Praxis Paper

Through the use of the attached lesson and its associated pedagogical tools, students will engage in multimodal learning which engages with text-based, visual, kinesthetic, and oral learning. Using the topic of the Acadian Expulsion and Diaspora in the mid-18th century, students will roleplay as period and locality-specific characters who must work together to build a settlement community. Each student is a ‘family member,’ connected by a last name, that must work together to build representations of what they believe would be needed in an Acadian settlement. This will help students construct the meaning of community through design (Cazden et al., 1996). The aim of group roles is to foster active participation from all ‘family’ members, allow each student to fulfill their specific defined role on their character card, contribute to a common goal of establishing a settlement, and allow students to work with classmates of various abilities, backgrounds, interests and languages (Think Literacy Library, 2010).

Afterwards, there will be a class discussion where the students will discuss the visual representation of dispersion and how they feel about what happened. During this class there is plenty of room for constructivism, especially with any refugee students in the classroom. While all students could potentially relate, the refugee students could take this time to tell the class about their real life expulsion from their countries. This will help students connect themes from past to present and become more aware of diverse situations. While the refugee students practice their English language oral skills, the English students can practice their listening skills.

Overall, this activity would be especially helpful for English Language Learners (ELLs) who have distinct learning profiles or students who have a hard time with reading comprehension (Watkins & Lindahl, 2010). It incorporates many non-text based activities, including brief oral presentations and tactile constructions, in order to engage with multiple learning styles. The vast majority of this task will be done by the students using their hands to develop physical representations of their thinking and understanding of an historical period and location. This allows them to be more creative in a subject that does not traditionally allow for such things. By building their own communities, they will understand the value of teamwork, collaboration, and support frameworks. By receiving the “destiny cards,” they will be introduced to the social justice perspective of the Acadian expulsion- experiencing a visceral representation of the difficulties faced by a population stripped of all of its supports (be they familial, social, or governmental).

This tool helps to stimulate many different areas of literacies. The audio and visual will help with oral and visual learners while the building and moving will give students who are more kinesthetic learners something to aid in their understanding. The projection of a map where Acadians were dispersed will allow students to read and understand it, thus engaging in historical content area literacy. It will also help to bring into perspective a real-life issue that affects much of the world today, especially in the middle-east, in a way that will bring it to the forefront of student consciousness.

References

Cazden, Courtney; Cope, Bill; Fairclough, Norman; Gee, Jim; et al. (1996, Spring). A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66 (1), 60-92.

Think Literacy Library. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2016, from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/library.html>

Watkins, N. M., & Lindahl, K. M. (2010, January). Targeting Content Area Literacy Instruction to Meet the Needs of Adolescent English Language Learners. *Middle School Journal,* 41 (3), 23-32.