Multimodal Approaches to Teaching Reading in Hong Kong Primary Classrooms

Christopher Shepard

City University of Hong Kong (China)
clshepard2 @cityu.edu.hk

Abstract

In a shift from traditional practices of teaching reading to primary school students, a preference toward multimodal approaches has been adopted by a growing number of educators in recent years and is seen by many as more effective for literacy development [1,3,4,6]. Hong Kong primary school teachers are increasingly turning to the wide variety of modern technology now available in the classroom to enhance language lessons and to communicate with learners through different channels. The use of computers, projectors, videos and other contemporary classroom tools is becoming more popular than traditional teaching activities used predominantly by teachers in the past [1,3,4]. This paper discusses a number of approaches currently used by a group of English teachers in a Hong Kong primary school to teach reading. A questionnaire was developed to determine which teaching approaches, multimodal and/or traditional, are being employed more frequently in the classroom, and which are considered by teachers to be more effective for developing literacy in primary school students. The findings illustrate a clear preference by the teachers towards multimodal approaches in reading lessons and a decrease in traditional activities. The purpose of this research paper is to provide insight into the teachers' preferred approaches, their apparent effectiveness, and to propose recommendations to further enhance literacy development in young learners.

References

[1].Christie, F. (2005). *Language Education in the Primary Years.* Sydney: UNSW Press.

[2]. Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images.* New York: Routledge.

[3]. Painter, C. (2007). Children's Picture Book Narratives: Reading Sequences of Images. In A. McCabe, M. O'Donnell & R.Whittaker (Eds.). *Advances in Language and Education*, London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

[4]. Prensky, M. (2010). *What I learned recently in NYC classrooms*. Retrieved October 26, 2011 from http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky-What_I_Learned_in_NYC_Classrooms-final.pdf

[5]. Stein, P. (2008). *Multimodal pedagogies in diverse classrooms: representation, rights and resources.* New York: Routledge

[6]. Walsh, M. (2005). "Reading visual and multimodal texts: how is 'reading' different?" in Conference Proceedings, Multiliteracies and English Teaching K-12 in the Age of Information and Communications Technology ALEA Conference 2004, University of New England.