A rationale for my multimedia project – *A lesson plan based on The Breakout of the Visual*

Writing and images have a complex history. Gunther Kress (2004) argues that "…writing is giving way, is being displaced by image in many instances of communication where previously it had held sway" (2004, p. 5). Additionally, David J. Bolter (2001), claims that the image, not the text, is now in control. The *Breakout of the Visual* (Bolter, 2001) is a subject that interested me throughout module 4. Kress alludes to that fact text and image work in a relationship together whilst Bolter argues about the tension between the two. However, both authors agree that the image is increasingly taking over traditional text. Kress sums it up nicely by claiming there are two kind of revolution occurring; "…of the modes of representation on the one hand, from the centrality of writing to the increasing significance of image; and of the media of dissemination on the other, from the centrality of the medium of the book to the medium of the screen." (2004, p. 5).

The *Breakout of the Visual* made me think about picture writing and its place within History. Bolter (2001) defines picture writing as stylized images that constitute their own language; this phenomenon is now new but it has certainly changed throughout History. The first known picture writing is thought to be cuneiform. It was developed around 3200 BC by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia (Cuneiform, 2018). To produce cuneiform pictures, a stylus was used to press lines into clay. Within this pictorial writing, developments naturally occurred – with the lines representing word sounds rather than word concepts. Cuneiform was abandoned in favor of the alphabetic script after 100 BC (Cuneiform, 2018).

In our present day modern society, the main mode of picture writing is digital, in the form of emoticons - better known as emojis. The style of how we write has also changed; originally, picture writing might have been hand drawn mammoths and fire on caves, and we now send little images of people, faces or airplanes over our smart phones (Bruck, 2014). This leads one to wonder, is the digital native lazier with their writing techniques or are they more creative?

The readings in this module made me want to compare the picture writing of the past – for example, cuneiform – with the popularity of emoji writing today. The use of emjois is all around: students use them when texting; there are movies based around them; and they are even making their way into more professional settings like emails. Emoji is the fastest growing language in the UK (Doble, 2015). "Growth of emoji popularity also shows in how much attention they receive. For example, Oxford Dictionaries prominently made an emoji, " 😂 ", their Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2015" (Pohl, Domin and Rohs, 2017, 6:4). Emojis have changed the way we communicate and, some might argue, are a depiction of our body language symbols that we have been reading for centuries and are therefore a natural progression in the way we communicate (Kermode, 2015).

This idea that picture writing began the history of writing 5,000 years ago, and how we are now using pictures again to communicate, fascinates me. I wanted to make these ideas and themes accessible to my grade 6 class. For my multimedia project I have created a lesson plan that my students will be able to navigate through, using our school iPads and a series of QR codes. Having used the iPads consistently over the past year, one of my current

educational goals is to more meaningfully introduce my students to a variety of applications that they can use to showcase their learning and skills. Bolter argues that hypermedia is different from books as there are multiple entry points for the reader, or visitor, to engage with the content. (2001, p.9). Although my lesson follows a sequential 1-to-6-step approach, it is designed so that a student could enter and engage with the lesson at any point. Combined with class discussion, I envisage this lesson will allow my students to think about the possibility of cyclicality in history, as well as to consider the future of writing for them and future generations.

Pohl et al. (2017) claim that emoji use is only increasing, and that the numbers and types of emojis is further increasing. But will the written language be lost with the new virtual one?

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