The Impact of Stereotypes and Language of Oppression on Students' Digital and Information Literacy

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the impact of self-imposed stereotypes and language of oppression on African American female students' self-efficacy in digital and information literacy. Understanding these factors is crucial for educators in creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. The research focuses on incorporating out-of-school literacy practices, multimodal activities, and social learning to build on students' existing skills and knowledge. Digital literacy is a critical skill for underrepresented and marginalized groups, providing access to resources and social networks. The study considers the challenges faced by African American female students who must navigate social and stereotypical disadvantages, particularly in STEM fields. The paper highlights the importance of promoting diverse skills and strengths to create an inclusive learning experience that fosters critical thinking and creativity. By recognizing and valuing cultural diversity, educators can promote academic success and a sense of belonging for all students.

Keywords: Critical skill, CulturallyResponsive Learning,Digital literacy, Multimodal learning, and Self-efficacy,

INTRODUCTION

Based on Moje and Lewis' (2007) article, learning is a socially situated process that involves the construction of knowledge and the development of skills through participation in meaningful activities and interactions with others. It is not simply a matter of acquiring information but is also shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs. Thus, learning involves individual and social processes and is influenced by race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, the paper explores how self-imposed stereotypes and the language of oppression given by individuals of influence can contribute to African American female students' self-efficacy, particularly in Digital and information literacy. According to the present literature, all adults' language influences self-efficacy, affecting their STEM and literacy skills and increasing anxiety. The aim is to understand self-imposed stereotypes further while keeping in mind that three out of four components of self-efficacy are externally influenced and sensitive to external factors. Furthermore, research on incorporating digital literacies in the classroom includes out-of-school literacy practices, multimodal activities, and social learning for African Females students (11th-grade to College Students).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Theoretical Framework

The paper explores how self-imposed stereotypes, and the language of oppression can contribute to African American female students' self-efficacy, particularly in Digital and information literacy. The research will focus on incorporating digital literacies in the classroom, including out-of-school literacy practices, multimodal activities, and social learning. In doing so, students can use their cultural backgrounds and experiences in their education and build on their existing knowledge and skills. African American female students face two types of obstacles, one based on race and the other based on gender. These obstacles are based on social and stereotypical disadvantages, negatively impacting their academic performance. It is a particular concern in STEM, as digital literacy is rooted in technology, serves as a medium for accessing the majority of platforms, and there is a need for the necessary research to explore the challenges, as well as methods of empowerment. Furthermore, digital literacy can impact education, employment, civic involvement, and personal well-being. It is necessary for success in today's digital world (Buckingham, 2010).

B. Statement of Problem

As educators, it's essential to consider our students' cultural backgrounds and experiences as we embark on their learning journey. By building on their existing knowledge and skills, we can utilize a variety of literacies, such as visual and

media literacies, to enhance our lessons. It's crucial to provide opportunities for our students to create and share their texts, which can promote a collaborative learning environment. Rather than focusing on what our students lack, we should adopt a strengths-based approach that emphasizes their existing knowledge and skills. By recognizing and valuing the diversity of our students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we can create an inclusive learning environment that promotes academic success and a sense of belonging (Street, 2013). Additionally, digital literacy is particularly crucial for underrepresented and marginalized groups because it can provide access to information, resources, and social networks that they might not have otherwise (Buckingham, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

C. Subject Literacy

According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2012), literacy involves thinking critically about necessary actions and understanding how to accomplish a given goal. With technological advancements and the widespread dissemination of information through virtual platforms and media (Guzzetti & Foley, 2014), literacy constantly evolves and adapts to the times. In the 21st century, literacy includes navigating various platforms and analyzing information. It is also influenced by time and cultural diversity. Street proposed this definition of literacy in 1993 (p.7). In simple terms, digital literacy means having the skills to find, understand, evaluate, and create information using technology. It includes using various tools and navigating different digital platforms. It involves listening, reading, writing, and speaking to analyze, synthesize and communicate information effectively.

According to Birr Moje et al. (2020), synthesizing data and executing tasks consider individuality, gender, race, socioeconomic status, religion, culture, and expectations. These factors are influenced by the culture in which they are embedded, leading to variations in results across different communities, groups, and societies, as noted by Street (1999, p.56). Digital literacy is the capacity to access, comprehend, evaluate, produce, and ethically communicate knowledge using digital tools and resources (Prinsloo &Rowsell, 2012). The ability to navigate and interact in the Digital. With the internet's invention, communication, information access, and media consumption have all undergone substantial changes. Due to this change, digital literacy has become essential to modern literacy practices.

New literacies must be developed because the internet has changed how individuals interact with media and information. A set of competencies known as "digital literacies" are necessary to interact with digital media and data effectively. This cover information gathering and evaluation, efficient online communication, and technological tools like social media and video conferencing. Computer literacy skills are crucial because they allow people to communicate, access information, and fully engage in modern society. In today's digital age, it's becoming increasingly apparent that those who lack digital literacy skills face a significant disadvantage.

A combination of technical abilities and cognitive, social, and cultural activities are required to succeed and thrive in the digital world. While information literacy and digital literacy are closely intertwined, information literacy goes beyond simply locating information and involves creating and sharing digital content. Digital literacy can impact one's education, employment, civic involvement, and personal well-being, making it essential for success in today's digital world (Buckingham, 2010). To remain current and productive in the digital world, individuals must actively develop and enhance their digital literacy skills since digital literacies evolve with new technologies and media types (Prinsloo &Rowsell, 2012).

Brown and Ryoo's (2008) study investigated scientific inquiry to promote social justice and address inequalities in STEM education, particularly among African American students. The study recognized the importance of digital literacy in this process and emphasized the role of culturally responsive pedagogy in promoting the self-efficacy of African American learners. The authors' findings suggest that using scientific inquiry as an inclusive and equitable approach to teaching STEM can support African American students in constructing their knowledge and challenging negative self-imposed stereotypes.

Bryant and Ashford's (2008) article examined how digital literacy skills can be used to dismantle negative self-imposed stereotypes affecting African American students. The authors highlight how digital literacy can empower African American learners to develop positive self-concepts. Carter's (2006) book argues that negative self-imposed stereotypes among African American students result from exclusion from mainstream educational practices and Eurocentric curricula. It provides recommendations for promoting the academic success of African American students by challenging these stereotypes through culturally responsive pedagogy. Harper's (2012) study focused on African American male college students and the impact of negative self-imposed stereotypes and racial inequities on their academic and athletic outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of promoting positive self-concepts through culturally relevant pedagogy and enhancing digital literacy skills to reduce negative self-imposed stereotypes among African American students.

Kubota and Lin's (2009) article argues that negative self-imposed stereotypes associated with African American English can influence academic achievement outcomes and examines how digital literacy skills can be used to empower African American students by challenging these stereotypes.

D. Incorporating Digital Literacies in the Classroom

By incorporating digital media and technology into their lesson plans and methodology, teachers may embrace digital literacy (Prinsloo & Rowsell, 2012). The educator can incorporate digital literacies in the classroom by allowing students to practice and reflect on their use of digital devices; teachers may aid students in developing their digital literacy (Buckingham, 2010). Instructors can also assist students in acquiring critical digital literacy, which is the capacity to assess the integrity, bias, and applicability of digital media and information.

Moreover, Digital literacy is not confined to computer science or information technology; it can be integrated into many topics. To improve student learning, teachers can incorporate digital technologies into their lessons in subjects like English, Social Studies, and Science (Prinsloo & Rowsell, 2012). Teachers can encourage student collaboration and knowledge sharing using digital resources like blogs, wikis, and online discussion forums (Buckingham, 2010). Using gamification and simulations, teachers can employ digital technology to provide students with more interactive and exciting learning experiences (Prinsloo & Rowsell, 2012).

It is also important to note that while enhancing student skills, we must continuously develop our own. Professional development programs can also assist educators in acquiring digital literacy and improving how they use technology in the classroom (Buckingham, 2010). Because of the continuing growth of digital literacies, instructors and educators must keep up with the most recent technological and digital media shifts to provide students with the most excellent assistance (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

E. Multiliteracies as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Multiliteracies, an educational framework introduced by the New London Group (1996), focus on the diverse cultural, linguistic, and communicative practices students engage with in today's globalized society. By embracing multiliteracies as a culturally responsive pedagogy, educators can better address the distinct needs of their students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds; teacher responsiveness in education involves recognizing and valuing each student's unique culture and incorporating it into the learning experience (Gay, 2000). This approach to teaching allows students to connect with academic content through culturally standard lenses, making the material more engaging and accessible. Integrating multiliteracies with culturally responsive pedagogy enables students to navigate their diverse social contexts and equips them with essential skills for success in an increasingly interconnected world (Cope &Kalantzis, 2009). The multimodal composition represents a significant shift in how students create and communicate meaning. It goes beyond traditional text-based approaches to incorporate various modes such as visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and linguistic elements (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). This method of composition allows for greater flexibility and creativity in expressing ideas, enabling students must continuously develop their personalized ways. Using multiple modes of communication can lead to more effective and nuanced messaging, as it allows the sender and receiver to interact with and decode information through various sensory channels (Hatten, 2009). As a result, multimodal composition encourages the development of higher-order thinking skills and fosters innovative approaches to problem-solving and knowledge construction in education (Takayoshi &Selfe, 2007).

Employing multimodalities in education can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. By allowing students to express themselves and construct meaning using multiple modes, educators create an environment where learners can explore their diverse strengths and preferences (Oldakowski, 2014). For instance, some students may excel at visual storytelling, while others are more adept at verbal expression. Utilizing multimodalities can help to bridge these varied strengths, ultimately supporting a more inclusive learning experience. Furthermore, engaging with multiple modes fosters critical thinking and creativity, as students must consider how different elements work together to convey meaning effectively (Kress, 2010). Educators can better accommodate diverse learning styles and foster a more engaging and dynamic educational environment by promoting multimodalities in the classroom.

"Technology-enhanced multiliteracies teaching towards a culturally responsive curriculum: a multiliteracies approach to ECE" by Kim, and colleagues (2021) investigated how technology can promote a culturally responsive curriculum in early childhood education (ECE) through a multiliteracies approach. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to collect data from 28 participants, and analyses were conducted using frequency statistics, descriptive statistics, and content analysis. The results indicated that technology-enhanced multiliteracies teaching could promote a culturally responsive curriculum in ECE by increasing students' engagement, social interaction, and critical thinking.Multimodal literacy refers to making meaning through various modes of communication beyond traditional written text, such as images, gestures, and sound (Kress, 2003). This approach's potential benefits include increased engagement, improved comprehension, and the ability to reach diverse learners through various modes of expression. Furthermore, understanding how to combat stereotypes' adverse effects on minority students' educational experiences is essential for promoting equitable learning opportunities (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

F. The Multimodal Approach to Literacy

In the 21st century, literacy has expanded beyond reading and writing to include interpreting and making meaning from a wide range of multimodal texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). This shift acknowledges diverse forms of communication prevalent in today's classrooms and the digital age. It is widely believed that multimodal literacy can support students' success by providing various ways to engage with and construct meaning from complex texts (Anstey & Bull, 2006). Multimodality invites students to engage in more holistic learning, recognizing that different semiotic resources offer different potentials for meaning making (Jewitt, 2008).For minority students, a multimodal approach to literacy can allow them to engage with their cultural heritage and address stereotypes present within the education system (Lee, 2007). Traditional literacy instruction primarily focuses on Eurocentric values and narratives, often excluding the experiences and perspectives of minority students (Gay, 2000). Integrating multimodal texts representing minority cultures allows these students to see themselves in the material, fostering a sense of belonging and increased engagement (Brooks, Browne, & Hampton, 2010).

G. Addressing Stereotypes in Minority Education

Stereotypes and implicit biases permeate minority students' educational experiences, typically undermining their academic progress (Steele & Aronson, 1995). These negative assumptions can create a self-fulfilling prophecy known as the "stereotype threat" phenomenon, whereby students internalize prejudices, resulting in diminished performance (Spencer, Logel, & Davies, 2016). Utilizing a multimodal approach to literacy can help address stereotypes by emphasizing minority students' strengths and knowledge, allowing them to challenge societal expectations and overcome self-doubt (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

One approach to addressing stereotypes in multimodal literacy is implementing culturally relevant pedagogy, which aims to draw connections between students' cultural backgrounds and classroom content (Paris, 2012). Such pedagogy fosters critical consciousness and empowers minority students to challenge and deconstruct dominant social narratives, consequently making an impact in dismantling stereotypes (Hughes, McGill, & Cain, 2015). By incorporating texts that reflect and validate their cultural backgrounds, minority students can engage more fully with the academic content, ultimately leading to improved academic performance (Lee, 2007).

CONCLUSION

It is crucial to recognize the significance of incorporating Multimodality for Minority students. Their self-efficacy in mathematics and literacies is interconnected and can affect other subjects and disciplines. Brown and Ryoo's (2008) study investigated the use of scientific inquiry to promote social justice and address inequalities in STEM education, specifically for African American students. The study highlighted the importance of digital literacy and culturally responsive pedagogy in boosting the self-efficacy of African American learners. The authors' findings suggest that utilizing scientific inquiry as an inclusive and equitable teaching approach can help African American students construct their knowledge and challenge negative self-imposed stereotypes. Female African American students encounter dual forms of obstacles, stemming from both their race and gender. Social and stereotypical disadvantages pose significant challenges that negatively affect academic achievements. This issue is particularly concerning within STEM education, as technology serves as a fundamental aspect of digital literacy and is utilized to access most platforms. It is imperative that further research is conducted to explore the challenges faced by these students, as well as potential methods of empowerment- as in Bryant and Ashford's (2008) article, which examines digital literacy skills in dismantling such stereotypes. It is imperative that further research is conducted to explore the challenges faced by these students, as well as potential methods of empowerment- as in Bryant and Ashford's (2008) article, that examines digital literacy skills in dismantling such stereotypes.

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