Living and Learning: Holistic Practices in Multilingual Classrooms

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50 Words for the Program

The purpose of this interactive presentation is to seek answers to the following question*: How do we live our holistic perspectives with multilingual communities of learners?* Problem-posing (to name/to reflect/to act) will be the format; and participants will receive an extended activity, which is theoretically grounded. Please bring a blank journal. (49 words)

Presentation Rationale

> **The more, the better.**
> **The sooner, the better**
> **The faster, the better**
> **The harder, the better**
> **The louder, the better.**

Often, it seems that ~this~ is what the public seems to understand about language acquisition–turns out, it's not true. If we want children to speak English, and we do, we do not have to give more, sooner, faster, harder, and louder. Because of this public misunderstanding or disinformation, it is no wonder the public doesn't understand holistic practices in multilingual classrooms. Our goal is to demonstrate in user-friendly ways how critically-grounded theory turns into practice, as teachers and learners together negotiate their own literacies and identities through holistic activities. Ultimately, we believe that human relationships are at the heart of all we do in teaching and learning (Cummins, 2001).

Literacy is communication. We often think of literacy as reading and writing, yet seeing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing are integral components of these tasks. One must, therefore acquire the ability to make connections, find similarities, and create metaphors (Marshall, 2004) if one is to become literate. Through developing language and literacies in multiple modes of communication, including the arts, technology, visual, verbal, oral and kinesthetic, students will broaden their abilities to think critically and to effectively communicate with others. If the goal of a literate society is the ability to negotiate meaning, then multiple ways of knowing expand these possibilities. Examining parallel concepts and strategies that exist between visual and verbal literacies can give students the opportunity to develop multiple schema and critical thinking skills.

Students are asked to decipher meanings from visual clues every day and they are asked to process images at a very rapid rate. As educators, we are responsible for developing literate individuals; however, we know that our students come to the classroom with diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities. Through arts-based literacy development in a culturally responsive curriculum, we can help *all* earners to discover new ways of communication, of sharing ideas and furthering literacies through multiple sign systems (reading, writing, visual art, music, photography, etc.) using one's own inquiry questions as tools for learning (Harste, 2005). Holistic classroom practices that address our students' diverse perspectives, cultural lives, and ways of meaning making are imperative in today's multicultural, multi-lingual world.

Educational Implications and Significance

It is hoped that the participants will come to understand the *benefits of bilingualism*:
- •Effective in fighting the negative mental decline in the aging process
- •*Increases intelligence*
- •Stimulates creativity
- •Promotes cognitive flexibility
- •Fosters divergent thinking
- •Facilitates high levels of mental-linguistic and mental-cultural awareness
- •Enables faster and more efficient learning of other languages
- •Heightens sensitivity to feedback cues and general verbal communication

In addition, the presenters hope to demonstrate multiple ways that teachers can live holistically, passionately, and fearlessly IF they do not limit their own power. Our goal is to inspire participants to own their own power.

How The Information Will Be Shared

The presenters will follow a problem-posing format: first, we will name and restate our over-riding question: *How do we live our holistic perspectives with multilingual communities of learners?* Second, we will reflect critically, as Joan establishes the theoretical framework. Third, and primarily, we will demonstrate in multiple ways how two central activities can be extended and adapted to multilingual communities and different age groups. Ultimately the problem-posing model, not only generates answers from the group, but it also provides a model for participants to experience theory turning into classroom practice.

Joan will demonstrate how to use the activities when students speak languages other than English; Janet will focus on classrooms, which primarily use English with highly diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Presenter: Joan
The first activity is **Autophotography,** which is attached at the end of this proposal. Copies will be given to the participants.

Presenter: Janet
The second activity is called a **Visual Read-Aloud** or **VRA** (Smilan and Towell, 2006). In reading terminology, this is called a grand conversation and in visual arts, this technique is referred to as a group critique. The stimulus for the conversation is a painting or illustration that is culturally relevant to the viewers of the artwork. For example, in Arizona the setting could be a desert landscape or an Indian reservation, using artwork by one of the local artists or children's authors/illustrators. The purpose of the activity is to enhance the viewers' comprehension of an image in a socio-cultural context through creativity and imagination using multiple perspectives.

1. Ask the participants to transport themselves into the painting, in order to answer the following questions:
If you were in this painting:
> *What do you see?*
> *What do you smell?*
> *What do you hear?*
> *What do you feel (touch)?*

2. Lead a group viewer response of the results, discussing how schema (schemata) plays an important role in the comprehension process when analyzing an image or a piece of text. Accept all interpretations, emphasizing the negotiation of meaning that occurs during the learning process.

3. Then ask each participant to enter the painting/illustration, choosing a perspective from which to develop a monologue. (Compare this to point of view in a narrative such as a fairy tale.) Working with a partner or small group who is proposing an alternative vantage point, ask them to develop a dialogue (oral or written) about what is happening in the piece. The vantage point can also be from someone or something not visually represented in the work.

4. Finally, ask for volunteers to read or role-play their dialogues with each other. (A handout of these steps will be given to the participants.)

* Throughout the session, the presenter, who is not sharing at that moment, will be maintaining a list of good ideas/activities, which are generated during the process. All will be posted on www.JoanWink.com after the presentation.

Autophotography
Joan Wink, December 2007

This activity evolved 12 years ago with a group of teachers; since that time, teachers in the Central Valley of CA extended the process in multiple ways. The primary process is shared below, but we encourage readers to adapt to fit their own context. The basic activity can take a week, a month, or a semester.

This activity is particularly good to begin the first day or week of an academic year.

Introduction: Students often believe that teachers "just don't understand." List the differences between your life and the life of one or two of your students. Do you understand their world? The following activity is one way that teachers can attempt to understand each student's life more fully.

First: Teacher and students privately write 20 words in 12 minutes, which answer the question: **Who am I?**
This may be followed by small group sharing and eventually whole group sharing, by those who choose to share.
Notice: at this level, we learn about the student, but we learn very little about the context or her perspective of her world.

Second: Students are given disposable cameras and asked to take the camera home on Monday and return on Friday; another group of students take the cameras the following week. Students are asked to take pictures of their world from their perspective. Usually, this takes 3-4 weeks to rotate the cameras through a class and create the accompanying classroom posters and sharing. At the university level, often this takes less time, as so many teacher educators have digital cameras.
Notice: in this activity we learn about the student's environment and how the student sees the world. Allow adequate time for sharing.

Third: In the classroom, students categorize photos according to any cultural perspective; for example: family; work; play; etc. Categories are created to fit the needs of the class.
Notice: We are creating the culture of the classroom based on the students and their background.

Fourth: Students select pictures, generate an outline for a narration of their own autobiography/autophotography. For example, each photo can represent a chapter, a paragraph, a sentence. At the university level, this part of the process can be incorporated into existing portfolio requirements of a class or of the state.
Notice: Students need to plan carefully.

Fifth: Each student finishes a self-published story of their life and world or their portfolio, which includes written and artistic representations of his life and his worldview.

jwink(autophotography)December 2007

Theoretical Perspectives Supporting Our Work
Resources

Bialystok, E., Craik, F., Klein, R., and Viswanathan, (2004). Bilingualism, aging, and cognitive control: Evidence from the Simon task. *Psychology and Aging*,19(2): 290-303.

CAL, Center for Applied Linguistics *Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Immersion, Retrieved May 1, 2007, from* http://www.cal.org/jsp/TWI/SchoolListings.jsp

Collier, V.P., & Thomas, W.P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. NABE *Journal of Research and Practice, 2*(1), 1-20. Retrieved Mary 15, 2007, from http://njrp.tamu.edu/2004.htm. (Also available from, http://njrp.tamu.edu/2004/PDFs/Collier.pdf)

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Díaz-Rico, L. T. (2008). *Strategies for teaching English Learners.* Boston, MA: Pearson Publishing.

Gardner, R. (2006, October 31). Bilingual pupils do better in exams, report finds. *TheIndependent.* Retrieved May 15, 2007, from http://education.independent.co.uk/news/article1943292.ece

Gold, N. (2006) Successful *Bilingual Schools: Six Effective Programs in California*. San Diego: San Diego County Office of Education. 64 pp.
Retrieved May 15, 2007, from http://www.sdcoe.net/lret2/els/pdf/SBS_Report_FINAL.pdf

Greene, J. (1997). A Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Bilingual Education

     Effective Reading Programs for English Language Learners: A Best-Evidence Synthesis. *Bilingual Research Journal, 21*(2,3*),* 103-122.
     In a recent review of research on the effectiveness of bilingual education, Greene concluded that the use of the native language in instruction English learners has beneficial effects and that "efforts to eliminate the sue of the native language in instruction. . . harm children by denying them access to beneficial approaches" (p. 115).

Harste, J.C. (2005, January 28). How the arts enhance learning. Keynote address delivered at the 2005 Georgia Read Write Now Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

Krashen (Stephen D.) has repeated summarized the research by stating that

     Children in well-implemented bilingual education programs typically acquire English faster, and at worst, do just as well as those in all-English programs, even though non-native speakers of English enter programs with less English and higher rates of poverty. Properly organized bilingual education programs use the first language in ways that accelerate and facilitate second language development.
     Steve D, Krashen generously shares all of his work at www.sdkrashen.com

Lindholm-Leary, K. (2007). Got bilingualism?: Spanish and Chinese Immersion students'perceptions of bilingualism and biculturalism. *CABE 2007*, Long Beach, CA. Retrieved May 15, 2007, from http://www.lindholm-leary.com/present&handout/CABE2007_FeatureSpeaker_StudentAtt.pdf

Lindholm-Leary, K. (2006, Dec.). Making great gains in dual language: Longitudinal Research on secondary students. *30th Annual Illinois Statewide Conference for Teachers of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Students.* Retrieved May 17, 2006, from http://www.lindholm-leary.com/present&handout/IllinoisConf2006_MakingGains.pdf

Marshall, J. (2004). Metaphor in art, thought, and learning. In Smith-Shank, D. (Ed.)
     Semiotics and visual culture: sights, signs, and significance. Reston, VA:
     National Art Education Association.
     Multilitercies project
     http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=380&DID=2004
     The Multiliteracies Project   The concept of multiliteracies was first introduced by the New London Group (1996). This concept defines a new approach to literacy pedagogy that takes into account the cultural and linguistic diversity that is part of our schools and society. It also incorporates a range of information and multimedia technologies that create new text forms and integrate new ways of communicating into the classroom.

     Minority-language students' development of identity texts is a central part of the Multiliteracies Project. Students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds invest their identities and demonstrate their multilingual proficiency in the production of these texts, which can take a variety of forms, including written, oral, musical, or dramatic (Cummins, 2004).

     www.multiliteracies.ca
     Easy steps;
     They gotta know the road is there first.

     How to get to a multilingual perspective with teacher education candidates and teachers in the trenches.

     Respect their load.
     No child first.

     Lift their load.

     With knowledge
     Knowledge is power.
     Leads to bilingual basics.
     Share our complex knowledge

Smilan, C. & Towell, J. (2006, May 2). Expanding the definition of
     literacy for preservice teachers through art-based learning.
     Unpublished lecture delivered at the 2006
     International Reading Association, Chicago, Ill.

Thomas, W.P. & Collier, V.P. (2003). The multiple benefits of dual
     language. *Educational Leadership*, *61*(2), October 2003.

Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement.* Santa Cruz, CA and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. http://www.crede.ucsc.edu/research/llaa/1.1_final.html

Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement.* Santa Cruz, CA and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Unsworth, L. (2008). *Multiliteracies, E-literature and English teaching.* Retrieved February 25, 2008 from http://www.multilingual-matters.net/le/022/le0220062.htm

The impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is changing the nature of literary narratives for children and the contexts in which they experience and respond to such narratives outside of school contexts. However, in the main, teachers do not feel confident or comfortable in the world of digital multimedia. Children's literature can bridge this intergenerational digital divide in the English classroom. This paper introduces frameworks that may assist teachers in negotiating curricular and pedagogic approaches with children using digital resources for developing literary understanding and literacy learning.