

## Praxis Paper

The purpose of this lesson is to provide teachers with an opportunity to discuss controversial topics including concepts of marginalization against women through an interactive and engaging mode. These themes and topics are viewed through the lens of women in the 1950s which allows students to look at these issues through a historical perspective. This can transfer into their studies and present-day social justice issues and will hopefully allow students to gain a deeper understanding of these topics. Using an interactive, multimodal video, students will be able to pause and reflect on the questions at hand, discuss with peers and create ideas of their own that will shape future projects.

The Article “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures” argues that “...diversity is a classroom resource just as powerfully as it is a social resource...” (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, et al., 69) and this diversity not only promotes positive education as a “service to minorities” but rather it benefits *all students*. The article, being before its time, is referring to what is now used and known as differentiated instruction. Differentiated Instruction, which draws on the theories of psychologist Lev Vygotsky, acknowledges the social, personal and academic differences between students and pushes for flexible and adaptable instruction to provide opportunity for each student, as an individual, to reach their full capacities.

The multimodality of this project offers and encourages room for teacher manipulation depending on situations. The technological aspect of a video offers stops or pauses of time, going backwards and forwards, and concept replication. Group work and discussion is recommended for the duration of the video so strategic grouping for identified students can be used to accommodate students would might feel more comfortable when first discussing ideas with a small group before addressing the entire class. This offers low-risk options for students to work out their ideas, as women and gender studies can be a delicate topic for some. Group work also promotes group learning and cooperation as well as development of interpersonal skills. The variety of options regarding characters, or choosing advertisements, allows student choice and autonomy for their activities. Giving the students choice allows the context they are investigating to be based on the interest of the students and promotes critical thinking, extension, and applications of ideas rather than reiteration. The essay encourages students to be creative while incorporating historical and social context; it asks them to step out of their own perspectives and

privileges and into the shoes of a woman in history. Since the lesson is paired alongside a video, the instructions, questions, and prompts are delivered both orally and visually, as well as through table discussions and handouts. Some of the extended activities and creative essay encourages students to present in front of the class - this can be verbally, visually, or with technology. This tool offers the pedagogical diversity discussed by the New London Group and will benefit every student with a diverse learning structure and atmosphere.

It is important for students to consider points of view beyond their own through possibly a sympathetic, critical, or inquisitive lenses. The New London Group's article mentioned above notes that the pedagogy of multiliteracies "focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects" (Cazden, 64). Having the students learn through the eyes of our characters from the 1950 allows them to see from alternative and potentially marginalizing perspectives. This skill is relevant to them in the 21st century classrooms as more students are diverse.

This video and lesson plan asks students to consider points of views 1950's characters from the movie *Mona Lisa Smile* and offers teachers and students a tool with which to work alongside and be interactive. Using multiliteracies as a foundation for the lesson, we hope to accurately portray and uncover the sexism in women's roles in the 1950s and through time.