Ayva Banks, Kayla Egeto, Savannah Ewing, Amanda Ham-Ying, Micaela Muldoon

Dr. Susan Holloway

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The Integration of Multiliteracies and a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Education: Bringing Theory to Practice Through the Activity “Pin the Punctuation on the Sentence”

The practical application of two key pedagogical theories, including the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies and the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, is exemplified within the context of a multimodal instructional lesson, where students engage in an educational activity called ‘Pin the Punctuation on the Sentence.’ Two main arguments about the purpose of multiliteracies emerged in discussions among the New London Group. Specifically, the first relates to “modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on” (Cazden et al. 64). Secondly, the term “multiliteracies” focuses on “the realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness” (64). The enhancement of teaching occurs through the incorporation of multimodalities, which involve the integration of auditory, gestural, linguistic, spatial, and visual semiotic modes. It is a form of Situated Practice where students gain immersion through experience and utilizing available Designs of meaning. The auditory modality is used throughout the lesson through the teacher speaking and providing instructions for the activity. Auditorial learning will be applied by the teacher reading each sentence on the board. Differences in speech will help students distinguish where punctuation is necessary in a sentence. For example, the teacher can emphasize the need for a comma by reading a run-on sentence out loud. When a student is blindfolded for the game, they will primarily rely on listening to their peers to help guide them in making decisions when placing the punctuation in the correct areas of a sentence. Integrating the gestural semiotic mode will be applied throughout the lesson and the activity. When the teacher reads sentences, they can use gestures to point to specific parts of a sentence. This will highlight where a question mark, exclamation mark, period, comma, or apostrophe may be necessary. This will be accompanied by the linguistic semiotic mode, where students can read the sentences displayed on the board and write them in their notes with the proper punctuation. The use of spatial semiotic mode will be used by students physically mapping parts of the sentences. They will analyze the layout and spacing within sentences to place the magnetized punctuation pieces in the proper places. Lastly, the lesson will apply to students’ visual learning experiences through a PowerPoint presentation with various images and graphics. Regarding cultural and linguistic diversity, “we want to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically, diverse, and increasingly globalize societies” (61). The teacher can add a couple of rounds of the game that use punctuation from other languages. This will allow students to engage in Critical Framing, where they interpret the social and cultural context to critically view the sentences about their contexts. Students will gain an enriched learning experience by strengthening their racial and ethnic identities, building cultural competence, promoting safety and belonging, and contextualizing culture through language. Through the integration of pedagogies that prioritize the theory of Multiliteracies and Culturally Responsive practice, students will acquire an impactful educational experience that has the potential to permeate various aspects of their daily lives.

Works Cited

Cazden, Courtney, et al. "A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures." *Harvard educational review* 66.1 (1996): 60-92.