

Praxis Paper:

Romeo and Juliet Multiliteracies

The idea behind our multiliteracies lesson plan was to create an assignment that students can use during the *Romeo and Juliet* unit in an English class. The goal was to include components that were interactive and that get the students talking about the play and show a good understanding of each of its acts and scenes. The lesson starts with a mind on activity where the students can utilize the Think-Pair-Share method and discuss with their elbow partner and then with their group. This will have the students talk about their critical thinking and close reading of significant characters of the play and how they inform the larger narrative. Then continuing onto a Four Corners activity allows the students to both practice their ability to speak to a class, collaborate, and consolidate understanding when looking at the tone of the play and how it fits into the tragedy genre. The nature of this class discussion highlights a key aspect of this unit where students must critically assess this work and identify key elements and characters of a Shakespearian drama that still informs literary works of the present day. This will all be applied in the cumulative assignment. This is where the students will create an Instagram in groups and use posts and stories to summarize the plot of one of the first four acts. Learning how to take a Shakespearean play and translate it to a social media platform in order to summarize it and highlight the key elements of plot and characters through a multimodal tool such as an Instagram account both utilizes skills that are cross curricular while also serving as a form of review for the groups who are in turn, making a resource for their peers to use to study for the unit test.

As stated in the New London Group's *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies*, "To be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities – interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes – students bring to learning. Curriculum now needs to mesh with different *subjectivities*, and with their attendant languages, discourses, and registers, and use these as a resource for learning." (72) To speak with their attendant languages and discourses now includes social media, where they can reenact this centuries-old play as people of color or members of the LGBTQ+, bringing representation and intersectionality into literature, performance, art, and history. By having students from all backgrounds participate in the creation of their own multimodal retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, we place the tools for multiliteracies in their hands, and let them explore how they wish to tell this story. The goal is to present the students with an example of how this can be done before then setting them free to create their own works of multiliteracies that can be an intersection of written, drawn, spoken, and physically expressed story telling that builds on great literature but is not bound by the hegemonic characteristics of the society in which it was created.

Work Cited

The New London Group. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 66, no. 1, 1996, p. 72.,
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