



LSLP Micro-Paper 71: Multimodal Critical Consciousness as Praxis

Andrés Esteban Tobón-Gallego

MA Candidate in Learning and Teaching Processes in Second Languages, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín | LSLP Advanced Researcher
atobongallego@gmail.com

Defining the Term

Today's learners are placing new demands on our educational practices. This is turning our classroom into sites to observe learners as active participants and promote their voices as empowered subjects of their own learning processes. Seeking new chances to move from a static and structural view of languages, [Multimodal Critical Consciousness \(MCC\)](#) provides an opportunity to engage learners in critical reading of these languages.

A praxis of MCC, as the true implementation of this idea, invites language teachers to stop isolating our classrooms from real life issues. Understanding classrooms as small representations of our reality helps teachers to create spaces to implement [critical literacy](#) discussions. This coupled with student-created [multimodal](#) texts, expands the traditional classroom literacies with expanded meaning-making possibilities.

MCC as praxis intends to ground the link between multimodality and critical literacy in the specific realities of each classroom. MCC gives teachers and students the chance to become activists and advocates inside their classrooms. Students and teachers may reflect on how schooling is preparing us to face a challenging society, using class topics to make students have real views about why things happen in determined ways, understanding classes as moments for discussion and cooperative intellectual growth.

Connecting it to LSLP

At the LSLP, we are concerned about bridging life matters inside our classrooms and educational context, thus shaping learners' criticality. MCC into praxis is a call for teachers to recognize themselves as activists in their classrooms. Some of our current research around MCC as praxis has involved using literacy walks for analysis of environmental and social realities. Our researchers have also delved into [critical viewing of media](#) as spaces for social sensitivity and the use of multimodal creations as representations of students' own reality to engage with critical and conscious perceptions of social reality around them

As we continue our conceptualization of Multimodal Critical Consciousness, we are exploring some of our current work on [multimodal storytelling](#) as moments for critical literacy discussions and the creation of affinity spaces as our new frontiers to engage with language from a critical mindset. Future work with MCC as a praxis may consider the analysis of [children's and youth personal literacies](#) as spaces where students are the main agents in their processes, challenging traditional classroom environments to empower and educate conscious learners.

Expanding Second Language Research

Learning and teaching a [second language](#) at any context must go beyond the fact of becoming competent. However, competence that may not foster the transformation of social structures and life conditions is not enough. Learning and teaching second languages through MCC encourages learners to become linguistically proficient but with critical and conscious eyes about the reality and the conditions in which they live and behave.

Moments of analysis and cooperatively expression of ideas bring to language classroom the chance for the students to engaged agents of their learning process. This turns everyday classes into unexpected moments of critical consciousness and the possibility to disrupt everyday power hierarchies through language.

References

- Cappello, M., Wiseman, A. M., & Turner, J. D. (2019). Framing equitable classroom practices: potentials of critical multimodal literacy research. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 68(1), 205-225.
- Schroeter, S., & Wager, A. C. (2017). Blurring Boundaries: Drama as a Critical Multimodal Literacy for Examining 17th-Century Witch Hunts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(4), 405-413.
- Turner, K. N., Hayes, N. V., & Way, K. (2013). Critical multimodal hip hop production: A social justice approach to African American language and literacy practices. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 46(3), 342-354.