Enacting the pedagogy of multiliteracies in the early years. Learning from an action-research project

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OUTLINE

• Conceptual framework
• The study
• Data collection and analysis
• Tentative findings
• Conclusions
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK


• **The pedagogy of multiliteracies** (The New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2012; Yelland et al., 2008; Haggerty & Mitchell 2010; Lotherington, 2017; Flewitt, 2013)

• **Teachers’ professional development** (Day, 2017)
THE STUDY

• **Context:** Portuguese early years curriculum framework (DGE, 2016) vs The pedagogy of Multiliteracies

• **Aims:**
  • Inform the literacy conceptions sustaining the early years pedagogy in Portugal by acknowledging multimodality as part of children’s communication repertoire (and not just arts…)
  • Understand of professional learning demands implied in this transformation

• **Methodology:** Action research & Self-study (Stoer & Cortesão, 1997)
TODAY’S PRESENTATION

• **The Book day, April 2019**: Shared book reading: *The highest book mountain on earth* (Bonilla, 2016)

• **Challenge:**

  “From the mountain of books that we have read until today, chose your favorite and prepare a presentation to your friends in class. Beware of the main character, space and whether, a surprising happening and sounds in the story. Then present your work and say why you chose your story.” (cf. Kumpulainen et al., 2018)

• **Project work and group presentation**
• How did Dinis represent and communicate to his colleagues the book he loved the best?

• Which teacher’s findings and decisions sustained the enactment of this literacy practice?
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

• **Data collection**: children’s material compositions, photography, video, interview; teacher’s reflective journal

• **Data analysis**: multimodal (and content discourse) analysis (Hull & Nelson, 2005; Flewitt et al., 2011); Analytical categories; thematic analysis:
  - **MEANINGINGS**: Which meanings were represented? (Why?)
  - **MODES**: Which modes were used to represent them? How do modes relate to each other in the representation? (Why were they chosen?)
  - **AGENCY**: What did children do on their own? What was the role of the teacher?
oral language

prosody

gesture

written language

3d-objects

colour

visual symbols

planning

(open agency, - scaffolding)

oral language

symbolic play

written language

presentation

(open agency, + scaffolding)

finishing

(open agency, - scaffolding)
Narrative meanings:
EMOTIONAL PROJECTON
/ Funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992)
CONFLICT: Finding herself to be the main obstacle for the enactment of the pedagogy of multiliteracies: her directiveness, control and tendency towards monomodality:

I bump into myself. This is the right way to put it. To avoid chaos I find myself valuing order and control. By determining the modes that children should use to represent their meanings I condition their meaning making. I myself have been a big obstacle. (15-11-2018)

INFORMED ATTITUDE: Going beyond herself: listening to children’s interests, cultivating order at the edge of chaos, scaffolding multimodality:

The activities that emerged from the shared book reading were intentionally planned to give way to free choice and multimodal meaning making (23-04-2019)
SOME TENTATIVE FINDINGS

• **Spontaneous choice** of *multiple modes of representation*;

• Multimodal representations + teacher’s interaction **scaffolding**:
  • the **verbal mode** of communication in a specialized practice;
  • meaningful use of the **written mode**, sustained by **phonemic awareness** and by knowledge of letters;

• The acknowledgment the **complexity and emotion involved in the professional development** demanded by the design of this pedagogical practice.
SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

• The analysis points into the relevance of **reconceptualizing emergent literacy as embracing the development of semiotic repertoires**, rather than focus on written language only.

• The data illustrates the need and the role of functional and attitudinal **professional development in enacting the possibilities offered by the multiliteracies** framework to transform literacy education in the early years.
REFERENCES

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