Toward a Culturally Inclusive Canon of Multimodal Picture Books: Developing Multiliteracies Practices and Assessments for Ontario’s Classrooms

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Keywords
multimodal picture books, culturally inclusive/responsive teaching, funds of knowledge, multiliteracies, transformative learning, anti-oppressive practices, early childhood education

Abstract
Multimodal picture books are a critical component of children’s literacy development, and in a multicultural province such as Ontario, it is vital that literacy development include cultural literacy. The demographics of the province’s classrooms are increasingly diverse; however, minoritized cultures are underrepresented among teachers, and there are sparse training mandates related to cultural inclusion. Thus, Ontario’s culturally diverse student body is encountering a number of barriers related to gender, ethnicity, perceived race, sexual identity, ability, class, and other social markers. To provide teachers with the tools needed to support their students, the current study utilizes a theoretical framework derived from anti-oppressive practices to identify where students encounter barriers. The work examines the strengths and limitations of the traditional canon of children’s multimodal picture books and explores the ways in which more inclusive works can support a culturally inclusive learning environment. Based on this, a culturally responsive selection process is outlined. The study employs a multiliteracies framework to propose classroom activities and assessment models that promote and assess literacy development. Transformative teaching approaches are also recommended to help teachers broaden their understanding of culture. Additionally, recommendations are made regarding mandated cultural training for pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as curriculum reform.

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This best-practices piece addresses the language-culture divide contributing to curricular bifurcation in many collegiate language departments and presents a lesson plan to help language instructors bridge the gap. The lesson on public transportation is designed for first-semester L2 German students and focuses on a guided reading of a music video adver. A pedagogy of multiliteracies includes a balanced classroom design of Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing and Transformed Practice. Students need to draw on their own experiences and semiotic literacy practices to represent and communicate meaning. The changes that transpire through the field of education affect learning processes, while the application of learning processes affects the use of multiliteracies (Selber, 2004). Transformed Practice subsequently underwent reformation and was renamed “Applying” as part of “Knowledge Processes” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 184), formerly known as Multiliteracy pedagogy. Multimodal picture books are a critical component of children’s literacy development, and in a multicultural province such as Ontario, it is vital that literacy development include cultural literacy. The demographics of the province’s classrooms are increasingly diverse; however, minoritized cultures are underrepresented among teachers, and there are sparse training mandates related to cultural inclusion. The study employs a multiliteracies framework to propose classroom activities and assessment models that promote and assess literacy development. Multimodal picture books, culturally inclusive/responsive teaching, funds of knowledge, multiliteracies, transformative learning, anti-oppressive practices, early childhood education. Abstract. Toward A Culturally Inclusive Canon Of Multimodal Picture Books: Developing Multiliteracies Practices And Assessments For Ontario’S Classrooms, Arwa Jammali. Major Papers. Multimodal picture books are a critical component of children’s literacy development, and in a multicultural province such as Ontario, it is vital that literacy development include cultural literacy. The demographics of the province’s classrooms are increasingly diverse; however, minoritized cultures are underrepresented among teachers, and there are sparse training mandates related to cultural inclusion. Thus, Ontario’s cul...