own.

Within literacy education, Lloyd (2010) describes affordances as "activities and interactions" in the environment that create "invitational opportunities" (p. 168). Lloyd refers to Gibson's (1979) work as the first appearance of the term, which was used to refer to "opportunities that the setting provides, which promote interaction and action (pp. 168-169). MVP as a form of music education is capable of creating opportunities and openings within the various stages of production for agentive activities and interactions capable of facilitating transformative music engagement.

Digital editing software platforms such as Garage Band or iMovie provide users with opportunities to create compositions in multiple modes simultaneously. The affordances of these new media technologies extend the meaning-making potential within creative ventures such as the production of a music video. From written text, to sound, to moving image, and gesture, these technologies afford music artists the capacity to express themselves multimodally. Young songwriters are now able to produce their own music compositions and music videos at school using classroom-based resources, provided their instructors have the means, resources, and experience to facilitate this type of learning.

Songwriting when combined with a strong multimodal composing praxis can provide music learners with unpredicted creative autonomy, extending the semiotic reach of the songwriting medium. This research uses two versions of the term "autonomy" based on Green's concept of 'musical autonomy' versus 'personal



autonomy' (2005, p. 232). Green explains personal autonomy as independent, self-sufficient learning, whereas musical autonomy refers to students having a choice about what the music means – sometimes collectively. With musical autonomy, students are 'freed' from the social context that they are in and are able to focus on their own interpretation of what the music means to them.

Multimodal music compositions such as music videos can provide music learners with the capacity to express personal narratives, explain and make sense of their worlds, and extend compositional practices towards a place of inclusion and participation. These multimodal technologies provide opportunities to materialize expressions of musical selves, generated through inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. Music can be represented by and through a variety of genres (pop, rock, techno, jazz) and materials (lyrics, choreography, camera angles), limited only by the creativity and resourcefulness of the individual or individuals involved in the production. What it means to be a music artist is changing as a result of the multimodal affordances provided by MVP technologies, and so is the manner in which musicians share their work with audiences in this new era of digital technology and social media.

Below in Figure 1 is a simplified info graphic that illustrates Kress' (2010) concept of the semiotic reach as it relates to MVP.



**Figure 1. A simplified, linear, multimodal social semiotic representation of MVP**

If we were to apply this simplified model to a songwriter's experience within an MVP class, it would be described as follows:

The songwriter initiates the project, writing the lyrics of the song by hand in her songwriting journal. Based on these lyrics, she creates the music for the song and records the vocals and guitar parts in the recording studio, importing these audio recordings into Garage Band, where she creates an arrangement of the song that she then exports as an audio file to be used in the music video. Next, the songwriter shares her completed song arrangement with her classmates, engaging in a discourse around the personal meanings contained within the lyrics and how this might be mapped onto stories conceptualized by her classmates. In turn, the songwriter's classmates bring their own points of view and interpretations to the song's lyrics. As a class, the students create a number of scenarios that they will film and edit together in post-production. These ideas are compiled into a collection of production notes, which include the locations, casting, and planned actions for each line of the lyrics or section of the song. The students collaborate with the actors during filming, directing each of scenes listed in the production notes. A camera operator captures video footage for each scene, based on the notes and input of both the director(s) and the actors, and all of the footage is uploaded onto a database and organized into a footage library. The final stage is editing, which takes place within Final Cut Pro X. Each student, the songwriter included, uses the amassed library of video footage to edit together their own version of the story, which is exported upon its completion as a QuickTime movie file. This is then shared with peers either on a student's computer or through a third party video sharing site such as YouTube or Vimeo. If we were to simplify this process, assigning a single word to each of the graphics in the info graphic in figure 1, it would look like this: write – record – arrange – plan – direct – film – edit – share. Within this simple, general model of the MVP process, there exists numerous opportunities for self-expression within MVP. A more detailed model of MVP that illustrates this particular research study as an extension of social semiotic theory will be discussed in the findings section of this thesis.

### **2.3. Multimodal Self-expression**

Hull and Nelson (2005) explore the roles that digital multimodal texts play in real-world contexts, drawing on data from the practice of multimedia digital storytelling. The authors argue that the expressive power of multimodality resides in relationships

between and among different, co-present modes. The authors refer to music as being “pivotal as a means of expression and identification, especially for youth” (p. 252), and they explore the affordances of multimodality as an instrument for meaning making. The authors state that multimodal composing:

is not simply an additive art whereby images, words, and music, by virtue of being juxtaposed, increase the meaning-making potential of a text. Rather, we plan to demonstrate that...a multimodal text can create a different system of signification, one that transcends the collective contribution of its constituent parts. More simply put, multimodality can afford, not just a new way to make meaning, but a different kind of meaning (p. 225).

Hull and Nelson argue that working on music and image-based projects multimodally creates a unique construction of meaning; “the meaning that a viewer or listener experiences is qualitatively different, transcending what is possible via each mode separately” (p. 251). The lyrics, music, and images that contribute to a music video can be seen as providing a multimodal containment vessel for the music, with all modes working together to deliver the music to audiences. Remove any one of these modal components, and the capacity for the music video to communicate as effectively would be diminished. If we accept the premise put forward by Hull and Nelson, it could be argued that the music video, as a multimodal text, can communicate a semiotic message that is qualitatively different from that of a music track or song lyrics on their own.

Current and emerging technologies enable young music artists to construct meaningful expressions of self multimodally, integrating interpretations of past experiences, present social circumstances, and moral stances. Taylor (1989) explains the term *stance* as one’s personal opinion or outlook toward something he or she values in the world. Songwriting and music video production can provide music learners with a creative venue to express personal stances and reflect a worldview. These personal expressions of self-awareness, captured in lyrics, melodies, and moving images can provide the developing musical artist with a cultural grounding and context for representing and understanding better the world within which he or she lives.

Today's music learners are afforded opportunities to interact with music multimodally, resulting in the creation of a multimodal music text that expresses a music learner's sense of autobiographical self. For the music learner, this multimodal musical text is capable of storing a very personal form of historical self-knowledge. What a music artist knows about his or her self at the age of twelve will change and evolve into a new knowledge of self when he or she is thirteen. Captured within a music video text is an autobiographical collection of a young person's conception of self at various stages of life. What these music artists know about themselves and how they understand the world is incorporated into their multimodal composing practices.

Benson (2001) explores conceptions of place, explaining that morality occurs within a "cultural field" (p. 131) where an individual brings their "interior psychological space", which is core to their identity, using their "moral compass" when shaping the moral dimensions of self. Young music learners through their MVP praxis are capable of making strong, personal, moral expressions of self within their music videos. Through the realization or expression of their ideas within their music videos, young music artists can find a place to stand in the world. In essence, the music video becomes an extension of the reality and identity of its creator, providing a cultural field within which the artist, influenced by their moral compass, can express the sort of self they believe themselves to be. This work of art becomes a 'snapshot' of a young mind at a particular moment in time, functioning like a multimodal journal containing a young person's most personal and profound thoughts. What used to take place within the pages of traditional journals or diaries is now also taking place on computer screens within music and video editing software.

## **2.4. Youth-Produced Media Through Various Lenses**

Various publications highlighting music and video production pedagogies explore numerous research methodologies used to analyze multimodal composing practices. The mode of sound or music is often overlooked, and implications for music pedagogy are often not considered. An extensive search within the literature relating to multimodal composing practices reveals a tendency to approach such research from the point of view of visual modes and not aural ones. Still, there is much to learn from existing

research practices in this area, and how this body of literature may relate to MVP pedagogy.

Turner (2011), a multimodal media production (MMP) and multiliteracies researcher, seeks to understand the potential of media production within language and literacy learning with youth. Within a MMP course at an urban middle school in one of northern California's most impoverished, lowest performing districts, Turner explores the multimodal composing practices involved in the creation of public-service announcements (PSAs). The purpose of this course was to develop and build on students' out-of-school literacy practices by teaching them how to analyze, critique, and produce their own media. Over the duration of one school year, 20 students in an information and communication technologies (ICT) class learned how to produce multimodal media using various software and equipment. Fifteen students remained in the course for the entire school year, and seven of these participants, consisting of four boys and three girls (five African-American, one Creole and one Latino) became the focus of Turner's research, chosen because they produced the most MMPs. The students worked primarily with Mr. Soto, a 33-year-old African American public school teacher, who is also an independent hip-hop artist. The students also worked with a 'beat instructor' named B-TOWN, as well as three content area teachers during the formal school day, and 22 undergraduate tutors. The participants in this extended-day program created public-service announcements in their ICT class, learning how to use multiple modes of communication within the context of their social interactions within the MMP course.

Analysis of the research data, which consisted of pre and post surveys of all 30 students, interviews with participants and instructional staff, extensive field notes, and videotaped classroom observations, was conducted using a grounded theory approach. Turner found initially that students aptly learned and developed basic computer, Internet research, and audio-visual skills. Literacies were observed to improve as participants learned to interpret and articulate research materials used in their PSAs, and these skills and literacies were seen by participants to be translatable across different contexts both inside and outside of school. The research suggests that multimodal composing practices can be used to further students' abilities to interpret and produce texts as well

as make meaningful social connections to self and community in the process. This research also offers possible implications for music video production as a form of multimodal music education with the potential for helping music learners develop multimodal literacies while at the same time making meaningful connections between their classmates and communities. Further, various aspects of the research methodology contained within Turner's article may be applicable to the 'reading' of music videos as multimodal texts.

Ranker (2007), a media literacy scholar, explores new possibilities for literacy and inquiry-based learning through the multimodal literacy practices of a group of grade five students studying American History within their English Language Arts (ELA) program. The study focused on two girls, Nicole and Kendra, who discovered new ways of using print and digital media within their multimodal composing practices to create videos exploring African American history. Working multimodally changed the research methods and literacy processes used by the girls, who capitalized on the interrelationship between the linguistic and visual modes. Images often provided a conceptual framework for text-based research that culminated in written narratives. Similarly, initial researching and writing of scripts provided a context for the filming and importing of their skit into the video editing software. The students also employed semiotic resources as they transformed their readings into script-based narratives, and the semiotic process of transduction, a semiotic process where the meaning contained within one mode is translated into another. This afforded the moving of written meanings into the gestural and visual modes when the students performed their script for the video camera. Transduction was also observed as the girls recorded their narratives as audio recordings to accompany their images, shifting their written meanings into visual meanings.

This case study suggests learners are able to represent, organize, understand, and interact with the subject of their inquiry in a more meaningful manner by cutting across multiple semiotic modes of representation. Moving meanings from one mode to another through the process of transduction provides new ways of expressing ideas more effectively. New possibilities for literacy and inquiry-based learning, as reported

within this article, offer insights into ways that MVP learners might engage in multimodal forms of self-expression.

Halverson (2010), a researcher in the field of identity development and literacy learning through plays, films, and digital stories, explores youth-produced media using multimodal social semiotics and formal film analysis. Her approach conceptualizes youth-produced films as spaces for identity construction and representation. Halverson's case study focuses on a single youth-produced autobiographical documentary called *Rules of Engagement*, which was created at Reel Works Teen Filmmaking, a non-profit organization in New York City. Participants enter a 20-week production program called 'The Lab' where they are mentored through film production by a professional filmmaker or film editor. This out-of-school environment teaches youth about the art and craft of filmmaking, as well as the constraints and realities of production within a documentary film realm.

Attempting to understand how youth construct and represent their identities through film production, Halverson's analysis of the visual design contained within film relates to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) concept of *social semiotics*, which is a distinctive approach to semiotics that seeks to explain semiotic meaning making as a social practice. The analytical framework used by Halverson combines the social-semiotic affordances of film as a medium for meaning-making with a traditional formal analysis of films. The social-semiotic approach produced units of analysis, and the formal film analysis produced a coding scheme based on four key cinematic techniques employed by filmmakers: *mise-en-scène*<sup>1</sup>, sound, editing, and cinematography. The analysis of *Rules of Engagement* revealed how youth-produced films are capable of displaying the construction and representation of self-identities and social identities through the interactions among these filmic elements. Halverson found that encouraging participants to create autobiographical documentaries placed the development of individual identity at the center of the production process. This research illustrates how youth can engage in filmmaking activities that support inquiry-based learning and

<sup>1</sup> The Merriam-Webster encyclopedia defines *mise-en-scène* as *the physical setting of an action (as of a narrative or motion picture)*.

positive identity development. Halverson's analytic framework seeks to understand the relationship between storytelling and identity, and the larger research agenda seeks to understand how positive identity development occurs as youth learn to engage in digital storytelling.

Other educational researchers have also explored semiotic redesign in youth-produced film programs. Gilje (2010), a literacy and New Media researcher, integrates a multimodal analysis with a socio-cultural perspective on student filmmakers' composing practices, analyzing the role of semiotic tools in the film making process. Thirty-one students in a media education class at an urban, upper secondary school in Norway participated in a research project over a period of seven weeks. Gilje, in his role as a participant observer, collected various forms of data including videotaped classroom observations, reflection notes created by students, and eight completed films. Student filmmaking groups were videotaped during the preproduction and editing phases of the research.

The case study was narrowed down to a single unit, consisting of three young women and their short fiction film *Threesome*. The research study focused on the semiotic process of transduction involved in the creation of an individual scene within this student film production. The research followed a creative trajectory of a particular film sequence, which began as a written synopsis derived from the screenplay. This sequence was transduced into the mode of image as a storyboard sequence, and again into the mode of moving image. An analysis of the finished scenes from the film provided insight into the multimodal composing practices of the young filmmakers. Gilje is interested primarily in the role of new media editing software and authoring technology in youth-produced films and how the participants negotiate semiotic resources within their multimodal composing practices.

Gilje's analysis followed the process of production across different modes in the participants' filmmaking across time. The combined sociocultural and multimodal perspective aimed to understand the agency and conceptualizing occurring within the participants' composing practices. The research findings illuminated struggles experienced by the participants in transferring meaning from the written mode into the



mode of moving images. Both modes have different semiotic resources for making meaning and the students were challenged in the process of redesign required to turn the ideas represented on the page to scenes framed within the video footage. The study of transduction within music video production has become a key area of focus within my own research. I was moved to investigate whether meanings transfer in a more direct and complimentary manner if carried across semiotic modes by the addition of a musical element such as an original song.

Gibbons (2010), a media literacy researcher, further demonstrates how identity expression occurs within youth video production processes. Using social semiotics, *chronotopes*<sup>2</sup> (Bakhtin, 1981; Compton-Lilly, 2010), and “social spaces” with youth (Leander, 2002; Leander, Phillips, & Headrick Tayler, 2010) as a theoretical grounding, Gibbons argues that “identities are made possible and expressed in the interplay between the different parts of the youth video production process as youth artefacts as they move through time and space” (p. 8). Participants included numerous young people involved in a number of youth media arts organizations (YMAOs) in the United States that serve marginalized youth. Gibbons narrowed the research focus to a single Native American girl attending a youth media arts organization called *In Progress*. This three-week program took place both at the school where the workshop was held as well as within the student’s home and community. Gibbons analyzed how this participant created her videos through time and space, and how her multimodal composing practices were negotiated in the filmmaking process. The *moving artefacts* created during the production were found to capture profound moments of understanding and acknowledgement of self, providing opportunities for reflexive inquiry and personal transformation.

Of particular interest to my research was the focus on the semiotic transformations in the *kineikonic* mode (Burn & Parker, 2003), which describes the mode of the moving image. These moving images occur over time and through the

<sup>2</sup> Bakhtin (1981) gives the name chronotope “(literally, “time space”) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (p. 84). Gibbons (2010) extends this theory to explore the moving artifacts created during film production that “occur over time and through the interactions in different spaces” (p. 13).

interactions in different spaces, providing a unique perspective on multimodal semiotic analysis of video footage. This concept of the kineikonic mode provides researchers with a multimodal theory of the moving image, which may be employed as a tool for analyzing the process of social semiosis and the multimodal composing practices that occur within various forms of filmmaking. By looking deeply into the interplay of modes within youth-produced video production, the kinkeikonic mode allows the researcher to describe the grammar of the music video at any level of detail, from an individual frame to an entire filmic sequence.

Related to Burn and Parker's kineikonic mode, Gibbons' methodological framework provides an understanding of how modes inter-relate using *multimodal microanalysis* (Curwood & Gibbons, 2010), a social semiotic approach to analysing media texts which was incorporated into my analysis of the music videos created by the research participants.

Gibbons' research illuminates the ways in which youth make creative choices within their multimodal composing practices, and how identities are represented multimodally as videos. My aim as a researcher was to extend Gibbons' research by exploring the potential for TME through music video production using a similar method of analysis. It was hoped that analyzing the kinkeikonic mode within youth-produced music videos would illuminate how youth capture profound moments of understanding and acknowledgement of self whilst also providing opportunities for reflexive inquiry and personal transformation.

Other scholars have written compelling articles outlining exciting new literacy practices in the area of video production. Nixon (2013), a New Media Literacies researcher, studies collaborative digital storytelling as a critical digital literacy practice capable of supporting meaningful dialogue around issues of identity, race, ethnicity, and gender. Nixon's case study features 20 children (aged 5-11 years) from a predominantly low-income and working class community in Southern California who attend Las Redes After-School Club, an elementary school program that advocates technology practices that encourage meaningful and empowering youth-led multimodal literacy praxis. The study focused on five children (aged 6-10 years) of African American, Latino, and Pacific

Islander decent. Students collaborated on their digital stories with undergraduate Education Studies Minor students from the local university, and the children chose stories based around their interests and ideas. The children engaged in a critical discourse around identity, constructing texts that represented their selves and life interests.

Nixon, in her role as a participant-observer, collected video observations recorded during class activities, interviews with the participants, cognitive ethnographies<sup>3</sup> created by the undergraduate students reflecting upon their collaborative activity with the children, reflexive letters written by the students, and the digital stories created within the project. The data collected served to answer the following research questions:

- What are the benefits and limitations of digital storytelling on youth identity play within the settings of a collaborative, media-rich learning environment?
- How can digital storytelling, as a digital literacy practice, be a tool for helping children to engage in critical dialogue around issues of race, ethnicity, and gender?

The iterative, non-linear analysis included a focus on “multimodality as a method and text within the social organization and learning of digital storytelling activities” (p. 147). Nixon analyzed the ways in which dialogues unfolded around issues of identity, race, ethnicity, and gender during classroom activities. The students’ multimodal composing practices illuminated identity themes within the various artefacts created during the digital storytelling process which were then analyzed and coded to provide the children’s perspectives on their work, interests, and interactions with their co-participants.

Nixon’s research findings indicate that digital storytelling technologies and the social activities that resulted from this collaborative work enabled meaningful dialogue around a variety of critical issues related to the lives of the children. Many parallels exist

<sup>3</sup> Williams (2006) explains that cognitive ethnographies are concerned with *how* members of a cultural group create meanings. Williams explains: “Cognitive ethnography employs traditional ethnographic methods to build knowledge of a community of practice and then applies this knowledge to the micro-level analysis of specific episodes of activity. The principal aim of cognitive ethnography is to reveal how cognitive activities are accomplished in real-world settings” (p. 1).

between Nixon's research outlining the affordances of digital storytelling and my MVP research. In particular, the manner in which Nixon explores the benefits and limitations of digital storytelling and its impact on youth identity play and critical reflection is related to my research interests.

Hull and Nelson (2005), scholars in the area of multi-media technology and new literacies, analyzed digital storytelling as a medium for youth to explore multimodal concepts of self. Digital storytelling allows youth to construct identities as they tell their personal stories and reflect on questions of who they are and what they value (Center for Digital Storytelling, 2011; Davis, 2004). This research analyzed the multimodal composing practices of a young musician and rapper at a community technology center for children and youth in California. Randy, the primary research participant, produced a series of digital stories that featured his own music and video productions. Hull and Nelson analyzed Randy's music video from the point of view of literacy pedagogy, arguing that multimodal composing is not simply an additive process of juxtaposing semiotic modes together to create meaning. They theorize that multimodality is not just a new way to make meaning, but instead is a way to make a unique and different kind of meaning altogether. The authors argue that working on music-based and image-based projects multimodally creates a unique construction of meaning; "the meaning that a viewer or listener experiences is qualitatively different, transcending what is possible via each mode separately" (p. 251).

Using a detailed multimodal analysis, the authors investigated the expressive capabilities of digital storytelling, "revealing the semiotic relationships between and among different, copresent modes" (p. 224). Within their research design, Hull and Nelson chose to focus primarily on the conjunction of images and words throughout their analysis, placing a secondary emphasis on the mode of music. Randy's music video, entitled *Lyfe-N-Rhyme* was transcribed within a timeline that used a multitracked, horizontal, time-coded format, structured in half-second increments. The next phase of the research involved identifying patterns within single modes as well as between and across modes. Using this method, the research was able to illustrate how:

- the visual pictorial mode can repurpose the written, linguistic mode
- iconic and indexical images can be rendered as symbols

- titles, iconic, and indexical images and thematic movement can animate each other cooperatively
- modes can progressively become imbued with the associative meanings of each other

Hull and Nelson were able to examine the meaning-making affordances of multimodality within *Lyfe-N-Rhyme*, illustrating how Randy's multimodal composing practices were able to illuminate "patterns within and between different modes that together constitute a multimodal whole" (p. 239). The findings of this research highlight the semiotic power of multimodal texts, and their capacity to communicate personal narratives and convey meanings of profound significance for both the creator and viewer. The authors stress the importance of widening the definition of writing to include multimodal composing, which they view as a powerful and transformative form of communication and representation. Music is referred to as being an essential component of identity construction for today's youth despite the fact that the article focuses primarily on the semiotic relationships between images and words. Music, although a major component of Randy's work, is not a key consideration within the article, even though the authors do speak to the many emotional qualities afforded by the mode of music within multimodal storytelling. This continues to justify the need for research into the semiotic reach and multimodal affordances of music within MVP pedagogies as a unique form of digital storytelling. My research aims to focus more specifically on the semiotic power of music and the genre of the music video as a mechanism for achieving transformative music engagement with youth.

The final example of literature exploring multimodal composing practices within film production is found in Cercone's (2012) article exploring the use of digital video composing as an instructional tool in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. The participants in this study, a group of high school students in a 12th-grade English course entitled *Mass Media and Video Production*, created music videos as an extension of traditional writing practices. The project took place over 30 class periods, functioning within a collaborative learning environment. The length of the program was necessary to support and develop meaning making throughout the unit. Through engagement with dialogue and inquiry, the participants used writing assignments to frontload the creation of music videos. Students composed in journals, which were regularly shared with

classmates within group dialogues. By writing in a purposeful manner, the participants were able to begin a “metacognitive, reflective process – and to begin thinking like a filmmaker” (p. 67). Using video cameras provided by the school, participants created music videos, exploring how meanings are passed from the mode of text to the mode of image. Participants filmed both in and out of class, working together and helping one another throughout the various stages of production.

The participants relied on their existing knowledge of the genres, narrative structures, and production aesthetics of music videos. Through their multimodal composing practices, they were able to express the many philosophies, concepts, and values of the class.

This form of writing was found to be more engaging for the participants than the forms of writing learned through traditional English courses. Through writing, revising, and sharing their work, participants become deeply engaged in the process. By discussing and sharing their writing and filmmaking practices, students took on the identities of “readers, writers – and filmmakers” (p. 76). The production of the music videos extended the reach of participants’ writing, providing expansive learning and the development of deeper meanings. The analysis of the students’ interactional data illustrated a deeper connection to their writing, providing opportunities for the youth to find “a place to be in the world, as they worked to capture their ideas on film using visual images, music, and voice-over narration” (p. 76).

The findings from this research study were as follows:

- Learning and meaning making became public and social spaces within the classroom, providing a forum for successful feedback and sharing;
- The digital video composing project allowed students to mobilize their prior experiences and engagement with popular culture;
- The affordances of multimodal composing provided opportunities to connect traditional forms of writing with lived experiences;
- Creating a digital video afforded opportunities for youth to become content producers, working with multiple forms of media to tell their stories for a real audience.

Cercone's scholarly work addresses numerous aspects of music video production with youth, but it does so specifically from the point of view of ELA and not that of the music classroom or musical pedagogy. The music videos were explored more from the point of view of how they may enhance the meaning-making potential of traditional forms of writing. Although this focus differs from my own research study, the focus on outcomes related to engagement and empowerment are similar. As in Cercone's research, my aim as a researcher is to explore MVP curricula that facilitate learning within positive, reflective social spaces where learners can draw on their previous experiences with popular culture and social media. MVP pedagogies attempt to connect traditional forms of writing such as poetry and songwriting with learners' lived experiences, and to encourage learners to tell their stories using a variety of technologies and within multimodal ensembles.

## **2.5. Summary**

These publications represent a spectrum of the theoretical and methodological lenses through which video production pedagogies have been studied, including the theoretical concepts of social semiosis, traditional film theory, multimodal composing practices, multimodal text-making, semiotic redesign, digital storytelling, multimodal media production, media literacy, and English language arts. There is a gap in this scholarly literature in terms of the role of music education and pedagogy in youth-led video production. The need for research into the design of multimodal classroom activities with music video production as an extension of music pedagogies would connect and integrate well with the above-mentioned examples of the literature.

The genre of the music video challenges music learners to engage in critical discourse around issues that are important to them. Music videos are in a sense, multimodal texts created through a digital storytelling vernacular, with music as the emphasis or backbone supporting the narrative. Ochs and Capps (1996) make the argument that narratives are innately multimodal, stating that "narratives are not usually monomodal, but rather they integrate two or more communicative modes. Visual representation, gesture, facial expression, and physical activity, for example, can be combined with talk, song, or writing to convey a tale" (p. 20). The medium of the music

video is a specific genre of digital storytelling, affording music learners the opportunity to not only *find* their voices but also *use* their voices to speak to their worlds through their multimodal messages.

I have outlined numerous research examples of programs for youth that have successfully engaged students in various kinds of multimodal composing practices. These programs represent some of the possibilities afforded to educators using today's new media technologies. The next chapter will examine TME as a theoretical framework for engaging in the production of music videos as well as the transformative aspects of MVP found within the literature.



## **Chapter 3.**

### **Literature Review Part 2**

#### **3.1. Making Music Education Meaningful for 21st Century Learners**

Music pedagogy in the 21st century is in need of an overhaul if music educators are going to successfully promote autonomous, meaningful, lifelong learning for today's youth. O'Neill (2012) advocates for new paradigms of music education and an increased awareness of how music learners consume and produce music within educational contexts. Educative roles can be more inclusive of students' interests, facilitating engaging and transformative musical experiences that may provide effective and sustainable forms of music learning for today's youth.

We might begin by considering where and how everyday music learning is taking place in today's world of multimodal media and participatory cultures. Traditional music conservatories and school-based music programs are no longer the only accessible route to a musical education for today's musicians. Even the most diminutive forms of mobile technology, such as an iPhone, can be used to create and record music, capture video footage, and edit together music videos within minutes. Many young musicians are learning how to play instruments using online resources and YouTube videos, many of which are posted by other young musicians (Peluso & O'Neill, 2013; Rudolf & Frankel, 2009). Young recording artists are now capable of producing albums in home-based studios, distributing their music independently online, and producing their own broadcast quality music videos with their peers using consumer quality cameras that capture broadcast quality footage. Never before has there been such autonomy, access, and diversity in musical creation methods, and the world of music learning is becoming ever more multimodal (O'Neill & Peluso, 2010).

Within this climate of rapid technological expansion and change, music educators in the 21st century can choose to reassess teaching practices and learning outcomes to reflect and incorporate new technologies and social practices. In this way, music educators may find new ways to foster personalized models of learning that connect young musicians with new conceptions of what it means to be a music learner in the digital age. Deakin Crick (2005) argues that for music learners in the 21st century, “personalized learning requires a sense of the worthwhileness of ‘being a learner’” (p. 359). Music educators, who themselves may be viewed as lifelong music learners, are capable of developing new identities as educators, incorporating new media technologies and youth culture(s) into existing models of music education. By engaging in the development and implementation of music pedagogies that incorporate new media technologies with learners’ interests, we reinforce the worthwhileness of being a learner by making music education more meaningful, engaging, empowering, and relevant for today’s music learners.

### **3.2. Positive Youth Development**

Shifting existing music pedagogies towards a more personalized and transformational model of learning requires educators to critically reflect upon what we think music learners do, where music learning occurs, what motivates young musicians to learn, and what learning outcomes we hope to achieve (O’Neill, 2012). We can encourage students’ musical and creative strengths and competencies in a way that is inclusive, collaborative, participatory, and empowering, creating openings for new learning models and approaches to pedagogy. Traditional music education paradigms require a re-alignment, towards the interests, values, and practices that matter to today’s students. Educators need to provide a musical environment that supports and sustains positive youth development on both the individual and group level. This is paramount to achieving engagement in musical education that is transformational for today’s youth (O’Neill, 2006).

Positive youth development is based on the premise that young people’s resiliency or ability to thrive in the face of adversity can be positively impacted by educative initiatives that build on and strengthen their competencies and social contexts

(Lerner *et al.*, 2002b; Villarruel *et al.*, 2003). O'Neill (2006) explains how past approaches to the study of musical development focused on *deficit* models within Western classical music education, where young music learners considered to be talented, virtuosic, or gifted were compared with others who demonstrated less of an aptitude or expertise as music learners. The Western classical music approach values the reproduction of historical approaches to learning notated music, which requires the music learner to develop advanced musical technique and the mimesis of pre-existing technical expertise. Those who are successful within this educational paradigm are rewarded and celebrated by specialists in this field through involvement in festivals and competitions. This creates a sense of musical elitism which supports a view of the Western classical music approach to music training as superior to other approaches to music learning that are perceived to be less formal and therefore inadequate.

O'Neill describes a shift in emphasis within research interested in youth development, away from deficit models of learning and towards initiatives that promote positive youth development. She explains, "all young people have the potential and capacity for healthy growth and development" (2006, p. 463). When applied to music education, the aim is to encourage a mindset or approach to learning that focuses on engagement in musical activities where healthy outcomes can be achieved by all learners. MVP pedagogies have the capacity to approach music learning from this new perspective, developing the unique musical strengths and competencies of each individual MVP learner within the various phases of production and within a variety of creative and challenging activities. The personal and musical autonomy inherent within MVP provides opportunities for learners to develop musical skills and competencies based on their interests and natural affinities within a broad range of skill sets. This educational context facilitates positive youth development within an engaging and active learning process where opportunities for self-expression and self-direction are ever present. This approach to learning develops through a different mindset, one where learners are encouraged to experiment, take initiative, problem solve, and work together towards common goals and achievements. This is what Dweck (2006) refers to as a *growth mindset*, or one where every individual has the capacity to grow and develop through effort, passion, and interest. Learning is understood as part of a process of growing or developing, and MVP pedagogies provide opportunities for music learners to

grow together, in a manner that is inclusive, respectful, and celebrates the diversity inherent in this approach to music education.

### **3.2.1. Self-theories, a growth mindset, and resiliency**

Dweck's (2006) notion of self-theories and mindsets provides an interesting framework or lens from which to examine resiliency. Self-theories are meaning systems that relate to conceptions of ability, and young people tend to hold varying self-theories about the nature of their abilities. According to Dweck, a fixed mindset is based on the belief that people's basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. Music learners with fixed mindsets feel the need to constantly prove themselves, focusing on the recognition that comes with grades, awards, and competitions. These types of musicians tend to view themselves as naturally talented or gifted, and there is a tendency for them to "live in a world of personal greatness and entitlement" (p. 122). O'Neill (2011d) draws on Dweck's concept of mindsets, explaining that "a musician with a fixed mindset views his or her musical abilities as evidence of talent rather than a starting point for future development" (p. 38). The fixed mindset is often reinforced by teachers and institutions that focus heavily on talent and ability, celebrating and rewarding the most 'accomplished' musicians with high grades, entrance into high profile musical institutions, and scholarship provisions. O'Neill argues that these students are less likely to take risks or expand into different musical avenues for fear that they will fail in these efforts and compromise their reputation or standing in the community. Musicians who have developed a fixed mindset tend to avoid accountability for their shortcomings, attempt to circumvent assessments of their abilities, and often feel a sense of entitlement because of their special talent.

A growth mindset, according to Dweck (2006), is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate and change through your efforts. Everyone can change and grow through application and experience, no matter what a person's aptitude, interests or temperament may be. O'Neill (2011d) argues that the development of a growth mindset can help music learners to achieve positive motivation and successful performance outcomes by establishing a passion for learning and the valuing of both effort and challenge. A growth mindset fosters the ability to successfully

negotiate obstacles or adversity through resiliency and persistence. Unlike music learners who develop a fixed mindset, these students do not need to seek constant validation of their abilities and achievements, and failure is seen as a natural part of the learning process. It is in this way that the growth mindset is well suited to students within music video production practices. The learning curve is often steep, requiring students to learn and incorporate new technologies into their productions. This can be daunting for some learners, but if approached from the point of view of a growth mindset, this can be seen as part of a larger learning process. Students can begin to approach the task of becoming proficient with music and video production technologies as part of a broader learning process.

### **3.2.2. Educators' beliefs and expectations**

Before we determine how to engage students in learning practices that facilitate positive youth development, we must first begin to think critically about our own expectations as educators. We need to examine assumptions about what students already know, what we think they want to learn, and what we believe their capacity for learning might be within the context of new and emerging music pedagogies. According to Brookfield (1995), "assumptions are the taken for granted beliefs about the world, and our place within it, that seem so obvious to us as not to need to be stated explicitly" (p. 2). Critical thinking allows us to engage in a process of *hunting assumptions* to reflect upon the types of assumptions we and other education professionals hold. Looking at our assumptions from multiple viewpoints allows us to assess the accuracy of our suppositions and to nourish a more democratic way of teaching where all students (and teachers) are respected, valued, and heard.

One of the main barriers to achieving transformative music engagement in today's classrooms stems from our own rigid and fixed theories of what music education should be (O'Neill, 2012). We are all influenced by our own childhood educational experiences and, more often than not, educators teach as they themselves were taught, often resulting in teaching practices and approaches that do not reflect recent technological and societal advancements. Everyday technology such as computers and cell phones, new media technology such as video cameras and editing software, and

online technologies such as the internet and social media, have had a profound influence on the learning environments and social contexts of today's youth (Kupiainen, 2013).

Music educators may assume that today's music learners, who have grown up with 21st century technologies, want to or need to learn music using a 20th century model. Many traditional music education paradigms reflect an approach to music education where music knowledge is passed down from preceding generations, and common practices are duplicated, enforced, and protected. A reciprocal exchange of knowledge is often not encouraged or valued, and this only serves to reduce opportunities for students' autonomous and agentic actions. Expansive music learning opportunities may be inhibited by hierarchical or authoritarian music practices that do not encourage new possibilities or ways of learning music (O'Neill, 2009; Senyshyn, 1999). In order to make learning a positive and empowering experience for our students, we need to challenge assumptions and traditional paradigms for music education and provide more opportunities for students to have a say in the direction their education takes. Perhaps this approach may help 21st century music educators to shift away from deficit models of education that often exist within the traditional western classical music paradigm towards educational initiatives that foster music learners who are able to think critically, and become resourceful and resilient in times of struggle or challenge.

### **3.3. Engaging and Empowering the Millennial Generation: Independent Learning, Affinity Spaces, and Participatory Cultures**

It is possible for positive educational outcomes and youth engagement to be key features of MVP programs provided educators view their own teaching praxis from the point of view of a growth mindset. As cultures and societies continue to grow and evolve, our approaches to education can continue to develop as well, incorporating emerging youth cultures and technologies into music programs. The role of the instructor within the classroom dynamic may also begin to change as educators attempt to engage youth in new participatory forms of educational practice. Educators need to observe the communicative and expressive vernacular of today's musical youth: cell phones and

texting; iTunes and YouTube; Garage Band and Final Cut Pro. These technologies present today's learners with unprecedented autonomy in regards to communication, personal expression, creativity, and even musical exploration. And yet, instructors and music programs often offer few opportunities to appropriate students' everyday technologies and resources into their classroom activities. Even fewer opportunities afford the incorporation of new media technologies into music classroom practices.

Music video production praxis, by its very nature, is dependent on interaction with various forms of technology. There is no music video without a video camera, and similarly, there is no music track without recording software and hardware. These production technologies are necessary tools used by MVP learners to execute tasks involved in a much more complex process of collaboration and production. Educative opportunities to participate and contribute to the production process are likely to be numerous: writing lyrics both individually and collaboratively; sharing musical ideas and concepts in pre-production phases of MVP collaborations; collaboratively creating music compositions in the studio as a recording engineer or in post-production using music editing software; engaging in various aspects of film production such as screenwriting workshops, location scouting field trips, story boarding, camera operation, directing, and video editing. These activities may relate directly to the production of the music video, providing opportunities for learners to strengthen creative competencies and educative social relationships. Music video production curricula are capable of providing engaging opportunities for students to incorporate and appropriate various everyday technologies, new media technologies, and social media into their musical praxis. With such a variety of opportunities for personal and musical autonomy available in and throughout the MVP production process, students are likely to find a deep emotional engagement in one or more aspects of MVP.

DeNora (2000) analyzes how music is used at both the individual and collective level, arguing that music is not just a cultural product but also a mechanism through which youth can reflexively construct emotional states, a sense of self, and social identities. Social interactions are also made more meaningful through musical experiences such as screenings and critiques of students' music videos. DeNora speaks to the formative role of music in the lives of youth, stating that "music is not about life but

is rather implicated in the formulation of life; it is something that gets into action, something that is formative, albeit often unrecognized, resource of social agency” (p. 152-153).

According to Sloboda (2001), as pre-adolescent musicians transition from elementary school to high school, assertions of autonomy shift the direction of musical activities towards interests, peer groups and life outside of the home. Musical activities such as elementary school music class or private instrumental music lessons are also impacted as youth question what purpose these musical activities have in their newly forming identities as teenagers. Musical participation for many of today’s youth occurs outside of formalized educational settings. Students’ interests are often not reflected within traditional music classroom activities, and as such students may be more likely to engage with musical activities occurring outside of the classroom (O’Neill, 2006).

### **3.3.1. Independent, informal learning**

Many of today’s youth no longer rely on music instructors to become engaged with music learning, accessing “new worlds of information” (Bean, 2010) online through computers, hand-held devices such as iPads, tablets, and Smartphones. YouTube sites, bloggers, and software programs such as Garage Band provide access to numerous forms of music learning resources such as instrument lessons, theory courses, and composition techniques. These resources are associated with informal music learning (Green, 2002), which plays a major role in the development of many young music artists. There are numerous videos posted by young people demonstrating informal ways of learning music (O’Neill, 2014), which facilitate learning and musical activity that did not exist before the time of web 2.0 technologies. These online communities have proven to be profoundly influential, impacting how young people learn, work, and think within this “new landscape of communication” (Kress, 2000, p. 183).

In his 2007 book entitled *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning*, James Paul Gee argues that young people are now learning more about literacy outside of the classroom than they are in the classroom. Video games and other forms of electronic media in the digital world are contributing to a more multimodal conception of



reading and writing practices for today's youth. For today's songwriters and music artists, learning how to play guitar, finding chords on a keyboard, or sharing lyrics with others is only a click away. Young music artists are able to connect online with new peer groups, sharing knowledge and creating communities based on similar passions and interests.

### **3.3.2. Affinity spaces and participatory cultures**

Gee (2005) explains that new educational models provide opportunities to incorporate aspects of popular culture, reflecting students' interests and breaking down the power structures of traditional paradigms of learning. Many young songwriters in the 21st century are becoming adept and comfortable with technology, continually learning new skills, acquiring new production and distribution resources, and sharing their 'know how' with other musicians within a variety of what Gee refers to as *affinity spaces*. Relating mostly to online gaming portals, Gee defines 11 features of affinity spaces, many of which are similarly used by music learners and singer-songwriters. Below are seven defining features of affinity spaces, drawn from Gee's (2005, pp. 225-229) publication, that apply to singer-songwriters and music video producers:

- "People relate to each other primarily in terms of common interests, endeavours, goals or practices, not primarily in terms of race, gender, age, disability, or social class."
- Affinity spaces do not "segregate newcomers from masters. Continua of people" are "accommodated in the same space based on their own choices, purposes, and identities."
- Affinity spaces encourage and enable users to "develop and display specialized knowledge in one or more areas," for example, how to learn the chords of a particular song, or how to play arpeggios on electric guitar.
- Affinity spaces use dispersed knowledge, which is knowledge that exists at other sites, such as YouTube or Wikipedia.
- Affinity spaces encourage, enable, and value tacit knowledge – "that is, knowledge users build up in practice but may not be able to explicate fully in words." Often, musicians will simply show others how to play songs, pointing a web camera at the keyboard or guitar while they play.
- There are "many different forms and routes to participation." For example, providing comments on YouTube sites that showcase young musicians allows other users to participate peripherally.

- Users of affinity spaces employ a variety of mediating devices, such as computers and social media to disperse knowledge and teach one another. They belong to online communities assembled from a variety of places and spaces such as school-based music programs, recreational music programs, and online user's groups such as YouTube or MySpace.
- Young people may access information as autonomous users and contributors within online communities, participating as active agents within cultures that value their contributions (O'Neill, 2012).

O'Neill (2012) refers to Jenkins (2009) notion of *participatory cultures* as having relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at least they care what other people think about what they have created) (p. 3). Participatory cultures provide young people with access to resources, both social and technical, facilitating expansive learning opportunities for music learners to engage with music using a variety of different modes of expression. Participatory cultures may occur within many aspects of young people's musical lives today. For example, music video production, which draws together groups of young music learners based on their interest in creating music videos, is capable of affording many of the features of both affinity spaces and participatory cultures within the various stages of production. Songs written by members of the MVP class may reflect the group's interests and ideas. Knowledge dissemination can be democratic and shared equally, and each participant's contribution may impact the outcome and quality of the video.

Gee's (2005) model of learning, based on affinity spaces, provides a functional, inclusive, and plausible alternative to traditional learning paradigms, especially within the context of music video production, which attracts learners based on common yet varied interests. Learners bring their own knowledge of lyric writing, music composition, video production, and video editing to classroom activities. Rarely, if ever, will a learner be proficient with all of these skills, which provides not only opportunities to learn from peers and mentors, but also opportunities to provide instruction and mentorship for those who may be less experienced. According to O'Neill and Peluso (2010), affinity spaces

enable learners to “engage in experimental learning and knowledge sharing with others that incorporates participatory and media convergence cultures” (p. 7). They also provide music learners with “the potential to explore new forms of artistic knowledge sharing and learning through creative collaborations in and through these technological possibilities” (p. 7). In my experience, each music video project tends to be unique, which means different MVPs require different production approaches and designs. Experimenting with different ways of using technology, such as dollies, sliders, lighting, camera angles, software treatments, and editing techniques creates new possibilities for learning that are shared within affinity spaces and incorporated into new working vernaculars and protocols as well as new forms of artistic (and musical) knowledge.

MVP instructors may be required to combine a variety of educational practices, weaving together aspects of creative writing, music learning, and video production into each MVP project. In keeping with Gee’s (2005) educational model, there is no need for the instructor to be an “expert” in the myriad of the educational and procedural components that contribute to a pedagogy based on music video production. Occasions for learners to share hints, tricks, and various forms of expertise may arise out of affinity spaces, creating opportunities for collective learning and engagement in musical and creative growth. Knowledge sharing and acquisition within collaborative classroom projects can become an organic and fluid process, allowing instructors to be more present in the moment and less confined by rigid and predetermined course outlines. Individual creative expression and autonomous learning make it possible for youth to take an agentic approach to their learning within music video productions.

Education, as seen through this lens of affinity spaces, is not dependent on pre-formulated teaching methods. Instead, learners solve emergent problems and provide support and assistance for each other. Groups of learners share common interests in a particular area, often times aimed towards gaining knowledge in a specific field. Members learn from each other while they share information and experiences with other members of the practice. Instructors in classrooms implementing this principle learn along with students, achieving goals that arise out of collaborative activities. There is no designated “expert” within this educational setting; teachers and learners alike work together to problem solve, strategize, and achieve goals, which in the case of music and

video production would include all of the stages that culminate in the final editing process of a music video.

The MVP classroom is capable of functioning as an affinity space. For example, I rely on students to provide demonstrations or explanations for various tasks involved in MVP. Students are often more knowledgeable and proficient with certain aspects of production, such as using DSLR cameras or advanced editing techniques in Final Cut Pro X. These students are often asked to share their knowledge by giving demonstrations and providing insights into the functionality of the various MVP technologies. Together, through interactions involving knowledge sharing, the class is able to become more effective producers of music videos.

### **3.3.3. Summary**

Learning environments occurring within participatory cultures are capable of equalizing the playing field for students and teachers alike, providing opportunities for any participant to contribute knowledge related to classroom practices in a shared endeavour. Music learners and instructors are able to plan together, create together, work together, and learn together. Music learners are capable of achieving a sense of ownership of their work, and each individual can influence the direction of his or her learning. Each member of an MVP class may be given the opportunity to contribute to decisions relating to how a music video is produced, what level of involvement each student will have in the production, and what the learning outcomes will be. For example, if an MVP learner wants to improve his or her camera operating skills, this interest can be expressed to the group and opportunities can be created for asking classmates or instructors to give demonstrations or for engaging in more practical experience. In this way, students are able to be proactive in their own involvement as camera operators within MVP projects, creating and directing their own learning outcomes and becoming more proficient as camera operators. Educational environments valuing participatory and interest-based paradigms for learning are capable of providing music learners with a foundation upon which they can choose creative paths that are meaningful, engaging, and transformational.

Participatory cultures and affinity spaces provide appropriate social conditions for a form of *engaged agency* (O'Neill, 2011b) within collaborative musical activities such as MVP, allowing for learning situations that create a sense of connectedness and a desire to learn with others. Expansive learning opportunities may arise out of new challenges, which are viewed not as obstacles that hinder the educational process but instead as catalysts for participatory and community-oriented approaches to learning. Within this educational paradigm, music learners have the potential and capacity for positive youth development, healthy and prolific growth as music artists, and opportunities for self-expression and self-direction (O'Neill, in press-a). Learners may be empowered within these pedagogies, contributing their knowledge and experience to classroom practices, becoming actively engaged members of an educational community who appreciate their contributions and support their own self-directed learning trajectories.

### **3.4. Transformative Learning Theories and Pedagogy**

As demonstrated in the previous sections, music video production pedagogies can provide innovative, learner-centred, and youth-driven forms of music learning that are capable of resulting in positive youth development and engagement. The role of narrative, imagination, and self-reflection are pivotal in leading music learners towards creative endeavours that are empowering and grounded in sources of self-discovery and awareness. Meaningful and sustained participation in music activities within affinity spaces and participatory cultures may result in learning environments that facilitate active agency and autonomy. A key question remains: what is it that makes a particular educational experience engaging *and* transformational for young people? The focus of my research and the design of the curriculum for this project intended to be both engaging and transformational for the participants. Various theoretical perspectives influenced the pedagogical approach to this program, stemming from transformative learning theories, activist approaches to pedagogy, and transformative music pedagogies. An overview of each of these perspectives is described below.

### 3.4.1. Transformative learning

Transformative learning, according to Mezirow (1997), “is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference” (p. 5). We understand our experiences and worlds through our *frames of reference*, which are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. Learning can be transformational when learners, through critical reflection, change their frame of reference and are realigned towards a new definition or understanding of their worlds. Learners must become more critically aware and reflective of their assumptions in regards to their personal values, beliefs, feelings, and intentions. Although all learning is designed to promote change, not all change is transformational. Young music video producers may attempt to explore and understand significant issues relating to urban youth, such as social class, gender roles, or sexual orientation. During the various stages of the MVP process, learners may uncover their own underlying assumptions regarding a particular issue, which may in turn provide opportunities to create new understandings and relationships regarding that issue. This new understanding reflects a change in the participant’s frame of reference, which indicates that a transformative learning experience may have occurred.

The exchange of knowledge and understanding that brings about transformative learning experiences within educational settings may be effectively achieved through inquiry and dialogue. O’Neill (2011c) refers to inquiry as “the process of using selected questions to guide our learning in a way that is exploratory and responsive, yet focused on something of importance to us” (p. 186). An inquiry-based approach to learner-centered music video production pedagogies can begin by outlining and asking questions about topics that are important and meaningful for learners. Driving questions often facilitate active investigations into subjects of inquiry, encouraging dialogue between educators and students in order to share knowledge, experiences, and creative strategies. Often triggered by challenging experiences, the questions that arise out of inquiry and dialogue can facilitate learning opportunities that help to focus attention on what might be newly realized. This can be a critical and transformative process, encouraging collaboration and developing new forms of knowledge and powerful understandings of self and community.

Wells (2000) draws on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning and development, and the central concept of artefact-mediated joint activity, which involves change and transformation of participants and settings over time. Activities and artefacts of previous generations shape human beings, and this cultural inheritance is appropriated and mastered through activity and interaction with others. Drawing on Vygotsky's theory, Wells proposes a number of important implications for the way in which we think about education:

- *The Classroom is seen as a collaborative community.* Joint activity, by definition, requires us to think of the participants not simply as a collection of individuals but also as a community that works toward shared goals, the achievement of which depends on collaboration.
- *Purposeful activities involve whole persons.* Transformation of the participants occurs as a function of participation in activities that have real meaning and purpose; learning is not simply the acquisition of isolated skills or items of information, but involves the whole person and contributes to the formation of individual identity.
- *Activities are situated and unique.* Any activity is situated in place and time; although there may be common features across activities and setting, each activity is unique, because it involves the coming together of particular individuals in a particular setting with particular artefacts, all of which have their own histories, which in turn, affect the way in which the activity is actually played out.
- *Curriculum is a means, not an end.* If the aim is to engage with particular students in productive activities that are personally as well as socially significant, covering the curriculum should not be thought of as the ultimate goal of education. Instead, the specified knowledge and skills that make up the prescribed curriculum should be seen as items in the cultural tool kit that are to be used as means of carrying out activities of personal and social significance.
- *Outcomes are both aimed for and emergent.* Outcomes of activity cannot be completely known or prescribed in advance; although there may be prior agreement about the goal to be aimed for, the route that is taken depends on emergent properties of the situation – problems encountered and the human and material resources available for the making of solutions.
- *Activities must allow diversity and originality.* Development involves “rising above oneself”, both for individuals and for communities. Solving new problems requires diversity and originality of possible solutions. Without novelty, there would be no development; both individuals and societies would be trapped in an endless recycling of current activities, with all their limitations. (pp. 60-61)

Wells conceptualizes the classroom as a community of inquiry, and considers the role of dialogic inquiry in education to be paramount. According to Wells, the values of inquiry, dialogue, and community are necessary prerequisites for educational change to be truly inclusive of all the interests involved.

### **3.4.2. Activist approaches to pedagogy**

Transformative pedagogies build on the concepts of discourse, dialogue, and inquiry, empowering learners to examine critically their beliefs, values, and knowledge. Transformative pedagogies facilitate the development of a reflective knowledge base, an appreciation for multiple perspectives, and a sense of critical consciousness and agency. This teaching approach is capable of empowering learners to examine prior knowledge in light of new experiences in order to enhance learning (Ukpokodu, 2009). My research study provides insights into the critical and reflective aspects of this kind of work with youth. Music video projects, whether autobiographical or fictional in nature, often weave together students' prior experiences into new narratives, which develop an appreciation for multiple perspectives and provide opportunities for students to become active agents in their own critical consciousness. Discourses may emerge out of inquiry and dialogue, which define musical and videographic processes. These processes may then serve as the catalyst for educational experiences that can be transformative, empowering, reflective, and critically informative for youth. The songwriter(s) or music video production team may come to understand aspects of their worlds through critical and reflexive inquiry, finding new meaning, values, and knowledge as they work towards common creative goals.

O'Sullivan's (2003) definition of transformative learning reflects an activist approach to pedagogy:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and action. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, races, and gender; our body awareness; our visions of alternative



approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (p. 326).

Viewing transformative learning and pedagogies through an activist lens reveals how this kind of education can empower students to take an active role in defining moral stances and exploring issues that are personal and important, using a critical and reflexive discourse to communicate these meaningful insights within the various artefacts that materialize out of the music and video production process.

### **3.4.3. Transformative music pedagogy**

O'Neill (2012) suggests that "transformative pedagogy is not a method of teaching but rather a set of principles that guide teaching and learning interactions" (p. 177). There are several key elements in common, despite any variances that may exist between different epistemologies and perspectives. O'Neill lists these elements as follows:

- *Teaching begins with student knowledge.* Opportunities for expansive learning are provided that enable learners to manipulate or interact within their own artistic and cultural ecologies in a way that helps them make meaningful connections.
- *Skills, knowledge, and voices develop from engagement in the activity.* Learners are asked to create, express, or display their own representations of a particular issue, event, or phenomenon.
- *Teaching and learning are both individual and collaborative processes.* The role of the instructor is one of facilitator, organizer, leader, and source of knowledge on the topic, but not the primary source of learning.
- *Teaching and learning are transformative processes.* Learners share their creative representations with others and engage in a process of dialogue, shared meaning making, and sociocultural and socio-political associations. (pp. 177-178)

Music video production with youth is positioned well within O'Neill's perspective on transformative music learning. Music artists are able to express their own stories through lyrics, music, and video, creating meaningful connections to their personal histories and classroom ecologies. The artefacts created during these productions, such as lyric sheets, white board drawings from pre-production meetings, storyboards, props used to convey ideas, chord charts, shot lists (for videography), director's notes, and

editing cue sheets are all indications of the skills and knowledge developed during MVP classroom activities. These artefacts emerge out of critical dialogues and purposeful discourse, representing issues, events, and phenomena that are important and meaningful to the students. As students learn together and educate one another through the production process, they partake in a form of transformative learning that is unique to the particular learning environment and affordances of MVP pedagogy.

My role within a transformative music engagement approach to MVP education is one of facilitator, organizer, and knowledge resource. As each project is unique, we problem solve our way through each step of the project together as community of learners. Although I plan carefully to ensure projects are completed in a timely manner, my role as instructor is to facilitate dialogue, engage students in MVP discourses, delegate tasks, gather, maintain, and provide production resources, and keep our productions on schedule. By no means am I the primary source of learning; students learn from each other through their dialogical interactions and discourse, modeling of technical processes and procedures, and mentoring of one another during all aspects of the production process. Students learn about music and video production together, and we all, as a class, learn about each other in the process.

Transformative learning and pedagogies illustrate how education can empower learners to take an active role in defining moral stances and issues of personal significance using a critical and reflexive discourse to communicate ideas through music and video production processes. Music video production praxis is capable of providing opportunities for students to become active agents in their own critical consciousness, developing an appreciation for multiple perspectives and embracing new points of view.

### **3.5. Transformative Aspects of MVP**

As discussed previously, meaningful connections emerging from MVP praxis and peer relationships can facilitate experiences of personal and social transformation. This often results from creative undertakings that are learner-centred and located within transformative pedagogies that place a strong emphasis on dialogue, inquiry, and action (O'Neill, in press-a). Learners may experience what O'Neill describes as an "engaged

praxis” (p. 15), learning how to recognize, understand, and overcome constraints within their lives through their work as music video producers. Through an *engaged MVP praxis*, young music artists may learn to build resiliency and independence as they work towards the development of new skill sets and practices.

It is of interest to my research to explore the concept of engaged MVP praxis, and the extent to which my students are able to construct their own sense of identity through their songs and music videos. A key aim of the MVP program is to encourage my students to become active agents in the construction and positioning of their musical “selves” (O’Neill, in press-b), which creates opportunities for the navigation and negotiation of identities within their musical lives. According to O’Neill, musical lives can be viewed as *segmented, situated, or agentive*. Segmented music lives are primarily associated with recurring events such as formal music lessons, often with little to no sense of connectedness between these events and other musical activities. For example, instrumental music lessons are often segmented from other musical experiences, such as listening to music on iPods or watching music videos on YouTube. Among segmented music learners, instrumental music lessons do not appear to have any direct relationship to other musical activities in the young person’s life.

Situated musical lives, on the other hand, are grounded within cohesive social contexts, where relationships are responsible for making a musical activity meaningful for the learner. For situated music learners, music engagement becomes a transformational experience when learners are changed through collaborative and socially-oriented musical experiences. Within MVP pedagogies, a music learner may be engaged by his or her involvement within a production through the collaborative and socially interactive activities that occur during production. For example, shy learners may find their voice, disengaged learners may become inspired by video editing, and socially awkward young people may find a sense of comradery through their MVP praxis. The transformative experience is situated within particular social contexts, and each context is often specific to an individual project.

Agentive musical lives, like situated ones, can also be transformative, and are usually more long-lasting or enduring. For agentive music learners, musical activities are

viewed more often as part of an interconnected, transformative journey and not just a situated moment or experience. In agentic musical lives, there is an intense connectedness within positive relationships and experiences with others, where youth earn respect from peers and develop a competence within their praxis as they develop unique and agentic identities as young music artists.

Music video production pedagogies provide the ideal platform for learners to become entrenched within musical lives that may be situated, agentic, or both. Some may not develop careers as music artists but may indeed be very engaged within a musical life that is situated. Those who do become inspired and empowered by their development as music artists through MVP pedagogies experience musical lives that are more aligned with a sense of *engaged agency* (O'Neill, 2011b), as students are able to become independent, resourceful, and proactive producers of their artistry, musical identity, and careers as music artists. These unique and empowered music artists are shaped and reinforced by the technology and media they use to develop their musical identities and distribute their product both on and offline.

Music video production pedagogies provide music learners with opportunities to explore healthy and positive conceptions of personhood that emerge out of their interactions with classmates and peer groups. O'Neill's (2011b) concept of personhood explores what it means to be "a unique person in a particular place and time, experiencing, responding, and acting on the world in a particular way" (p. 2). Our relationships, social engagements, and connections with other people help to define our sense of personhood. As Taylor (1989) points out, personhood can only be defined in relation to others. He argues, "one is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it" (p. 35). As music learners strive to make sense of their own lives, to realize expressions of personhood, and to explore who they are and what their place is in the world, they find opportunities to engage in these processes through music video production pedagogies that are grounded in transformative practices.

Benson (2001) argues for the concept of self as a primary means for navigating the world, which he sees as primarily a psychological system of location or a way to

negotiate through the world. As Benson states, “the idea of self-as-a-story-told, as a narrative structure, functions to place oneself as a moral agent in and across personal time” (p. xi). If we can accept the premise of self as an extension of moral agency in time and space, then it could be suggested that songwriting and music video production provides a purposeful mechanism for music learners to capture meaningful moments of personhood through creative, collaborative, and meaningful interactions. The music video, as a by-product of collaborative MVP praxis, serves as the purposeful mechanism for learners to write the stories of their lives through morality plays that reflect the collective consciousness of the group. Both individual and collective expressions of self are captured within the music video, reflecting the moral agency of its creators.

Narratives contained within music videos reflect the awareness and thought processes of the songwriter(s) and production team. The personal histories captured within music videos represent embodied experiences that reflect the essence of the artist’s and production team’s sense of personhood. What emerges is a collective sense of who they are in the world, and who they have been in the world is expressed and materialized through song and its accompanying music video. Working collaboratively on youth-produced music videos provides young songwriters with the means to share their most personal experiences with their peers. Benson (2001, p. 45) relates the process of story telling to the development of identity, stating:

The story or stories of myself that I tell, that I hear others tell of me, that I am unable or unwilling to tell, are not independent of the self that I am: they are constitutive of me. This is a central claim of the cultural psychology of selfhood.

Songwriting and music video production allows youth to preserve a personal and social history. Self-reflection is made possible in these captured moments of adolescence, recalling lessons learned and moments of significant insight or personal transformation. The development of personal narratives can provide a place of solace for youth, and may also serve as a “textual space providing relief and refuge – a means of coping with difficult circumstances, relationships, and emotions” (Kinney, 2012, p. 397).

Ben Bolden, a Canadian music educator and researcher, investigates how individuals construct a sense of personhood with and through music. Drawing from

Bakhtin's notion of *ideological becoming* (Bakhtin, 1981), which theorizes how human consciousness develops out of a process of negotiation between two types of discourse (the *authoritative*, or dominant discourse that represents imposed societal norms, and the *internally persuasive* discourse or the internal voices, ideas, and messages that we learn to understand through our interactions with the world), which we incorporate as our own. It is the constant negotiation or struggle between these two discourses that, when reconciled, may result in new meanings and understandings, giving rise to new possibilities (Bolden, 2006). Bolden's analytical process identifies the process of *ideologically becoming* within and throughout music making, which involves four factors:

1. Identifying a particularly internally persuasive discourse
2. Recognizing the discourse as meaningful
3. Acknowledging the discourse as more significant than a challenging (possibly contradictory) authoritative discourse
4. Allowing the personally negotiated understanding of the discourse to open up new possibilities

The musical lives of MVP learners are impacted by the various discourses that they encounter during the production of a music video, which require the negotiation of personal meanings arising out of the confrontation between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. Out of this struggle new definitions of one's musical self often emerge, which reflects the learner's process of assimilating or appropriating the ideas of others into their own world. It is in this negotiation where newly discovered pathways lead towards transformative experiences that may result in the development of a reconstructed musical self or an evolved musical identity. Bolden explains how music education, when seen through this theoretical lens, has the ability to "give rise to new possibilities", where "the music classroom could become a testing ground for the trying on of music identities" (p. 49). The vast array of roles that music learners may 'try on' within MVP pedagogies, from songwriting, to recording engineer, to videographer and video editor, provide numerous opportunities for young people to engage in music making experiences that facilitate the negotiation between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses.

Learning to redefine what it means to be a music artist in today's age of powerfully expressive yet inexpensive MVP technologies provides opportunities for

young music learners to challenge perceived norms within the music industry around the production and distribution of songs and music videos. MVP classroom discourses are also capable of facilitating endless exchanges of ideas through discourses that bring music learners together to create music videos collaboratively and cooperatively. This kind of music learning, as outlined within Bolden's analytical process, creates openings for internally persuasive MVP discourses that compete with or challenge authoritative discourses and allow for new understandings and possibilities as learners *become* new musical selves.

New definitions of personhood, facilitated through music discourses encountered within purposeful educational initiatives can be empowering and transformational for young people. Lauren Smith, an American counsellor and music therapist, published a case study entitled *Sparkling Divas! Therapeutic Music Video Groups with At-Risk Youth*, which was the final project for her master's degree in Music Therapy (Smith, 2012). Focused on a pilot project, the study explored the use of popular music, songwriting, technology, and music video production at an inner-city Boys and Girls Club. The participants used both musical and non-musical technology to create music videos using Apple video editing software to facilitate a community-based therapeutic experience. The aim of the study was to create a safe and supportive environment in order to promote creative self-expression, development of healthy peer relationships, and non-violent communications. The study took place over nine 60-minute sessions. The participants were seven girls (aged 10 through 13 years) of Hispanic and African American heritage. Audio and video documentation was captured for each session, as well as detailed notes at the end of each session. In the ninth session, the final music video was screened for family, friends, and the director of the club. The findings of Smith's research indicate that the participants "developed a healthy sense of group identity, a sense of control of their creative process, and experienced a safe space in which to channel their creative energy" (p. 17). Therapeutic music videos were found to provide a creative, technologically-centred therapy that addressed therapeutic goals in a way that was accessible and fun. The production was also found to provide opportunities for the participants to express themselves verbally as a group, while still allowing individual voices to be heard and valued. The participants were also empowered by the autonomy provided by the process and technology. Emotional and psychosocial

problems associated with living in poor urban neighbourhoods, such as identity, depression, isolation, and trauma were found to be capable of being addressed through the participants' MVP praxis.

Youth-based writing practices such as the ones mentioned above provide educators with opportunities to pay attention to what Lange (2004) refers to as the "pedagogical entry points" where learners engage in personal dilemmas as potentially transformative experiences (p. 131). The participants in Smith's study were empowered to work through a variety of personal and psychological issues associated with living in an urban environment. They were transformed through their shared experiences, giving them a sense of their worth and potential, as well as a skill base that can be applied to countless social and academic situations in the future. Although Smith's article addresses the issue of music video production as an engaging and transformational musical activity for youth, it is theorized from the point of view of music therapy and not that of music pedagogy. Although there are numerous parallels between the Sparkling Divas project and my own MVP pedagogical approach, my emphasis is more on the practical application of MVP within music education as a form a transformative engagement that is capable of bringing about deep and meaningful music learning opportunities for young people.

### **3.6. Summary**

The creation of self-directed narratives within MVP pedagogies may contribute to the positive development of youth in a variety of ways that might be described as transformative. Self-confidence, increased awareness of personal beliefs, the ability to take action and perform, the generation of personal meaning, the capacity to share ideas with others, and other countless and immeasurable skills are experienced during this creative and collaborative process. The findings of my research suggest that MVP praxis can encompass an active, lifelong learning process, empowering youth to become active agents in the direction of their own learning and development. Within the context of the MVP classroom, storytelling, personal writing, and self-directed narrative creation provide opportunities for educators and learners to engage in a collaborative search to define their worlds, but each from his or her own lived experience.



Benson (2001) describes identity as a woven narrative, with the subject playing the role of both the “reader and the writer” of his or her own life (p. 46). The shape of this life is made and remade by the stories that he or she conveys of his or her own existence. Songwriting and music video production provides the optimal situation for classroom activities that capitalize on creativity, imagination, and collaboration. The power of the imagination allows for the expression of narratives that reflect the conscious moments where learners interpret meaningful moments in their histories. Beginning with the facilitation of a growth mindset, MVP students are encouraged to grow as people as they grow as musicians, capturing within their stories, songs, and videos, the experiences that reflect positive youth development and transformative engagement opportunities for all youth involved.

### **3.7. Justification for Research**

The capacity for autonomous lifelong learning will be key to successful living in the 21st century (Deakin Crick & Wilson, 2005). This study explores music video production through the lens of transformative music engagement and multimodal social semiotic theory. In order to impact the current and future music education landscape, this research explores an innovative practice involving music and video production technologies, exploring the affordances and constraints associated with new modes of multimodal music creation. This research also investigates the multimodal composing practices of young music learners and how a multimodal social semiotic theoretical framework might provide the necessary conditions for collaborative, autonomous, and engaging participation within music video production praxis that fosters transformative experiences.

Various research methodologies and theoretical frameworks can be used to study how music learners carry meaning through different modes, a process that is a natural and integral component of music and video production. Multimodal social semiotics can help us trace the creative trajectory of music video production through its artefacts, observing the combinations and *orchestrations* (Kress, 2010) of modes, how the intention or meaning of one mode is transferred into another mode, and how these meaning-making systems are materialized within the music video. We can observe and

analyze how music learners design and interpret meanings, thoughts, and ideas, through their multimodal composing practices. Alternatively, transformative music engagement fills the gap where the sociocultural element is overlooked, providing insight into the mindsets and motivations of songwriters and music video producers (O'Neill, 2012). This combination of theoretical perspectives is capable of providing a holistic approach to observing, analyzing, and interpreting youth-led music video production and the bi-products of this newly emerging form of music education.

At the core of my research study, I will explain how ideas and meanings are created within and across semiotic modes in an attempt to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding about the multimodal composing practices of today's music learners. The concepts explored and findings contained within this study may apply to other forms of music learning and multimodal music pedagogies, thereby advancing the field by complementing existing research in this area. There is a gap in research documenting the learning processes involved in youth-led music video production, particularly in relation to music pedagogy. This research attempts to address these issues through the observation and analysis of the multimodal composing practices occurring within a particular context and pedagogical approach to music and video production with youth.

### **3.7.1. Research purpose and questions**

Young songwriters today are able to produce their own music compositions and music videos using classroom-based resources, provided their instructors have the means and experience to facilitate this type of learning. My own extensive work in songwriting and music video production with youth has provided me with experience and insight into this form of music education. This study explores video production within a classroom setting, viewed from both a multimodal social semiotic and transformative music engagement lens. This review of the literature, combined with my own research interests has led me to the following research questions:

1. What are the specific semiotic affordances provided by new media technologies, and how might they best enable music learners to achieve music-oriented multimodal literacy through the production of collaborative music videos?

2. How might music video production (MVP) pedagogy provide expansive learning opportunities associated with aspects of transformative music engagement (TME)?

The genre of the music video is becoming a common communicative vernacular for today's musical youth, as evidenced by numerous youth-produced videos showcased online. These videos capture the voices and ideas of a generation of children who have grown up with computers and multimodal digital media. This research investigates current multimodal composing practices, reflecting upon existing literature in related areas of education and pedagogy. The aim is to use a multimodal analysis based on a transformative music engagement theoretical framework to examine the production practices within a music video production class at an urban after-school music program for at-risk youth. Implications for the development of a music video production pedagogy and the benefits for young musicians and songwriters will be discussed as well as areas for future research in this branch of music learning.

## **Chapter 4.**

### **Research Methods**

#### **4.1. Program**

##### **4.1.1. Objectives**

This research includes a program development component and a study. In this section, I will describe the program development component, beginning with a description of the pilot program, followed by the revised program that was used in the study. The pilot program was created to provide the educational platform and conditions necessary for my research. The revised program occurred during the final term (term three) of the same year, and the formal interviews conducted for data collection occurred during the first term of the following year. The course objectives for both programs, originally created for the school's required course outlines, are displayed within a comparative chart, as seen below in Table 1. The objectives for the pilot were general and broad, allowing the program's pedagogy to emerge and develop out of the students' interests. Alternatively, the objectives for the third term were more specific and defined, based on the needs of the particular MVP project, which is the focus of my research study, while still remaining flexible enough to enable emergent process and student-directed initiatives.

**Table 1. A course objectives comparison chart for the pilot project and the research study project**

Pilot Project – Term One	Research Study Project – Term Three
To work in both a group and private class setting	To work on two final video projects
To explore aspects of production, direction, and aesthetics	To develop new venues and opportunities for filming
To develop a deeper understanding of music through the application and appropriation of music into other modes (lyrics, video, production)	To learn about collaborative film production
To focus not only on the instrumental learning but also the intrinsic value of working collaboratively and creatively as a team	To learn how to use the Cobra Crane and hand-held tripod
To familiarize students with the conceptual side of music and video production (table work) as well as the technology used in amateur or home-based production settings such as cameras, lighting, software, editing, microphones, etc.	To tell the stories of our students and our school; to represent the culture and philosophy that capture's the school's vision, and to realize this tangibly within our art and work
To tell the stories of our students and our school; to represent a culture and philosophy that capture's the vision of the school, and to realize this tangibly within our process and work	To capture our process multimodally through action research, reflexive analysis, and behind-the-scenes documentary style film making (produced by our students)
To develop music/songs, music videos, and research/artistic learning as described above which can be showcased on the school's website and the student lounge	To develop music videos, and research/artistic learning as described above which can be showcased on the school's website
To develop not only a web presence online but also an presence within the school, spawning interest from students in other disciplines and creating future collaborative projects that bridge the gap between disciplines and departments within the school (i.e.: collaborating with various ensemble classes or other students from individual disciplines such as voice)	

### **4.1.2. Learning outcomes**

Six key learning outcomes formed the basis of the MVP program, with the aim of enabling students to:

- Work cooperatively in a small group environment, within a participatory culture that values a peer to peer learning model
- Develop MVP productions of personal and social significance through a collaborative process that includes engagement in dialogical inquiry
- Work competently with production equipment, including DSLR cameras, tripods, lighting equipment, as well as music and video editing software
- Plan a small music video production in and through the three phases of production which include pre-production, production, and post-production
- Describe and communicate how meaning is represented within particular modes such as text and passed through to others such as sound or moving image
- Apply concepts and skills learned within this course to learner's own artistic and creative undertakings and using their own technology

### **4.1.3. Program development (pilot)**

This purpose of the pilot was to test, develop, and apply various teaching approaches in order to develop the foundations for an effective music video production pedagogy. The curriculum was designed to be flexible and emergent, developing around the suggestions and interests of the students. This approach facilitated the active participation of students in the moulding and shaping of the MVP program and its pedagogy. The intention was to teach students first how to create and develop their own music in Garage Band, and then to extend the meaning-making potential of the music through the production of accompanying music videos. Subject matter and content for songs would be interest-driven, with a focus on social justice and moral positioning.

Songs would be produced in the school's Mac Lab using Garage Band, and production teams would be assembled to create music videos for each song. Working in small groups, students would be able to experience various aspects of production, from the planning phase (story boarding, planning camera angles, creating shot lists, etc.) to the filming phase (camera work, lighting, direction, live audio, etc.) to the post-production phase (film editing, green screening, compositing). Students would also be involved in

documenting the production process and creating behind-the-scenes video vignettes, capturing the essence and process of MVP praxis and providing opportunities for students to reflect critically on their work and the overall process of MVP.

A variety of resources were assembled in preparation for the pilot. The list was as follows:

- 10 computers with identical operating systems (to streamline software and process), the same version of Garage Band, and Final Cut X (the latest version)
- White board and coloured markers
- Projector and screen for computer demonstrations
- Portable hard drives for project archiving
- Music production hardware: microphones, pop screen, and digital to audio interface
- Video production hardware: DSLR camera with HD video recording capabilities, tripod, cobra crane, dolly extension, hand-held tripod, production lighting kit, light reflector, backdrop frame and various fabric backdrops, and green screen

Topics resulting from preparatory meetings with the Director of Education and the Director of Community Planning were compiled in a list that appears below:

- Hard drive space: How will we accommodate the massive amount of drive space generated by video footage? We discussed external drives, which would need to be Firewire 800 or Thunderbolt (not USB) in order to run Final Cut from the external drive.
- Assistant: The assistant for this class needs to be more than just enthusiastic and musical. The chosen individual will need to have familiarity with Garage Band, Final Cut (or another video editing software program), recording techniques, etc. R.S. would be an ideal candidate, and having him/her as the assistant for my class would streamline my class with his Hip Hop class, increasing the probability of collaborative efforts between our two classes.
- The camera: It is essential that I am involved in the research and purchase of our video camera. The video technology changes so quickly that it is important to know what the very latest technology is and what particular camera will be best for the needs of our class and our students. There are many options in many price ranges, so knowing what our budget is for a camera would be a good place to begin.
- Scheduling: *when* the class is scheduled is just as important as *where*. Because we will be recording often, a quiet and non-active environment is

ideal. Monday through Thursday are usually very busy and active times at this school, and thus Friday or Saturday would be the best choice for this class. Also, once video production begins, we will need access to the great room (and its stage), as well as the other rooms (for variety) and too much activity not related to our class would be very distracting for the talent and crew.

- Web presence: My goal for this class is to generate audio files and music videos that we can showcase on the school website and the Student Lounge. Also, I'm very much interested in teaching the students to document our work and process within short video essays such as the one I referred to above. Showing who we are and *how* we work is of interest to not only our student body, but also our board members, potential sponsors, other educational institutions, and viewers online. This is how our school can find its voice (as our school's catch phrase "find your voice" states). This is how we as educators can communicate to our viewers that we value not only the instrumental aspects of education (the product), but also the intrinsic value of our work (process, reflection, understanding).
- Maximizing set up time and breakdown time will allow for more time spent in production, as a 1.5-hour class for a day's production is very short. This is something that we may need to discuss, as far as perhaps a sliding structure for production classes, or makeup classes for private lessons missed during the production phase of particular video shoots.

The structure and design created for the program was as follows:

- 10 students ranging in age from grades eight through twelve
- The class would be scheduled on Friday afternoons for 1.5 hours
- A one hour drop-in time would be scheduled at the end of the class, allowing for extra time during production/filming or individual attention with the assistant, who was scheduled to be present during the drop-in time
- Students would each receive a single 30-minute biweekly private lesson with the instructor

The pilot project was a positive and successful experience for students and instructors alike. Students learned the basics of music composition and sound design in Garage Band, the basics of high definition filming using the school's DSLR camera, and the fundamentals of video editing in Final Cut Pro X. Two of the students recorded original Christmas carols with the help of their classmates, and these songs were filmed and edited into music videos by the class. One of the videos was screened at the seasonal concert at the end of the term, garnering much esteem from administrators and students outside the MVP program.



## **4.2. Study**

### **4.2.1. Research site**

The research was conducted at an urban after-school music program for at-risk youth. The mandate of the school is to accept students who are considered 'at-risk' either due to socio-economical circumstances (80%) or due to social, academic, or emotional challenges (20%) that are not severe enough to impede their ability to study music. This 20% margin consists of GLBT youth, autism spectrum youth, and young people with various social challenges or anxiety disorders. The school provides a variety of styles of music education, including classical, jazz, rock, popular, and hip-hop. Students attend weekly group classes in their chosen discipline, which may be one or more of the following: piano, guitar, voice, choir, percussion, ensemble, music theory, songwriting, hip-hop, and music video production. Most students are provided with biweekly private lessons. Tuition is free, and students within instrumental disciplines are provided with an instrument to use at home. Students of all experience levels are admitted without having to audition and the age range of the students consists of grades four through twelve. The program is run independently of the public school system, affording autonomous programming for instructional staff.

### **4.2.2. Participants**

The participants in the MVP study class consisted of five females and five males between the ages of 13 and 16 years of age. The racial and ethnic breakdown of the class was as follows: three Canadian-born Caucasian females, two Canadian-born Caucasian males, one British Caucasian male, two Chinese Canadian-born females, one Filipino Canadian-born male, and one Canadian-born male of mixed ethnicity (Filipino and Irish). The information provided about gender and ethnicity demonstrates the diversity of the group of participants. Two of the students were eighth graders, three were ninth graders, three were tenth graders, and two were eleventh graders. Table 2 provides a summary of the participants' demographics. Each participant chose his or her own pseudonym to protect his or her anonymity in the study.

**Table 2. Demographics of participants**

Name (Pseudonym)	Grade	Gender	Ethnicity
Richard	8	male	mixed ethnicity (Filipino and Irish)
Kat	8	female	Canadian-born Caucasian
Zoe	9	female	Canadian-born Caucasian
Finn	9	male	British Caucasian
Daisy	10	female	Canadian-born Caucasian
Jeremiah	10	male	Canadian-born Caucasian
Clyde	10	male	Canadian-born Caucasian
Steven	10	male	Filipino Canadian-born
Jade	11	female	Chinese Canadian-born
Brooklyn	11	female	Chinese Canadian-born

### **4.2.3. Program structure**

There were 13 sessions in total, consisting of one recording session, one private lesson, nine classroom sessions, and two sessions of structured interviews. Below is a description of each session:

**Session One:** Daisy (the songwriter) and I worked together to record her song *It'll Never Be* in the studio. During the recording session, Daisy recorded two tracks of vocals, and two tracks of acoustic guitar. At the time, it had not been decided that this song would serve as the music video project for my research study.

**Session Two:** Using her private lesson (with me), Daisy edited the vocals and guitar recordings in Garage Band, using the best parts of each track to make a master track of each. She also added in an artificial bass line using one of the software instruments in Garage Band. She then mixed her song down to iTunes, compressed it into MP3 format to email to herself, and copied the uncompressed AIFF file to my thumb drive.

**Session Three:** It was the following week after the song's completion that Daisy requested an opportunity to 'pitch' the song to her MVP classmates as a collaborative

project. The idea was presented as a potential MVP, and the project was unanimously accepted.

**Session Four:** Daisy began the first writing/planning class by performing the song, which she played as an audio file in iTunes, for her classmates. The participants gave their first impressions of the song, engaging in a dialogue around the emotional experiences of each student, and what sorts of personal references occurred while listening to the song for the first time. Copies of the song's lyrics were handed out, and Daisy read them aloud, explaining the context and the inspiration for the song. The class engaged in a dialogue around the meanings contained within the lyrics, and each student took turns sharing lyrics that were personally resonant. This dialogue served as the departure point for a number of discussions resulting in ideas for sub-plots, creation of sub-texts, and alternate interpretations of the song's lyrics and story.

It was in this class that the concept of the love letters emerged. It was suggested that the lyrics of the song could be written as love letters, created by different characters in the video using different coloured papers and inks. Subsequently, from the concept of the love letters emerged the subplot of Clyde and Brooklyn's on-screen romance, which became the primary focus for many of the students' final video edits. Daisy also suggested the idea of her on-screen character performing the role of narrator, existing uniquely outside of the consciousness of the on-screen characters. The narrator character would sing directly into the camera, engaging with the audience, whereas the other characters would not only be unaware of Daisy's presence, but they would not engage directly with the audience (they would not look into the camera). A conceptual framework based around the narrator character was established, and the class ended with the assigning of homework, which included developing more potential story arc ideas and sketching out any ideas or concepts for possible storyboarding development.

**Session Five:** In the second writing/planning class, participants took turns drawing ideas for shots on the white board, explaining or describing how they might be filmed. The class decided who would be cast as the couple showcased in the dominant sub-plot (Clyde and Brooklyn), and how the other students would be incorporated into each of the verses and choruses. A particularly important moment occurred in this class

around the issue of passing the love letters, which were folded to look like 'notes' that might be passed around by young people in a classroom setting. The students decided to shoot a montage of close-up (C/U) shots of hands passing the notes, which facilitated a discourse around heterosexist representation. It was unanimously decided that hand pairings in these scenes should represent all possible gender pairings. I will revisit this moment in detail in the pedagogy and analysis sections as it served as a catalyst for one of the more transformative learning moments in the project.

Another significant contribution to the overall production that emerged out of this session was the concept of the 'love heart' chalk drawing that is featured prominently in the majority of the students' videos. Daisy drew the image on the white board and illustrated how the text contained in the chalk drawing would be transformed into the title of the song. This will also be covered with more depth in the analysis section. The session concluded with a dialogue exploring aspects of production that would possibly occur in the following weeks. Decisions regarding who would serve as the camera operators and which scenes would be shot and in which order were discussed and articulated. Students made all decisions relating to production procedures and character casting. Detailed production notes were written directly on the lyrics sheet and photocopied to give out to the students at the beginning of the following class.

**Session Six:** Production (on-location video capture) was intended to take place over two extended 2.5-hour classes but was extended to four classes in total. In production day one, which occurred at a local park over a span of 2.5 hours, students captured the majority of Daisy's performance shots, scenes of the students on the swing set, the Clyde and Brooklyn sub-plot on the park bench, Zoe's subplot under the tree, Steven's letter writing scene, and the chalk-drawing scene with Clyde.

**Session Seven:** Production day two, which occurred over 1.5 hours at the same park, focused on Daisy's 'singing in the leaves' shots, and the cell phone scene that occurs between Jade, Kat, and Finn.

**Session Eight:** Production day three, which occurred over 1.5 hours at the school, captured all of the letter writing and note folding shots.

**Session Nine:** Production day four, which occurred over 2.5 hours at the park, captured the letter passing close-up shots, Daisy's final performance shots, general static B-roll footage (supplementary footage intercut with the main shot in a scene, often close-up shots, background shots, or texture shots) of Zoe, Jade, Richard, Steven, Clyde, and Jeremiah, and the final scene where the note is passed to Daisy.

**Sessions Ten and Eleven:** As the production phase occupied twice as much time as originally planned, editing had to take place over a condensed two weeks, which occurred during the last two weeks of the school year. Students often require more than two classes for editing a project of this size and scope, but due to the time constraints, students used their time efficiently and managed to get their videos completed by the end of the second editing class. Some students also came in to work on their own time, and all students received their regularly scheduled private lesson during these two weeks and were able to make good progress during this time as well. It was during the second editing day that I conducted the informal interviews with the students focusing on their editing processes and choices. At the time I wasn't aware of how important these interviews would be to the research, but my intuition implored me to capture this process although I was not certain how I would use the interview footage at the time. These interviews would later be incorporated into the music video transcriptions as the "Student Interpretation" category and would contribute greatly to the interpretations and analysis of the students' editing work.

**Sessions Twelve and Thirteen:** In these two sessions, the structured interviews took place. Participants set up the backdrop screen and the manual settings on the DSLR cameras. The eight remaining participants from the previous term were interviewed over the duration of two classes.

In total, eight of the students completed music videos. These students were: Finn, Jade, Jeremiah, Richard, Steven, Daisy, Clyde, and Kat. The two remaining students, Brooklyn and Zoe both worked on behind-the-scenes mini-documentaries. Neither student was able to complete their mini-docs by the end of the course that year, but both intended to continue working on their projects in the following year. Brooklyn continued to work on her mini-doc intermittently for the entire next year, completing her

film by the end of the year in May of 2014, shortly before graduating and leaving the school. Having been selected as a potential candidate for the Berkley School of Music summer camp program, Zoe left the MVP program to focus more on her instrumental and ensemble courses at the school, which prevented her from completing her mini-doc. Although Zoe was conflicted about leaving the MVP class, it bears mentioning that she was indeed the recipient of a full scholarship to attend the 2014 Berkley School of Music summer program for youth.

Reflecting now upon the process and breadth of the project, the overall scope of the production and its success in engaging the students was right on par. Aside from the production phase, which required four days instead of two, the completion time followed the projected schedule as expected. It would have been less stressful for the students in the editing phase to have had one more class, but students made up for the condensed editing schedule by working efficiently during class time and coming in on their own to work independently. All eight of the students who worked on an edit of the music video were able to finish on time, which reflects the agency and engaged praxis experienced by the participants during the research project.

### **4.3. Pedagogy**

TME and transformative learning theories were the primary influences for the pedagogy used within this study. Designed to be learner-centred and youth-driven, a participatory approach was used to engage participants in the creation of the music video for the project, which was titled *It'll Never Be*. The approach to production was collaborative and inclusive, allowing for all voices to be heard. The outcomes for the study were both aimed for and emergent, challenging students to try new production roles and develop new MVP skills. Introverted participants were encouraged to step in front of the camera, and those who have an affinity for performance were challenged to step behind the camera. Participants with more skills in a particular area were encouraged to mentor others with less experience.

The role of narrative was pivotal in creating a context for Daisy's song. Two primary narratives emerged out of inquiry and dialogue: Daisy's narrator character and

the Brooklyn/Clyde romantic scenario. In attempting to understand Daisy's lyrics, the participants were able to engage in purposeful inquiry, prompting explorations into sophisticated character dynamics and complicated sub-plots. Understanding the concepts of rejection and loss became focal within these dialogues, and a multimodal discourse based on this concept resulted in numerous suggestions for locations, dramatic scenarios, and camera shots.

Critical reflection resulting from a number of pivotal dialogues resulted in new definitions or understandings of important sociocultural and socio-political associations. The participants shared feelings and thoughts of personal significance, such as issues relating to sexual orientation and gender positioning. Finn engaged his peers in a discourse around the gender pairings represented within the note passing scenes. Through a process of dialogue and shared meaning making, the participants were able to shift their assumptions around sexual orientation, assigning all possible combinations of gender pairings in the close-up shots of the hands. Finn was able to help his classmates change their frame of reference around representations of sexual preference, learning to understand what loss and rejection might feel like from a non-heterosexual point of view. Being 'heard' by his classmates in this instance was an empowering experience for Finn, and a transformative moment for the entire group.

My role as instructor was "one of facilitator, organizer, leader, and source of knowledge on the topic, but not the primary source of learning" (O'Neill, 2012). Whenever possible, I would ask students to share their expertise with their peers, whether it be the adjustment of settings used in *manual operation* mode on the DSLR cameras, or the discovery of a new function, process, or treatment in Final Cut Pro X that enhanced creativity or increased efficiency/productivity.

Through the implementation of a transformative pedagogy, the participants were able to express their own stories throughout the various stages of production, creating meaningful connections to their personal histories and classroom ecologies. For Daisy, this project was an opportunity for her to share private and personal feelings with her classmates, who in turn found creative ways to relate and connect themselves to the song through their own suggestions, contributions, and creative initiatives. Within the

writing/planning sessions and the filming sessions, the students worked collaboratively to shape the production resources multimodally into raw footage that would be used autonomously and agentively in post-production. In the editing sessions, students were able to connect on a deeper and more personal level with the project, making distinct and innovative choices within an engaged praxis that produced unique and meaningful interpretations of Daisy's original vision.

#### **4.4. Procedure: Ethics and Reciprocity**

Ethics is a major consideration when engaging in research with youth. As I was already conducting research at this research site as a research assistant for the Multimodal Opportunities, Diversity and Artistic Learning (MODAL) research group, under the supervision of Dr. Susan O'Neill, I understood how to engage in ethically responsible research. I was given verbal consent to engage in this research project from the Executive Director of the school, followed by written consent from both the Board of Directors and the Director of Education. A number of conditions and criteria were required by the Board of Directors in order to receive permission to conduct research within the school. This criteria was as follows:

- Students involved in research with an outside institution must benefit directly from the research
- The school as an institution must also benefit from research in some direct manner
- Research practices must not negatively impact upon regular programming
- Students must not be exposed to stress or harm of any kind, whether it be physical or mental

To minimize the impact of the research process on the learning environment, I integrated the research within the context of class assignments, ensuring that the research and data capturing process did not become a daunting task for the students or impact classroom activities in any significant manner. I feel this approach to research multitasking reflects a practical and ethical method of data collection, generating and documenting research without exploiting or negatively impacting the research participants.



Involving the research participants in a study exploring identity development provided the participants with opportunities to learn about their own musical selves, their moral stances, and how they may experience a sense of engaged agency through their work. Through a focus on continuous reflectivity, the participants were able to develop a better understanding of their work, and its impacts on their sense of self and world-view. Finally, as co-researchers in this project, the participants will gain knowledge into the critical inquiry process, thereby becoming researchers in their own right. This research experience offered participants an opportunity to experience a particular form of learning that many youth do not experience until they engage in post-secondary education.

#### **4.5. Procedure: Data Collection**

The *It'll Never Be* video project took place over a four-month span and 13 sessions. The research involved qualitative methods of data collection, beginning in session one and ending in session 13. I have worked at the research site for 13 years, which resulted in a supportive and encouraging relationship with the school and its administrators. As the instructor of the class, I have the ultimate insider perspective, as well as access to the class on a weekly basis for two full years, which provided the flexibility required to complete the study in a thorough manner. Records pertaining to re-enrolment data verify the return of eight of the ten students for year two of the program, providing longevity and aspects of trustworthiness and dependability. Overall, I feel the class and its participants provided the optimal environment and resources for a meaningful research study.

Data collection began in session one, filming the music recording process and conducting an informal interview with Daisy. The video documenting process of classroom observations continued throughout each of the other 10 sessions. Video documentation played a major role in gathering data for analysis. Classroom observations captured casually and indirectly using a video camera became an essential part of the research process. Issues relating to 'getting past' the cameras in research environments can be problematic in some case studies. Participants are often cognisant of the video camera's presence, which may influence their behaviour and cause participants to 'perform' for the camera. In my particular research scenario, there is

always at least one camera present due to the amount of video footage captured for use in class activities, such as behind-the-scenes mini-docs and the music videos themselves. This is a major benefit to the data capturing process, as the camera is practically invisible as a research device, blending into the classroom environment like any other computer, chair, desk or object in the class. As a result, the students were very comfortable both in front of and behind the camera, allowing for the capture of data that was authentic to the moment and not a product of a ‘performance’ prompted or influenced by the presence of a video camera. This also provided ample opportunity for the securing of emic data, which at times can be difficult to obtain for researchers working in educational settings with children and youth.

The chart below in Table 3 illustrates the 13 sessions in the research study, what occurred in each class, and the kind of research data collected in each session.

**Table 3. Data Collection Chart**

Session	Activities	Data
1	Daisy Recording Session	Video & music, behind-the-scenes (BTS) documentation
2	Daisy’s Private Lesson	BTS video documentation
3	Daisy pitches her idea to MVP class	BTS video documentation
4	Writing Day 1	BTS video documentation, production notes
5	Writing Day 2	BTS video documentation, production notes, & whiteboard photos
6	Filming Day 1 footage	video
6	Filming Day 1 BTS	video
7	Filming Day 2 footage	video
7	Filming Day 2 BTS	video
8	Filming Day 3	video
9	Filming Day 4 footage	video
9	Filming Day 4 BTS	video
10	Editing Day 1	video
11	Editing Day 2	video
12	Formal Interviews 1	video
13	Formal Interviews 2	video

Although the class originally consisted of ten students, I narrowed the focus of the research to one case study based on eight students and four completed music videos due to the omission of two students who left the program at the end of year one. The video for the song *It'll Never Be* was created as the last production of the 2012/2013 school year, and the structured interviews were conducted at the beginning of the 2013/2014 school year. The eight remaining students in year two were Daisy, Brooklyn, Jade, Finn, Clyde, Richard, Steven, and Jeremiah. Kat moved to another school and Zoe left the MVP class to focus more on her instrumental courses at the school. Verbatim transcriptions were produced for each interview, which resulted in 71 pages for the structured interviews and 17 pages for the informal interviews conducted in session 13.

The four videos analyzed for the research belong to Daisy, Finn, Clyde, and Richard, chosen because they represent the greatest diversity of editing approaches and styles in the class. I initially felt it more apt to analyze videos from two male and two female students, so as to achieve an equal gender representation, but upon reviewing the videos from the perspective of the research, I found the four chosen video editors to be the most divergent and as such the best choice for the research. These four videos provide a sampling of four distinct musical identities that develop within a single case of eight young musicians.

#### **4.6. Analysis: Research Methodology / Design**

In order to gain a critical understanding of how the participants constructed their music videos, a set of analytic tools was assembled to analyze the MVP process and the final video edits. A sociocultural point of view of MVP was analyzed within a series of formal interviews, filtered through the lens of transformative music engagement, and a detailed analysis of the completed music videos provided a multimodal point of view of the students' multimodal composing practices. The study aimed to combine these two analytical lenses, following the trajectory of the *It'll Never Be* video project within and across the three phases of production. Emphasis was placed on the ways in which these music learners transformed and transduced their ideas within their MVP praxis to arrive

at a deeper understanding of themselves, their relationships within the MVP class, their praxis as producers of music videos, and their world-views.

More specifically, the Curwood and Gibbons' (2010) *multimodal microanalysis* was used to analyze the completed music videos. This method of analysis illuminates how learners employ multiple modes of representation within their multimodal composing practices. Influenced by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) concept of *multimodal discourse*, the Curwood and Gibbons approach to the analysis of a text (such as a music video) assumes that communication is no longer limited to spoken or written language alone. Other modes of expression, such as sound, gesture, moving image, movement, and colour are also essential components within a music video and as such serve as significant points of critical inquiry and reference within the analysis.

Micromodal analysis is primarily informed by the work of Andrew Burn and David Parker, who, in 2003 published a book entitled *Analysing Media Texts*. In their book, the authors outline their concept of the *kineikonic* mode, which stems from the Greek words 'to move' (kinein) and 'image' (eikon). As explained earlier, this concept provides researchers with a multimodal theory of the moving image, which may be employed as a tool for analyzing the process of social semiosis and the multimodal composing practices that occur within various forms of filmmaking. By looking deeply into the interplay of modes within youth-produced video production, the *kineikonic* mode allows the researcher to describe the grammar of the music video at any level of detail, from an individual frame to an entire filmic sequence.

Burn (2013) continues to work towards a more in-depth theory of the *kinkeikonic* mode developed within the Burn and Parker book *Analysing Media Texts* (2003). Within his paper, *The kineikonic mode: Towards a multimodal approach to moving image media*, Burn explains the two modes of *filming* and *editing* can be seen as the primary *orchestrating modes*, which occur within both spatial and temporal dimensions and exist as a binding relationship between the two. All other modes are identified as *contributory modes*, which can further be broken into three categories: the embodied modes that refer to language and action, auditory modes that refer to music and sound, and visual modes that refer to aspects of video production. Within a music video, the embodied

modes might include dramatic action, gesture, facial expression, gaze, movement, or speech. The auditory modes might include music, melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, and instrumentation. The visual modes might include lighting, location, direction, focus, and colour. It is the interplay and counterpoint that occurs between the orchestrating and contributory modes within a music video that provides the language necessary for micromodal analysis. This language in turn was used within the analysis of the music videos to describe, interpret, and explain how the students capitalize on the affordances of MVP technology to create music videos that have personal and profound meaning for them. The methodology of multimodal microanalysis, as developed by Curwood and Gibbons, takes these ideas one step further, providing a step by step method for engaging in a rich, detailed analysis of multimodal texts, thus making it the perfect compliment to the sociocultural analysis of the participants' structured interviews.

Multimodal microanalysis occurs in three phases. The first phase is *transcription*, which for the purposes of my research was realized in Microsoft Word as an extensive table that unfolds vertically in rows that have the most dominant modes or what is labeled as *codes* and in the top column as *categories*. I created a screen capture every time the video cuts or transitions to a new shot. These screen captures are then cut and pasted adjacently into the document below one another, and the code columns/categories then span out to the right of each screen capture. The document was orientated in a landscape format to accommodate the unusual width of the table, and the document is read from top to bottom, from left to right, just as one would read a regular document.

For the multimodal microanalysis of the four music videos, I used the following main category codes:

- *Screen Shot/Time*. The length of the song *It'll Never Be* was 3 minutes and 26 seconds. Some researchers who use this method use regular intervals or time segments, such as a two-second interval, and some even choose to create a screen capture of each individual frame. Neither of these formats were appropriate for my own analysis as it is the editing choices that occur and how the meaning is passed from one shot to the next that was of most interest for addressing the research questions. With this in mind, I used the time code/category to list when each shot cuts or transitions to the next, which also allows for an understanding of the length of each shot, and the editing rhythm occurring at various points in the participants' edits. The 'Screen

Shot/Time' code column displays both the screen shot image and the time in the video where the transition occurs (or where the next shot begins).

- *Lyrics*. This code includes any lyrics heard within the music during that particular shot.
- *Music*. This code represents what is occurring in the musical arrangement, which in the case of this song consists of only guitar and solo vocals. Other songs with more complicated instrumental and vocal arrangements would require more data input in this field, but within this research project, this field is fairly sparse in its use due to the simplicity of the song's arrangement.
- *Action*. Curwood and Gibbons use this code to describe what is occurring on the screen in relation to movement or activity. For Burn and Parker (2003), action determines agency, describing the choices made by each student and what they wanted to include within their edits. Within my research, I tended to use this code/category more in the Curwood/Gibbons manner, but agency within the video editing process was also a prominent theme within the multimodal microanalysis of the videos.
- *Filming*. This code allows for descriptions of what kind of shot the camera operator captures, such as a hand-held, moving shot. It also allows for the description of the framing of each shot, such as a medium close-up (C/U) with right framing or a full shot.
- *Editing*. This code allows for a description of the transitions between shots, which is most often a 'straight cut' or an instant cut from one scene to the next. At various points in each video, students might also choose other kinds of transitions such as a cross-fade, and temporal issues relating to the rhythm of a particular student's editing choices is also explored within this code. For example, students often choose to cut directly on the beat in some scenes, and at other times, they make their cuts in random timings. This code allows for a critical analysis of these editing choices.

I made a number of deviations from the Curwood/Gibbons and Burn/Parker templates, adding in three other fields. The first addition was to add in a field called *Student Interpretation*, which allowed me to include directly into the analysis process comments made by each participant during informal interviews outlining and describing how the participants made their editing choices and what their favourite shots or scenes were within their own video. The transcriptions of these interviews are added into this field according to the matching moment in the video. For example, if a participant begins to describe a choice made at 1:03 in the video, I added in the transcription of the interview in the closest row associated with that time in the video. Therefore, when we are in and around the 1:03 point in the video transcription, we can also see how the participant reflected on their video editing at that point in their edit.

I also added in one other field within my transcription template, labeled *Themes/Interpretation*. This field was inserted in a combined row with the *Transcription Narrative* field, occurring at significant points in the document where analysis was required. The 'Transcription Narrative' field provides space to accommodate the second phase of multimodal microanalysis, and the 'Themes/Interpretation' field was an addition suggested by Dr. O'Neill to add to the analytical depth and breadth of the transcription template. These two fields provide a very apt balance of the objective and subjective analytical points of view. The transcription narrative, which I will explain further in the following paragraph, provides a clear-cut, objective chronology of action, movement, and framing for each point of analysis. Alternatively, the interpretation field allows for a much more subjective analysis or interpretation of what I see happening at each point of analysis. This interpretation allows for explanations of how meaning making is occurring, how the meaning is being passed through different modes, what metaphors are being created, and how aspects of engagement, agency, and autonomy are playing out within a particular student's MVP praxis.

In its totality, my version of the transcription template created for this research project incorporates aspects of Curwood/Gibbon's micromodal analysis, Burn/Parker's kinkeikonic multimodal analysis, and O'Neill's transformative music engagement theoretical perspective within one document. It allows for both an objective, scientific take on 'what is happening' in each scene as well as a subjective take on how the student is capitalizing on the affordances of the editing software to create meaning, tell their story, and experience a sense of engaged agency through their MVP praxis.

The second stage of multimodal microanalysis is to write a *transcription narrative* for each point of interest in the music video transcription document. This, as mentioned in previously, occurs numerous times in the transcription within the field of the same title. The purpose of the transcription narrative is to gather all data occurring within each individual code/category (time, lyrics, music, action, filming, and editing) and to create an objective, straight-forward narrative that explains how each student is using modes within their videos to communicate their particular and unique version of the story. Each mode listed within the transcription narrative is highlighted in bold, revealing the frequency and dominance of particular modes within each student's video. This allows

for an observation and understanding of repetition, variation, and patterns that develop within modal choices, often revealing the particular editing style of each participant. For example, some participants prefer to use long, dramatic shots that showcase and emphasize the performances of Daisy or the other actors. Others prefer to use frequent and often very rhythmic cutting sequences that emphasize the rhythmic and musical elements contained within the audio track. The transcription narrative is a detail-laden representation of the video, which serves as a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the music video, providing a non-biased and detailed account of every step in the music video.

The third and final stage of multimodal microanalysis is to code for *modal patterns*, analyzing how the student creates his or her music video and what patterns of modal usage develop, disappear, or re-emerge within their video edits. Much of the analysis relating to the modal patterns in each student’s videos is written within the ‘Themes/Interpretations’ field of the music video transcription documents. This is where I am able to bring in my own perspective to the analytical interpretations. Although my interpretations also reflect my own experiences with the students, as well as my biases, values, and assumptions, they nonetheless provide another layer of sense making and insights to the analysis.

Equally important in generating an understanding of the impact of MVP as an extension of music education pedagogies is simultaneously employing another set of analytical tools that may address issues relating to transformative music engagement occurring at all phases of production and not just the post-production or editing phase. To compliment the finished music videos, I created a series of open-ended questions relating to the *It’ll Never Be* project that the participants could reflect upon using a structured interview approach with questions developed in advance of the interviews. Eight of the ten original students were interviewed and their responses were analyzed using the *constant comparative method* (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), which is described below.

It was vital that the research remain as close as possible to the participants’ ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Learner voice is a major theme in transformative music



engagement, and as such, the analysis of the data needed to have a strong student voice in order to engage in an inquiry around *why* they are making the choices they made, what it means to them on a personal and social level, and what they learned about themselves and their relationships to one another and the world within and throughout the project.

The constant comparative method applied an emergent process of inductive reasoning to the interview transcriptions. The first step involved transcribing the 8 formal interviews, which was completed over a 2-week period. The second step was to unitize the data (identify 'units of meaning' in the text). I worked with another doctoral candidate on this process who had prior experience of this process and volunteered to assist me with the initial stages of this process, which I then completed over a further two weeks. The units of meaning were written on post-it notes, and each participant was assigned to a different colour of post-it note. Initially, the post-it notes were placed randomly on the walls of my office. Over time, common words or concepts began to appear, and these post-it notes were placed together in what became the preliminary categories.

Once this initial analysis was completed, I created a table in Microsoft Word, complete with columns for the code, the category and its excerpts, and the units of meanings summaries. Digitizing the organic process that occurred on the walls of my studio into one Word document occurred over a 7-day process, and the first draft was sent to Dr. O'Neill for feedback. I scheduled one meeting with Dr. O'Neill to work through and refine the first draft, and feedback for subsequent drafts was received via email. Through a series of seven revisions to the document involving more detailed interpretations of the emergent themes and related concepts, I arrived at my final four categories: Learning Relationships, Choice, Experiential, and Capacity Building. The Learning Relationships and Capacity Building themes both have numerous sub-themes, which are outlined in Chapter 6.

The analytic framework assembled for my research combines a social semiotic, multimodal microanalysis exploring the structure and the substance of the music videos with a socio-cultural analysis of the participants' interviews using the constant comparison method. TME served as a theoretical lens from which to analyze issues

relating to motivation, collaboration, and the affordances of MVP technologies. This research methodology allowed for an approach and analysis of the research from multiple theoretical points of view. This process provided insights and interpretations that culminated in a rich and extensive portrait of the work. The findings outlined in chapter 8 speak to the core values of transformative music engagement and showcase the power and potential for meaningful exchange within MVP pedagogies.

#### **4.7. Trustworthiness and Reflexivity**

Including the participants within the research process helped to fulfill the criteria for credibility. The participants were involved in many aspects of the research, as well as the development of behind-the-scenes materials used in mini-docs and classroom observational materials. Transparency of my own motives and procedures as they related to the research conducted with the participants provided them with an understanding of the research process, and their own relationship with their work and contributions to the study. The participants, as they reflected critically on their own assumptions and ideas relating to their work as producers of music videos, were able to understand that they were contributing to the construction of the meanings generated within the research. For example, the participants were aware that the structured interviews would be transcribed, analysed, and developed into the findings that would then describe and represent their collective meanings, understanding, and interpretations. The interviewees were aware that their responses would impact the findings and outcomes of the research. Similarly, the informal interviews conducted on the final day of editing were also understood by the participants to be their own individual and unique contributions to the research and its findings. Transferability was addressed through the vast amount of video documentation, as well as the numerous forms of data documentation mentioned in the methods section of this proposal. Detailed records have been kept during all stages of the research process, and all materials were safely stored on an external hard drive within a variety of carefully labeled folders.

Reflexivity played a key role in this qualitative research. Crowley (2010) states that reflexivity is “a qualitative parallel to the quantitative considerations of validity and reliability, and is seen to be a means of increasing the *transparency* of the research

process” (p. 240). Reflexivity played a key role in my own critical reflective practice as it related to the research. First, reflexivity facilitated an exploration of the effectiveness of the research process and the use of both the constant comparison method and multimodal microanalysis in relation to the manner in which it helped to construct the meanings and interpretations presented in the findings.

A strong reflexive relationship to the work also helped me as a teacher-researcher to recognize and keep in mind that my analysis is part of a larger social process involved in the construction of meaning. My own biases and experiences in MVP influence my interpretations, as well as the power dynamics that exist between myself and the student participants. Sharing the research at various stages in its development with other members of the educational community at the research site allowed me to delve deeper into my own values and assumptions as a teacher-researcher as did presentations at three conferences within the developmental phase of the research. A reflexive or personal statement is also provided within section 7.1.1 as a means of owning my position as a teacher-researcher within the study.

## Chapter 5.

### Research Findings: Multimodal Social Semiotics

#### 5.1. Forward:

I present my findings in two interrelated chapters. Chapter 5 analyzes four music video transcriptions using a multimodal microanalysis of the kineikonic mode and the social semiotic patterns emerging from a detailed comparison of the videos. Chapter 6 presents the findings derived from the analysis of the formal interviews conducted with eight of the ten students from the original research sample. As mentioned previously, two of the participants did not continue with the program in the fall of 2013 and as such were unable to take part in the interviews. Findings derived using the constant comparison method illuminate and explore the “transformative” and “engagement” themes within O’Neill’s TME theoretical framework.

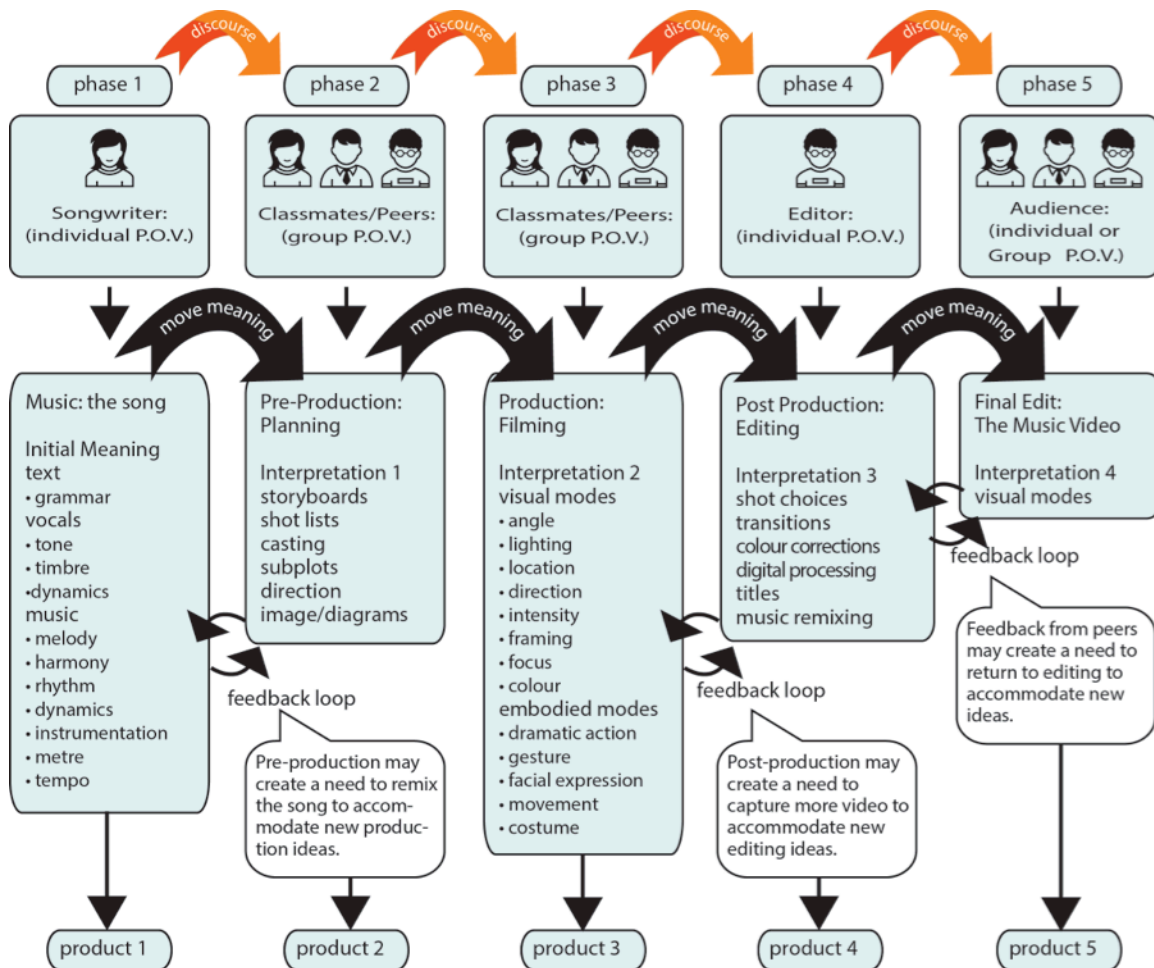
These two theoretical perspectives, multimodal social semiotics and TME, enable the investigation of one music video production using two different but complimentary lenses. The multimodal perspective provides an analytical account of the semiotic processes of transformation and transduction that occur within the students’ multimodal composing practices and how meaning is passed from one mode to the next within multimodal ensembles. The sociocultural framework of O’Neill’s TME provides insights into the mindsets, motivations, and social facets of the research site and participants, with particular emphasis on the students’ experiences of transformative engagement. In a sense, the multimodal microanalysis in Chapter 5 enables the research to *show* you how participants created and constructed meaning using excerpts from their videos, and the analysis of the structured interviews in Chapter 6 allows for the participants to *explain* in their own words how they worked and interacted within the production and how this process was meaningful for them as young music artists. This combination of

methods offers a more holistic or complete account of the multimodal learning process associated with the MVP program.

## **5.2. A Working Model of MVP as Social Semiosis**

Daisy has a unique position within this research, being the creator of the song and the initiator of the video project for her class. She is the only participant within this study who would be able to reflect on all eight of the stages listed in figure 3. It was Daisy's idea to share her song with her MVP classmates, as she felt it would be more interesting and meaningful for her to bring multiple perspectives to her song. I felt this scenario would serve as the perfect case study for my dissertation research. My research interests at the time were oriented around music video production as an enhancement to the meaning-making potential of songwriting. The other nine participants would be inserted into the process (described in figure 3) at stage four, the pre-production planning phase, represented by the icon of the boy and girl and their interconnected thought bubbles. This would serve as the departure point for my inquiry into this research topic. Although the other nine students enter into the creation process later than Daisy, the formal interview data outlined in section one suggests that their engagement is similar or even equal to Daisy's.

How can this process be explained in a more elaborate, social semiotic point of view? Numerous semiotic messages contribute to the complex social ecologies occurring throughout the various phases of production. Although it is difficult to represent this complex and multi-layered process within a single model, I have attempted to capture the process with as much detail as possible in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2. Multimodal Composing Practices, Discourse, and Social Semiotics in MVP Production**

Figure 2 provides as a visual representation for both my specific research project as well as the general process of MVP. Note the five stages depicted, with the three phases of production located in between phase one, the creation of the song, and phase five, the viewing of the video by an audience. This research study is situated within these three middle phases, and the multimodal microanalysis of the four music videos included in this research are situated within the fourth (editing) stage. Sections 5.3 to 5.5 outline modal patterns emerging from this process of multimodal microanalysis.

### **5.3. Modal Patterns Found Within the Four Music Video Transcriptions**

A multimodal microanalysis of the four music video transcriptions revealed three main modal patterns. The first pattern illuminates the manner in which resources were used to determine character placement and hierarchy within the story arc of each music video. The second pattern explores how modal resources were used to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles (Hodge & Kress, 1988), expressing ideas in and through modes. The third pattern illustrates how autonomy and agency are expanded through access to multiple modes of expression and production within the editing phase of the project. Using excerpts from the participants' informal interviews as well as excerpts from the music video transcriptions, these three patterns are analyzed with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of MVP pedagogies.

#### **5.3.1. Pattern one: Using modal resources independently to represent self and the other**

The first pattern found to be a common element throughout the videos was the ability to employ modal resources to determine character placement and hierarchy within the music video's story arc. Using modes such as framing, layout, montage, image, gaze, gesture, colour, and action (by 'action' I am referring to what is occurring on the screen in terms of movement, activity, or interaction), each editor acts as an autonomous agent, making calculated choices and assembling modal resources into multimodal ensembles using Final Cut Pro X to create distinct narratives that showcase a hierarchy of primary and secondary characters. Musical autonomy (i.e., as described by Green, 2005, refers to students having a choice about what the music means – sometimes collectively – and are 'freed' from the social context that they are in and are able to focus on their own interpretation of what the music means to them), one of the more dominant affordances provided by video editing software, is exemplified by the diversity of casting choices within each participant's video edits. It is important to note that by 'casting' in the post-production stage, I am referring to the casting or choosing of characters within the video clips and not of live, physical individuals. This 'casting' process takes place within two steps. First, the participants become familiar with the

captured footage, which has been previously assembled into a collection of raw materials within a ‘footage library’ on a commonly shared hard drive. The participants then decide which characters within the collection will be selected and how they will assemble a visual narrative for each section of the song using specific characters in specific scenes and in specific combinations. This selection of video clips, combined with the lyrics heard within the song, create a multimodal discourse that communicates a context and narrative to the viewer. Table 4 illustrates the video footage casting choices made by all eight of the participants within their video edits:

**Table 4. Participants’ casting choices from within the video footage that were used in their video edits**

Participant	Multimodal Microanalysis Completed	Primary Character(s)	Secondary Character(s)	Tertiary Characters (in order of appearance)
Daisy	Yes	Daisy	Clyde & Brooklyn, The Letters	Richard, Kat, Steven, and Zoe
Clyde	Yes	Clyde	Brooklyn, Daisy	Richard, Jade, Steven, Zoe, and Jeremiah
Finn	Yes	Clyde & Brooklyn	Daisy	Zoe, Steven, and Jade
Richard	Yes	Clyde & Brooklyn	Daisy	Steven, Jade, Kat, Finn, and Zoe
Jade	No	“everyone”	n/a	n/a
Steven	No	Daisy	Clyde & Brooklyn	Zoe, Richard, Jeremiah, and Kat
Jeremiah	No	Daisy, Clyde, and Brooklyn	Richard, Jade, Steven, Zoe, and Jeremiah	n/a
Kat	No	The Letters	Daisy, Clyde, and Brooklyn	Jade, Kat, and Zoe

For this particular modal pattern, described here in section 6.2.1, I refer to both the four music videos that were used in the multimodal microanalysis as well as the other four completed videos, using excerpts from the informal interviews to create a more comprehensive comparison of character casting choices within the editing process. The other two modal patterns in sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 rely exclusively on the multimodal microanalysis contained within the transcripts of the four music videos.



Daisy, the creator and performer of the song, tells the story from her own character's point of view, with Clyde and Brooklyn as secondary characters. In her informal interview, conducted on the final editing day, Daisy explains her hierarchical character choices, initially stating that there was no main character in her video, but then quickly changes her mind and comes to the realization that her character could be considered dominant.

G: What I want you to do first is tell me who are you telling the story from the point of view of? Who is your main...your main character in the film?

D: Um, I don't really have a main character.

G: So...

D: So, it's more like there's a narrator who's telling the story of various different people. Um, it's more...it's more like a universal story and I'm just trying to through the film, not really trying to tell someone, like...a...a single person story. It's more just like, the idea of it'll never be.

G: But it...it seems like your probably telling the story from the point of view of the performer, right?

D: Yeah. It's like the narrator's kind of telling everything. And I think my...what I really like about this is that, it starts of, and it's really just I'm telling a story and then we have clips of what I'm telling like it's a story. And then at the end, I did it so that it's like I'm in this story. And that's my favourite shot.

It makes sense that Daisy, as the singer/songwriter for the project, would choose to place her character in the dominant position. This is most likely the most meaningful way for her, the songwriter, to tell her story. It could be suggested that Daisy has a more vested interest in the video, which she not only wrote, but also planned to upload onto her YouTube page with her other videos. Daisy does however, share her story with the other members of the class through her editing praxis, choosing to make the Clyde and Brooklyn story arc secondary to her own character's positioning within the story; serving as the narrator for this couple's on-screen narrative. In this manner, Daisy is able to extend the semiotic 'reach' (Kress, 2010) of her ideas, through her initial sharing of the song with her classmates during pre-production, her interactions during the filming/production days, her multimodal compositing practices within the video editing software, and her choices of casting in the editing process. This combination of choices

and actions will in turn facilitate and direct the interpretation of the story by her intended audience.

Clyde's on-screen character was conceptualized and written into the story by his classmates in the pre-production phase of the project. Clyde would perform the role of a young man who expresses interest in and is subsequently rejected by Brooklyn's on-screen character. Clyde was chosen for this role in the production because of his extensive background in theatre. The social dynamic occurring between Clyde and Brooklyn's on-screen characters was intended to serve as the primary story arc for the story. Daisy would function specifically as the narrator for Clyde's experience as he attempts to express his feelings for Brooklyn. It is no surprise then that Clyde chooses to tell the story from his character's point of view, using shots of his character more frequently than the other characters in the film, Daisy included. In making these choices, Clyde defines his own character as dominant, shifting the focus onto his character and making Daisy's character secondary. He is able to tell the story from his own point of view by making editing choices that focus attention on his own character. In this way, he demonstrates a sense of agency that appears to provide him with the ability to have his own distinct voice within the music video, reinterpreting Daisy's original concept and redesigning the story to reflect his own experiences and feelings.

The notion of musical autonomy is also apparent in the way participants developed character hierarchies within their music videos. In the pre-production phase of the project, the class chose to intentionally shoot more scenarios and footage than was required, allowing for more creative autonomy in the post-production phase. It was during the video editing process that each student made decisions as to which character(s) would be made primary and secondary within their chosen narrative trajectory. Daisy and Clyde both made their own characters dominant in the video's visual narrative. So how did the other participants establish character dominance in their edits? Finn chose to tell the story from the point of view of both Clyde and Brooklyn equally, with Daisy as the secondary character. Richard also followed this same casting hierarchy. Jade, on the other hand, made an interesting choice as an editor. She explains her choice within her informal interview, stating:

Jade (J): Mmm, it's sort of like from everybody. So like, a third person, I guess?

G: A third person point of view?

J: Yep. Like, or...actually themselves. They could like, put themselves into, like, other people's shoes.

Jade makes a conscious choice not to make any one character more or less dominant, which is an assertion of agency that capitalizes on the musical autonomy provided by the video editing software. She chooses to take a more diplomatic or democratic approach to casting, sharing the story with all of her classmates as equally as possible using a third person perspective.

Other participants made interesting and distinctive choices in their representation of self and others within their editing praxis. Steven doesn't include himself at all in his edit of the music video. I hadn't noticed this until I began to analyze the videos in this section of the research. Having not had an opportunity to ask Steven about this choice, I can only speculate that it is due to self-esteem or self-image issues. In his structured interview, he stated, "I thought, like any shot of me, looked pretty bad, because I'm not good with cameras." Although the other members of his class would appear to disagree, based on the prominence of Steven's footage in their videos, I believe it is Steven's right to assert his agency in this manner. I will continue to work on Steven's self-image next year by attempting to provide more opportunities for him to appear on camera when he is ready to do so. For the time being, Steven is more comfortable behind the camera, which, given the autonomous nature of MVP pedagogies, still affords many other learning and social opportunities for Steven within his MVP praxis.

Jeremiah doesn't distinguish between Daisy's character and the Clyde/Brooklyn relationship in regards to a dominant positioning in the video. In a similar manner to Jade, Jeremiah takes a very democratic approach to his character hierarchy within his video. Emphasis is equally spread out amongst all of the characters, although there is a greater quantity of footage of Daisy, Clyde, and Brooklyn in the video footage library, which does impact the prominence of these three characters in his edit. It is for this reason that I have listed Daisy, Clyde, and Brooklyn as primary and the rest of the characters as secondary. Jeremiah was absent during the last class and was therefore

unable to take part in an informal interview exploring his editing choices. Perhaps he would have had a different interpretation of the casting hierarchies within his video edit.

Kat was also absent during the last class; therefore, she did not participate in an informal interview on the final editing day. She makes some unique choices within her video edit that reflect her background as a writer. What is of particular interest from the point of view of Kat's casting choice (whether conscious or unconscious) is the concept of "The Letters" as a character in the overall story arc. During session eight, the letters used within the video were created by Daisy, Brooklyn, Steven, and Kat.. The lyrics of the song were written on different coloured papers, intentionally using a variety of coloured inks and writing styles to differentiate them easily within the video. Most participants used the letters intermittently throughout their videos, and others used them in a concentrated manner later in the story as a letter writing montage sequence, which was the original intention for the inclusion of these 'props' in the video. Kat makes a distinct and unique editing choice, selecting to incorporate a letter montage at the beginning of her video. We see shots of the letters being written, folded, and passed for the first 30 seconds of the video, which places them in a position of interest or perhaps even as a dominant 'character' in the story. This letter-dominant theme stays prominent throughout the duration of her video. Choosing to use the letters as a character in the video highlights Kat's creativity and unique approach, influenced by her interests as a writer, and facilitated by the agentic choices she makes as a young artist.

In analyzing the character positioning within the participant's music videos, we are able to observe how they employ modal resources within their video editing praxis to represent themselves and their classmates within a spectrum of casting dominance and character roles. This is just one of the many ways learners can interpret and reinterpret the song's meanings and insert individual points of view into the production. In what other ways were the participants able to generate meaning and communicate ideas within their videos? How do the participants pass meanings through modes? How do the participants combine modal resources to create multimodal ensembles? How are the participants able to experience a sense of engaged agency through their modal choices? The next two sections use a multimodal microanalysis method to explore these


questions though a focus on the modal patterns found within the music video transcripts and how they illustrate multimodal social semiotic work at play.

### **5.3.2. Pattern two: Using modal resources to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles**

This research seeks to observe and understand how the production of a music video can enhance the meaning making potential of a song, and how this production process can create expansive and collaborative learning opportunities for young music artists. Participants were able to effectively and efficiently use modal resources to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles (Hodge & Kress, 1988), expressing ideas in and through modes.

In the editing phase of the *It'll Never Be* music video project, participants were able to assemble multimodal ensembles using Final Cut Pro X, often passing meanings from one mode to the next or even through multiple modes simultaneously. This section examines how meanings passed from the mode of text to the mode of sound, and from the mode of sound to the mode of moving image. The multimodal microanalysis allows for the researcher to observe this process, cut by cut, allowing for a critical interpretation of participants' actions and choices and how they use modal resources to effectively enhance the meaning-making potential of the song.

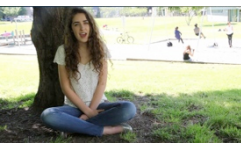


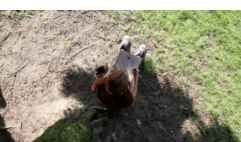
An example of the Microsoft Word template used for the multimodal microanalysis of the four videos is displayed below in Figure 3.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing	Student Interpretation (from interview)
 00:00						
Transcription Narrative:				Themes:		
				Interpretation:		

**Figure 3. An example of the multimodal microanalysis template**

Using written descriptions as well as excerpts from the music video transcripts, examples of how modal resources are used to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles within the video editing phase of the production are explored below. For each example, I will provide the transcription narrative, major themes present within the excerpt, and a multimodal social semiotic interpretation of the sequence.

In example number one (Figure 4), Daisy illustrates her ability to communicate her ideas multimodally by passing meanings generated within her lyrics through to other modes.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 02:26	When...	Bridge: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We see Zoe writing the lyrics heard in the music in a notebook like a poem  She looks to her right just before the cut	C/U, right framing	Straight cut
 02:29	...heavy rain clears this haze I know...	“	Daisy sings towards the camera	Wide shot, left framing	Straight cut
 02:34	...you'll never feel...	“	We see a C/U shot of the letter, which reveals the lyrics played in the music	C/U, central framing	Straight cut
 02:36	...the same.	“	We see a C/U shot of the letter, which reveals the lyrics played in the music	Medium C/U, central framing	Match cut
 02:39		“	We see Zoe from above in the tree	Wide shot from above	Jump cut

**Figure 4. 02:26 to 02:39 in Daisy's video**

**Transcription Narrative:**

02:26 to 02:39: In the action, we see a five-shot sequence. Four of the shots focus on Zoe's character, who is writing the lyrics heard in the music in a notebook like a poem. There is also one shot of Daisy, sitting under the tree singing. The first shot of Zoe is framed with a C/U (close-up), right side positioning, followed by two shots captured in an over-the-shoulder perspective. The first of these two shots is framed in a C/U with central positioning, which is edited together as a match cut to a medium C/U and finally a jump cut to a bird's-eye-view shot, framed as a wide shot with central

positioning. In the lyrics, we hear the words “When heavy rain clears this haze I know you’ll never feel the same.” The text-in-use is the words “I know you’ll never feel the same”, which appears as words written below a drawing of a heart in Zoe’s sketchbook. In the music, this section functions as the bridge.

**Themes:** multimodal discourse, multimodal editing practices, semiotics, creative collaboration, transduction, transformation, semiotic trajectory



**Interpretation:**

This five-shot sequence (five adjacent video clips communicating a common and continuous idea – like a sentence or phrase of music) illustrates the potential for MVP to communicate autonomously within multimodal discourses issues of personal and meaningful significance. Daisy is able to transfer her original lyrics into the modes of text and sound; we hear Daisy sing lyrics that we see Zoe writing in her sketchbook. The mode of text, originally created by Daisy in her songwriting book is first *transformed* (stays within the same mode) into the lyrics typed out in Microsoft Word, which is printed and used as production notes. The production notes are transduced (i.e., change modes through the semiotic process of transduction) into the mode of sound (the song), then again transduced into the mode of moving image, and finally back into the mode of text within Zoe’s sketchbook, where we see the lyrics written below a drawing of a love heart. Daisy’s lyrics begin their communicative journey in the mode of text and arrive at their final destination in the video in the same mode, traveling through numerous modes along the way. This exemplifies the kineikonic mode at work, combining the primary *orchestrating modes* of filming and editing with numerous *contributory modes* (layout, framing, lighting, colour, text, image, sound, transition, gesture, etc.). On-screen, Zoe’s character is able to interpret Daisy’s lyrics, translating them into the mode of still image within her drawing through the semiotic process of transduction. Daisy explains how her character sings the words as we simultaneously see it on the video, stating “it corresponds directly with the – *I know you’ll never feel the same* – lyric”. The semiotic trajectory of this scene illustrates the journey of Daisy’s ideas, beginning monomodally and arriving multimodally within the music video’s final edit. Beginning as text on a page, Daisy’s ideas translate into the melodies of a song, combined with the chords of a guitar, the drawings of her classmates, the subplots and story arcs created collaboratively



within pre-production, the moving images captured within production, and final edits of each individual version of the music video. The medium of music video creates a “new semiotic landscape” (Burn, 2013), opening new possibilities for Daisy to voice her ideas, share them with her peers, and deliver them to her audience.

In example number two (Figure 5), Finn employs the modes of colour, gaze, and layout to transform and transduce the song’s lyrics.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 01:14		Chorus 1: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We cut back to Daisy, who is looking directly into the camera.	C/U, left framing	Dissolve, heightened colours
 01:16	It'll Never Be.	“	We hear her sing the words “It’ll never be,” but she doesn’t sing them in this shot, as if to suggest that she is thinking the words instead. As we do hear the words, each one emerges on screen in large, white capital letters.	C/U, left framing	Text fades in, each word in time with the vocals

**Figure 5. 01:14 to 01:18 in Finn’s edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**





01:14 to 01:18: In the action, we cut back to Daisy, who is looking directly into the camera as we hear her sing the words “It’ll never be.” The text-in-use is the words “IT’LL NEVER BE,” which emerge on screen in large, white capital letters. The letters are animated to fade onto the screen as we hear Daisy sing each one. The editing choice here is one where the colours have been enhanced to be very bright and bold. The framing in this shot is a C/U with a left positioning.

**Themes:** semiotic work, affordances of MVP editing, unique affordances of MVP

**Interpretation:**

There is a copious amount of semiotic work occurring in this short four-second edit. Finn has chosen to use colour correction to enhance the contrast and saturation of the colours in the video. The grass in the background has become a very bright green, and Daisy's eyes a striking, bright blue colour. The emotional intensity of the scene is heightened by enhancing the mode of colour. Finn further capitalizes on the affordances of the editing process, animating each of the three words "It'll never be" into the screen as we hear Daisy sing each word. We hear Daisy sing the words "It'll never be," although she doesn't actually sing them in this shot, as if to suggest she is thinking the words that we see emerging around her in the scene. MVP editing technology provides Finn with the personal and musical autonomy to create this complex expression of the song; an interpretation uniquely afforded by the medium of the music video

In example number three (Figure 6), Richard uses footage of cellphone texting to connect the song's lyrics to other characters showcased in the video.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 01:17		Verse 2: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	A girl (Jade) sits alone on the grass sending a text.	C/U, central framing, over-the-shoulder shot	Straight cut
 01:21	Careless dreams around me,	“	We see a C/U of the cellphone, and an individual is testing, but we don't clearly see what is written.	Match shot, C/U, central framing	Straight cut
 01:24	... I always fall...	“	A couple of teenagers (Kat and Finn) are sitting together on the grass. The girl receives a text from Jade.	Full shot	Straight cut
 01:24	...too hard.	“	A C/U of the text exhibits the words “I always fall too hard”.	Cutaway shot, C/U, central framing	Straight cut

**Figure 6. 01:17 to 01:36 in Richard's video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

01:17 to 01:36: The action in this sequence of four shots is a text being sent from Jade to Kat. What begins as a framing choice of a C/U, with central framing, and an over-the-shoulder POV, cuts as a match shot C/U of the text that is being tapped out on the cell phone. The text-in-use is “I always fall too hard,” which we also hear in the lyrics as Daisy sings this segment of the song. The action cuts to a full shot framing of Kat, who engages in the action of sitting beside Finn. Kat receives the text from Jade, as the scene cuts to a cutaway shot which reveals the action of Kat receiving the text from Jade.


**Themes:** multimodal discourse, transduction, transformation, creative collaboration, creative affordances of MVP technology

**Interpretation:**

Richard passes the meanings carried within the lyrics and vocals into the moving imagery, choosing to match up the arrival of a cellphone text succinctly with the vocals. We hear the words “I always fall too hard” performed in the song as we see them appear on the cellphone screen. There are two semiotic processes aptly illustrated here. First, the vocals pass the meaning of the lyrics from the mode of sound into the mode of image through semiotic transduction. We can also observe how Daisy’s original hand-written lyrics are redesigned through the semiotic process of transformation into the text seen on the cellphone.

This editing sequence connects Jade, Finn, and Kat to the narrative experienced by Daisy, Clyde, and Brooklyn. We may now begin to understand the story from these new character’s points of view; Daisy’s song tells the story of many people, and her lyrics represent the emotional and social contexts played out by the various characters and subplots within the music video.

Example number four (Figures 7 through 9), illustrates how a discourse around the multimodal representation of song lyrics, which occurred during the pre-production phase of production, resulted in one of the more powerful and innovative sequences in Finn’s music video.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>01:11</p>	...ever.	Chorus 1: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We see Clyde now writing an image in chalk on the pavement. His and Brooklyn’s initials are encased within a heart, and he is writing the words “4 ever” below it.	Full shot	Straight cut

**Figure 7. 01:11 to 01:14 in Finn’s music video**


**Transcription Narrative:**

01:11 to 01:14: In the action, we see Clyde now writing an image in chalk on the pavement. His and Brooklyn's initials are encased within a heart, and he is writing the words "4 ever" below it. The framing is a full shot with a central positioning. In the lyrics, we hear Daisy sing the word "forever".

**Themes:** multimodal discourse, transformation, transduction

**Interpretation:**

This shot is one of the more innovative ideas emerging out of the pre-production phase of this project. The sequence outlined here compares footage from Choruses one and three, which occur two minutes apart but connect a single concept trajectory. In this shot, we see Clyde writing an image in chalk on the pavement at the park. His and Brooklyn's initials are encased within a heart, and he is writing the words "4 ever" below at its base. Later in the video, the 'ever' in the drawing is turned into 'never' and the words 'It'll' and 'be' are placed on either side, creating the phrase 'It'll never be' below the heart, which has at that point been crossed out. But here, Finn's initial use of this shot serves two purposes. First, he creates a multimodal discourse exploring young love, exhibiting and communicating Clyde's feelings for Brooklyn within the drawing. We can see that Clyde is professing his love for Brooklyn by creating this image in chalk, written in bright, bold colours. The second purpose here is a semiotic one, where Finn uses the semiotic process of transduction to translate Daisy's lyrics that we hear in the music from the mode of sound (music) to the modes of text and image. When Daisy sings "And autumn leaves for ever," we see Clyde writing the word "ever" in his chalk drawing. Through the process of transduction, the word "ever" is not only translated into another mode, but it also takes on a new meaning, referring to both Daisy's use of the word in her lyrics and song, as well as Clyde's use of the word in his drawing, which has been created as part of the Clyde/Brooklyn narrative. Figures 8 and 9 below continue this multimodal concept trajectory.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>03:11</p>	... autumn leaves fore...	Chorus 3: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We cut back to Clyde, who has returned to his chalk drawing. He has crossed out the heart with his and Brooklyn's initials and is now changing the "4 ever" text to It'll Never Be instead.	Full shot	Straight cut on the first beat of the phrase

**Figure 8. 03:11 to 03:15 in Finn's music video**

**Transcription Narrative:**

03:11 to 03:15: In the action, we see Clyde, who has returned to his chalk drawing. He has crossed out the heart with his and Brooklyn's initials and is now changing the "4 ever" text to "It'll never be" instead. The framing is a full shot, and in the lyrics, we hear the words "autumn leaves forever." In the music, the edit cuts on the first beat of the phrase.


**Themes:** semiotic affordances of MVP, multimodal ensemble, social semiosis, primary and secondary modes, creative collaboration, transformation and transduction, chain of semiosis

**Interpretation:**

In this scene, Finn exemplifies the semiotic affordances of MVP and its ability to communicate in multiple modes simultaneously. We cut back to Clyde, who has returned to his chalk drawing. He has crossed out the heart with his and Brooklyn's initials and is now altering the "4 ever" text into the "It'll never be" text. We hear Daisy singing the lyrics "autumn leaves forever" in the background and we experience Clyde's dramatic performance, captured in this final chalk drawing scene.

In this multimodal ensemble, a number of aspects of multimodal semiosis are at play through the processes of transformation and transduction. The lyrics, which began as text written in Daisy's songwriting notebook, were first translated to the mode of sound when they became a song through the process of transduction. The song performs three distinct functions within the video production: as a chronological timeline

upon which the video narrative will be arranged within the editing process; as an emotional backdrop upon which performances are captured during filming; and as a delivery device for the lyrics, which we hear performed by Daisy within the song. Clyde is able to exhibit all three of these functions here in this particular editing sequence. We hear the chorus for the third time. The title of the song and final line of the chorus, which the audience now knows to be ‘It’ll never be’, emerges out of the chalk drawing on the ground as Clyde alters the lettering to reveal the words “It’ll never be” at the bottom of his now defaced chalk drawing. The semiotic process of transduction translates the words heard in the music into the mode of text. Daisy’s original lyrics have traveled from the mode of text to the mode of sound and back again into the mode of text. The multimodal cycle has come full circle, and the song’s message has been delivered to the audience, who will interpret the message based on their own personal understanding of rejection and loss. Daisy’s song, which she wrote at home alone, has become a conduit for her MVP classmates and the video’s audience to explore what it might mean to experience rejection or loss.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>03:21</p>	It'll never be.	Chorus 3: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	The final shot reveals a clear display of Clyde's transformed chalk drawing, which is timed to occur simultaneously with the final line of the song. The lyrics and the visuals both showcase the same words, "It'll never be."	Full shot	Dissolve

**Figure 9. 03:21 to 03:26 in Finn’s music video**

**Transcription Narrative:**

03:21 to 03:26: In the action, we see a clear display of Clyde’s transformed chalk drawing, which is timed to occur simultaneously with the final line of the song. The text-in-use (lyrics) and the visuals both showcase the same words, “It’ll never be.” The framing of this scene is a full shot, and the transition used here is a *dissolve* (a gradual transition from one scene to the next); one of the few dissolves used in the video. In the

music, we hear the words “It’ll never be” sung by Daisy. At the end of this scene, the video fades to black.

**Themes:** transformation, transduction

**Interpretation:**


The final shot reveals a clear display of Clyde’s transformed chalk drawing, which is timed to occur simultaneously with the final line of the song. The lyrics and the visuals both showcase the same words, “It’ll never be.” This scene illustrates how the original chalk drawing has been altered to reflect the emotional journey and metamorphosis of Clyde’s character.

### **5.3.3. Pattern three: Affordances of video editing software enables creative autonomy and agency within MVP praxis**

Autonomy and agency were both found to be expanded through MVP editing praxis. Opportunities to realize ideas multimodally resulted in successful and meaningful expressions of participant’s musical selves within their music video edits. The examples below illustrate the multimodal counterpoint facilitated by video editing software capabilities, the creative autonomy afforded within participant’s multimodal composing practices, and the semiotic ability of music videos to express participant’s musical selves.

In example number five (Figure 10), Finn illustrates how the creative affordances and musical autonomy provided by MVP production and editing praxis allows for multiple narratives to be expressed simultaneously.



Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>00:13</p>	Falling Leaves around me, change is in the air.	Verse 1: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	Clyde and Brooklyn sit on swings talking, a girl stands in front of them, closer to the camera but not in focus. The girl in front (Daisy) plays the role of the narrator, performing the vocals heard in the song.	Medium C/U, right framing, focus positioned on background -Daisy begins to sing, looking into the camera -when Daisy sings "change is in the air", she looks away and runs her fingers through her hair, moving it behind her left ear	Straight cut

**Figure 10. 00:13 to 00:22 in Finn's video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

00:13 to 00:22: We hear daisy sing the lyrics "Falling Leaves around me, change is in the air." The action in the shot displays two sets of characters, Daisy, the vocalist/performer in the foreground singing the song, and the young couple, Clyde and Brooklyn in the background sitting on swings talking quietly. The framing is a medium C/U with right positioning, and the focus positioned on background. As Daisy begins to sing, she adjusts her gaze, which has been thus far looking past the camera to one where she is looking into the camera. At the point when she sings, "change is in the air," she looks away and runs her fingers through her hair, moving it behind her left ear.

**Themes:** semiotic design and redesign, creative affordances of MVP, multimodal discourse, context, unique affordances of MVP

**Interpretation:**

Finn capitalizes on the affordances provided by both DSLR cameras and editing praxis. DSLR cameras provide autonomy for filmmakers, providing options for various focussing techniques, such as a 'focus-pull', where an object in the background can be 'pulled' into focus while the foreground is pushed out of focus. This is a standard filming technique used during production that allows for objects to be made more focal to the

audience. In this shot, Daisy sings in the foreground while Clyde and Brooklyn sit on the swings in the background. Daisy has intentionally been pulled out of focus in this scene. The camera operator elected to make the background characters 'in' focus while Daisy remains 'out of' focus. Finn makes a conscious and creative choice to use this shot, employing the mode of focus to bring attention to the characters in the background, despite the fact that the vocalist is performing in the foreground.

Finn's conscious choice in this example epitomizes the unique creative affordances of MVP as an extension of the songwriting process. Finn is able to create a sophisticated context within this multimodal discourse, showcasing the Daisy and Clyde/Brooklyn narratives simultaneously. We hear Daisy singing what we assume is her own character's experience, but what we focus on is Clyde and Brooklyn's dramatic action in the background. The narrative that Daisy sings from her character's point of view is simultaneously retold in a parallel timeline within Clyde and Brooklyn's counternarrative. Finn was the only participant to use this shot in this way. This action demonstrates both agency and musical autonomy in the editing process, illustrating how Finn makes a distinct, creative choice that results in a unique interpretation of this scene. The unique affordances of MVP allow for multiple narratives to be communicated simultaneously, an affordance not as easily offered by the song on its own.

In example number six (Figure 11), Daisy creates a multimodal discourse around the concept of 'eyes' within her video edit, combining the lyrics heard in the music, shots of the actors looking at one another, and her own performance gestures.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 00:21		Verse 1: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	Clyde is looking towards Brooklyn but she is not looking back	Medium C/U, left framing	Straight cut
 00:24		“	Brooklyn turns towards Clyde and meets his gaze, and is engaged in a conversation with him	C/U, right framing	Straight cut
 00:27	The brightest colours...	“	Daisy sings to herself under the tree as if remembering a past encounter	Wide shot, left framing	Straight cut
 00:30	...remind me of your eyes.	“	Daisy looks up at the camera	Wide shot, left framing	Same shot

**Figure 11. 00:21 to 00:32 in Daisy’s video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

00:21 to 00:32: The action in this three-shot sequence begins with a shot of Clyde looking at Brooklyn followed by a shot of Brooklyn returning his gaze. Both shots are framed in a C/U with a left side positioning for Clyde and a right side positioning for Brooklyn. The third shot cuts to Daisy, who is singing to herself under a tree. She is framed in a wide shot with left side positioning. In the lyrics, the text-in-use that we hear is “The brightest colours remind me of your eyes.” In the action, when Daisy sings the word “eyes,” she turns and looks up into the camera.


**Themes:** semiotics, semiotic gesture, transduction, affordances of MVP editing technology, autonomy, agency

### **Interpretation:**

This three-shot sequence illustrates Daisy's ability to create meaning multimodally within her video. In the lyrics, we hear the words "The brightest colours remind me of your eyes," and in her choice of imagery, we see first a shot of Clyde looking at Brooklyn followed by a shot of Brooklyn returning his gaze. The audience is drawn into the eyes of the performers as they look at one another. Daisy then cuts to a shot of herself singing under a tree, as if she is remembering a past encounter. Just as we hear the word *eyes*, Daisy looks up towards that camera, again drawing us into her performance and more specifically into her own eyes. We sense that she is speaking directly to us through this gesture, and it completes the multimodal discourse exploring the concept of eyes or, more specifically, looking into someone's eyes. Daisy explains her multimodal composing practices here, explaining, "The clips always have to do with the lyrics." What Daisy is describing is the semiotic process of transduction, where she has translated her lyrics into the mode of moving image by choosing to cut these three shots together in conjunction with her song lyrics. Not only does Daisy show us the intimate connection between Clyde and Brooklyn as they gaze at one another, she also establishes a connection between her character and the audience by looking directly towards the camera, mimicking the gestures of Clyde and Brooklyn in the previously adjacent video footage.

The affordances of MVP editing technology provide Daisy with the ability to be an autonomous, active agent in the development of her craft as a songwriter and filmmaker. She very aptly makes distinct and explicit choices in her video editing, extending the reach of her song's meaning whilst simultaneously extending the reach of her performance as a singer.

In example number seven (Figure 12), Richard expresses empathy towards Clyde's character, relating his own experiences with those of the fictional characters, resulting in a very personal and unique interpretation of the song.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>02:26</p>	When heavy rain...	Bridge: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	Clyde is looking away from Brooklyn, he has a look of anguish on his face.	Medium C/U, left framing	Straight cut

**Figure 12. 02:26 – 02:30 in Richard’s video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

02:26 – 02:30: The action here depicts Clyde looking away from Brooklyn with a look of anguish on his face. In the lyrics we hear Daisy sing “When heavy rain,” which is the beginning of the bridge section of the music. The scene is framed in a medium C/U with left framing, and the camera is angled towards Clyde’s face, while Brooklyn’s face is shadowed and not facing the camera.

**Themes:** self-evaluation, creative collaboration, multimodal discourse, transduction, new and unique meaning

**Interpretation:**




This particular edit was described by Richard as one of his favourite shots within his video. In choosing to combine this image with the lyrics performed by Daisy, Richard creates a very complex emotional context, explaining:

He (Clyde) sort of like realizes that like, even though like, he’s going back to being friends with her, he still un...she...he still kind of likes her. But, about here, he realizes that it’s pointless. I might as well just get rid of those feelings entirely.

Richard is able to represent the heavy, complex feelings of rejection through the multimodal discourse that combines the text in the lyrics, the emotional intensity of Daisy’s music, and the images of Clyde and Brooklyn. This shot has been framed in such a way that it allows us to see the subtle expressions on Clyde’s face, which communicates a look of anguish and disappointment. The meanings in Daisy’s lyrics are transduced into the modes of moving image, framing, and camera angle, gaze, and gesture to create a new and more complex meaning. This editing choice shows how

Richard is able to communicate how this scenario might feel for him through the creation of a multimodal composition (this particular scene). He is able to connect his own experiences with those of the fictional characters as well as Daisy, who in her own way is also attempting to understand rejection and loss within the song. Daisy, Clyde, Brooklyn, and Richard all are able to explore the concept of romantic rejection together through the collaborative creation of the music video. They all contribute their own part to the project, but in the end it is Richard’s agentic editing praxis that solidifies his own unique interpretation and communicates his understanding of the concept.

In example number eight (Figure 13), Clyde employs the semiotic process of transduction to facilitate autonomous and agentic multimodal meaning-making, creating a new and unique semiotic redesign within his video.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 00:29	The brightest ...	Verse 1: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	A young man (Clyde) looks towards a girl (Brooklyn), talking pleasantly.	C/U, central framing	Dissolve
 00:33	...colours remind me of...	“	Brooklyn has just finished a comment. She looks down for a moment and then back up at the boy.	C/U, central framing	Dissolve to black for a few frames and then dissolve back into the shot of Brooklyn
 00:35	...your eyes.	“	Brooklyn looks over towards Clyde.	Same shot	Same shot

**Figure 13. 00:29 to 00:38 in Clyde’s video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

00:29 to 00:38: In the action, a young man (Clyde) looks towards a girl (Brooklyn), talking pleasantly. Brooklyn has just finished making some kind of a comment. She looks down for a moment and then back up at Clyde. In the lyrics, we hear the words “The brightest colours remind me of your eyes.” Both shots are framed in a C/U with central positioning.

**Themes:** multimodal discourse, narrative, affordances of music video production, transduction, new and unique meaning, semiotic redesign, expressive and creative entrance, reinterpret, own point of view, creative collaboration, communal agency, music learner autonomy, agency

**Interpretation:**

In this example, Clyde illustrates a purposeful and intentional editing praxis, matching the image of Brooklyn’s gaze with the lyrics “your eyes,” interpreting Clyde’s on-screen character as the central character in the story. The interpretation generated through Clyde’s multimodal discourse suggests an emotional connection to the lyrics; when we hear the words “remind me of your eyes,” he cuts from a shot of his on-screen character to a shot of Brooklyn, who gazes back at him, suggesting that he is being reminded of Brooklyn’s eyes. It is in this manner where Clyde inserts himself as the primary character in the video’s narrative for the first time, effectively directing the multimodal discourse towards a specific communicative agenda. He effectively capitalizes on the affordances of MVP here, employing transduction as a semiotic process which allows him to connect the meanings generated by the lyrics of the song and the images captured by the camera, creating a new and unique reinterpretation of the story through his semiotic redesign.






This example also illustrates MVP’s capacity to provide an expressive and creative entrance for music learners with little to no musical experience. Clyde is the only student in his MVP class that had no previous musical training. He entered the school through the MVP program feeling MVP would be an appropriate way to apply his previous experience as a stage actor. The MVP program provided an opportunity for Clyde, as an inexperienced music learner, to connect with music learning and engage

with other music learners. Clyde is empowered by the creative autonomy provided by his editing praxis, which facilitates a capacity to reinterpret Daisy's song from his own point of view, and to connect with the song in a way that is personal and meaningful for him. It is in this way that he is able to insert himself socially and academically into a pre-existing group of music learners, garnering esteem from his classmates, engaging in music-related discourse, and immersing himself into a variety of music-related activities. His previous experience as an actor made him an asset to his classmates, who learned about acting from him as he learned about music from them. This particular example illustrates how MVP can provide a platform for creative collaboration, providing openings for music learners of all experience levels. Music learners not only experience communal agency<sup>4</sup> as they work together to produce music video components, but the video editing process also affords individual, personal autonomy and agency within MVP praxis.

In example number nine (Figure 14), Clyde is able to achieve a deep, personal connection to the narrative through his multimodal composing practices. He continues to establish his own character as the central figure in the story through his deliberate editing choices, weaving together a detailed, complex, and unique narrative through his editing choices.

<sup>4</sup> Martin (2007) "communal agency is understood as a self-interpreting, self-determining capability of persons. (p. 435)



Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 01:27	Careless dreams around me, I always fall too hard.	Verse 2: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We see Daisy singing directly into the camera. She appears to be sitting at a park bench.	C/U, right framing	Straight cut
 01:36	These twisted...	"	We see Daisy sitting beside Clyde and Brooklyn on the bench.	Full shot	Match cut
 01:42	... mind games, and rolls of the dice,	"	Clyde reaches down to gently hold her hand. She pulls her hand away, rejecting his advance.	C/U, central framing	Cutaway
 01:46	...so why do I play if it only breaks my heart that it's true. I'll...	"	Daisy continues to sing beside Clyde and Brooklyn on the bench. Clyde and Brooklyn now have an awkward energy between them.	Full shot	Cutaway sequence back to full shot
 01:56	... never be with you.	"	Clyde looks away from Brooklyn. We see the anguish on his face.	C/U, left framing	Match cut

**Figure 14. 01:27 to 02:00 in Clyde's video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

01:27 to 02:00: In this five-shot, 33 second sequence, we see in the action the narrator (Daisy) 'singing' the story of Clyde and Brooklyn on the swing set. In the framing, we see a C/U shot of Daisy singing, with right side positioning, which is then connected to a full shot of Daisy sitting beside the couple using a match cut. In a C/U

central framing, we see Clyde reach down in an attempt to hold Brooklyn's hand. She pulls her hand away, rejecting his advance. We cutaway back to the full shot of the three characters on the bench, and Daisy continues to sing beside Clyde and Brooklyn, who now have an awkward energy between them. The final shot of the sequence cuts back using a match cut of Clyde, framed as a C/U with left side positioning. Clyde looks away from Brooklyn. We see the anguish on his face. In the lyrics during this 5 shot sequence, we hear the words "Careless dreams around me, I always fall too hard. These twisted mind games, and rolls of the dice, so why do I play if it only breaks my heart that it's true. I'll never be with you."

**Themes:** multimodal composing practices, creative affordances, agency, creative collaboration, social semiotics, positive youth development, new understandings of self


**Interpretation:**

In this elaborate, 33 second, five-shot sequence, we see how Clyde is able to tell a very detailed and complex narrative through his multimodal composing practices. The creative affordances of the video editing software allows Clyde to assert his creative agency here, continuing to establish his own character as the central figure in the story. As Daisy sits beside Clyde and Brooklyn, it begins to become apparent that she is singing Clyde's story and not her own. We can see and understand this through Clyde's choice of shots and their placement in the song. In the music we hear Daisy sing "These twisted mind games and rolls of the dice," and in the video we see Clyde reach down in an attempt to hold Brooklyn's hand. Brooklyn pulls her hand away, rejecting his advance. Although it is Daisy that is singing the lyrics, we see in the image that it is Clyde who is 'rolling the dice' in his attempt to make a romantic gesture towards Brooklyn. When Brooklyn rejects Clyde's advance, we associate this with the 'twisted mind games' that we hear in the music. Cutting back to a C/U of Clyde, we see him look away in anguish as we hear Daisy sing the words "never be with you." This continues to reinforce that it is Clyde's story that we are hearing and not Daisy's, therefore making Clyde the central character of the video. Clyde explains in his own words what he is attempting to communicate here, saying:

I feel like - the whole hand holding shot -because I feel like that's kind of like...it kind of just shows the whole point of it. That he went for her and then she rejected him. That was kind of just, sums the whole thing up almost right there.

This is another example of the affordances of a music video production to provide opportunities for meaningful creative collaborations between music learners. Daisy's song, which holds a specific and unique meaning for her, becomes a platform to tell the stories of many young people. In Clyde's case, Daisy's song afforded opportunities for him to tell the story from his character's point of view, making the song much more meaningful and personally significant for him. Clyde combines semiotic resources and modes in the editing process, transforming Daisy's original song into his own story. This process allows him to explore new understandings of what it might mean to be in a romantic partnership within a safe, collaborative, and creative environment.

In example number ten (Figure 15), Daisy exhibits an engaged agency within her multimodal composing practices, using her real life songwriting journal as a prop in her video edit. She is able to alter her perceived reality by appropriating objects from her real world life into her art practice, bridging the gap between her real life and the fictional one portrayed in the video.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 01:39	...the dice, so why do I...	Verse 2: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We see someone writing the lyrics heard in the music in a notebook like a poem	C/U, right framing	Straight cut

**Figure 15. 01:39 to 01:41 in Daisy's video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

01:39 to 01:41: In the action, we see someone writing the lyrics heard in the music in a notebook like a poem, framed in a C/U with right side positioning. In the lyrics, we hear the words "...the dice, so why do I (play)...".





**Themes:** engaged agency, multimodal composing practices, transformation and transduction, creative collaboration, engaged agency

**Interpretation:**

In this scene, Daisy has incorporated her real-life songwriting journal into the video. Using the lyrics that she wrote down during the song's inception, Daisy incorporates into the fictional story an aspect of her real lived experience. In doing so, Daisy's vision for the music video is able to come full circle, from the initial 'scribblings' of lyrics written in her songwriting journal to the completion of her video edit. This scene represents how MVP can function not only as a conduit for the development of an isolated musical activity into a collaborative one, but also as a method of production and communication of personal meanings and insights that emerge out of the songwriting process. Daisy exhibits a sense of engaged agency here, continuing to make choices that alter her reality by appropriating her real world life into her art practice.

The semiotic processes of transformation and transduction allow Daisy to transform songwriting, which for her is often a solitary process, into one that can be discovered, explored, and shared with her peers. New meanings and interpretations evolve out of the creative collaboration, but Daisy is still able to incorporate artefacts from her original song praxis into the mix, making it a musical activity that holds both personal and social significance for her.

In example number 11 (Figure 16), Finn is able to exert his musical autonomy as well as his own individual agency in a series of very specific and deliberate editing choices.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 01:32		Verse 2: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	We cut over to Clyde, who is looking longingly towards Brooklyn.	C/U, left framing	Match cut towards Clyde, into a cutaway sequence
 01:36	These twisted mind games, and		He reaches down to gently hold her hand.	C/U, central framing	Cutaway
 01:38			Brooklyn pulls her hand away.	C/U, central framing	Same shot
 01:40	... rolls of the dice, So why do I play...		We cut to Brooklyn's reaction, which is awkward and uncomfortable.	Medium shot, central framing	Cutaway sequence, back to Brooklyn

**Figure 16. 01:32 to 01:44 in Finn's video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

01:32 to 01:44: The action in this three-cut sequence begins with Clyde, who is looking longingly towards Brooklyn. He reaches down to gently hold her hand but Brooklyn pulls her hand away. We cut to Brooklyn's reaction, which is awkward and uncomfortable. In the lyrics, we hear "These twisted mind games, and rolls of the dice, so why do I play...". In the framing and editing, we begin first with a C/U of Clyde, with a left side positioning. Using a match cut, we jump over to a C/U of the two character's hands, followed by a cutaway back to Brooklyn in a C/U with right side placement.

**Themes:** autonomy, agency, social semiotics, creative collaboration, communal agency, multimodal discourse

### **Interpretation:**

Finn is able to maximize on the communicative effectiveness of his narrative by capitalizing on the affordances of MVP editing technology. Finn employs a sophisticated combination of editing techniques in this sequence, including a match cut<sup>5</sup> followed by a cutaway sequence<sup>6</sup>. This example illustrates how Finn is able to exert his musical autonomy as well as his own individual agency in these very specific and deliberate editing choices. Communicating his ideas clearly and efficiently within his editing praxis, he explains:



You can see, in um, uh, then as he tries to act upon his feelings, the other person is not down and she...she does stand up for it and she doesn't want it to be a thing. So, this...this affects him. And from the shots that...I've tried to use, I've tried to make it very close to them so you can really see the emotions that they're using and not using too many wide shot. 'Cause, you can't really get the full effect of the emotion that they're trying to portray. Whereas in close ups, you can really see that she's not comfortable with it and he wants to be something more.

There is clear evidence that Finn has been able to act as an autonomous agent within his editing praxis, gathering the semiotic resources created and captured by his classmates and engaging in post-production redesign that results in a clearly communicated and meaningful moment in the video.

In example number 12 (Figure 17), Clyde capitalizes on the musical autonomy afforded to him through his editing praxis to create his own personal, meaningful ending.

<sup>5</sup> A match cut connects two shots using a specific action, such as cutting on a look. When an actor shifts his gaze in a new direction, the camera cuts to a new image.

<sup>6</sup> A cutaway sequence emphasizes images, objects, and characters within a scene. Often used to cut from a full shot to a close-up of an object of interest, cutaway sequences are effective communicative tools and a great semiotic resource for editors.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 03:26	It'll never be.	Chorus 3: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, and vocals	Clyde is now finished changing the words in his chalk drawing. He stands up and walks away out of the shot. His shadow remains projected over the chalk drawing.	Full shot	Straight cut
 03:29		"		Same shot	Same shot, Fade to black

**Figure 17. 03:26 to end in Clyde’s video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

03:26 to end: In the action, we observe Clyde, who is now finished changing the words in his chalk drawing. He stands up and walks away out of the shot. His shadow remains projected over the chalk drawing until the fade to black. The framing of the shot is a full shot, and in the lyrics we hear the final performance of the words “It’ll never be.”



**Themes:** music learner autonomy, agency, multimodal composing practices, creative collaboration

**Interpretation:**

Clyde is provided with the musical autonomy to create a personal and meaningful conclusion for his video. He explains in his informal interview that his story doesn’t have a happy ending, although he himself is very pleased with the way his story ends. He states, “I like the walking away scene. ‘Cause that’s like, I’m done with you. I don’t need you. It’s like, Yeah! It’s good. I like it.” Clyde continues to explain that his ending suggests his character has made peace with his unsuccessful relationship with Brooklyn and that he is “coping with things. He copes with, uh, rejection.” He is able to function as an active agent in not only his development as a MVP artist through this work, but he is also able to have empathy for his character’s experience, possibly learning more about himself in the process. Through his multimodal composing practices, and as a result of

his creative collaboration with Daisy and the MVP class, he has learned how it might feel to experience love, rejection, and loss.

In example number 13 (Figure 18), Daisy acts as an autonomous agent, creating a nebulous conclusion to her video.

Screen Shot/Time	Lyrics	Music	Action	Filming	Editing
 <p>03:27</p>		Sustained last note on guitar	Daisy reads the letter	Medium C/U, left framing	Same shot
 <p>03:29</p>		Sustained last note on guitar	Daisy looks towards the camera	Medium C/U, left framing	Same shot

**Figure 18. 03:27 to 03:30 in Daisy’s video edit**

**Transcription Narrative:**

03:27 to 03:30: In this shot, which begins at 03:21, we see in the action of this specific time frame, a shot of Daisy, who has just received the note, reading the note and then looking up at the camera. The shot is framed in a medium C/U with left positioning. In the music, we hear only the sustained last notes on the guitar, which fade out slowly.

**Themes:** autonomy, agency, affordances of MVP technology, unique affordances of MVP

**Interpretation:**

Daisy is able to act as an autonomous agent here, choosing to create a nebulous ending that doesn’t resolve in any direct manner. We are left wondering what the final scene means, which was Daisy’s intention. When asked about her video’s conclusion, Daisy responded:



I don't know. That's up to you to find out... It could be many different things. Um, I think it is that, this whole entire time she's like it'll never be. Oh my goodness. And then, actually, it could be. You know? Like maybe this is...maybe I was...I almost think it...it's um...it kind of lightens the mood a little bit. I just...I think the whole entire song's sad and, kind of like, depressing and I just wanted to finish with a little...a little hope I guess you could say.

The affordances of the MVP technology made numerous possible endings available to her within the footage captured during production and her editing choices made during post-production. She is able to create a very complex message at the end of her video, exemplifying the unique affordances of MVP.

## 5.4. Summary

Chapter 5 analyzed four music video transcriptions using a multimodal microanalysis of the kineikonic mode and the social semiotic patterns emerging from a detailed comparison of the videos. The multimodal perspective provided an analytical account of the semiotic processes of transformation and transduction that occur within the students' multimodal composing practices and how meaning is passed from one mode to the next within multimodal ensembles. A multimodal microanalysis of the four music video transcriptions revealed three main modal patterns:

1. Using modal resources independently to represent self and the other
2. Using modal resources to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles
3. Affordances of video editing software enables creative, musical autonomy and agency within MVP praxis

The first pattern illustrated the ability to employ modal resources within the video editing process to determine character placement and hierarchy within the music video's overall story arc. In analyzing the character positioning within the participant's music videos, we are able to observe how the participants employ modal resources within their video editing praxis to represent themselves and their classmates within a spectrum of casting dominance and character roles. This is just one of the many ways learners can interpret and reinterpret the song's meanings and insert individual points of view into the production. Bolden (2006), in drawing from Bakhtin's concept of *ideologically becoming* (1981), conceptualized personhood as "an evolving sense of self firmly ensconced in the

context of the social world around us, and shaped by personal interpretation of that world.” In looking at the manner in which the participants were able to employ modal resources to independently represent themselves and their peers within their music video editing praxis, it is possible to see and understand how these young music artists are developing a sense of personhood through their work as producers of music videos. By making casting choices in the editing process, each individual editor was able to interpret the world created within the video by making choices that result in very specific interactions with both the culture and positioning of themselves with their fellow classmates as well as the culture and context of the positioning of the characters in the video. The MVP learners were able to express and project a sense of personhood onto the characters, in the process negotiating and renegotiating who they are in the real world through their fictional characters and the dynamics occurring within their video.

The participants were also able to demonstrate how they made personal, moral expressions of self within their music videos through their editing-based casting choices and positionings in their videos. These music videos became an extension of the reality and identity of each editor, providing a cultural field within which the MVP producer, influenced by their “moral compass” (Benson 2001, p. 131) can express the sort of self they believe themselves to be. The music editing software also facilitated conceptions of place for each editor, providing a “cultural field” where each participant could bring their “interior psychological space”, which is core to their identity, using their “moral compass” when shaping the moral dimensions of self. Daisy places herself as the morally neutral *narrator* of the story in her video. Clyde on the other hand, places himself in as the central character; the victim of romantic rejection who chooses to move through his pain and move forward in his life. Other participants, such as Jade and Jeremiah, felt it was a better moral choice to give everyone equal representation within their videos. These choices reflect the moral positionings of each editor and contribute to their developing sense of self within their MVP class and their communities.

In a similar manner to Halverson’s (2010) analysis of youth-produced films, the character placement created during the editing phase of production revealed how the participant’s music videos were capable of displaying the construction and representation of self-identities and social identities through the interactions among

these *casting* choices. Halverson found that encouraging participants to create autobiographical documentaries placed the development of individual identity at the center of the production process. This research illustrates how youth can engage in filmmaking activities that support inquiry-based learning and positive identity development.

The second modal pattern demonstrated that participants were able to use modal resources to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles, challenging notions of Miller and McVee's (2012) concept of *new literacies* and the way in which they "go beyond linguistic texts to draw across the multiple modes that we make use of every day in our attempts to understand the world" (p. x). The music videos created by the participants functioned as multi-faceted carriers of meaning, communicating their ideas, and extending the *reach* (Kress, 2010) of Daisy's music video through their multimodal composing practices. The analysis of the four music videos exemplified the affordances of multimodality and the "distinct potentials and limitations for representation of the various modes" (Kress, 2005, p. 12). The numerous combinations of modes generated through all stages of production compounded the potential for the participants to explore, interpret, and communicate the ideas contained in Daisy's song.

Ranker's (2007) exploration of the written narrative, developed using multimodal composing practices, illustrated how young learners were able to represent, organize, understand, and interact with the subject of their inquiry in a more meaningful manner by cutting across multiple semiotic modes of representation. Similarly, the participants in my research found that passing meanings from one mode to another through the process of transduction provided new ways of expressing ideas more effectively.

Gilje's (2010) analysis of youth-produced filmmaking followed the process of production across different modes in the participants' filmmaking over time in a similar manner to my own study. Gilje's research findings, unlike my own, illuminates struggles experienced by the participants in transferring meaning from the written mode into the mode of moving images. Both modes have different semiotic resources for making meaning and the students were challenged in the process of redesign required to turn the ideas represented on the page to scenes framed within the video footage. My

research participants were not challenged in such a manner and were more so empowered by the autonomy provided by the medium of the music video.

The third modal pattern illustrated how the affordances of video editing software enabled creative, musical autonomy and agency within MVP praxis. Hull and Nelson (2005) argue that working on music and image-based projects multimodally creates a unique construction of meaning; “the meaning that a viewer or listener experiences is qualitatively different, transcending what is possible via each mode separately” (p. 251). In numerous cases, Final Cut Pro X was found to provide the creative autonomy for the participants to create new and unique meanings and reinterpretations of Daisy’s song within their music videos.

Autonomy and agency were both found to be expanded through MVP editing praxis. Opportunities to realize ideas multimodally resulted in successful and meaningful expressions of participant’s musical selves within their music video edits. Multiple narratives were able to be expressed simultaneously, participants were able to experience empathy for the on-screen characters and develop deep personal connections to the song’s narrative, and Daisy was even able to appropriate her real life belongings into the fictional construct. The analysis of the videos also illustrated numerous instances where participants were able to function as an autonomous, active agent in the development of their craft as music video producers. Finally, the editing process of MVP illustrated how MVP pedagogies were capable of providing an expressive and creative entrance for music learners with little to no musical experience. A discussion of how this research relates to previous theory and research will follow in the final chapter.

## Chapter 6.

### Research Findings: Participants' Reflections on Tme and MVP

Structured interviews were conducted with eight participants in December 2013, which resulted in five emergent themes: learning relationships, capacity building, experiential learning, choice, and empowerment. Table 5 below depicts these five themes, derived from an analysis employing the constant comparison method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), and filtered through the lens of TME.

**Table 5. Themes emerging out of an analysis of the structured interviews (using the constant comparison method)**

Type of Theme	Theme Name
Theme 1	Learning Relationships
Theme 2	Capacity Building
Theme 3	Experiential Learning
Theme 4	Choice
Theme 5	Empowerment

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, MVP pedagogies were found to be capable of providing opportunities for young people to have a voice, express their ideas, and reflect upon the world. For many, this afforded opportunities to gain personal insights and develop new forms of knowledge and understanding. Communicating meaningful ideas and concepts through the production of music videos appears to hold the potential for changing the way young people view certain aspects of their lives. According to Mezirow (1997), the process of effecting change in a frame of reference within an educational setting can result in transformative learning, often moving learners towards new understandings that are “more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience” (p. 5). Mezirow also suggests transformative learning is capable of

facilitating autonomous thinking as learners negotiate and interpret their own values, meanings, and purposes. Through their participation in the formal interviews, the participants were able to reflect critically upon their work as music video producers as well as their individual contributions to the collaboration. O'Neill (in press-a) reminds us that TME "enables music learners to make meaningful connections and build relationships that facilitate youth empowerment" (p. \*). In the analysis of the structured interviews that follows, I explore participants' perceptions of engagement, connectedness, inspiration, agency, empowerment, and transformational learning, which they experienced during the *It'll Never Be* project. Participants' responses reflect many new understandings that are reflexive, perceptive, and integrative of their MVP experiences. Sections 6.1 to 6.5 explore the five main themes emerging out of the analysis of the structured interviews.

## **6.1. Theme One: Learning Relationships**

In all stages of production (pre, production, and post), MVP is capable of functioning within a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009), providing opportunities for learners to share technical knowledge and resources such as operational procedures for DSLR cameras, how to direct a scene, or even how to coach an on-screen performer during filming. My role as instructor was to manage the project and connect the participants to their work, both collaboratively and individually, attempting to empower them to take charge of their own learning and collaborate together as an accountable community of music artists. Participants' interview responses describe similar qualities within MVP productions to those of an "affinity space" (Gee, 2005), where participation is based upon interest and knowledge is distributed based on each participant's strengths and practical experience(s), and everyone contributes to the production in a democratic manner. MVP was found to be capable of resulting in the following learning relationship sub-categories: feelings of uniformity and connectivity, connection to peers, different skills and knowledge, peer to peer learning and engaging in collaboration. Excerpts from the interview responses describe the learning relationships that occurred during the research study in each the five sub-themes below.

### 6.1.1. Uniformity and equality

Participants described experiencing a sense of uniformity throughout various phases of the study. Daisy reflected upon issues of uniformity and collective ownership within the production, stating, “it turned into this whole different project and it became not just my song, but everyone’s song.” Jeremiah reflected upon feelings of unity experienced within the production, stating that there was a “kind of uniformity together.” He described the project as having a structure that allowed for “all voices to share together,” which reflects the democratic approach to learning experienced within participatory cultures and affinity spaces. Jade was one of the few students who spoke about issues relating to equality within creative collaborations. When asked how the group worked together, she responded:

Um, there wasn’t any major disagreements so I guess pretty well. Um, there was some times that more than one person’s idea is put out and then we spend time, like, hearing each other out and then, as a group, we decide, uh, if it’s doable or we could try and that worked out pretty well.

Jade’s response reflects the democratic and respectful manner in which the class worked together, suggesting MVP is capable of functioning effectively within a participatory educational model.

The idea of individual impact on the production was a common topic within the interviews. Clyde, Richard, and Steven reflected upon their contributions to the production, describing a sense of equal impact in the production process. Clyde explains his concept of impact as it relates to his classmates within the production, noting:

Well, I was one of the main actors and also an editor. So, my role may have been a tad bit more than others but basically, we all have the same impact and the same role in this whole thing. Like, I believe that we all, we all have basically the same impact. Everyone’s kind of equal in this class. No one’s really has more or less. We’re all on like an even playing field. Even though I got to act more, I feel still, other people got to do other things to make...everyone’s job balanced.

Steven explained the democratic approach to role delegation within the production, stating, “everyone basically did whatever they could to help.” Similarly, when

asked about his role in the overall production, Richard had a similar response, describing his involvement by stating that it was “about the same as everyone else.”

Through these responses, the participants viewed their MVP class as a collaborative community, valuing each individual’s contributions to the greater whole. Working together democratically, students viewed each other as equals, experienced feelings of unity, and the production itself facilitated feelings of collective ownership over the song and its music video.

### **6.1.2. Connection to peers**

Participants expressed feelings of connectedness within the production, both to their work and one another within the MVP process. Finn appreciated the extra-curricular nature of the program, saying, “it definitely felt a lot more...connected.” He explained that engaging within the MVP activities made him feel more confident about connecting with individuals working in other areas of film. Daisy described the positive social dynamics within the class, stating, “I don’t think there was ever any tension or any issues. We, we all just went through it really well.” Brooklyn also expressed feelings of connectedness towards her classmates throughout the project, explaining that she “got to know everybody better. Got to know everybody’s interests better. It was like, they’re all really laid back and they’re all really helpful and we kinda help each other along the processes which is nice.”

Participants described a sense of ease in communicating with one another, sensing an openness and closeness with one another through the various forms of communication occurring throughout the project. Brooklyn, Daisy, Clyde, and Richard described an ability to communicate well with their classmates. Daisy described her interactions with her MVP peers as “a very open relationship” and Finn explained that being able to communicate properly with his classmates ensured that “your ideas don’t get messed up and mangled and thrown in the bin.” Jeremiah spoke at length around the topic of communication and how it was a bonding and positive force within the production:



Um, I was able to communicate quite well. Like, I think um, everyone in, in the MVP class is really...like, they all really...we all really love each other. It's, it's a great...it's a family really. It's cool um, the way that we're able to just kind of freely communicate and, and, ah, share ideas openly is really unique I think. Um, yeah, especially in our culture where, where everything is really closed off and people are really, you know, inwardly focused.

Jade, who is a person of few words, made one of the more insightful comments around the topic of communication, saying, "Uh...communication is key...listening to others will be a...will make you learn something new too."

### **6.1.3. Different skills and knowledge**

MVP by its very nature is complex, multi-faceted, and interdisciplinary, requiring learners to fulfill numerous tasks and procedures using a multitude of technologies and resources. Gee (2005) describes affinity-spaces are places where members have different skills sets and knowledge, which may be shared when necessary or appropriate to the task at hand. MVP in this way functioned as an affinity space for the participants. Finn aptly reflects on this idea, explaining that he "had previous experience in editing and Jeremiah had previous experience in cinematography. And, you know, we all had experience in separate areas." Although Finn had no experience in many areas of the production, he felt he was able to be helpful in areas that were familiar to him, such as editing, lighting, and sound, often sharing with knowledge with his classmates and even giving demonstrations in class around advanced editing techniques and camera operation. Participants were able to bring their own skills, interests, and experiences to collaborative activities, sharing their knowledge with one another and developing strong relationships through their collaborative learning efforts.

### **6.1.4. Peer-to-peer learning**

Participants described peer-to-peer learning relationships as effective, enjoyable, and positive. Participants such as Finn expressed their gratitude towards instructional staff for their help in developing new MVP-related skills sets. Jeremiah expressed positive engagement within peer-to-peer learning relationships, stating:

I learned from others was probably the main thing. I looked at what other people had created and how they created it. And, and ah, took some, some things from that and left some things obviously. But, you take what you think is good from it and, and you leave what you think isn't. I think I, I learned a lot from other students and from teachers as well in the MVP class and the community.

Clyde reflected positively on the learning relationships occurring during production, describing how participants worked together to solve problems and grow as a collaborative unit. He explained, "people were like helping each other, like, learn things 'cause some people knew more about this program than others so they would help each other out." Brooklyn, simply put, stated, "Learning from my peers is, I think, is one of the best ways to learn." Brooklyn's response reflects the value participants placed upon the learner-centred educational model and peer-to-peer learning relationships experienced during the study.

### **6.1.5. Engaging in collaboration**

Participants found the collaborative process to be interesting and engaging. Daisy explains how songwriting for her is a solitary process that usually occurs at home, in her room, on her own, with "just me and my guitar." She described the process of developing a music video based on her own song with her classmates as "really interesting," and "different," and that it was "nice to collaborate with people." Although this was a new experience for both Daisy and her classmates, Jeremiah speaks fondly of the challenges experienced during the production, explaining:

It gets kind of, kind of crazy at sometimes but, you know, it just...being able to go along with it and, um, uh, pushing through challenges, collaboration. You know, collaborating together is probably, what I would say, is, has been the best part for me.

## **6.2. Theme Two: Capacity Building**

This theme explores issues relating to the development of musical strengths and competencies, as well as challenges and constraints to the learning process within production. Participants' responses reflect what may have promoted and strengthened

the competencies and social contexts within the project, as well as what may have fostered resiliency (O'Neill, 2006), problem solving ability, and resourcefulness. The participants' also exhibited a capability to articulate a deep, reflexive understanding of their own growth and development throughout the project, with most outcomes reflecting a positive overall experience. There were, however, some constraints and challenges experienced by participants within social interactions during production activities as well as with the implementation of MVP technology within praxis. This feedback provided a valuable insight into learners who may be shy, introverted, or socially anxious when engaged in groups or collaborative activities. The majority of negative feedback was based on the experiences of one participant, but this point of view broadened my understanding of the potentially problematic outcomes of MVP pedagogies. Within each of the sub-themes below, participants reflect upon their own critical assessments of learning, life skills emerging out of MVP praxis, affordances of MVP technologies, and challenges/constraints within MVP activities.

### **6.2.1. Critical assessments of learning**

Research participants were found to be capable of engaging in a healthy reflective practice with regards to their growth and improvement within MVP production procedures. Daisy, Finn, Jeremiah, and Clyde reflected upon their improved MVP skills as well as their increased knowledge of concepts relating to MVP production. Finn in particular felt that he had "learnt more in that time than I have in my entire school career," and Clyde reflected upon his progress, stating it was "like, a complete step above that. Like...it's like ten steps."

Although participants were pleased with the final outcome of their videos, many also felt they could improve upon their editing skills. Participants had time to reflect and improve their editing abilities in the time between the end of the production and the structured interviews, which were scheduled later that year. Finn commented:

I feel like my edit is at a 7 because I was not using a program I was used to. I, and I was rushed near the end. Um, I've recently gotten a lot more used to working under pressure so I feel as if I had another go at it in the same time frame and with the same program, I...I think I would be able to

create at least, a..a 9 for myself. But you know, it's it's all out there already. So, but I'm...I'm happy with the work that I did.

Expressing a similar sentiment, Jeremiah explained, "I think looking back now, I probably would've been able to put something together a little bit more finely tuned. But, um, I think for what I created, I was very pleased. And I still am pleased." On a scale of one to ten, the average rating students assigned to their completed video edit was a seven, whereas the majority of participants felt they could raise the rating by one or two points if they were to re-edit the video at that time. These responses reflect a positive and critical self-assessment and the students' sense of continuing to improve within their editing praxis.

Participants also expressed a sense of pride in their work as well as contentment with their individual contributions to the overall production. Jeremiah expressed a deep fulfillment when describing his work, saying, "I definitely love how the video turned out...it was the best that I could do." Having the ability to reflect critically upon their work, participants described a sense of pride in relation to their final edits and were pleased with their progress as MVP students.

### **6.2.2. Life skills and motivation**

Some participants experienced an increased work ethic resulting from their efforts within the production, citing specifically endurance, quality control, and efficiency as areas of personal growth experienced during the project. Finn described his own increased ability to endure:

A lot of the time when I'm working on a project for more than..uh, more than a month or two, I get, uh, kind of bored or you know, just, I move on and work with other projects. But, um, with this one, as it kept going for so long, it has definitely built up my stamina for staying with a project which I'm definitely thankful for. Uh...it, it brought out a perfectionist in this because, I was working with a program that I didn't necessarily like yet I had to deal with it and still make it as pretty as I could. And I feel like I achieved...I feel like I achieved that.

Finn explained further how he was able to stick to a project for more than a couple of months. Richard also reflected upon his time management, explaining that he was able to organize his time better and be more efficient with his editing process.

Participants also reflected upon motivational aspects of the production. Some were simply motivated by the production process in general and others were motivated by specific factors relating to deadlines and year-end concert screenings. Participants expressed a motivation to learn MVP techniques and procedures, create a good quality product, work with MVP technology, and a willingness to 'be present' within MVP activities. Daisy explains:

In the past, I didn't actually edit the video. I just kind of...I was the performer. And, for me, I really wanted to be there for the creation of the song, the filming of the video and the editing of the video. And the final mix down.

Steven relates his motivation to quality control, explaining, "making a good final product is usually what makes me work," and Richard relates his motivation to his interaction with MVP technology, stating, "I look forward to working with all the technology that we have at the end of every week. It's kind of a thing to look forward to. To kind of motivate me, I guess." Jeremiah, Steven, Jade, and Richard described time, or lack thereof, as a motivational factor and driving force behind their editing work. This is not surprising considering the short, two-class time frame that was allotted for the completion of the project before the year-end. Learning to work towards a deadline, developing new skills in production, and engaging with MVP technologies were all found to be sources of motivation as reflected within the participants' responses. These life skills may help the participants to endure and thrive in the face of other challenges as they grow towards adulthood, as well as contributing to resilient and agentive musical lives.

### **6.2.3. Learning to use MVP technology and equipment**

Learning to use MVP technology is a key factor in the development of a successful MVP praxis. Technology is involved in almost every stage of production, except for perhaps the writing of lyrics and the creation of production notes, which can

be created as hand-written documents. Recording the music, capturing the video footage, and editing the video are all stages of MVP requiring engagement with various forms of MVP-related hardware and software.

In considering participants' capacity for healthy growth and development, it was essential to take into account the affordances of MVP technologies and whether they were enabling or constraining the learning processes of the participants. Most were successful in learning about and working with the various MVP technologies, and they expressed a desire to engage with the numerous technical challenges associated with production. Participants also expressed a lack of intimidation when it came to learning how to engage with new MVP-related technology; and most felt an improved confidence in relation to their own interaction and implementation of MVP technologies.

Daisy reflected on her improved ability to engage with MVP technology and techniques, stating, "Um, if you'd asked me this a year ago, I would probably say, I have no idea what I'm doing. But now, I think I'm pretty good. Like, I'm feeling pretty confident." Other participants relayed similar experiences. Finn stated that he is "getting better at it all the time," and Jeremiah explained, "I feel much more confident. Using the software and using the camera and just manoeuvring everything is really much easier for me now than it was when I started off." Jade also conveyed that she felt confident with DSLR camera operation and video editing, and Steven even listed storytelling as one of his strengths within his MVP praxis, which reflects his ability to combine MVP resources in a creative and purposeful manner. These responses suggest that participants were capable of effectively engaging with the technology, becoming proficient with its use, and overcoming challenges or intimidating technological aspects of production within their MVP praxis. But what kind of artistic and musical creativity does the MVP technology afford within the production of a music video, and how does this technology afford expressive and communicative autonomy?

#### **6.2.4. Multimodal praxis and creative affordances of MVP**

A critical exploration of MVP praxis within the study provided opportunities to investigate how the skills and concepts learned over the duration of the project were

enacted, practiced, embodied, and realized. This study aimed to understand how participants created and organized ideas, and created narratives or communicated meaningful ideas within all stages of production while being facilitated within a learner-centred, participatory approach to learning. Participants were asked how MVP afforded creativity and expression of ideas. Participants' responses suggest that the *It'll Never Be* project provided creative opportunities during all stages of production; that learners felt a sense of accomplishment when engaging in their MVP praxis. The project was also found to provide musical autonomy within storytelling development, allowing ideas and meanings to pass in and through semiotic modes.

MVP praxis was shown to provide creative and educational opportunities within various modes and branches of production. Daisy, the songwriter for the project, best explained this concept, explaining how she was involved in every phase of production. Reflecting on her role in the *It'll Never Be* project, she explained, "I wrote the song that we made the music video off of and I was also in the video and I helped...well no, I edited one of the final projects." Jeremiah, although not the songwriter, felt equally involved in all aspects of production. He stated, "I did everything and I was kind of around doing most everything almost every day." Daisy, reflected upon the overall production and the importance of all phases of production:

I don't think there's a part of the...I don't think there's a part of the, the project that I find least interesting because they are all equally important to the project. Without editing or without camera work or without songwriting, you would have no project. You'd have no music video. So, maybe they're least interesting but they're not...they're all equally important.

The autonomy afforded by video editing software provided opportunities for participants to become engaged with the development of a unique style or 'look' for their videos. This often resulted in feelings of pride for participants, contributing to a sense of creative identity as MVP artists. In reflecting on his own engagement and sense of accomplishment within his MVP praxis, Steven explained, "I realized, like, my video had a really fast pace... It always, like, kept changing and I guess it was kinda, for me, in my opinion, it was kinda engaging, in a way." Steven's description of his stylistic choices suggests video-editing software affords opportunities to experience a sense of engaged

praxis (O'Neill, 2014), developing a unique design and style for music videos within editing praxis.

Storytelling exists at the very core of MVP; it is often the aim of the songwriter or music video producer to tell or express a narrative. In MVP, stories are told multimodally, with a heavy emphasis on the modes of sound and image. The ability to tell the story effectively is either facilitated or hindered by the tools and medium used by the music video artist. When asked about the storytelling affordances of MVP within this study, participants related mostly to their editing praxis and the choices or options that video editing software provided for them. Jeremiah described how he edited together his video footage:

I tried to, I tried to really piece it together in a bit of a narrative so I, I never...oh, sometimes. It depends on what I'm doing but in this particular piece, I was trying to piece it together in kind of a story-like fashion. Just kind of making it flow in a way that someone would almost read a book. Which is kind of like, piece-by-piece, chapter-by-chapter, um, scene-by-scene really.

Brooklyn explained how she was able to contribute to the story of the video through her acting choices:

I was kind of...I was the person that kind of made the main actor feel the way he did. And that kind of...that was...that was how he was telling us his story. Or like Daisy was telling his story and I was helping him tell his story by rejecting him.

We can see from Brooklyn's explanation that MVP affords the potential for storytelling during all stages of production. Brooklyn, who performed as an actor for the first time in this project, was able to embody the practice of storytelling within her choices as an actor in the video. In her mini-doc, she found other ways to continue her work as a storyteller within her MVP praxis. She explained:

Through the mini-doc. I...I...I put her (Daisy) in the mini-doc a lot 'cause she has a lot of interesting things to say about how she wrote her song and what inspired her to write her song and like, how she wanted to tell her story and so, I kind of did that to the mini-doc.



In this instance, we see that there are layers of storytelling present within Brooklyn's MVP praxis. She is enabled by the video editing software to tell a story about Daisy's story.

Finn, who was at the time the most experienced filmmaker in the group, understood the editing phase as the most impactful in the story telling process. He stated:

As an editor, I kind of advised at towards editing as my... the best part because, you know, it's all just words and video and so it goes into the editing suite where it all comes together and that makes a cohesive story and that's something. And that they say there are uh....there are always three stories. There is the story you write, the story you film and the story you edit. And um, editing the last one so that's the final story so I feel like I had a very big creative part in this whole project.

Finn is able to reflect upon the entire process of MVP, achieving a holistic understanding of the process and his own strengths as an editor.

### **6.2.5. Challenges and constraints to process and production**

A small number of participants expressed insecurities relating to their MVP praxis, and one participant reflected negatively upon specific social situations occurring within collaborative phases of production. No one particular aspect of MVP was cited as the most challenging. Finn described his biggest challenge as writing and "flushing out ideas." Similarly, Steven described "coming up with ideas" as a major challenge. Jeremiah explained that crowd sourcing of video footage was his biggest challenge, Brooklyn and Clyde both described pre-production as their least favourite part of the process, and Richard cited filming as his least favourite aspect of production, explaining he "wasn't really doing anything to help contribute so I was kind of questioning whether or not it was important that I was there." Jeremiah and Daisy both described editing as the most significant challenge as it tended to get monotonous after a few classes.

Steven, one of the more introverted participants, felt unable to express ideas or contribute socially during production due to shyness and a lack of self-confidence.

Steven revealed how particular social relationships were prohibitive for him. When asked what he contributed to the production, he stated,

Oh my gosh okay, I, I don't think I really gave that much input into, like, the production of this video because I was kind of shy and I didn't know what to say or whenever I had an idea, I just like kept it to myself because I didn't think it was any good or anything like that.

He continued to describe his feelings of inadequacy within the pre-production stages of the project, saying, "most of my ideas I guess were overshadowed by everyone else because I never really said anything during, like, writing." Steven elaborates on his feelings of isolation experienced during the filming classes:

For filming, um, I was still pretty shy with everyone else, I didn't know everyone else that well besides, so I was, uh, put into a pretty hard position. I didn't know how to talk to everyone. I was kind of, I was pretty shy so um, I just, I mostly watched you guys film I guess and whenever you'd need, um, an extra I just did what I could.

When asked about sharing his music video with his classmates and other peers within the school, Steven's response was as follows: "I don't know if it's ever going to be any good for like, you know, the other people. I...I never know if they...if they would think it would be interesting or anything like that".

Steven's above response reflects an overall lack of confidence in his abilities and a reluctance to share his work with his peers. He also expressed his insecurity and feelings of inadequacy in regards to his talents and abilities within the MVP class. Seeing his classmates as more established in their art practices, he expressed feelings of inadequacy, stating:

I don't know, I just, I felt like I don't have, like, that many great talents, like the talents they have so I was kind of like, wow, um, like I don't know what to say to them now cause I feel kind of lame in like, standing next to them some times and I was like, yeah, I...I'm okay now but back then I was, I didn't know what to do. I was...nervous... I don't know, some of, some of like the classmates around me have some pretty interesting backgrounds. Like Daisy's a singer/songwriter. Zoe is a singer/songwriter. Kat writes poetry. Finn...is a filmmaker.

Steven's responses reflect the importance of creating a space for *reflective practice* (Brookfield, 1998) and *reflexivity* (McKernan, 1991) within educational settings. Steven's interview provided both Steven and myself with an opportunity to engage in reflectivity together, identifying and articulating Steven's challenges and constraints and creating opportunities for action-based initiatives that will support growth for both Steven as a student and myself as his instructor. A more detailed reflexive point of view regarding Steven's interview responses is discussed in the final chapter.

### **6.3. Theme Three: Experiential Learning**

Participants described a deep engagement within certain aspects of the project, and some expressed an intense emotional involvement within specific production-related activities. Finn described this particular music video project as "one of the projects I've had the most fun with," also expressing a deep engagement with his MVP praxis, stating, "I like production and post-production immensely." As the only photographer in the class, Jeremiah had a strong emotional connection to his work as a videographer within the project. He described the filming phase of production as his favourite activity within MVP, stating, "My favourite part. Um, you know what, I, I, I always enjoy the shooting. I, I, I enjoy when we get out there and just take the cameras and take a walk". Brooklyn described her intense engagement with the editing process, stating that she was:

...obsessed with it now... I'm like really into editing now. I really like making the mini-doc's and the videos even though I didn't make the video this time. But I made a mini-doc and I thought that was really fun. I'm like...like, I'm just into it.

Brooklyn doesn't consider herself to be a very motivated individual. When explaining why editing has been engaging for her, she states, "I'm kinda of like, I'm generally, a lazy person so, like, when I, when I start to do something, I don't stop, I'm kinda excited." Brooklyn described a moment that occurred outside of her MVP class, which possibly captures best her sense of have been transformed through her MVP learning experiences. Empowered by her skills as an editor, and motivated by her previous engagements within MVP class productions, she explains how she was able to

assume a leading role in facilitating and producing a film project for one of her classes at school:

Yeah. Um, just like the other week, I had to do an English project and I had to film it and I did like, this Hamlet thing. This Hamlet um, video about modern Hamlet. And, it's like, I just took a camera and I kind of...I kind of felt like the director. It was really cool. I was telling all my friends what to do and I was telling them how this is...this is how you should shoot it and this is how you will make it funnier and this is how you'll edit it. I wasn't the editor this time 'cause my friend like, had all the...she had the laptop and she knew what to do. But then I was sitting next to her and I was like, you should do this, you should do that, you should do this. And I was like, this really reminds me of music and video production class. It's really helpful.

Brooklyn is usually a fairly reserved personality. She has a calm and composed way of working and being with her peers. During her interview when she explained her involvement in the Hamlet video project, she was excited, animated, and passionate in her description of the experience. This suggests Brooklyn's experiences within her two years in the MVP program were transformational for her, producing a very capable, passionate, and agentive young video artist.

Other experiences were equally transformational for participants, resulting in profoundly insightful responses around issues relating to the production design. Finn addressed the topic of heterosexist representation and the casting of actors for the note passing scenes, reminding his classmates that not everyone in the production was heterosexual. All pairings of hands had been automatically assigned as male to female or female to male. Finn's comments were catalytic in facilitating a discourse around heterosexism that altered the participants' understanding of Finn's point of view. The collective frame of reference was shifted towards a more inclusive place where everyone could be represented within the video's imagery. This moment captures a learning transformation for Finn, who, although somewhat nervous about exposing a private and personal issue to his classmates, was able to show his vulnerability and explain why the issue was important to him:

I was there for one of the planning days where, um, we were talking about the part when all the characters share hands and it was uh, uh...I, I noticed that all the hand sharing was all heterosexual couples and so I raised my hand and said well, not everyone in the class is heterosexual

how uh, how can we incorporate um, homosexual/transsexual couples into the...the mix. And um, yeah, it was...it was cool. And after that we had a uh, you know, things got uh, everything got a bit...everything got a bit queer up in here. It was a lot of fun.

When asked how he felt about bringing up such a personal and private issue to his classmates, Finn stated:

Um, I was a little scared at first because, I...I knew the group fairly well - we'd been together for a year but I'd never really...we'd never really sort of brought up this sort of a topic before. But then, it went over really well and everyone was very... um, you know, accepting of it and they were like yeah, yeah that sounds better. And so, you know, it was...it was very fun and easy to incorporate and it was just, hmm. It was...I'm glad I, I stood up and said that.

O'Neill (in press-a) explains that "transformative experiences enable young people to actively use concepts and/or relationships in one context to see and experience another context in meaningful, new ways" (p. 16). Finn's comments reflect how this particular experience was empowering for him as a young LGBT youth; he was able to help his peers form a different or more inclusive understanding because he shared his own perspective. It was courageous for Finn to stand up for his beliefs within a classroom setting, and in the process, he was able to bring about a change in the way that his classmates observe and understand the world. He created a new frame of reference for his classmates through inquiry and discourse, developing knowledge around the experiences of queer youth, and bridging the gap between himself and his peers.

#### **6.4. Theme Four: Choice**

Access to more choices in genre, medium, and discipline increases the possibility for engagement in musical activities that may be personally and professionally transformational for MVP learners. According to Kress (2010), autonomy and agency are expanded through access to multiple modes of expression and production, which MVP learners are able to realize through their MVP praxis. Given the opportunity to realize their ideas in multiple modes, participants were found to be successful in their attempts to create meaningful expressions of their musical selves. Participants experienced

feelings of creative autonomy through the dynamics they established with their instructors, who encouraged them to make their own stylistic and compositional choices within the production.

Participants cited numerous examples of how creative choices made during various stages of production altered meanings, moods, and feelings associated with their videos. The affordances of MVP provided opportunities for participants to become autonomous agents, making decisions during planning, filming, and editing, which in turn impacted the development of their ideas, performances, and video edits. Jade refers to the expressive and communicative potential inherent in moving camera shots, explaining, “it moves around like, it would be looking over someone’s shoulder has a different feeling from looking...umm...like, uhh, in front of them, or behind them.” Jade’s comment illustrates she is able to create a shift in the way a scene feels by altering camera angles and positioning. Jeremiah reflected upon his ability to have an impact on the production as both a director and a camera operator: “I think personally, I was able to um, through the, the way that I had um, through my photography mind really, I was able to look through that and give a lot of insight.” Jeremiah’s comments suggest he is able to be insightful and reflective within his work as a photographer and videographer. Daisy, who was initially most often in front of the camera, became insightful and reflective in her descriptions of camera operation procedures, becoming active in filming and directing scenes in subsequent video projects. She described how choices made around camera positioning impacts audience perception and understanding:

It tells the audience um, without them actually having to move, I guess. Like, um, changing the angles and colors would make them see and not actually think about it but then they would...uhhh...we would try to make the idea come alive to them, I guess.

These examples exhibit the musical autonomy afforded by MVP; how a music video has the potential to greatly improve participants’ understanding of their creative potential as young music artists.

Editing was most often mentioned within the interviews when participants were engaging in a dialogue around creative, musical autonomy and choice within MVP. When asked how the editing process made it possible for Finn to impact the meaning-

making potential within his editing praxis, he stated that there was “Tons. Like, umm, I know that there’s some ways that with different effects on certain clips, it can kinda show a different meaning.” Jade related choice to her ability to represent rhythm, pace, and tempo visually within her editing. She explained that “the coloring or what clips to use... when to start the clip or to end it. To fade out. And I mostly fade out the clips because the song seems kind of slow.” Richard explained that for him, the creative affordances of the editing process allowed him to frame his own point of view within the shots specifically chosen within his editing praxis. He explained, “...how the different performing shots, I kind of felt like, I could give out the ideas that I thought of before and kind of use my experiences to influence the way the story was made.” Clyde shared a particularly empowering moment that occurred during post-production, where an accidental discovery resulted in the creation of his favourite sequence in the film:

In the editing where I used that piece of, like, real bad footage. It was like, where we were laughing in it and I used it to make it actually like a real cool scene in the, ahh, in the music video and it worked out really well. Like it actually fit in quite well for being just being b-roll, like garbage. We weren’t even...wasn’t even b roll. It was garbage. It was like a scene that shouldn’t have been there.

Richard reflected on his ability to affect the emotional intensity of a scene through the use of transitions:

I remember trying to do, like...I cut a clip of, like, right in the middle on a certain spot and then I put a fade effect so it was kind of fading in and out. Like and it kind of showed like, it was, I don’t know, it kind of gave that scene more emotion, I guess.

Participants also felt the learner-centred approach to MVP was helpful in facilitating creative choice and freedom, instilling a sense of control within their multimodal composing practices. Clyde stated, “there was just so much creative freedom. We could’ve pretty much done anything with it.” Richard stated, “we could be like, using our creativity to come up with different shots and tell the story. Cause, like although the song was already written, we could still kind of create a story still.” Jeremiah reflected on the variety of technologies used within the making of a music video and how they impacted creative choices made within music video productions:

The technology that we're using here in the MVP program, we're really using a whole variety of different things to make what we make and create what, what ends up happening here. So, um, I think, like, from the software to the cameras, to the tripods that hold them, to the many different um, technologies that we use. When they're used together, they're really able to be a powerful um, and very useful thing in our process.

Clyde also reflected on the potential for MVP technologies to inspire and empower young people to engage in creative expression, stating that "With technology these days, you're...anyone can be an artist, like, it's much easier to get into the artist mindset and like, kinda like, portray your ideas."

The presence of choice within the various stages of production was a contributing factor to experiences and creative work that was found to be influential, meaningful, inspirational, and transformational for these young music learners. The affordances provided by MVP provided opportunities for participants to experience autonomy and agency within their multimodal composing practices.

## **6.5. Theme Five: Empowerment**

The learner-centred MVP activities within the *It'll Never Be* project enabled participants to "make meaningful connections and build relationships that facilitate youth empowerment" (O'Neill, in press-a, p. \*). Participants experienced personal and social transformation throughout the project, expressing a sense of ownership over both the product and the process. Empowerment as a concept seems to have infiltrated many of the themes explored throughout this research, but I will speak to a number of specific examples of empowerment that stood out within the participants' interview responses.

Communal agency and empowerment were found to be interrelated outcomes stemming from numerous experiences described by the participants. There was a sense of connectedness, or as the participants described, a feeling of *togetherness* that infused the collaborative phases of the production, as students acted autonomously and agentively together as a group. Daisy reflected upon the group's communal agency, stating:



I also really enjoyed the, um, the filming; the creation of the project, the brainstorming where we're all trying to come up with a concept and what exactly this videos going to entail. It was really, it was really our project. ... We made the creative decisions and we did it as a group.

Jeremiah reflected on the concept of togetherness within collaborative activities.

He stated:

Personally, art is a very organic thing I believe. So, it's, it's something that the individual has personally and when they're able to give that to a group and we're all able to contribute together, it turns into something really cool.

Jeremiah also refers to the pedagogical structure of the program, in which he emphasized his valuing of a cooperative and collaborative approach to the production of music videos. He explains how meaningful it was for him to engage in a creative collaboration with the other participants:

...they structure the course to allow for all voices to kind of share together and to be lead and yet ta, ta, to be um, together in that leading is really...it's a unique thing. It's a...it's a real collaboration I would say. I think personally for me, um, meaning is created when um, we know that we're doing something, um, that's meaningful. So, like, um, I think together, as a collaborati...as a, as a group, we all really um, together create what the meaning that we're going to create, right? 'Cause with one person, you're going to create something different than if you have multiple um, multiple people there, right. So, I think personally for me, I would have created something very different than would have happened if everyone came together and created the meaning that, um, came out of this.

Participants described feelings of autonomy and agency within a variety of roles, and how they felt empowered by their efforts and achievements as a class. Jeremiah explains that "I did everything and I was kind of around doing most everything almost every day," referring to the many roles that he performed within the span of the project. He also articulated sense of pride and respect in the work that he created with his classmates, stating:

I'm happy, I'm satisfied with what I did and what everyone really did together. It turned out well...It can be, it can be nice to just share what we have and really give our all in what we do together. Which is cool.

Although Jeremiah is speaking about pride and togetherness, I interpret this passionate explanation of the group's praxis as the experiential reflections of a young music learner who has been empowered through his personal and social interactions within the project. Daisy echoes Jeremiah's sentiment, expressing that she also felt a sense of pride and togetherness, stating, "I think we all did a great job."

Another key concept that continued to appear throughout the interviews was the idea of control, either individually or as a group. When asked about the Hamlet film project that she helped produce for her English class, Brooklyn reflected on how it felt to assume a dominant, leadership role in the project:

Like, really educated. Really, like in control. And then like, I know what to do and I feel really smart about it. I'm... I'm not like a smartass but, its just like, I just feel like, I had the most experience and it was nice. It was good like, among my friends, I knew the most about camera work and editing so..it was good that they turned to me for that.

Finn and Clyde responded similarly when describing the student-led nature of the *It'll Never Be* project. Finn stated, "I would say the *It'll Never Be* project is a student produced, um, music video production that was written um, written, produced and edited all by the students." Clyde provided a similar description, stating, "Well, first of all I'd say, it's a student run production – run pretty much completely by the students with some, like adult with more experience, like guidance." These participants describe their affinity for the learner-centred pedagogy and the participatory learning relationships occurring within the program. These responses reflect the participants' empowerment within the production and the ensuing feelings of ownership of the process.

Brooklyn expressed feelings of empowerment resulting from the personal autonomy and control afforded to her through her editing choices. She explains why she is so proud of her final video edit: "Because no one else helped me make it. Because I did it all by myself. Umm..like, of course, I was...everyone else helped film it but then I'm part....I'm the person telling the story. I'm the narrator now, not Daisy." Brooklyn is empowered by the affordances of the editing process, developing a distinct point of view and expressing what matters to her within her editing choices, developing a sense of pride in her work and an appreciation for her independent actions.

Participants were also empowered by their ability to solve creative challenges; they described feeling engaged with the MVP technology and developing a sense of pride in their work. Clyde speaks to his creative endurance and how it made him feel to complete his video:

Really good. Like, um, I don't know why. Like, doing something clever like that, it's kind of like you solve the puzzle. But it's like a creative puzzle so you are like, I did put the pieces together and made something that wasn't good into something good. So, yeah, it made me feel good.

Brooklyn also expressed a sense of pride in her abilities to develop interesting editing ideas:

It's 'cause, when I get a good idea and I write it down and I'm looking at myself and I'm like really proud of myself. And when I start doing it, I'm like, and I'm on a role, I'll just...it'll just feel really cool. Like, I'm like... I'm get...I'm doing something...getting productive.

Brooklyn's productivity can be interpreted as the result of her engagement in her MVP praxis and the affordances of the technology that both inspired and empowered her to create.

Both Daisy and Steven expressed a satisfaction in completing their music videos, and Steven, who is often very critical of his work, expressed a sense of pride in his finished product. He explained, "after I watched it (my video), after I was done, I thought it was pretty good right you know, it was something I made, I finished it, I thought it looked pretty good, It looked really interesting, you know, for me." Daisy described having a finished product as "a great feeling," and expressed a sense of pride in her ability to follow through, stating, "I was really proud of that. I spent hours editing the video and it's a finished product. Something that I did myself thanks to what I learned here."

Finally, a number of the participants endeavoured to transfer their MVP skills and practices to projects that occurred outside of the context of the research. For example, Daisy used babysitting money to purchase Final Cut Pro X for her home iMac computer, which allowed her to spend more time developing her video editing skills outside of the

MVP program. She borrowed a camera on a family vacation and produced her first two self-made music videos. She explains:

Over the summer, I made two music videos with my friends and they helped me film it and I was able to bring it into the classroom and edit it all myself and, and it was just...if I hadn't learned what I did during the year, I would've never been able to go outside of this school and be able to make this video myself and then bring it back and say, look what I did with what you taught me. And, I just...I don't think I would have even known turn on the camera, like, in the first place.

Through her engagement in a purposeful MVP praxis, Daisy was empowered to begin producing music videos outside of the context of the MVP program, using other DSLR cameras and engaging with a different group of peers to realize her creative ideas as a singer/songwriter and a music video artist. These actions illustrate Daisy's engaged agency (O'Neill, 2012), reflected in the actions of a young music learner who is empowered by her knowledge and experiences within the MVP program, and driven by her interests and motivations as a young singer-songwriter.

A number of participants have begun to accumulate their own MVP technologies in order to engage in independent production of music videos. Finn explained

I now own the technology and the skills to create a music video at home um, without someone, that is, uh....I, I have a friend who, who is a writer and she, she helps me out and we do a lot of work together.

Brooklyn described a confidence in her abilities to create music videos independently, saying, "Yeah, I have a camera and I have a laptop. I think I could make a video myself." Similarly, Clyde explained, "I feel confident enough now to make a video on my own. I don't know if it could be musical or what could it be, but I feel confident enough."

Some participants described feelings of confidence in their ability to create music videos independently, but they also explained that a lack of access to MVP technologies was prohibitive to their growth as independent producers of music videos. Richard stated, "Yeah, definitely but, like, if I had access to the technology, I could definitely work on this." Steven reflected a similar sentiment, stating, "Oh yeah, definitely. It just wouldn't look as good obviously with the kind of equipment I have but I can make one." Jeremiah

expressed a confidence in his abilities to engage in MVP and described plans to begin accumulating the necessary resources:

Um, with my own resources? Definitely, yeah. I'm planning on getting most of the software we've been using here at SOM. So, in the future, I'll definitely be able to use all the software to the ability that I know and um, create a music video for sure. Yeah, I think I'd definitely be capable of doing that.

Seven of the eight interview participants, when asked if they could create their own music videos at home, responded in the affirmative, with two of the youth (Daisy and Finn) stating that they already engaged in independent music video productions. Inspired by their collaborative and individual efforts within the MVP program at the research site, these young music learners appeared to be empowered as active agents in the development of their own artistic development.

Collectively, through their responses to the interview questions, the participants made a strong argument in support of the production of music videos as a form of transformative music engagement. Reflecting on the democratic, participatory, and learner-centred nature of the *It'll Never Be* production, the participants articulated many experiences that were empowering and engaging for them. Learning together as a group of peers, and sharing their diverse skills and interests helped to connect the participants through their engagement with one another. The creative affordances of MVP were found to be sources of inspiration for the participants, providing opportunities for new and expanded forms of self expression and the personal autonomy to become active agents in the direction of their learning and artistic development. Transformative pedagogies, such as the one developed for this research study, have the power to ignite a sense of pride, instilling feelings of accomplishment and ownership within the relationships, connections, production practices, and works of art that develop out of this form of transformative music engagement.

## 6.6. Situating and Comparing Research Findings to Existing Literature and Theory

In their article, *Locating the Semiotic Power of Multimodality*, Hull and Nelson (2005) provide compelling evidence that music is “pivotal as a means of expression and identification, especially for youth” (p. 252). Providing a sound argument for the affordances of multimodal composing, the authors explain that adding together a variety of semiotic resources, say for example, text, music, and images, does more than simply increase the meaning-making potential of a text. The authors argue that in fact a multimodal text communicates in a different manner all together, creating a unique construction of meaning. Hull and Nelson go on to explain, “the meaning that a viewer or listener experiences is qualitatively different, transcending what is possible via each mode separately” (p. 251). Within the multimodal microanalysis of the *It'll Never Be* project, numerous examples of participants’ multimodal composing practices illustrate how reinterpreted meanings derived from Daisy’s lyrics were unique to each video edit. These music videos were found to communicate in multiple modes simultaneously, creating a synesthetic experience for the viewer that does in fact transcend what is possible via each mode on its own.

If we accept the premise put forward by Hull and Nelson for the capacity of music to be transformational for youth, then O’Neill’s TME (2012) provides a dynamic and multidimensional theoretical framework for investigating and understanding how music learners become active agents in their own musical development. This research study, through the lens of TME, inquired critically into the potential for empowerment, autonomous self-directed learning, connectedness to musical activities, emotional engagement, and reflexive self-awareness within the various stages of the *It'll Never Be* music video project.

MVP was found to function well within a participatory (Jenkins, 2009) model of education, providing opportunities for learners to share technical resources and learn from one another within peer-to-peer oriented educational ecologies. Brooklyn captured the essence of this concept stating, “Learning from my peers is, I think, is one of the best ways to learn.” Exhibiting similar aspects to affinity spaces (Gee, 2005), positive

engagement was found to be stimulated and facilitated by participants' shared interests, and knowledge. This was often based on each individual's strengths and practical experience. Finn shared his expertise with editing, Jeremiah facilitated many insightful discourses around camera work and photography, and Daisy helped to educate her classmates about songwriting and the development of song lyrics. Each participant was able to share his or her knowledge and practical experience with his or her peers, becoming empowered as they inspired others.

The communal agency or sense of togetherness expressed by participants within their interviews also reflected feelings of connectedness (O'Neill, in press-a) in the many ways that participants navigated and negotiated their musical worlds within their MVP praxis. MVP in this way was found to create a sense of togetherness and a desire to learn *with* others. Equally empowering was the manner in which MVP fostered resiliency (O'Neill, 2006) through the personal and musical autonomy provided by the processes and technologies involved in the production of music videos. Participants such as Finn and Clyde exhibited increased stamina and endurance within lengthy projects, and Daisy described feelings of pride in her capacity to follow through to the end of a project.

Music video production pedagogies were also found to be capable of providing openings for new ways of learning that reflected a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Participants rose to the challenges of learning about and working with the various MVP technologies, explaining their engagement with the numerous technical challenges associated with production as a source of motivation and even empowerment. This was seen as part of a natural growing and learning process, and difficulties experienced during the project were seen as challenges to overcome through continued effort and experimentation. Participants such as Daisy, Finn, Jeremiah, and Richard also expressed a lack of intimidation when it came to learning how to engage with new MVP-related technology. Overall, it was found that participants felt an improved confidence in relation to their own interaction and implementation of MVP technologies, which was a result of their effort and engagement with MVP technologies. This also contributed to the extension of the participants' knowledge and skills and the assertion that MVP, as a form of music education, was capable of contributing to their agentive musical lives (O'Neill, in press-a) of this group of young music artists.

MVP was found to help learners to redefine diverse moral and personal issues through their engagement in critical and reflexive discourse. These transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997) experiences were found to provide opportunities for students to become active agents in their own critical development, learning to appreciate multiple perspectives and embrace new points of view. Research participants were also able to successfully engage in a reflective practice with regards to their growth and improvement within the study, expressing a capacity for healthy growth and development. Participants were also able to engage reflexively with one another, defining matters of personal importance through “meaningful and real-world learning that encourages youth responsibility and decision-making. (O’Neill, in press-b, p. 14).

Narrative, imagination, and self-reflection were found to be pivotal components for enabling music learners to engage in MVP endeavours that were empowering sources of self-discovery and awareness. Participants were able to effectively and efficiently use modal resources to pass meanings through multimodal ensembles (Hodge and Kress, 1988), creating imaginative narratives and expressions of the participants’ musical selves in and through modes. New media scholars, Willet, Burn, and Buckingham (2005), speak to the benefits of multimodal composing practices as a vehicle for identity construction. The outcome of my study, in a similar manner to Willet et al. found that the production of music videos produced new understandings of personhood (O’Neill, 2011b) as the participants “performed, defined, and explored” (Willet et al, 2005, p. 2) their new musical selves within their MVP praxis. As seen in Finn’s discourse exploring the heterosexist assumptions of his classmates, creating a music video with his peers became a catalyst for a change in the assumptions and understandings of his classmates. Learning to embrace new ideas around romantic couplings and the visual representation of sexual orientation within the *It’ll Never Be* story arc provided openings for both Finn and his classmates to embrace new and changed frames of reference. This supports the assertion that MVP can provide transformative experiences for youth; Finn was able to help his classmates to “actively use concepts and/or relationships in one context to see and experience another context in meaningful, new ways” (O’Neill, in press-a, p. 16).



Autonomous self-directed learning was also found to be an important and pivotal outcome of the study. Two of the participants, Daisy and Finn, were inspired and empowered by their development as music artists and were subject to an engaged agency (O'Neill, in press-\*) becoming independent, resourceful, and proactive producers of music videos outside of the MVP class. Daisy, as a result of her involvement in the MVP class, has also become proactive in the production of her online musical identity and emerging career as a music artist, moving beyond simply "*being* involved in music and into the realm of *becoming* and engaged music learner" (O'Neill, 2012, p. 180). A discussion of how this research relates to previous theory and research will follow in the final chapter.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research**

#### **7.1. Reflective Practice, Personal Growth, and Participant Updates**

##### **7.1.1. Reflective practice and personal growth**

In attempting to discover and research my assumptions around MVP education and how this frames the way in which I work as an MVP educator, I am reminded by Brookfield (1998) that I can view these assumptions through four lenses: the lens of my own autobiography as a learner of reflective practice, the lens of my MVP learner's eyes, the lens of my colleagues, and the lens of related literature. I will speak briefly to each of these lenses below.

My autobiography as an MVP learner began eight years ago during the summer break from my regular teaching practice. It was during this time that I developed my first video camp as a way to create employment for myself. A group of my piano students were in need of a summer camp but I didn't have access to multiple pianos. In asking the students what they would like to work on together, it became apparent that they would like to work in iMovie on some kind of short film. I purchased two used iMac computers, combined it with my existing iMac and one at a student's home, and we set up a simple production studio in the basement of the her home. We spent five full days writing, filming, and editing together and then held a screening at the end of the week for parents and friends. The reception was overwhelmingly positive, and parents began to ask for regular video-based programs for their children, most of who were my private piano students. Approximately one year later, in a summer film camp in Kitsilano, I

found myself directing my first music video. For the story of this film, the children each possessed a special magic ability. One character in the film decided that her magic power was the ability to turn the world into a music video. Out of this story arc emerged a very simple music video for a cover version of the Cindi Lauper song “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun.” The students and I created choreography, props, and costumes. It was a smashing success and for me it was the highlight of my summer. From that point on, almost every video camp that I produced incorporated a music video component. The majority of my video camps eventually became music video oriented, with the exception of the occasional ghost story or haunted house video project. I proposed a music video production course at the music school that ultimately become the site for my research study, and three years later the program was accepted, funded, and filled with at-risk, inner-city youth. This is where my PhD dissertation began, later that year, with the creation of the *It'll Never Be* project. I was at the mid point in my PhD studies when I recognized a gap in research involving MVP pedagogies within the academic community, which this research aims to address.

Embarking on the process of creating this study and collecting data in the form of interviews provided me with access to what Brookfield (1998) refers to as the second critically reflective lens; that of our learner’s eyes. Many of my assumptions around the impact of MVP pedagogies supported and confirmed what I already knew; this was important, formative, personal, emotional, and engaging creative work for the students. Through the interviews I was able to hear in the participants’ own words, each of these assumptions explained and articulated in great detail. However, I was bewildered by Steven’s challenges within the MVP program that he so clearly reflected upon within his interview responses. As an instructor of almost 20 years, I pride myself in being able to ‘read’ my students and know how they are feeling within the social or collaborative components of my classroom activities. To hear how difficult it was for him to connect with his peers was disarming. He appeared to have a healthy, collegial relationship with all of his classmates, but his responses said otherwise. Initially, I was quite taken aback by Steven’s feedback, feeling as though I had somehow failed him by not noticing (or asking) sooner. I have since been able to help Steven engage socially with his classmates, facilitating opportunities for him to take on responsibilities within subsequent video projects that helped him gain esteem from his peers. Once he was able to connect

with the other students more thoroughly through a series of purposeful production-related activities, his behaviour and social engagement became more confident. This experience highlights the importance of maintaining a strong reflective practice when working with young people. The interviews allowed me to access aspects of the Steven's experiences that did not surface within our regular classroom engagements.

To address Steven's lack of confidence and self-esteem, I found a way in the next music video project to make him an expert in an area of production that was not yet familiar to the other students. A piece of production equipment called a Cobra Crane, which is a long moveable arm that is attached to a tripod, allows for camera movement similar to a see-saw action. The camera operator is situated on one side with the camera on the other. The tripod sits in the middle as the pivot point, and the camera operator is able to achieve fluid, moving shots that keep the camera pointed straight forward while the camera moves up or down within a 6 foot radius. The MVP students had yet to incorporate these sorts of 'crane' shots into their projects. Therefore, this provided an opportunity for Steven to become the first fully trained Cobra Crane operator in his class. I spent time in Steven's private lesson teaching him how to attach the Cobra Crane to the tripod and capture a variety of moving shots quickly and efficiently. Steven became the class "expert" in the setup and use of the Cobra Crane, which quickly became a much sought after resource in subsequent video projects. And, as a result, Steven became much more involved in filming procedures, and the other students engaged him regularly as the Cobra Crane expert, even bestowing a new nickname on him - the "Cobra Commander" (a reference to the G.I. Joe cartoon series). He is now much more proactive within class activities, sharing his ideas during production discourses, and connecting with classmates through collaborative endeavours.

Steven's interview responses indicate how vital it is for instructors to check in regularly with students during programs that are participatory, collaborative, and learner-centred. Introverted or socially anxious individuals such as Steven may find such participatory social ecologies to be quite inhibiting. It is essential for the instructor to maintain an open line of communication with students and not to make assumptions regarding a single unified experience for all learners. As mentioned earlier, through a critical assessment of my role as teacher-researcher, I was able to come to an

understanding of where my role as the facilitator of the program fell short for Steven. In the project immediately following the interviews, I was able to find roles for Steven that were situated within his comfort zone, allowing him to engage in positive social interactions with his classmates. I also made a point of including Steven and his classmate Jade, who also tended to be less forthcoming with her ideas within group discussions, as contributors to the planning phase of the next production. Through a continual effort to connect and communicate reflexively with these students, I was able to ensure that they were feeling 'heard' and included within their MVP activities. Seeing my own MVP teaching practice through the lens of my students' eyes has had a profound impact on my approach to teaching and my understanding of MVP pedagogies in general.

Brookfield's (1998) third critically reflective lens is that of our colleagues' experiences. In working with the MODAL research group, I have had the opportunity to share my work and research in the field of MVP pedagogies within five conference papers (four presentations and one poster) in conferences in Brazil, the UK, and locally in both Victoria and Surrey, BC. These experiences afforded opportunities to participate in critical conversations where colleagues could provide their own points of view and inquiries into my work as a researcher and MVP educator. These dialogues have contributed significantly to creating critical clarity in my research. The conferences attended were also excellent practice for me as an emerging researcher, challenging me to define what I value about this new and innovative approach to music education whilst striving to connect my research to theoretical literature by other educational scholars and researchers.

Brookfield's (1998) fourth and final critically reflective lens is focuses on related theoretical literature. Very little research has been published describing the production of music videos with youth in educational settings. However, as Brookfield explains, "theory can help us *name* our practice by illuminating the general elements of what we think are idiosyncratic experiences" (p. 200). In searching for ways to connect my work as a MVP education researcher and practitioner, I discovered many new perspectives around MVP and other related areas in the literature. I was able to gain a more holistic understanding of my teaching practice: where others have struggled; how my own

struggles paralleled these challenges; best practices; new vocabularies; insightful perspectives; new and innovative approaches; alternative theoretical frameworks and research methodologies; new applications for MVP. Falling head first into related literature has enabled me to define where I stand in the field of MVP research, and where I would like to go in the future.

Finally, reflexivity provided opportunities for me to identify and explore my own personal connections to this work, why I am motivated to study and develop MVP pedagogies, and the impact that this research has had on my artistic and educational practice. Through an analysis of the research and the emergence of the findings and implications for MVP within music education, I came to understand that my work as a music teacher, and my interest in technology-driven music pedagogies such as MVP reflect my own personal history as an at-risk youth in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As a LGBT youth in a small town in British Columbia, I faced many of the same challenges as the young music learners who enrol in my MVP classes. Music for me was an escape from the awkward and often abusive interactions that I experienced with other young people both in and out of school. Homophobia and its many faces played a role in my social isolation as a teen, and electronic music composition provided not only a source of recreation and application for my skills as a classical pianist, but also a much needed source of self-worth and pride in my ability to create music that I felt was relevant, well-crafted, and, for lack of a better word, “cool”. Through this research study, I have come to the understanding that my intense passion to develop and provide this kind of musical instruction for today’s at-risk youth redeems my own negative childhood experiences. I see in the faces and hear in the responses of my MVP students throughout their interviews, the empowerment and connectedness that was missing in my own youth. In helping young people to find a voice, connect with others, engage in critical consciousness, and develop agentic musical identities, my own past struggles as a youth is given meaning, context, and a sense of appeasement.

### **7.1.2. Participant updates**

I have had the opportunity as an educator, collaborator, and music producer to work closely with a number of young MVP learners continually for the past five years.

These young music artists have been empowered by the unprecedented autonomy that today's new media technologies provide. A growing collection of original songwriting compositions created by these students, which have been recorded collaboratively and developed into music videos, are proudly shared with online audiences on Facebook pages and YouTube channels. The ability to write, record, and film their songs has fuelled this ambitious and driven group of young people towards careers in the music industry. I currently work with a number of young music artists, ages 17 and under, who not only consider themselves to *be* musicians, they are actually working within their local communities as emerging professional music artists, performing regularly in cafes and public festivals, winning local 'idol-style' competitions, entering songwriting contests, and recording demo albums that they distribute to their fans during live performances and music festivals. These young music artists are actively investing in their musical futures as they develop their multimodal songwriting portfolios, aiming for careers as music artists in a variety of sectors within the entertainment industry. Daisy and Zoe belong to this group of young singer-songwriters that I have had the pleasure to work with both on and off of the research site. It has been profoundly interesting to incorporate these two young women into my research study and to newly understand their development through the theoretical lenses of TME and multimodal social semiotics. Following the development of all of the research participants throughout the duration of the two years of the MVP class has contributed greatly to my own agentive music life and has been a highlight of a 20-year career as a composer and music educator.

Since beginning their work as producers of music videos in the MVP program at the research site, both Daisy and Zoe have had incredibly prolific experiences as young agentive music artists. Daisy, the composer of the song used within my dissertation study, is a prime example of a music learner who is living an agentive musical life. Her work with her MVP class peers has allowed her to not only develop strong emotional ties to her classmates, but also a strong and healthy respect from her peers within the entire school as an 'up-and-coming' singer-songwriter. Through this recognition, she has been able to develop a healthy and confident sense of her musical self, which has led to Daisy's flourishing as an independent producer of music videos outside of the MVP class. She now hosts a YouTube page for her numerous videos, a Twitter account to promote her live performances, and she even has an agent who is now attempting to

connect her to other songwriters both nationally and internationally. She has raised the funds required to record her first album of original songs, and plans to continue to make music videos for these songs within her MVP class as well as independently with her peers. She has been interviewed on local television about her songwriting and music videos, and she has been accepted by TEDxKids to present her work as a music artist. Daisy has engaged in her own transformative journey,; from a shy, awkward teen to an empowered active agent in her own musical growth and development. She has a defined sense of self as a musician, and an impassioned spirit within her music education.

Zoe, who initially left the MVP program to prepare for her audition to the Berklee Inner City Music Program summer camp, has just returned to the MVP program. She and Daisy have been reunited and will create music videos together for the next eight months. Other participants in the MVP program have also had successful MVP-related outcomes of their involvement in the MVP program. Finn left the school to pursue his own video production endeavours. Through his work in video, he caught the eye of his school's theatre program and has become the full time theatre technician and lighting designer. Jeremiah has also left the MVP program to work part time as an apprentice in a local film production company. Jade graduated in June of 2014 and has enrolled in Emily Carr University of Art and Design to study photography. All of these participants have begun to pursue their own artistic interests and careers in the arts, which arguably could be as originating from their experiences within the MVP program.

The school benefited from the research in numerous ways. Video projects documenting various MVP practices and procedures resulted in the creation of the 'mini-doc' format, a very popular and impactful form of inquiry-based filmmaking used by the MVP students. These mini-docs, which consisted of short, three to ten minute video essays, provided a two-fold purpose. First, they were an excellent means of data collection and documentation of classroom activities, and second, they became a very popular communicative medium for the students in the class. This mini-doc component, which began as an experimental research tool, has become a permanent component in my MVP pedagogy. If not for this research, the concept and implementation of the mini-



doc may not have been as impactful on the program or as popular with the MVP students.

The final way in which the school benefited from the research was through the exposure gained attending conferences in the past two years. I have shared my research with music educators both locally and internationally. Although all research is reported in a confidential manner, many professional relationships with other similar educational institutions have occurred through my conference experiences. In an 'off the record' manner, other educators have come to know more about the school, which has spawned new partnerships with other similarly minded educational institutions. The education that I have received during and following these conferences has also allowed me to share new ideas and influences with the school.

## **7.2. Summary of Findings**

### **7.2.1. Engagement (experiential learning, capacity building, and learning relationships)**

The main findings in relation to participants' engagement in the MVP program were:

1. *Connectedness*. There were numerous examples where participants expressed a sense of *uniformity* and *togetherness* during collaborative aspects of MVP, which contributed to feelings of empowerment and collective agency.
2. *Learner Voices*. Participants were able to express and voice personal and meaningful issues, gaining new insights and understandings about themselves and their worlds, both through their music videos and within their interview responses.
3. *Reflectivity*. Research participants were able to engage in a healthy reflective practice with regards to their capacity for growth and improvement within MVP production procedures.
4. *Emotional Engagement*. Participants described a deep engagement within certain aspects of the production, and others expressed an intense emotional involvement in certain activities.
5. *Motivation*. Participants found aspects of MVP motivated productivity. Some were motivated by their intense engagement with the general

production process and others were motivated by specific factors such as deadlines and year-end concert screenings.

6. *Work Ethic and Personal Growth.* Participants experienced an increased work ethic resulting from the production of the video, citing specifically endurance, quality control, and efficiency as areas of personal growth experienced during the project.

## **7.2.2. Transformative experiences (empowerment and choice)**

The main findings in relation to participants' transformative experiences in the MVP program were:

1. *Active Agency.* Findings indicate that MVP students were engaged as active agents within the creative collaborations that occurred during all phases of MVP.
2. *Musical Autonomy and Self-ownership.* Participants expressed a sense of ownership over both the product and the process.
3. *Choice.* Choice was found to be closely related to the notion of empowerment. MVP processes and technologies were found to be autonomous, providing MVP learners with the freedom and control to create music videos that reflect each student's individual voice as well as the beliefs and values of the entire class.
4. *Communal Agency.* Participants experience a sense of engaged agency, both as individuals and collaboratively by working together, teaching together, and learning together.
5. *Initiative.* Participants became active agents in the direction of their musical development, some transferring their MVP skills and practices to independent MVP initiatives and others accumulating MVP technologies as a first step in the production of their own music videos.
6. *Inspiration.* Participants were found to be inspired, engaged, and empowered by their work as producers of music videos.
7. *Constraints and Challenges.* Constraints and challenges were experienced by some participants, both from the point of view of social contexts occurring within MVP as well as relating to engagement with the MVP technology. These mostly involved insecurities around specific aspects of MVP praxis and social situations within various stages of production.
8. *Empowerment.* Participants were encouraged in ways that enabled them to overcome challenges in their immediate environment but also to create lasting transformation that is likely to help them to successfully negotiate challenges in the future.

### 7.2.3. Multimodal social semiotic

The main findings in relation to the multimodal social semiotic analysis of the music videos were:

1. *Representation and Self-expression.* A multimodal microanalysis of the videos revealed that participants successfully used modal resources to represent self and other within their multimodal composing practices. This was found to be a common element throughout all eight videos, highlighting participants' abilities to employ modal resources to determine character placement and hierarchy within music video edits.
2. *Multimodal Meaning Making.* The music video was found to be an apt platform for MVP learners to engage in multimodal meaning making through multimodal ensembles generated during all stages of production.
3. *Creative Affordances.* Video editing software afforded opportunities for numerous participants to tell stories from their own point of view, and provided opportunities for meaningful, creative, collaborations.
4. *Multimodal Music Composition.* The music video was found to transcend the communicative potential of songwriting or music composition alone, functioning as a unique form of musical composition in its own right.
5. *Expansive Learning.* The affordances of MVP praxis were found to create expansive learning opportunities extending the knowledge and understanding of music learners towards new and innovated forms of music making.
6. *Inspiration.* Participants were inspired through their creative musical endeavours which were related to their sense of accomplishment and transformative music engagement.

### 7.3. Limitations of the Research

The limitations of this research are mainly in relation to the small sample of research participants from a single iteration of an MVP program. In regards to the participants, they could be viewed as a sample of convenience due to the fact they were an existing class at the research site where I have been an instructor now for 14 years. However, my selection of the research sample was the best (and only) choice for this study because there is currently no other similar program in British Columbia. I also had a previous student-teacher relationship with two of the students prior to the

commencement of the research. These two students, Daisy and Zoe, both studied piano with me for a number of years, as well as video production within a series of video production workshops for approximately four years before the research began.

Before the structured interviews, I asked a number of participants to keep their answers clear and concise, not to talk too quickly, and to avoid using words such as 'like' too often within their responses. These pre-interview instructions were recorded on video and subsequently transcribed. On reflection, I believe that these instructions, which were meant to assist participants in giving clear and concise responses, might have had the unintended effect instead of placing unnecessary constraints on their ability to describe their experiences *in their own way*.

A significant insight that emerged out of the analysis phase of the research relates to the creation and designation of the themes that emerged from the structured interviews. These themes (learning relationships, capacity building, experiential, choice, and empowerment) were listed in what might be perceived to be a hierarchy based on the dominance of the first two themes over the last three themes. This is because learning relationships and capacity building were the themes that participants reflected upon the most. This does not necessarily mean that these themes are more important than the others, but more that these topics were possibly easier to articulate or perhaps what happened to be on their minds at the time of the interview. It is also important to acknowledge that many of the responses may fit more than one theme but their resonance with a particular theme made them gravitate away from the others. Even the themes themselves were at times difficult to distinguish as various aspects of MVP can simultaneously fit into two or more of the five themes. For example, learning relationships can be empowering, choice may contribute to capacity building, and experiences can be both empowering and transformational. As such, I feel that although certain themes may appear to be more prevalent than others, all five are equally important and were often interrelated in the findings and implications for the research.

Finally, I would have welcomed an opportunity to engage in member checks with the participants by engaging them in thinking about and responding to the findings of research. This was not possible as I do not have access to the students during the

summer term, which is when the analysis of the research was completed. I have been asked to share my research with the instructional and administrative staff at the research site as part of a professional development workshop. I will therefore have an opportunity to receive feedback from members of the administrative and instructional team in this way, which may inform both my future research and practice.

## **7.4. Areas for Future Research**

There are numerous areas for future research in the realm of MVP music pedagogies. A longitudinal study of participants within a MVP program for at-risk youth would likely produce other insights into transformative MVP pedagogies. It would be interesting to follow the lives of a group of young MVP learners throughout their high school years, studying not only how the songs evolve and change as the participants matured, but also to investigate how TME impacts the lives of the participants over a four or five year period.

Another area for future research would be to engage in a more focused study, similar to this one but using a collaborative group effort to create and produce the original song rather than having each student 'reinterpret' Daisy's song as was done in this study. This would provide an opportunity to focus on one or two aspects of the MVP process in greater detail, and explore any differences in participants' engagement and sense of empowerment within a more collaborative songwriting environment.

Another interesting comparative study would be to examine how music students and film students produce videos when given the same footage. I suspect music learners employ a different approach to music video editing than film learners. Although I don't have the evidence to support such a claim, I do know instinctively through my observations throughout the study and in previous music video projects that music learners emphasize and prioritize the mode of music over the mode of image within their editing choices. Using a multimodal microanalysis of the completed videos, it would be interesting to compare the videos made by music learners compared to film learners to explore the similarities and differences between the two.

Finally, the opportunity to explore a similar study within different cultures or countries would provide insights into the cultural implications of MVP. For example, it would be interesting to study MVP learners in other countries, with different backgrounds, might develop their narratives within the songs and videos. This might also lend further insights into the topics of importance and interest to youth growing up in different music learning ecologies.

## **7.5. Implications for Education**

How will today's teachers prepare themselves to educate the adults of tomorrow? More specific to the topic of music education, what manner of skill and training will be required of music teachers if their music programs aim to successfully engage students in transformative music praxis? Where will this transformative education take place? In band classes or choirs? In popular music programs or classical conservatoires? How does technology fit into existing music education pedagogies? As common, every day technologies become more multimodal, so will the thought processes and literacies of children who grow up utilizing this technology as a means to express and communicate their ideas. Kalantzis and Cope (2008) argue that all aspects of education are changing. The authors explain that the idea of "New Learning" (p. 3) is in contrast to past concepts of teaching and pedagogy. Learning environments will continue to challenge notions what it means to be an educator in the 21st century and how we develop future teaching methods to engage our students as they become autonomous, active agents in their own learning.

Albers and Harste (2007) implore today's teachers to prepare themselves for the classrooms of the millennial learner by readying themselves to "work with how messages are sent, received, and interpreted, as well as how media and technology position us as viewers and users of multimedia texts" (p. 6). How will instructors of music and performing arts programs continue to provide programming that incorporates our traditional music knowledge within the vastly changing and evolving face of education? The influence and impact of new and emerging technologies must also factor into the development of music pedagogies in order to keep up with a generation of music learners that are "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001). Music teachers must also recognize

the manner in which today's youth interpret and understand not only music, but also music videos as well.

New media technologies are sophisticated and ever changing, especially the numerous editing and authoring software programs used in music and video production. Aside from learning how to effectively use these technologies, which can be challenging and time consuming, general technical maintenance such as software upgrades can also be a major barrier to the continuity of educational programming. It can be a steep learning curve for the music educator who has the desire to work multimodally but not the experience or the means to do so. This leads one to speculate if perhaps the lack of research based on education-oriented multimodal music praxis might reflect tensions on the part of educators and researchers who are unfamiliar with or intimidated by new media technologies. Consider as well that instructors within the public school system must abide by guidelines established by educational institutions that may not favour the inclusion of technology or multimodal composing praxis within established curricula.

Miller and McVee (2012) propose that the integration of multimodal texts and composing practices within traditional teaching methods such as scripted-lesson plans and rigid curricula that favour traditional text media lead to impediments and frustration on the part of teachers. Furthermore, children growing up using new media technologies may be more apt than their instructors when it comes to the use and integration of such technologies within classroom activities. This creates a knowledge gap between teachers and students, one which Green and Bigum (1993) explain as the product of a generation of young people who have altered their overall body of knowledge as a result of their continued engagement with computers during their childhoods.

This knowledge gap also impacts music learning and practices in today's music classrooms. O'Neill (2010) found that "there is a growing media convergence culture whereby unique combinations of old and new forms of music production and consumption have exploded boundaries surrounding what constitutes traditional musical knowledge" (p. 26). The author speaks of authoritarianism or prejudice towards new literacy practices resulting in an approach to knowledge that is privileged or requires policing and the manner in which "this inhibits learning opportunities that are capable of

fostering the reflection necessary for a critical sense of the value of any musical knowledge – of our undiscovered future musical world” (p. 26). If the teachers of today are going to attempt to connect with the musicians of tomorrow, we need to address this knowledge gap by embracing and engaging with new literacies, new technologies, and new multimodal composing practices. We can provide opportunities for our students in the fine and performing arts to not only become producers and consumers of new literacies, but to also “provide opportunities for students to create and perform their understanding” (Miller & McVee, 2012, p. 7).

Although some music educators may believe that shifting musical study to incorporate various popular genres may propel their curricula forward into the 21st century, Sloboda (2001) argues that it is not so much the style of music played by music learners that needs to evolve but more the way that we think about and respond to music. What defines a musical sub-culture is how today’s youth use music, in what contexts, and for what purposes. This postmodern view of education affords a celebration of personal autonomy and cultural differentiation, and Sloboda suggests that providing more variety for today’s learners may result in a new brand of music education that reflects the everyday experiences and interests of today’s music learners. Variation in roles for educators may see teachers taking on the position of coach, mentor, programmer, composer, arranger, studio-manager, or film producer. Varied trajectories can and should be built into curricula, including both long-term and short-term projects, providing young music learners with a wide range of ‘entry and exit’ points for musical engagement. And finally, a variety of musical activities that reflect music learners’ sub-cultural interests should be incorporated into syllabi, including interaction with new media technologies, photography equipment, recording studio hardware, film-scoring technologies, or even DJ-ing equipment. The more we can connect students’ interests to educators’ pedagogical endeavours, the more we can bridge the generation gap between educators and learners. This educative approach fits well within a participatory culture model, allowing for educators and their students to learn together in and through new approaches to music education.

Appropriating new media technologies into educational programs that explore multimodal music praxis can provide educators with a way to bridge the generation gap



between learners and themselves. Pedagogies that incorporate today's new media technologies will help prepare learners for future vocations where interaction with technologies that do not yet exist will be part of their every day professional and social practices. MVP pedagogies incorporate students' interests within a technology-driven multimodal music praxis. Music video production is a unique and engaging form of music education that provides opportunities for music learners to gain a deeper understanding of songwriting and music composition. Music learners are able to represent ideas and reflections of their musical selves multimodally. Personal expressions of self-awareness resulting from MVP may provide music learners with a cultural grounding and context for their lives, community, and worlds. Music learners may become active agents in the direction of their music education, and furthermore, they may be inspired and empowered by their work as producers of music videos. Working independently and collaboratively within all stages of production can provide opportunities for music learners to own their ideas and their creative output whilst establishing meaningful connections to their peers, both socially and academically. The experience of creating a music video has the potential to be an expansive and transformational learning experience for a wide range of music learners.

Miller et al. (2012) feel that a fundamental shift in pedagogical thinking needs to occur in order to create educational programs that not only meet the requirements of existing curricula but also connect to student interests in ways that are interactive, inspiring, and meaningful. The authors refer to a reframing of teaching within a multimodal literacy pedagogy (MLP) that "connects the literacy identities and practices of our students through purposeful multimodal activities in supportive social spaces to potentially change classrooms and learning" (p. 117). Music video production is one form of MLP that can provide today's music learners with purposeful multimodal activities that encourage creative engagement with today's new media technologies.

## **7.6. Conclusion**

Redesigned music pedagogies that incorporate new media technologies and multimodal composing practices have the potential to greatly enhance meaning making and self-development for today's music learners. Music video production can be seen as

its own unique and valuable medium or mode of creative expression, offering challenges and opportunities capable of connecting learners and educators within participatory cultures that embrace innovative music learning. Until such practices become more commonplace, Gall and Breeze (2013) remind us that sound continues to be an “under-explored semiotic terrain” (p. 430), referencing the educational potential of the music video, arguing that “despite the rise in importance of music video, where creation of the sound precedes still or moving images, multimodal creative projects in schools rarely begin with the consideration or creation of music” (p. 430).

In the case of MVP pedagogies, the theoretical frameworks of transformative music engagement (O’Neill, 2012) and multimodal social semiosis are well suited. Multimodal social semiotics can help us trace the creative trajectory of a music video production through its artefacts, observing the combinations and orchestrations of modes, how the intention or meaning of one mode is transferred into another mode, and how these meaning-making systems are materialized within the mediums of sound and moving image. We can observe and analyze how music learners design and interpret meanings, thoughts, and ideas, through their multimodal composing practices. Alternatively, transformative music engagement fills the gap where the human element is overlooked, providing insight into the psychological mindsets and motivations of songwriters and music video producers. TME is less concerned with the tools and processes used in the process of production and more focused on why the work is important and meaningful to the individual or group.

Educators must become more aware of what motivates and engages musical learners in and out of classroom environments if we are going to make music education more meaningful and relevant for music learners in the 21st century. We need to shift our thinking about what it means to be a young music learner today, and be mindful of how music learners engage with current and emerging music resources and technologies. MVP provides music learners with the means to find their voices, to write their stories multimodally, and to reflexively ‘read’ their worlds and the worlds of others through their work. Through a process of self-reflection, today’s music learners are able to create narratives through songwriting and music video production that frame their lives and identities and connect them to their cultures and communities.

Transformative learning pedagogies are capable of providing opportunities for music learners to redefining moral and personal issues through critical and reflexive discourse. Music video productions provide opportunities for music learners to become active agents in their own critical development, learning to appreciate multiple perspectives and embrace new points of view. If, as Benson explains, different ways of narrating the self produce different selves (Benson, 2001), then challenging music learners to question the world through an engaged MVP praxis creates openings for new understandings of their musical selves, impacting who they become as they question perceived norms and assumptions. Music learners can learn to rise to the challenge of life, as they reach towards “wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility” (Greene, 1995, p. 43).

Music video as a medium, as a mode of communication and expression, and as a form of multimodal music literacy has the potential to reach across not only modes, but also genres of music education and generations of students and teachers alike. Movement towards creating such a convergence may bridge the knowledge gap between generations and create a new world of understanding for tomorrow’s music artists. Perhaps in the process, we may not only reinvent the identities of our music learners, but also what it means to be a musician in the 21st century.

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## Appendix A.

### Structured Research Questions

NEW

Lights, Camera, Re/Action: Exploring Transformative Music Engagement Through Songwriting and Music Video Production with Inner-city Youth

Study Number 2013s0660

Gordon Cobb Thesis Research – Interview Questions Relating Specifically to the ‘It’ll Never Be’ Music Video Project

1. Imagine you have to describe the “It’ll Never Be” production to someone who knows nothing at all about it. What would you tell them? [Probe, if needed: Can you describe that a bit more? What would you say to help them understand what was done to make the film?]
2. How would you describe your main role in the production?
3. How pleased are you with the contribution you made to the production on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not very pleased and 10 is very pleased. [Probe: Why do you think this?]
4. How successful do you feel the “It’ll Never Be” video is on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not very successful and 10 is very successful? [Probe: Why do you think this?]
5. What was your favourite part of the production? [Probe: Why?]  
Probe, if needed: Can you describe what happened and what you were doing?]
6. What do you think is the most creative thing you did during the production?  
[Probe: Why do you think this was creative?  
Probe, if needed: What about the most creative thing you did in your editing of the final video?]
7. How much opportunity were you given to make your own choices and creative decisions during production? [Probe: Can you describe a choice or decision you made that you were proud of? How did this make you feel?]
8. What motivated you the most to work on this video project?
9. What was the most challenging or difficult moment or problem you experienced when working on the production? [Probe: How did you feel about it?  
Probe: What did you do about it?]
10. How well were able to communicate with your other classmates during the production? [Probe: Can you explain why you feel that way?]
11. What was the most important goal you wanted to achieve in the production of the video? [How well do you think you achieved it and why?]

12. How much previous experience have you had with video production? [Probe, if needed: Can you describe your previous experience?]
13. What aspect of music video production are you most adept at? [Probe: Can you describe why you feel this way]
14. What aspect of music video production are less skilled at? [Probe: Can you describe why you feel this way]
15. Do you feel you made a contribution to creating or representing meaning in the video? [Probe: Can you describe why you feel this way]
16. How confident do you feel about using the technology involved in creating the video?
17. How helpful do you think the technology is at enabling you to express your own ideas?
18. How does the technology allow you to be creative?
19. What part of making the video did you find the least interesting? [Probe: Why do you think that? How did you respond to this uninteresting part?]
20. What part of video production do you feel least confident about? [Probe: What do you think you still need to learn? How might you go about learning this better or what would make you better at this?]
21. Have you learned anything from this class that you can use in your own life outside of class? [Probe, if needed: Would you be able to make your own music video at home with your own resources?  
Probe further: What would you need in order to be able to make your own music videos at home?]
22. Could you comment briefly on your role within this research, as both a participant and as my student? Are your responses directly related to your own personal experiences, or do you at all feel like you are just telling me what I want you to say? Can you explain?

## Appendix B.

### Glossary of Terms

Retrieved from the following webpage: MODE (2012). Glossary of multimodal terms. <http://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/>

**Affordances:** Adapted by Kress (e.g. 2010), the term ‘modal affordance’ has particular currency in multimodality. It refers to the potentialities and constraints of different modes – what it is possible to express and represent or communicate easily with the resources of a mode, and what is less straightforward or even impossible – and this is subject to constant social work.

**Discourse:** Discourse is an important term for multimodality and many working in this area are concerned with understanding the use and effects of Discourse through the uses of modes and their arrangement in modal ensembles. The assumption is that all multimodal texts, artifacts and communicative events are always discursively shaped; and that all modes, in different ways, offer means for the expression of discourses. From this perspective, different discourses may be brought into play modally and, therefore, the choice of modes may itself be used analytically to indicate the presence of different discourses in specific texts.

**Embodiment:** Embodiment usually refers to how the body and its interactive processes, such as perception or cultural acquisition through the senses, aid, enhance or interfere with the development of the human functioning. Within the context of multimodality the emphasis is on the relationship between physical experience, and multimodal resources, media practices and social spaces. This relationship is an interdependent one where meaning making is grounded in physical experience, through bodily form, gaze, gesture, body posture, facial expression, movement, which shapes the kind of interaction with the environment.

**Ensembles:** This term refers to representations or communications that consist of more than one mode, brought together not randomly but with a view to collective and interrelated meaning. Within the framing of socially, culturally and historically regularized

ways of making meaning, the communicator 'orchestrates' an ensemble (Kress, 2010) that bears traces of the maker's 'interest' (Kress, 1997) and agency (Rowse, 2012), including aesthetic considerations (Hull and Nelson, 2009). As such, there is a meshing between cultural affordances, and the ideas and purposes of the individual, as meanings are 'sedimented' in particular ways (Rowse and Pahl, 2007). Medium also frames what is done; as well as combinations of modes made bodily and on the page, the resources available in online technologies shape the configuration of multimodal ensembles (Burnett, 2011). Deriving from music, the metaphor 'ensemble' is suggestive of discrete parts brought together as a synthesized whole, where modes, like melodies played on different instruments, are interrelated in complex ways.

**Gaze:** Gaze is the direction of orientation that people display through the positioning of their head, notably their eyes, in relation to their environment. Gaze is a key term used across visual and multimodal research in a range of disciplines, including art history, visual studies, cultural studies, psychology, and sociology. However, gaze is a contentious issue. Coulter and Parsons (1990) critique work on gaze, suggesting how gaze is a gloss for many ways of 'looking' that is attended to in quite different ways.

**Genre:** The term Genre originates from literary studies and has been extended to describe the regular patterns of semiotic choices in multimodal communicative objects and events that are particular to specific communities and cultures.

**Gesture:** This is a term that describes the use of the hands and other parts of the body for communicative purposes. The study of gesture has a long interdisciplinary history, drawing on socio-cultural theory, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, behavioural science, neuroscience, communication, performance studies and dance, and computer science. It is commonly subsumed under the larger umbrella term of kinesics that encompasses gestures, movement, posture, stillness, head movement, gaze, facial expressions and so on.

**Kineikonic:** The kineikonic mode is a term used to denote the moving image as a multimodal form. It is derived from the Greek words *kinein*, to move (also part of the origin of 'cinema'), and *eikon*, image. It was coined by Burn and Parker (2001) to avoid the problems of the usual words used within cinema and film, both of which privilege

these specific cultural forms over, for instance, television. It was also intended to explicate a multimodal theory of the moving image which combined the emphasis on the semiotic 'grammar' of film established by theorists such as Christian Metz with an attention to the signifying features of contributory modes such as speech, dramatic gesture, music, space, lighting, costume. These modes are seen as orchestrated by the framing and ordering functions of filming and editing. Properly speaking, then, the kineikonic mode is a multimodal ensemble: it contains both the modes themselves as well as the interplay of those modes as they move through time and space in a moving image. Using a term that places the modes into the single mode of kineikonic emphasizes the governing role of what Metz called the 'cinematic code' of filming and editing that has existed over the past century. In addition, it highlights how the integration of modes, such as written words, visual images, and transitions, are salient to both the production and interpretation of moving images (Curwood & Gibbons, 2009; Gibbons, 2010). The kineikonic mode unifies what is culturally understood as a form of the moving image.

**Layout:** Layout refers to the arrangement of entities in two and three-dimensional spaces. For instance, on a page, bits of writing and images are given a specific place in an arrangement of entities; they are placed. In a room, pieces of furniture and people are placed. These placements are based on certain semiotic principles. For instance, the proximity of entities signifies a particular categorization or classification; one principle of layout is: 'what is placed closely together belongs together'

**Medium:** The material form which carries the sign. Kress & van Leeuwen argue that the material medium (paper, stone, ink, etc) is traditionally neglected in linguistics and semiotics, but that it makes an important contribution to the meaning. The medium selected to carry the message also plays a role in the distribution of that message, both influencing and influenced by the context of communication. The use of the human voice to communicate face-to-face will mean something different from the same voice recorded and disseminated on a website or TV broadcast to unknown, undifferentiated audiences. The same message will mean something different if presented as written language on paper; and again on a website.

Mode: This term refers to a set of socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning. Mode classifies a 'channel' of representation or communication for which previously no overarching name had been proposed (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). Examples of modes include writing and image on the page, extending to moving image and sound on the screen, and speech, gesture, gaze and posture in embodied interaction.

Multimodality: Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach that understands communication and representation to be more than about language. It has been developed over the past decade to systematically address much-debated questions about changes in society, for instance in relation to new media and technologies. Multimodal approaches have provided concepts, methods and a framework for the collection and analysis of visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments, and the relationships between these.

Semiotic Resources: Semiotic resource is a term used in social semiotics and other disciplines to refer to a means for meaning making. A semiotic resource is always at the same time a material, social, and cultural resource. Van Leeuwen defines the term as follows: "Semiotic resources are the actions, materials and artifacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically – for example, with our vocal apparatus, the muscles we use to make facial expressions and gestures – or technologically – for example, with pen and ink, or computer hardware and software – together with the ways in which these resources can be organized. Semiotic resources have a meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime" (van Leeuwen 2004:285).

Social Semiotics: Social semiotics is an approach to communication that seeks to understand how people communicate by a variety of means in particular social settings. Modes of communication are what they are not because of a fixed set of rules and structures, but because of what they can accomplish socially in everyday instantiation. With this emphasis, a key question is how people make signs in the context of interpersonal and institutional power relations to achieve specific aims. This is



fundamentally important since semiotic systems can shape social relations and society itself.

Transduction: 'Transduction', a term originally coined by Gunther Kress (1997) in a social semiotic view of multimodality, refers to remaking meaning across modes. For example, writing might be remade as drawing, or speech as action – and this becomes increasingly complex when more than one mode is entailed. Taking this process to refer to externally visible semiotic action rather than activity in the brain, the notion of transduction has been alternatively termed.