Using Multimodal Education to Distinguish Different Types of Conflict in Media and Text

Morgan Laramie, Gillian Kornacki, Lauren Robinet, and Amanda Watts

University of Windsor

The pedagogical tool created, “Distinguishing Different Types of Conflict in Media and Text” is designed to help students understand and identify various types of conflict including person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. society, and person vs. nature. The tool itself incorporates multiple types of literacies while using both linear and nonlinear characteristics. Aimed towards grade 9 academic students, the tool is intended to facilitate multimodal education relating to narrative development. Multimodal education is significant in terms of its various capabilities. For example, the tool integrates multiple learning methods such as audio, visual, and textual to encompass various learning styles. In doing so, educators are more likely to impact various students with unique learning needs.

Furthermore, media literacy is an increasing aspect of education and includes multiple forms of representation exposed to students in and outside of the classroom. Today, considering the numerous media outlets influencing children, educators are encouraged to “help students explore and examine the power dynamics in the discourses that surround us (Freire, 1970, 2000; McLean, 1989)” (Vacca, L. Vacca, and Mraz, 2014, p. 34). By incorporating forms of media into the classroom, students learn to review sources critically opposed to simply accepting implications. Although the tool created is not meant to specifically highlight media manipulation, it encourages students to practice critical analysis by deciphering underlying conflicts. By examining media with a specific purpose, in this case distinguishing conflict, students are encouraged to review media in its entirety and reflect critically on specific aspects.

Importantly, the learning process created is nonlinear. Students are not forced to grasps the concepts independently but rather socially through discussion and media navigation. The clips themselves demonstrate the various types of conflicts. However, students may understand the clip more so after the discussion or possibly recognize multiple types of conflicts within one video. Thus, the tool incorporates aspects of nonlinear education by presenting numerous learning opportunities throughout various stages; the educator has the opportunity to reverse the process, reviewing specific aspects. This nonlinear learning process is beneficial in terms of its interaction as “these characteristics of new media completely negate the stenotypes of the lonely reader” (Vacca, L. et al., 2014, p. 34).

The pedagogical tool also works well to arouse curiosity and encourage pre-reading impressions. Relative to the education and development of narrative, the tool introduces students to the concept of literary conflicts. The dialogue used relates directly to English content literacy by incorporating words and phrases important to narrative development. For example, the discussion of conflict through characters, events, and setting “helps readers write their own versions of the story prior to reading…story impressions get readers to predict the events of the story that will be read, by providing them with fragments of the actual content (McGinley and Denner, 1987, p. 249)” (Vacca, L. et al., 2014, p. 181). The tool provided demonstrates various conflicts within fragments that forces students to anticipate why the conflicts exists and how conflicts relate to narratives in entirety. Significantly, when used students are introduced to the importance of conflict in narrative while being educated to navigate text with purpose.

Works Cited

Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

McGinley, W.J., & Denner, P.R. (1987). Story impressions: A pre-reading/writing activity.

*Journal of Reading*, 31, 248-253.

McLean, P. (1989). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of*

*education*. New York: Longman.

Vacca, Richard C., Vacca, Jo Anne L., and Mraz, Maryanne (Eds.). (2014). *Content Area*

*Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum* (11th ed.). Toronto ON: Pearson.