

3 A Multiliteracies Model for the Middle Grades

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ABSTRACT

We need a model that can guide middle school educators to implement multiple literacies (multiliteracies) so prevalent in today's global economy, but how can this be successfully accomplished in today's schools? As a result of content analyses, regular classroom observations, and interviews, the researchers document a framework for multi-literacies implementation on a schoolwide level that not only engages students in learning, but also in skills that will authentically prepare them for the global economy, regardless of economic background. The results suggest that successful implementation of multiliteracies begins with an in-depth vision statement created, accepted, and reexamined on a regular basis by all stakeholders. The vision is then implemented through research-based best practices like student research supported by teachers as facilitators and extended by community resources and mentors, often as first hand sources. Students are encouraged to think, create and develop their own ideas and follow them through to fruition as mastery learning of required content, including skills to objectively and respectfully critique their work and the work of others. Our model also prescribes what we know to date to be best for those whose lives can actually bring about the change, the students themselves, with the help of teachers, parents and others. If young adolescents are to succeed, they must be free to explore and develop deeper levels of consciousness than those required to recall facts, to perform on uniform tests, and to be quantitatively productive. School environments must be dialogue and literature rich, encouraging students to develop the capacity to question and to recognize the standards of excellence in written, verbal, and visual forms, yet still consent to the having of wonderful ideas.