

Name: Shanaaz Hajaree

Student No: 62891278

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Assignment 4:

Case Study - Multiple teaching and learning
strategies to mediate learning

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Introduction:

"I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land"- (Thabo Mbeki, 1996).

South Africa, a land rich in cultural diversity, language and various ethnic backgrounds. In South Africa alone, we have eleven official languages, of which Zulu is the most common first language with (23 percent) followed by Xhosa (16 percent), Afrikaans (14 percent) and lastly English with (9.6 percent) (Wikipedia). It has become common place for schools today to cater for learners from various cultures and linguistic backgrounds. However, English is understood in most urban areas and is the dominant language in government, media and schools etc. It is more than likely an educator will encounter student(s) with limited or no English proficiency in their classroom.

What would you do to make sure that your learners participate in a reading lesson you have planned?

I firmly believe that children learn best when the lesson presented is fun and exciting. I would most likely pick Grade 4 with the age group being between 9-10 years of age. My lesson plan, will include a well-known folk lore or story appropriate for the above age range. Reading it aloud to them, making use of various props, visual aids and flash cards. Involving them in little skits and imaginary play and creating an overall multicultural environment for the child so they may feel at ease and secure.

How are you going to make sure they understand the lesson?

Picking simple texts as homework so they may practice and have them read it aloud the following day. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning by having open ended discussions during circle time. Have them pick an object or item that is part of their culture or heritage and asking them to write a few lines based on it. "I find offering opportunities for students to communicate with each other about their culture, origins and background as part of the learning programme (presentations, debates, writing and reading) is a very effective method of demonstrating respect for cultural diversity as well as making the most of the richness of what it offers." (Eustice K, 2012)

Steps and Solutions:

First and foremost the role of the educator. The educator needs to be a good communicator. They must be able to speak clearly and pronounce each word correctly to explain and guide their students. "Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them – James Baldwin.

Secondly, choosing the appropriate literature. In this case we have been tasked to teach the learners how to read. The educator should ensure the material is a familiar story and simple enough for the age group you are teaching. A well-known folk tale or a story that may be translated into English. This also helps teach multicultural diversity and respect for other backgrounds and religions. An educator may read a paragraph from the book and assess the child by asking him/her to read the same paragraph and thereafter correcting any mistakes that may occur.

Use metaphors while learning to read, for example:

- ◆ Mirrors: Do you see yourself in this story?
- ◆ Windows: Can you learn something about other cultures from this story?
- ◆ Doors: What can you learn about other cultures from this story? How does it compare to your own culture? (Condy J, 2014)

Circle time, during this time you can engage with all the learners. Choose a poem or song, again keeping it simple enough for the children to understand. Engaging with learners by asking them open ended questions about the poem or song.

Visual Resources and aids. Through pictures, cartoons, film and various other forms of multimedia it has been shown that this is one of the best ways to teach a second language. Learners respond well to the visual stimuli. A form of assessment here would be to ask the learner to write a few lines based on a picture or video they have seen.

Creating a diverse, multicultural environment. By incorporating different cultures in your classroom. This can be in the form of an imaginary play area, various props available for the children to perform a small play or skit, labelling the different areas in the classroom in the different languages.

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject (Balkcom S, 1992). By grouping learners, the educator hopes to promote peer learning, build teamwork, increase language and enhancing literacy amongst culturally diverse students.

The Montessori Three Period lesson, is one of the most effective ways in which to teach a second language. As an example, the educator will present a varying set of objects or visual aids.

- ◆ Period 1: Introduction (This is...) For example, **this is a hat.** The educator will then point to the object. This is done several times with the various cards.
- ◆ Period 2: Association/Recognition (Show me...) In this part of the lesson we ask the learner to show the educator the object. For example, **Show me the hat.** The child should then be able to pick out the correct object. This is done until the learner can correctly identify the object.
- ◆ Period 3: Recall (What is this...?) The educator will only move on to this period once they know the child has fully grasped the first 2 periods. Here the educator will point to an object and ask the learner **What is this?**

Conclusion:

While teaching a Multicultural class may seem a daunting task at first, it is one of the most rewarding experiences an educator can have. We have been fortunate enough to live in a country that has such a wide variety of people of all races, ethnicity and religion. It hopefully grants the educator insight and understanding in the vast cultural and ethnic backgrounds our society has to offer.

"We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race." – Kofi Annan

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