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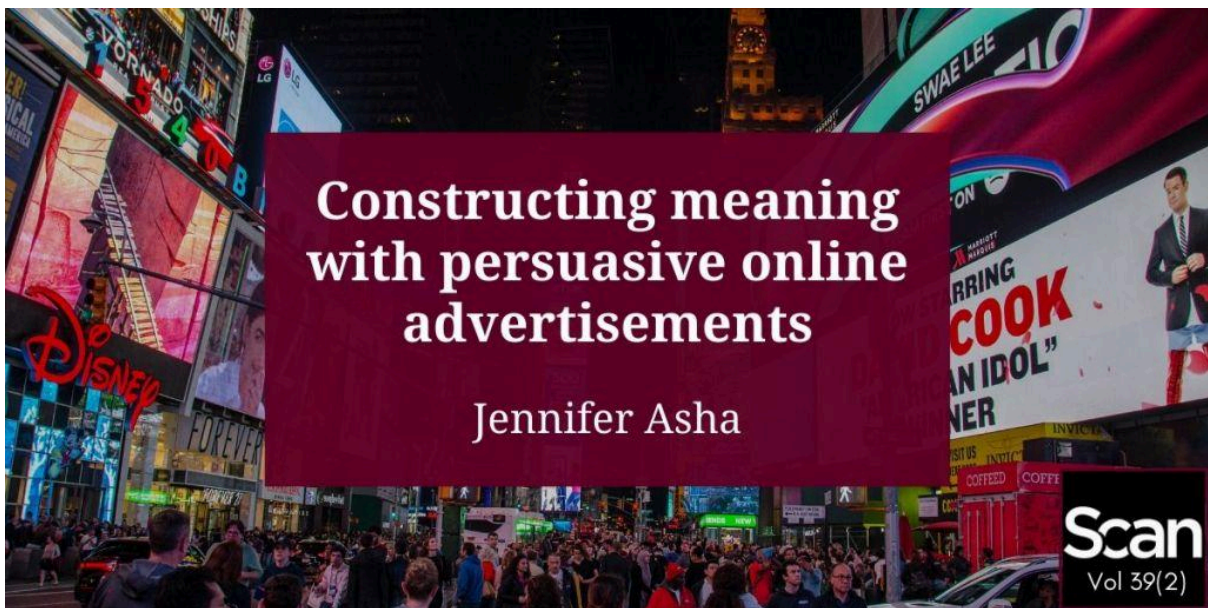
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Constructing meaning with persuasive online advertisements

Jennifer Asha

In [Examining persuasive techniques using visual and digital texts](#) I described four high quality persuasive texts that can be worthwhile resources for lessons designed to explore the structures, features, purpose and audience of texts created for persuasive purposes. In this article I will examine some richer texts that can help teachers to demonstrate critical literacy practices and guide their students towards being critically literate consumers of multimodal persuasive texts.

The need for critical comprehension

The use of multiple sign systems to make meaning within multimodal texts (Seigel, 2006) requires the reader-viewer to enact sophisticated skills to access the layers of meaning (Albers, 2008) and comprehend the text. It is important for teachers to encourage students to bring together the resources for decoding the multiple sign systems of a text; for comprehending the meanings intended by a text's creators; and for critically considering the context of the text and their own interpretation of these meanings as suggested by the Four Resources Model (Luke and Freebody, 1999). By examining texts and considering the reading practices required by persuasive multimodal texts, teachers can assist students to better comprehend them. In turn, the reader-viewer can better understand the demands of a text and be more able to engage in self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 1990) as well as becoming 'strategic, motivated and independent learners' (Paris and Paris, 2001, p 89). In addition, teachers can select specific [English textual concepts](#) as a means of focusing learning and teaching practices to meet the [English K-10 Syllabus](#) outcomes.

Using multimodal texts to meet outcomes within different key learning areas

Primary school teachers have become experts at meeting outcomes from multiple key learning areas within a single lesson or unit of work. High quality texts are often pivotal in these lessons, combining a variety of types of text, styles and modes that complement each other and allow teachers to highlight learning intentions and teach content knowledge of different Key Learning Areas. In the following paragraphs I will describe several online advertisements and the visual and verbal techniques employed by their creators to meet their purpose for the intended audience. I have included cross curriculum links and made suggestions of print-based literature that could be

used to further support learning in the [Geography K-10 Syllabus](#) and [History K-10 Syllabus](#) across the primary school. Each of the texts mentioned here could be discussed with students in ways that encourage critical literacy. Discussion starters such as those following can be adjusted to suit the text being studied, students' age and literacy development stage.

- Who is the intended audience of this text?
- What is the creator's ideology? How is the reader-viewer being encouraged to think about a particular topic or issue?
- What is the ideology that I bring to this text? How can I make personal connections to the text? Does the text resonate with me or challenge my thinking?

YouTube video: [‘Mog’s Christmas Calamity’](#) by Sainsbury’s

Audience and purpose

Created for a Sainsbury's supermarket campaign in the United Kingdom to support the Save the Children Fund and improve child literacy, 'Mog's Christmas Calamity' (3.21) is pitched at an older group of viewers familiar with Judith Kerr's picture book 'Mog's Christmas', originally published in 1976, as well as to a new audience of young children. The advertisement aims to connect the Sainsbury brand to positive memories of much-loved characters, childhood reading and family celebrations.

Multimodal persuasive techniques

With the familiar voice of Emma Thompson providing the narration, a cameo appearance by Judith Kerr, the written message 'Christmas is for sharing', and the supermarket's logo shown only in the closing frames, the multimodal text comes across as a heart rending mini feature film rather than an advertisement.

The viewer is introduced to each member of the Thomas family through close up shots (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) of them asleep in their beds, peacefully dreaming. This is reminiscent of the classic Christmas poem 'Twas the night before Christmas' by Clement Clarke Moore. In a similar close up shot the viewer is shown Mog, not dreaming pleasantly but having a nightmare. Her reaction to the bad dream sets off a chain of disastrous events that culminate in burning a large portion of the Thomas' house and destroying the family's Christmas. The action, whether it be clumsily running along the kitchen bench, hanging on for dear life to the ceiling fan, knocking the phone off the hook and accidentally dialling the emergency number, or scampering through the cat flap entangled in Christmas lights, is shown from Mog's eye level. The angle and distance (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) of these shots assist the creators in characterising Mog by allowing the viewer to see the cat's facial expressions and thereby enabling a connection with the character's emotions. To a lesser extent but with similar effect, Mr and Mrs Thomas are also shown through close up, eye level shots as they react to the events going on around them. Initially their response is sorrow at the state of their house and their Christmas preparations. However, by the resolution of the narrative, when the neighbouring community gathers to save and share Christmas, Mr Thomas is shown beaming with joy and relief. While the narrator tells a version of the story that has Mog as the hero, the viewer has the 'inside scoop' that Mog is in fact the cause of the disaster. This insider knowledge assists in connecting the viewer to the storyline. It is the viewers' connection to the ideas, to the advertised brand and to supporting Save the Children Fund through the purchase of the picture book 'Mog's Christmas Calamity' that Sainsbury's is aiming for

Supporting Literature suggestions

- [Mog's Christmas Calamity](#) by Judith Kerr
- [Little Dog and the Christmas Wish](#) by Corinne Fenton and Robin Cowcher
- [Queen Victoria's Christmas](#) by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley

Characterisation can be explored through each of the texts by examining how visual and verbal elements are used by the creators. Comprehension can be encouraged by helping students to recognise the similar and different themes, text structures, purposes and audiences of each text. History outcomes for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 students can be met by comparing the ways Christmas is celebrated in the different texts and in students' own families, and with changes that have occurred to Christmas celebrations over time being highlighted for students ([HTe-1](#), [HTe-2](#), [HT1-1](#), [HT1-4](#)).

YouTube video: LIFE - [Landcare is for Everyone](#) by Landcare Australia

Audience and purpose

Initially a television advertisement, now available only online, this advertisement was created with the purpose of raising awareness of the [Landcare Australia](#) organisation and encouraging Australians to actively care for land and water in their everyday lives.

Multimodal persuasive techniques

The animation (2.01) shows stylised people enjoying the natural environment and engaging in a variety of sustainable practices. The illustrative style gives the animated characters and setting the look of being made of wood. This link to the environmental theme of the text also has the effect of lowering the modality (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) of the images and allowing the viewer to put themselves 'in the picture' and encouraging the viewer, in the words of the upbeat sound track, to 'step on up' and play their part.

The advertisement employs the visual element of alternating distances through a series of intimate close up shots, to show detailed facial expressions and actions or tiny aspects of the environment, being juxtaposed with rapid zooming out shots that show wider scenic views and the results of the sustainable actions of the characters. This pairing of shot distances echoes the sustainability mantra 'think globally, act locally'. Extreme long shots are used to visually suggest that sustainable practices in Australia can have a positive effect around the world. The final frames of the advertisement pause on a map of the country while encouraging every Australian to lead the way in best practice through a banner stating 'Landcare is for Everyone'. By merging the animated map of Australia with the Landcare logo, the final frame reminds the viewers of the brand and directs them to the organisation's website. This confirms the creator of the film text and its purpose of raising the profile and interests of Landcare Australia.

Supporting Literature suggestions

- 'The Windy Farm' by Doug MacLeod and Craig Smith
- 'Cry Me a River' by Rodney McRae
- 'Uno's Garden' by Graham Base
- 'The Lorax' by Dr Seuss
- 'The Curious Garden' by Peter Brown

The Landcare advertisement could be used to introduce an integrated English/Geography unit of work designed to examine sustainable practices that protect environments. The use of literary texts to teach critical comprehension practices and elicit further discussion about environmental themes and sustainable practices would complement the use of informative texts to research the topic and further meet Geography outcomes ([GE2-1](#), [GE2-2](#), [GE2-3](#), [GE2-4](#)).

YouTube video: '[Japan - Where Tradition Meets the Future](#)' by JNTO

Audience and purpose

This advertisement (3.02) forms part of a tourism campaign designed to entice a range of visitors to Japan by showing aspects of the country's rich and unique history alongside its ability to innovate and inspire.

Multimodal persuasive techniques

The dual nature of Japan as steeped in tradition while reaching towards the future is exhibited through the multimodal motif of contrast. The advertisement employs contrast in terms of the settings or scenes shown (technological versus natural, night versus day, busy city versus quiet rural scenery, indoors versus outdoors) and the people depicted (both female and male faces, religious monks versus everyday people, older people versus younger, traditionally dressed versus the contemporary). The contrast motif is a strong feature of the cinematic choices. Close ups that show details and longer distance shots to allow the viewer to take in whole scenes of both natural and built environments. The instrumental sound track starts with a slow beat that builds to a faster one before slowing down again at the end of the advertisement.

Other visual choices have been made to engage the intended audience. Numerous close up shots of faces make the advertisement more personally engaging as the depicted participants meet the eye of the viewer through visual demands (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). The angles (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) scenes are shown from and the speed through which different scenes are presented position the viewer in particular ways. The opening frame, shot from below (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996), positions the viewer looking up and thus emulating a sense of wonder. The rapid fire of scenes is reminiscent of an awed visitor who is trying to take everything in. In contrast, the lingering scenes help to create balance and not overwhelm the viewer. The resulting effect of such persuasive devices is a text that encourages the viewer to discover aspects of a culture that is ancient as well as one in continual change.

YouTube video: '[Japan Disaster – One Year On](#)' by WorldVision Australia

Audience and purpose

Created in 2012 this advertisement (3.26) was made to thank WorldVision supporters and show the results of their donations in assisting the 2011 Japanese tsunami survivors to rebuild their communities.

Multimodal persuasive techniques

The advertisement begins with still images, taken at the time of disaster, to show the effects of the tsunami. It then transitions into moving images to show footage of the action being undertaken to help re-establish community and industry. The dynamic nature of these images can be seen as being symbolic of the communities being assisted to move on from the disaster. The accompanying voice over and music is slow, poignant and emotive, setting an appropriately

respectful mood. Less personal mid distance shots of children and adults at school, play or working are interspersed with close up shots of interviewees reporting on progress and the positive effects of WorldVision support. These 'pieces to camera' show the participant 'face on' to the camera though gazing 'off camera' presumably to the interviewer, in a visual offer (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). These interviews add a personal touch to the narrated impersonal statistics and facts.

The verbal text has tightly packed 'noun groups' that make use of technical and factually descriptive adjectives, for example; 'disaster risk reduction program', 'solar panels', 'emergency supplies', 'storage units', 'evacuation centres'. The advertisement is particularly personalised at the end of the sequence when an interviewee speaks to the audience via a visual demand (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) directly saying, 'Thank you' to the intended audience.

This pair of digital advertisements focusing on Japan could form the basis of lessons designed to learn more about one of Australia's neighbours. Though they have very different purposes and audiences they each employ persuasive techniques to meet their specific objectives. They offer teachers and students the opportunity to practise their critical literacy while learning more about the focus country ([GE3-1](#), [GE3-2](#), [GE3-4](#)).

Critical literacy is an important part of English literacy across the learning stages (Zammit and Downes, 2002; Freebody, 2007). Exemplary texts such as those described here can provide teachers and students with resources to practise their code-breaking, text participant, text user and critical literacy practices (Luke and Freebody, 1999) as they construct meaning with multimodal texts that also allow for learning in other Key Learning Areas.

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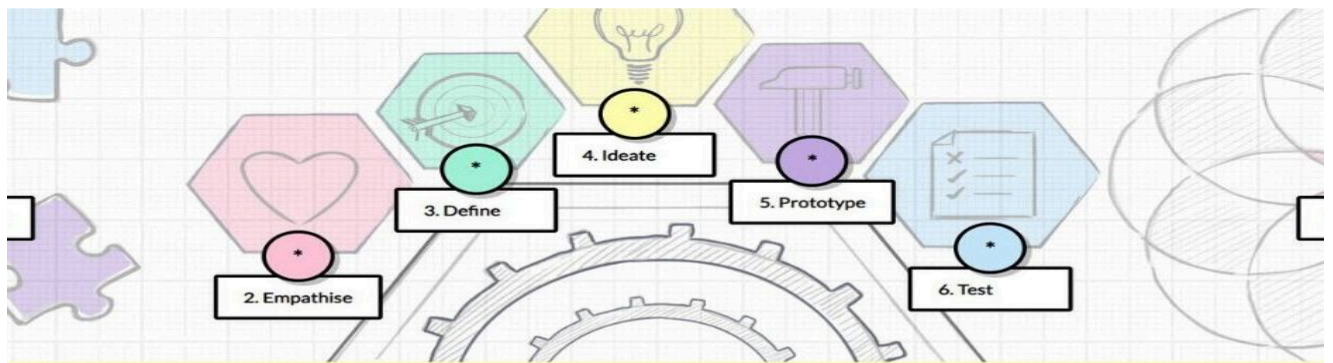
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Design thinking across the curriculum

Tahlea Taylor

Design thinking across the curriculum

Tahlea Taylor

Overview of the Design thinking across the curriculum resource

Resource: Website - [Design thinking across the curriculum](#) by NSW Department of Education (2019).

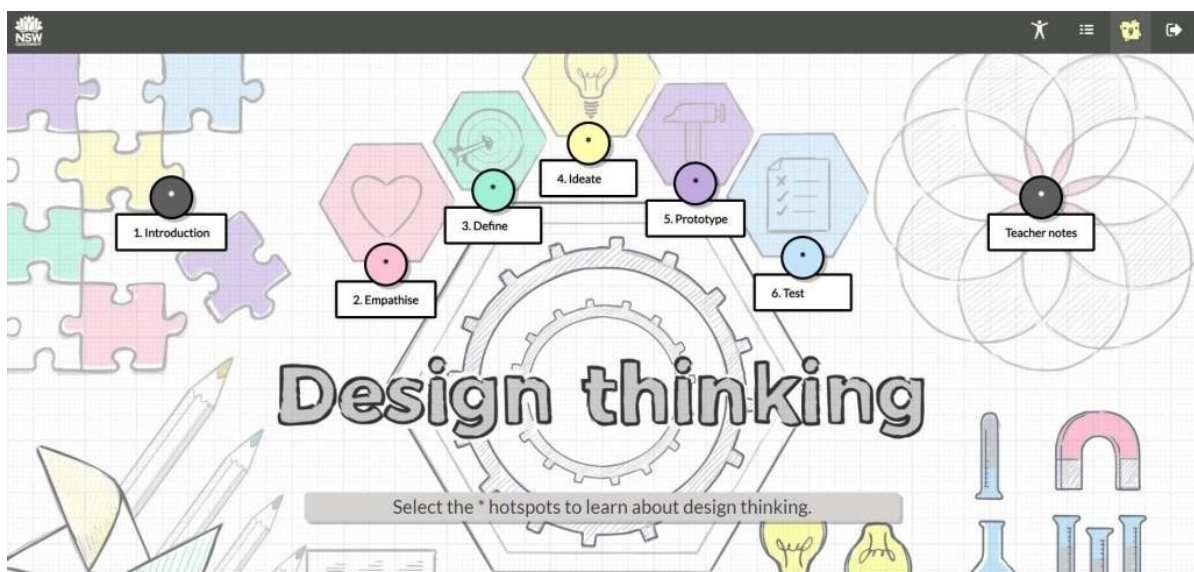


Image: The Design thinking across the curriculum website

[Design thinking across the curriculum](#) introduces Stage 2, Stage 3 and Stage 4 students to the design thinking process through a practical, hands-on application. Published in late 2019, it is an online, interactive resource which explores the five main stages of this creative problem-solving methodology. These stages include empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test. It was created to complement the [Game Changer Challenge](#), a department initiative which recognises that the great challenges of the future will be solved by today's students and poses its own authentic challenge to students. A valuable feature of this resource is that it has been cleverly created so that it can be applied to solve any design thinking challenge across the curriculum.

Students are supported in devising creative solutions to the proposed problem as they navigate through this student-centred resource and take on the role of a designer. A series of animated videos and a range of interactive activities provide scaffolded opportunities for students to develop their skills and knowledge, as well as check their understanding at each stage of the design thinking process. The resource also includes a digital design folio which students can readily download, edit and personalise. This assists students with capturing the design thinking process, collecting inspiration and ideas, and reflecting on their own learning and growth.

An introductory overview and extensive teaching notes further support this resource, making it a valuable teaching tool in primary and high school classrooms.

Value of this cross-curriculum resource

The cross-curriculum nature of 'Design thinking across the curriculum' reflects design thinking as a process which can be applied across multiple learning areas and capabilities. Clear learning and teaching connections can be made to [English](#), [science and technology](#), and [technology mandatory](#) syllabus documents. The resource can also be integrated into other learning areas or topics being studied in class and/or a particular context. Suggestions for differentiation and scalability are included in the teacher notes section of the resource.

The resource provides students with rich authentic opportunities to develop and apply their knowledge and skills to solve a real-world problem. Through translating their learning from the classroom into a real-life context, students concurrently develop general capabilities such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication and problem-solving.

Using the resource

There are various ways that this resource could be introduced to students. For instance, teachers can challenge students to:

- explore what the design thinking process is all about. The introduction module of [Design thinking across the curriculum](#) provides an overview of the design thinking process, engages students in the early stages of a design thinking challenge, and provides important information about accessing and using the design folio. Whilst this resource is written for students to access and navigate, teachers are encouraged to work through the first module with their students to clarify information and set expectations.
- research a product which has been created as a result of using the design thinking process. Identify key information about the product, including what the product is, when and where it was made, and what problem/s it has been designed to solve. Two examples include the [creation of 3D-printed prosthetics](#) and the construction of a [pirate island adventure](#) setting in a children's hospital.
- watch the [Game Changer Challenge pitch sessions](#). These sessions showcase the creative solutions devised by primary and high school students as part of a three-day design thinking program. They worked alongside leading industry professionals to learn how best to use education tools and technology to address the challenge question.

Learning and teaching elements

'Design thinking across the curriculum' is a complete resource package. All relevant information, teaching activities, animations, design folio, teaching notes and tools are directly embedded into the resource or available through links.

The teaching activities are separated into the different stages of the design thinking process. Each of the stages follow a similar structure so that students quickly become familiar and can readily navigate the resource:

- Watch - a short animated video explaining the stage in the design thinking process
- Explore - an interactive close passage and clear learning intentions
- Experience - information about the stage of the process
- Give it a go - opportunities for students to apply their understanding
- Check your understanding - opportunities for students to apply their understanding to their own design thinking problem and ensure they have understood the concepts
- Record and reflect - reflection of the activities, the process and the experiences
- What's next? - a snapshot of what the next stage involves.

An overview of the focus of each stage

- Empathise - students experience a case study of a hospital and work on developing their skills to understand others' points of view. They experiment with using the 5 whys strategy to think more deeply about a problem.
- Define - learners are gaining clarity of the problem and turning it into a 'how might we...' question. In order to have a firm foundation for the rest of the process, students need to look for questions that have a person at the centre and a clear issue to address. For example: 'How might we ensure every new student (person) has the best first day of school (issue) possible so that they feel connected straight away (clear outcome)?'
- Ideate - this stage is about solving the challenge. There will be lots of ideas sharing and collaborating.
- Prototype - the key to learning in this stage is to become tangible as it involves taking the idea, turning it into a real, working example, getting feedback, and then refining the example.
- Test - students pitch their idea into the real world. They need to decide on what success and failure look like and can test part of an idea over and over until they have a viable working idea to present.

3. Define

The define stage is about using what you learned in the empathise stage to define the problem. There is never only one way to define a problem but the clearer your definition of the problem, the more valuable your solution will be.



[Open transcript](#)

Time



Resources



Image: A page from the teacher notes link, explaining the steps students need to take to define the problem they are focusing on.

Additional information about the teaching activities can be found in the teacher notes section, along with information about time, resources, learning intentions and success criteria, answers, suggestions for scaling the project, curriculum links and assessment.

Syllabus links

Stage 2 - English

A student:

- EN2-1A communicates in a range of informal and formal contexts by adopting a range of roles in group, classroom, school and community contexts.
- EN2-7B identifies and uses language forms and features in their own writing appropriate to a range of purposes, audiences and contexts.
- EN2-10C thinks imaginatively, creatively and interpretively about information, ideas and texts when responding to and composing texts.
- EN2-11D responds to and composes a range of texts that express viewpoints of the world similar to and different from their own.
- EN2-12E recognises and uses an increasing range of strategies to reflect on their own and others' learning.

Stage 2 - science and technology

A student:

- ST2-2DP-T selects and uses materials, tools and equipment to develop solutions for a need or opportunity.

Stage 3 - English

A student:

- EN3-1A communicates effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and language forms and features.
- EN3-7C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information and ideas and identifies connections between texts when responding to and composing texts.
- EN3-8D identifies and considers how different viewpoints of their world, including aspects of culture, are represented in texts.
- EN3-9E recognises, reflects on and assesses their strengths as a learner.

Stage 3 - science and technology

A student:

- ST3-2DP-T plans and uses materials, tools and equipment to develop solutions for a need or opportunity.

Stage 4 - English

A student:

- EN4-2A effectively uses a widening range of processes, skills, strategies and knowledge for responding to and composing texts in different media and technologies.
- EN4-5C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information, ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts.
- EN4-9E uses, reflects on and assesses their individual and collaborative skills for learning.

Stage 4 - technology mandatory

A student:

- TE4-1DP designs, communicates and evaluates innovative ideas and creative solutions to authentic problems or opportunities.
- TE4-2DP plans and manages the production of designed solutions.

General capabilities

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social
- Ethical understanding
- Information and communication technology

Links to the Australian Curriculum and information about assessment can be found in the [Teacher notes](#) section of the resource.

Actively engaging

This resource has been purposely designed to support students to actively engage with the design thinking process and apply their knowledge and skills to solve a real-world problem. It supports the translation of learning in the classroom into a real-life context.

During each stage of the design thinking process, there are practical suggestions of how the learning experiences can be differentiated at three scales:

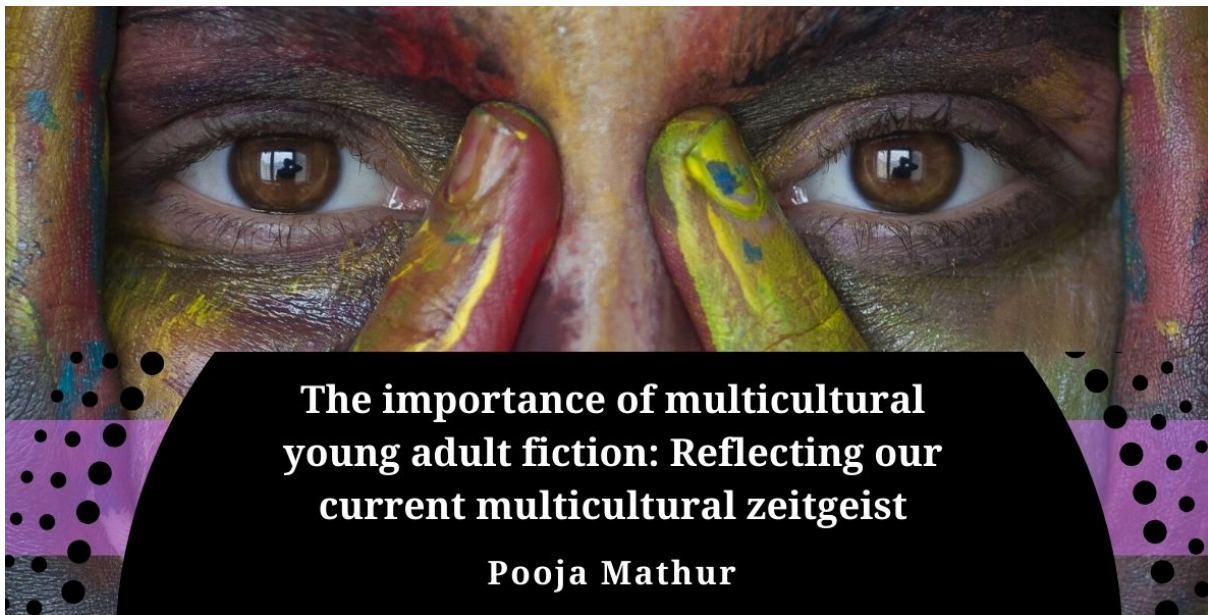
- Class - apply the design thinking skills to the class group. Students may choose to follow the 'best first day' question to keep the focus on the process and allow students to self-drive the learning.
- School - skills are encouraged to be applied across the school, with students testing ideas with other students and teachers. Students are asked a school-based question and are provided with opportunities to present their projects to different audiences.
- Community - this involves a deep dive. Students may complete an in-depth investigation and come up with their own problems. A unit of Project Based Learning (PBL) work may even be created to allow students to test and trial their skills.

Information and suggestions about how each stage of the design thinking process can be scaled for class, school and community are included in the teacher notes section of the resource.

Opportunities exist for design thinking projects which extend across classes, as well as across schools. Two schools in Port Macquarie, Tacking Point Public School and Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus, have recently teamed up to run a design thinking project involving Stage 3 and Stage 4 students. The students have identified a tourism issue in their local area and are working collaboratively using the design thinking process to address the problem: 'How can we make the coastal walk more engaging for visitors using AR technology?'

Engaging with this resource may also be the ideal springboard for encouraging students to participate in the [Game Changer Challenge](#). The Game Changer Challenge provides opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of the design thinking process, engage with industry professionals, experiment with a range of innovative tools and technology, and collaborate with peers from other schools to solve complex problems which will make a difference to our future.

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The importance of multicultural young adult fiction: Reflecting our current multicultural zeitgeist

Pooja Mathur

The importance of multicultural young adult fiction

Pooja Mathur

Reading fiction is an eloquent and persuasive means to impart education and it can facilitate deeper understanding of our society by building empathy (Baer and Glasgow, 2010; Gaiman, 2013). To familiarise students with cultures different to their own, school libraries must include fiction titles written by authors from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds, where the lives of migrant and refugee teenagers in contemporary Australian society are accurately portrayed.

This article explores that imperative. It briefly examines trends in multicultural literature and notes the role of teacher librarians in selecting texts which both assist students and resource the curriculum. In addition, it suggests some relevant multicultural texts, suitable for Stage 5.

Holding up the mirror: Reflecting our current multicultural zeitgeist

According to the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2019), 35.1 per cent of students enrolled in NSW government schools in 2018 possessed a language background other than English (LBOTE). In some Sydney schools, the proportion of LBOTE students can exceed 90 per cent (Ho, 2019).

These students need to feel represented in the texts they study. If they don't see themselves in these narratives, they can feel marginalised and detached, and begin to question their place in society (Landt, 2006).

In the past, multicultural characters were not central to the storyline of Australian fiction. They were minor, 'exotic' characters (Pearce, 2003, p 238), inserted to add colour and flavour to the story. While multiculturalism emerged in Australian children's literature in the 1970s, it was only from 1990s onwards that the central literary viewpoint started including both dominant and minority cultures (Pearce, 2003).

Today, writers from multicultural backgrounds pen stories that reflect their own experiences, including searching for identity, misunderstanding and misrepresentation, trauma related to refugee experience, culture clash, grief and loss, bullying, family ties and mateship, diversity (disability, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, religious and racial), economic and social status, and more. These authors aim to portray multicultural society in a way which is faithful to reality (Melanson, 2016),

with no embellishments. As a result, in their stories, students meet characters of similar ages, who come from cultural backgrounds different to their own, but who deal with some shared real-life issues. And instead of learning about customs and traditions in dry, factual textbooks, they experience them via relatable characters (Landt, 2006).

The role of teacher librarians

As teacher librarians build the library collection, we are privileged to influence what students have access to and what they read. In selecting resources, we therefore need to represent every student we serve, and ensure they feel valued and cherished (Koester, 2015).

To 'know students and how they learn' and to 'select and use resources... that engage [them] in their learning' is inscribed nationally in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). When we know our students, and thus choose multicultural literature which reflects their 'biopsychosocial' interactions, we build empathy and facilitate transformations in their sociocultural mindset (Travers and Travers, 2008, p 13; Chevalier and Houser, 1997).

Teacher librarians also assist teachers in fulfilling their curricular goals by building a relevant and comprehensive library collection (Wall and Ryan, 2010). We collaborate with teaching staff (Gilman, 2007) to design and deliver excellent educational programs (Gibbs, 2003), using our knowledge of contemporary multicultural literature to research, select and evaluate relevant titles.

According to the [Standards of Professional Excellence for Teacher Librarians](#) (2004), teacher librarians must 'fully understand the need to cater for the social, cultural and developmental backgrounds of learners in program implementation and curriculum resourcing' (standard 1.2). By connecting the study of relevant multicultural fiction titles to various curricular areas, a culture of inclusion and acceptance is promoted (Obergh, 2007), which results in higher positive student engagement (Colby and Lyon, 2004).

Multicultural texts for Stage 5

Study of the following contemporary Australian young adult titles could support a range of key learning areas, cross curriculum priorities and general capabilities, including [intercultural understanding](#). Many of these texts also lend themselves well to exploration of [English textual concepts](#), including character, authority, context, perspective, point of view and representation.

'Bro' (2016) by Helen Chebatte

This novel details the daily life and experiences of teenage boys studying at a multicultural school where everyone is defined by their cultural background. The text examines a range of relevant themes with unflinching honesty, including mateship, loss, violence, and the extreme steps some young men may take to defend their honour or to save face (Lees, 2016). This text could also assist students to understand concepts around racial tension, identity, cultural heritage, stereotypes, belonging, conflict resolution, grief, immigration, gender, family, and the impact of social media. The novel could support various curriculum areas, including English (EN5-7D, EN5-8D), PDHPE (PD5-3, PD5-6, PD5-9, PD5-10), geography (GE5-1, GE5-2, GE5-6), and history (Depth Study 5: The Globalising World: Migration experiences).

'Promising Azra' (2016) by Helen Thurloe

Azra, a typical 16 year old girl, loves her friends, her little sister, her parents and chemistry. She's an obedient daughter to traditional Pakistani Muslim parents. Secure in her plans for studying at university before getting married, her world comes crashing down when her domineering uncle arranges her marriage to a much older cousin in Pakistan. With help from the school counsellor and

other concerned adults, Azra overcomes her fears about tainting her family's honour, and fights against the arranged marriage. For students in Stage 5, this resource could enrich the study of English (EN5-7D, EN5-8D), geography (GE5-1, GE5-2, GE5-6), and PDHPE (PD5-3, PD5-6, PD5-9, PD5-10). It also supports understanding of the general capabilities, including critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, intercultural understanding, and ethical understanding.

'The First Third' (2013) by Will Kostakis

18 year old Billy sets out to fulfil his beloved grandmother's bucket list and, on the way, learns valuable lessons about the importance of choices in life. For readers, his Greek heritage, immediate family, close friends, and their lives - with all their dilemmas and complexity - are relatable and believable. Recurring themes of this novel include grief and loss, identity (diversity) and culture (language, traditions), family ties and mateship. For students in Stage 5, this resource could support curriculum areas of PDHPE (PD5-3, PD5-6), English (EN5-8D), and history (Depth Study 1: Making a Better World?: Movement of peoples, and Depth Study 5: The Globalising World: Migration experiences).

'Cloudwish' (2015) by Fiona Wood

Set in multicultural Melbourne, this award-winning young adult novel walks us through a formative period in the life of a first-generation Vietnamese Australian teenager. Vân Uóc tries hard to stay true to both her parents' expectations and her own desires and aspirations, and navigates a seemingly forbidden attraction - all while dealing with bullying, her mother's depression and a magical wish (Buckley, 2015). This resource is well suited to Stage 5, and could support learning in English (EN5-8D), PDHPE (PD5-3, PD5-6), history (Depth Study 1: Making a Better World?: Movement of peoples, and Depth Study 5: The Globalising World: Migration experiences), visual arts (5.8, 5.9, understanding the cultural frame), and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.

'No Normal' (Ms. Marvel, 2014) written by G. Willow Wilson, illustrated by Adrian Alphona

In this text, Kamala Khan, a typical American teenager from a traditional Pakistani Muslim family, tries to find her identity while dealing with pressures of study, religion, bullying, others' expectations and her own desires. As she gains the 'gift' of being a polymorph, she ultimately realises that her strengths are her own culture, her parents' values and her personality. A costume and blonde hair do not change who she is (Jaffe, 2015). This text could support learning in Stage 5 across multiple areas, including English (EN5-8D), visual arts (5.8, 5.9) and visual design (5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.8), as well as general capabilities like critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding.

[Chinese Straight](#) (2016) written by Maxine Beneba Clarke; illustrated by Isobel Knowles. (Also available as an SBS True Stories [podcast](#), 2015.)

This digital text deals with the common teenage desire to fit in and be accepted by peers. After spending her entire childhood being teased about her frizzy afro, and in a bid for temporary acceptance by cool girls, Maxine decides to undergo chemical treatment for her hair. Sadly, instead of achieving the desired 'Chinese straight' hairdo, and the resulting acceptance, she is subjected to further humiliation and pain. This resource offers scope to explore English textual concepts of [character](#) and [representation](#), and social issues, including cultural diversity, identity, the outsider, bullying, multiculturalism, body image, bullying, peer pressure and racism. It could support outcomes in English (EN5-8D), PDHPE (PD5-3, PD5-6), visual arts (5.8, 5.9) and visual design (5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.8).

Common themes

In nearly all these texts, characters struggle to juggle the attitudes, values, and beliefs of their ethnic, cultural and religious upbringing while trying to fit into contemporary multicultural Australian society. The protagonists often seek to resolve their dilemmas by finding a form of intercultural understanding, and they ultimately realise that one culture does not have to be sacrificed in favour of another. In the process, they acquire an understanding of how culture influences their identity (Clarke, 1998).

Most of the suggested titles also contain examples of contemporary characters striving to understand the miscommunications, misrepresentation and misperceptions that lead to misunderstandings between members of diverse cultural backgrounds (Richard and Ernest, 1993). For instance, refugees in Australia have often been depicted as either villains or victims. Little voice has been given to the complexity of resettlement - while recovering from trauma, adjusting to unfamiliar education and bureaucratic systems, seeking employment, and simultaneously navigating family, peer, individual and community expectations (Salazar, 2010). In contrast, 'Cloudwish' offers readers a glimpse of the stark horrors experienced by refugees, while also demonstrating that Vân Uóc and Billy have plenty in common, despite their vastly different cultural and family backgrounds. 'Between Us' (Atkins, 2018) is similarly remarkable, since readers hear three different refugee voices describing their thoughts, concerns and experiences.

Conclusion

To firmly establish inclusivity at the nucleus of our educational system (Cai, 2002), students require opportunities to read and study rich multicultural literature. Multicultural texts help students identify with their own culture. They introduce them to other cultures and urge them to ponder issues regarding diversity. They build empathy with characters who are different from them, which can transform into empathy in real life. This is key, since development of empathy is paramount for social harmony and for students to mature into responsible and successful citizens in today's multicultural and global society (Gerson and Neilson, 2014).

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