

The Multiliteracies Project: A Praxis Paper

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Multimodal Geographical Learning for English Language Learners

Introduction

English Language Learners (ELLs) can benefit from various instructional strategies tailored to their learning needs. The geography lesson plan for grades 3-5, which focuses on the Geographical features of Canada, is an example of a multifaceted approach to teaching that aligns with the principles outlined in Herrell & Jordan (2020). This praxis paper discusses applying pedagogical strategies in lesson plans.

Integrity of Theory and Practice

The lesson plan has been designed to cater to the varied learning preferences of ELLs by incorporating multimodality. As highlighted by Herrell and Jordan (2020), it is essential to “choose technology based on student needs” (p. 63), “provide language support through visual images” (p. 38), and “integrate movement into language acquisition” (p. 28). The lessons include videos, maps, and the Monopoly game to ensure that students receive information through various modes, which helps them comprehend and retain the material.

The Monopoly game in the lesson plan is designed to promote active engagement among students by emphasizing creativity and criticality. This approach aligns with the article (Herrell and Jordan, 2020) that suggests “building vocabulary through dramatization” (p. 47) and “organizing information into categories” (p. 119). By encouraging students to explore Canada's geography through play, they are prompted to think critically about the content and apply their knowledge creatively.

The lesson plan's focus on social justice and multiculturalism is enhanced by its emphasis on the First Nations peoples of Canada. By incorporating this perspective, the plan fulfills the directive to "value home cultures in one project" (Herrell and Jordan, 2020, p. 230). Discussing the First Nations' relationship with the Canadian landscape helps students understand the historical and cultural significance of the geographical features they are studying. This approach is culturally responsive, and fosters respect for the sovereignty and stewardship of indigenous peoples over their ancestral lands. It encourages students to view Canada's topography from a perspective that acknowledges and honors the First Nations, aligning with the theoretical foundations promoting inclusivity and recognition of diverse historical narratives within Herrell and Jordan's (2020) course readings.

The project involves students working together in teams, which aligns with the "cooperative learning" (p. 273) strategy discussed by Herrell and Jordan (2020). This approach promotes interdependence and individual accountability, thereby facilitating students' academic and social growth. The lesson's group activities not only scaffold language learning but also enhance interpersonal skills among ELLs, making it an effective way of fostering their development.

Conclusion

The lesson plan for teaching Canadian geographical features to students in grades 3-5 embodies the multimodal, socially conscious, and collaborative pedagogical approaches advocated by Herrell and Jordan (2020). By aligning with these strategies, the lesson plan establishes a strong connection between theory and practice, creating an educational environment that encourages the success of ELLs.

References

Herrell, A. L. & Jordan, M. (2020). *50 strategies for teaching English Language Learners* (6th ed.). Pearson.