Micro-Paper 8: *Multiliteracies*

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Defining the Term

Multiliteracies seek to transform the literacy class into a space where students develop a deep understanding of the socio-cultural realities while developing the tools to transform the world. This proposal intends to change the way students perceive learning and allows the development of students' higher thinking levels through different alternatives of engagement, divergent orientations and modalities in meaning-making. The pedagogy of multiliteracies suggests supplementing the traditional emphasis on alphabetical literacy (letter sounds in words, in sentences, in texts, in literature) with new forms of multimodal text design that integrate the different modes of representation (e.g. written, spatial, oral, etc.) within language.

Multiliteracies call for active citizenship, centered on learners as agents in their own knowledge processes, capable of contributing as well as negotiating the differences between one community and the next. In the pedagogy of multiliteracies, all forms of representation, including language, are dynamic processes of transformation rather than processes of reproduction. Meaning makers do not simply use what they have been given: they are fully makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning.

The transformative pedagogy of multiliteracies identifies four major dimensions of pedagogical acts or "knowledge processes": experiencing the known and the new; conceptualizing by naming and by theory; analyzing functionally and critically; and applying appropriately and creatively. These four dimensions of the pedagogy of multiliteracies encourage students to transform and make new meanings out of the different texts and not just to reproduce what others have expressed.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, the concept of multiliteracies appears as the central concept for our master's thesis research. We are exploring children's performance in their in- and out-of-school literacies and how these overlap each other without their awareness. The development of the concept of multiliteracies will help the research group to go beyond it on those research studies related with school literacies.

Expanding Second Language Research

While the topic of multiliteracies has a long tradition in first language literacy research, the potential for second language research, in particular for the Colombian context, remains unexplored. We need to explore this topic further in this field to break the traditional boundaries in the development of reading and writing. Instead, we need to consider the real development of participatory literacy practices that foster critical thinking and the creating of texts that allow students to interpret and transform their reality.

References

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