EFFECTS OF MULTIMODAL LEARNING on ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes the implementation of multimodal learning within the setting of an early elementary school aged classroom. Multimodal learning is viewed as a pedagogical strategy to teach all types of learners by using different modes. Other strategies that are tied with multimodal pedagogies include apprenticeship and social interaction, studio-based thinking, and meaning-making through multimodal learning. Using action research methods including participant observations, interviews, and systematic data collection through photo, video, and audio recordings, I describe the processes of multimodal learning within an early elementary school setting and discuss the ways in which the students’ interactions were framed by the use of multimodal learning.
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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Rationale

All children learn at a different pace and in a different way. Teachers should teach their students how to learn in a way that is most beneficial to their development as an individual. This has fueled my research where I examined how children interact using different modes of learning and how that improves their development. I taught and observed in a classroom that implemented multimodal learning, which includes media, visuals, arts, physical, social interaction, and play.

Children have many different intellectual strengths and curiosities that can be revealed and encouraged through multimodal approaches to learning. The other teachers and I worked with children’s emerging interests to celebrate the wonderful diversity of how children learn, and communicate that learning to others. As the children engaged with a variety of art media, they built skills of observation, attention, and persistence while creating work that conveyed ideas, feelings, and personal meaning. Through these different modes of learning I also examined the social interactions between students.

It was required by our professor, that we allot twenty minutes everyday of free drawing time. This was implemented to allow children to grow and develop through their own creativity and with the aid of an adult or caregiver these benefits are further enhanced. Adults are a key factor in children’s lives to encourage social interaction and play with others. Their involvement in learning is also crucial to a child’s developmental stages. Vygotsky (1962) theorized that social interaction forms intellectual development and is a necessary component of child development. Social interaction truly shapes an individual and can determine the outcome of their future. The different modes of learning
and using a multimodal approach increase the interactions between students in the classroom.

Penn State’s School of Visual Arts program was held at the Patterson Building on Penn State’s main campus. According to Penn State’s School of Visual Arts program, the goal was to create a learning environment that not only listened and responded to children’s unique perspectives, but also one that encouraged them to work together, to learn from each other, and to experience the multimodal capacities that make up the languages children use to make and express meaning in (and of) their world.

Teachers should allow their students to choose whichever way works best for their learning because in doing so it will enhance their learning by meeting the students’ needs. In my thesis, I strive to prove the significance of multimodal learning in education and how it promotes social interaction among students.

Questions

My main research question is: How do students interact between each other by using the different modes we provide them in the classroom? This paper also considers the following sub-questions in order to think about explicit connections to arts-based, studio-based, and multimodal pedagogies in this study: How can we integrate arts-based learning into classroom pedagogy to create meaningful learning opportunities for students? How can we utilize studio-based thinking in our lesson plans to draw from students’ own knowledge and experiences? What meaning making does multimodal learning create?
Background/Context

My study of multimodal learning was conducted at the Penn State Summer Laboratory Preschool within the School of Visual Arts program. I was enrolled in a graduate level college course and my role in the course was to be a teacher with my other classmates at the School of Visual Arts Program. The Penn State Summer Laboratory Preschool was designed to provide a curriculum using multiple modalities and media (traditional and digital). The goal was to ensure the participation of children with special needs by collaborating with the Inclusive Easter Seals Child Development Center in State College, PA. The summer lab preschool classes were taught by myself and other pre-service teachers in the newly designed M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education, a cohort program that includes transdisciplinary coursework under the supervision of faculty in early childhood education, language and literacy, art education, and disability studies in education. This lab preschool’s transdisciplinary approach was informed by the latest research on multimodal learning (e.g. art, music, and movement), studio-based instruction, bilingual/bicultural and full inclusion co-teaching models to facilitate inclusive learning environments for diverse learners.

This program was created by a grant project called The Transdisciplinary Inclusive Early Childhood Education Project (TIECEP) which was implemented to develop an evidence-based, multimodal curriculum for implementation in inclusive early childhood education settings. Partners in TIECEP include Penn State’s College of Education (Early Childhood Education and Language and Literacy programs), the College of Arts and Architecture (School of Visual Arts and Art Education program), and the Center for Disability Studies (Disability Studies program). The TIECEP curriculum and teaching
model incorporated innovative strategies and approaches that drew from multiple disciplines. The approach is utilized for redefining ability and disability in ways that support educators to more effectively work with children whose competencies are not easily recognized and developed in traditional educational settings or taught efficaciously by teacher education programs.

This was the first time they offered an arts-integrated Penn State Summer Laboratory Preschool for ages 3-6. My cohort of teachers in my class took two art education classes prior to teaching at the School of Visual Arts Program. My classmates and I were expected to be responsible for all aspects of this program: adapting the classroom environment, creating the themes, designing lesson plans, observing the students, and documenting throughout the four weeks of the program. I observed the classroom that contained 5-6 year olds with one lead teacher and one assistant teacher, as well as two other teachers that were documenting when not teaching. I was lead teacher twice, assistant teacher twice, and documenter four times. The School of Visual Arts Program was held at the Patterson Building on Penn State’s University Park-Main Campus with children ranging from age 3-6. The Patterson Building was used for college level courses, therefore had adult-like furniture with chairs and tables that were a lot larger than the children. We were able to create a space around those tables/chairs to make the classroom more child-accessible. We provided smaller tables with small chairs. We had a reading tent with beanbags for the students to sit on. There were approximately thirty students from the State College area who were enrolled for the four weeks of the program. The approximate population of State College, PA is 42,000. There were three African American children, four Asian children, and 23 Caucasian children. The program
was separated into two classrooms, one with 3-4 year olds and one in which I worked, with 5-6 year olds. My fellow peers and I were also split into two groups with eight teachers in each classroom. We then split into subgroups allowing only four of us in the classroom during a given day. Within that subgroup, we had one lead teacher, one assistant teacher, and two documenters. We rotated the subgroups every other day so we each were in the classroom teaching four times and documenting in the class four times. On the days that we were not in the classroom, we were “curating” the exhibit that displayed all of the students work throughout the program.

I examined the way the students interacted between each other and how the students used the different modes of expression we provided them in the classroom. One such method is arts-based learning in which the students learn through the processes of art. We used various art techniques to allow the students to express themselves. We also provided them with iPads where they were able to use media technology to learn and interact with others.

Throughout this project, I used the Grounded Theory Research method that was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The Grounded Theory Research method is used to discover a theory based on the analysis of data, therefore managing the research process in a reverse fashion than traditional research methods. I began my research emically, with some questions and perhaps a few assumptions but with no fixed position on a subject and no solid hypotheses. As the fieldwork progressed and I collected my data observations, the questions were answered, reformulated, then asked again, and the answers are interpreted, and then reinterpreted several times. The theory was essentially grounded in my observations. Gradually, through my observations and
participatory nature with my informants, my field notes, and my anticipated audience, interpretations and meanings emerged. This study exemplifies the Grounded Theory Research method as I gathered data through my fieldwork and then identified core theoretical concepts: multimodal learning.
Chapter 2.

Methods of Data Collection

Participant Observation

The classroom that I observed stimulated the children and allowed them to explore, play, and grow while using their imagination. They were able to choose which area they would like to spend their time. I observed how the children interacted using different modes of learning and how that improved their development. I participated with the children in the classroom using the modes provided for them, which included media technology (iPads), physical (art projects), and play (blocks). Children gravitated towards the different types of learning that they were most interested in. They also interacted with those students who had the same desired mode of learning. As I observed in the classroom, I actively took field notes of the children doing activities and interacting with the different modes of learning. In addition, I took pictures, videos, and audio recordings of my participants as I asked them questions about their work.

Interviews

I also interviewed the teachers, students, and parents to obtain their views on using multimodal learning and its effect within the classroom. One of the multimodal pedagogies includes Studio Thinking Framework. Studio Thinking Framework provides students with a studio-like classroom where they can design and express themselves using the arts and continue to gain knowledge. Studio-based thinking suggests that students not only learn dispositions specific to visual art, but also develop their habits of mind. “Developed through repeated observations of classes (including close analysis of videotaped teacher-student interaction in studio classes), interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of students’ learning over the course of years of instruction,
the Studio Thinking Framework identifies the types of thinking students develop through serious engagement in visual art” (Sheridan, 2009, p. 74). In this research conducted at the Penn State School of Visual Arts, I started with observations of the class over the course of the four weeks of the program. I then interviewed the teachers, students, and parents of the students. Therefore, the Studio Thinking Framework was used to then analyze that data and look at the findings within the study. In order to start my research, I first applied to the Office of Research Protection for approval in research in educational settings (Appendix E). Also, I needed to receive permission from the students’ parents/guardians. Appendix A includes my permission slip for the students’ parent/guardians. I asked a variety of questions about the implementation of multimodal learning and their thoughts on it to the parents (Appendix B), the teachers (Appendix C), and the students (Appendix D). For the students, I simply pulled them aside individually to ask them these questions orally since some of them were not yet able to read. They were told they were not required to talk with me, however all of the students and their parents agreed to participate. Also, by orally questioning them, I was able to listen to their response and record their conversation in my notes. I encouraged them to discuss and express how they felt about their time at the School of Visual Arts program and look at how the different modes in the classroom benefitted their learning and encouraged social interactions. I then analyzed this data by organizing the answers and responses and grouping them with similar answers of other children.

**ORP/IRB Protocols**

Though no participants declined participating, IRB required me to define these
protocols. The children and parents were informed that this study was voluntary. If the parents chose to have their child not to participate or withdraw their child from the study at any time, they were informed that there would be no penalty and that their child would not be excluded from any school activity (See Appendix E for details on my IRB Exemption).

**Documentation Artifacts**

Lastly, I was a documenter and curator in the classroom as well. Through the use of photos, videos, and audio recordings, I was able to collect data on my participants and their perspectives on what they were learning. The photos and videos were done when I was not acting as the lead teacher during the particular day. I was able to view and analyze these videos to learn what my informants enjoyed, how they interacted with others, and what they were learning throughout the day. The audio recordings, however, were systematically recorded both while I was documenting and while I was teaching as well. The use of action research strategies provided me with a deeper understanding of my participants. The interactions with the informants allowed me to facilitate questions and build off their answers to learn more about their thoughts on a given project. Using this data collection, the team of teachers curated and created a showcase at the end of the program to show the culmination of the students’ work. The photos and videos were put on display, as well as the projects they completed throughout the program.

**Data Analysis**

By reviewing my observations, interviews, and documentation artifacts, I
analyzed my data and coded themes within my field notes. I was able to ascertain how the different modes of learning affected the way in which children learned and interacted with one another through the environment, social interaction through play, and teacher scaffolding. As I observed, I looked at why the interactions between the students were happening. It stood out to me that with the different activities provided within the classroom environment fueled their interactions with those who had similar interests. Along with that, I noticed that through the use of those different modes and different activities, students had the opportunity to play with their peers and socially interact through that play. Lastly, it stood out to me that the teacher scaffolding by using questioning techniques developed interactions with peers and increased the growth of friendships within the class.
Chapter 3.

Review of Previous Research

Multimodal learning and how it promotes social interaction helps children develop not only their academic but also their communicative potential. The different modes and learning styles of individual learners allow children to interact differently with their peers and make progress in their language development. During this study in particular, I examined how social interaction is impacted when using different modes of learning in the classroom. In reviewing past studies, the significance of both social interaction and multimodal learning prove to facilitate childhood growth and development. The following section discusses three key pedagogical strategies and approaches to classroom learning: multimodal learning, arts-integrated approach and studio-based thinking, and social interactions through play.

Multimodal Learning

Sankey, Birch, and Gardiner (2010) explored the increase of multimedia and how it has helped students learn differently in ways that appeal to each child individually. Their study was an experimental design where they provided different ways to present instructional content and used different ways to measure the students’ learning performance. They had approximately sixty students and used pre-tests and post-tests to examine the effects or preferences of multimodal learning. “The innovative use of educational technologies provides higher education institutions valuable opportunities for their staff to design media-enhanced, interactive, more inclusive and engaging learning environments. To assist with this, the increasing use of multimedia in teaching has provided many opportunities to present multiple representations of content (text, video,
audio, images, interactive elements) to cater more effectively to the different learning styles of an increasingly diverse student body” (Sankey, 2010, p. 852). The research findings in this study exhibit how different modes of learning can stimulate brain development. “Neuroscience research has also revealed that significant increases in learning can be accomplished through the informed use of visual and verbal multimodal learning” (Sankey, 2010, p. 853). Learning through different modes allows students to learn in a way that fits their needs as a learner.

**Arts-Integrated Approach and Studio-Thinking Framework**

Multimodal learning encompasses different ways of learning such as media, pictures, visuals, and arts. By using these different modes of learning we can access different strengths within our students. Using an arts integrated approach, verbal and visual modes can be exposed. This allows for a richer exploration and deeper meaning making to emerge. It gives students who have relative strengths in one modality to experience the success in that certain mode while also working in a modality of relative weakness (Sheridan, 2009). Multimodal learning helps students learn in ways that meet their needs on an individual basis. Oftentimes, students struggle in school because they are not given the opportunity to express their knowledge in a way that makes sense to them. Taking a multimodal approach in the classroom allows a teacher to integrate various ways of conveying information based on what works for the individual student into any subject such as literacy, math, science, or social studies. This connection between visual and language arts is developmentally appropriate for young learners. Students’ interrelated development of writing, reading, and drawing can create deeper connections and deeper understanding (Sheridan, 2009). Using multimodal learning to
Teach and learn can solve this common struggle and help students succeed and gain knowledge.

The use of different stations throughout the classroom allows teachers to provide those different modes of learning. “While important learning happens through open-ended free play with blocks, educators can use the Studio Thinking Framework to scaffold and target more complex thinking and building, while still providing opportunities for free exploration and experimentation with blocks” (Sheridan, 2009, p. 76). Free play and students’ choice is vital to a classroom; however teachers must be closely monitoring the students and making sure that they are giving the students’ ideas to think about and build upon their knowledge.

**Social Interactions through Play**

According to Thompson (1995) when time and space are used properly, sketchbooks have the ability to emphasize drawing as a central activity that helps the children recreate their experiences and present them in tangible permanent form. This exemplifies how drawing for just twenty minutes every day can expand children’s knowledge without them even knowing it. During this study with the School of Visual Arts program, the students were given twenty minutes each day to draw whatever they wanted to as a free drawing activity. This allowed them to build upon their own knowledge and foster creativity. The teachers facilitated and aided them by scaffolding them with questions. It can help them understand things within their own mind in a deeper way.

According to Vivian Paley (1981-2010), play can be referred to as “children’s work” because it provides rich opportunities to explore and learn new concepts. Play is
extremely beneficial in one’s childhood. Play allows children to think above and beyond and not just look at facts, but to create in-depth stories with meaning. It supports children’s creativity while offering them a risk-free environment where they can use their true imagination (Isenburg, 2006). Play also incorporates learning and connecting new grammar that they have learned in the classroom. Paley’s novel, The Boy on the Beach (2010), demonstrates essential teaching behaviors that educators could implement by allowing for an emergent curriculum based on the desires of the students. Through the acting out and role-playing of the child’s own stories, the students can gain creativity, higher-level thinking, social skills, a sense of importance, and learning who they are as individuals. Paley’s various books expose what it means to be an effective teacher through looking at the stories of children and examining their play. Multimodal learning encourages play through the different modes and facilitates social interactions with children.

Social interaction is another critical segment of childhood development. By allowing the children to share their artwork they were able to develop friendships within the classroom. The interactions with other children can allow for the sharing of dialogue, the sharing of perspectives, and the sharing of ideas that can be a significant contribution to early learning (Thompson, 1995). Social interaction can enable children to think of things differently because they gain another perspective on something. It can facilitate language development, increase their knowledge, and allow them to grow as individuals.

Lev Vygotsky’s Social Interactionist Theory explains how the development and growth of children occurs through social interaction with others around them and the aid or “scaffold” by an adult or caregiver. As children grow and develop they learn how to
interact with others around them. This interaction occurs through conversation or play and can be influenced by an adult or teacher role. Vygotsky conducted his work during the 1970’s, and his belief was that children’s play with adults was just as vital as children’s play with their peers. He believed in scaffolding and that adults could help children engage in play that children could not do on their own (Tarman, 2011). Social interactions, with teachers and peers, encourage play and increase the learning development that happens within that play. When students or adults interact with other students, it provides a scaffold to help the students build more knowledge and learn more based on the knowledge of others.

**Multiple Intelligence Theory**

Multimodal learning helps develop a child’s self-efficacy and self-worth by allowing them to learn in a way that is most beneficial to their individual learning style. The multiple intelligences theory explains the different types of learners that students have the ability to be. This theory was originally founded by Howard Gardner in 1983 in “Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences”. The intelligence types can be incorporated into various subject matters, allowing for interdisciplinary works. There are also multiple ways of demonstrating understanding based on these multiple intelligences (See Figure 1). The eight areas of intelligences include: 1) linguistic, 2) logical-mathematical, 3) musical, 4) spatial, 5) bodily-kinesthetic, 6) interpersonal, 7) intrapersonal, and 8) naturalist (Gardner 1983).
In order to build self-esteem, students need to find their strengths and know how to use them. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to work through different modes of learning and work with different intelligences to foster that opportunity for the students. The activities within the classroom have to be engaging and developmentally appropriate for the students and it is beneficial to conduct activities that work with different intelligences together in order to enhance the intelligences that the students may be weaker in. Knowing that children can acquire knowledge through various ways enables teachers to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence Type</th>
<th>Incorporated into subject matter</th>
<th>Way of demonstrating understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal-Linguistic</td>
<td>Books, stories, poetry, speeches, author visits</td>
<td>Writing stories, scripts, poems, storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical-Logical</td>
<td>Exercises, drills, problem solving</td>
<td>Counting, calculating, theorizing, demonstrating, programming computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Tapes, CD’s, concert going</td>
<td>Performing, singing, playing, composing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual-Spatial</td>
<td>Posters, art work, slides, charts, graphs, video tapes, laser disks,</td>
<td>Drawing, painting, illustrating, graphic design, collage making, poster making, photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CD-ROMs and DVDs, museum visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily-Kinesthetic</td>
<td>Movies, animations, exercises, physicalizing concepts, rhythm exercises</td>
<td>Dance recital, athletic performance or competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Teams, group work, specialist roles</td>
<td>Plays, debates, panels, group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Reflection time, meditation exercises</td>
<td>Journals, memoirs, diaries, changing behaviors, habits, personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalist</td>
<td>Terrariums, aquariums, class pets, farm, botanical garden and zoo visits, nature walks, museum visits</td>
<td>Collecting, classifying, caring for animals at nature centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>Working on causes, charity work, astrology charts</td>
<td>Community service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Multiple Intelligences (Ahmed, 2012)
implement these modes of learning to reach children with different learning styles (Ahmed, 2012). No two students are the same. Each individual is different and learns in a different way. Students must be able to explore these different modes of learning to find out what type of learner they are. Teachers should base their lessons off of the students’ wants and the students’ needs so that the students are more engaged and gaining as many learning opportunities as possible. “Teachers who use multiple intelligence theory see the benefits such as active and successful students” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 32). For example, I saw this in the use of the superhero theme that the classroom was based on. The students were interested in superheroes, and therefore were more engaged with the lessons that were taught. Also, the students’ use of the iPads, art supplies, dramatic play area, and the reading tent gave them the opportunity to participate in the activities that were most interesting to them.

This study seeks to display how multimodal learning is beneficial to children and their learning development. In reviewing previous research studies, it is clear that child-learning development is increased through the use of different modes of learning in a classroom setting. Thus far, looking at the use of multimedia (Sankey, Birch, and Gardiner, 2010), the arts-integrated approach and Studio Thinking Framework (Sheridan, 2009), the benefits of play (Paley, 1981-2010), the Social Interactionist Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and the Multiple Intelligence Theory (Gardner, 1983) shows researchers what is known about this topic of multimodal learning, therefore showing the importance of this study to the educational field.
Chapter 4.

Findings

My research involved observing and analyzing a classroom at the Penn State School of Visual Arts program that implemented multimodal learning.

Figure 2: Reading Area

Figure 3: Block Area

Figure 4: Dramatic Play Area

Figure 5: My Hero Project
The classroom used various modes to allow the children to learn in different ways. The classroom had a reading area (Figure 2), block area (Figure 3), dramatic play area (Figure 4), and included two integrating art projects every day. The theme of this classroom was “The Power of Heroes”. The purpose of this unit was to give children the ability to look at and engage with belief systems as well as philosophical and ethical issues in the world around them. Children used their prior knowledge of typical superheroes to explore and examine heroes in their everyday lives around them. They were asked to think who their hero in their life is and to make something for their hero (Figure 5). Children also were asked to compare characteristics, such as superhero powers to humanized powers of civilians. This unit was designed to help young children learn from the experiences with heroes around them, in order to develop the characteristics to grow into generous and helpful children in society.

A typical day at the School of Visual Arts program started with twenty minutes of sketchbook time (See Figure 6 and Figure 7). Then, the lead teacher for that day introduced the topic of conversation and led them into the art project for that day (See Figure 8 and Figure 9). If children finished early they could then play in whichever area of the room they chose. They transitioned
to snack time as a whole class altogether. The children were then allotted the rest of their
time for free time. Often times, teachers would bring the class to circle time during the
last ten minutes to do a wrap-up of what they had learned that day. The free time was
where children seemed to interact with one another the most.

After reviewing the data collected, the three key findings that fostered interactions
between the children by using the different modes were the environment, social
interaction through play, and teacher scaffolding. These three themes are examined
throughout the findings chapter.

Theme One: Environment

Play behavior is often determined by the play space and environment they are
given. Children should have enough room to do certain physical activities inside the
classroom and should have enough room to explore. Also, the toys and objects they are
given determine what type of learning they will experience. In my interviews with the
parents, I asked them what their children enjoyed during their time at the School of
Visual Arts program in order to ascertain what activities worked best in the multimodal
learning environment. One of the parents stated, “They loved the friendly environment and engaging activities”. Many other parents said that their children enjoyed the variety of activities and that it engaged their children. By offering a variety of activities and different modes of learning, these students were able to learn in different ways through different centers throughout the classroom. In the classroom, there were several different areas: dramatic play area, drawing center, art center, block area, dollhouse area, painting area, reading area. Many of the children played in the dramatic play area and dressed up as superheroes. They engaged in imaginative play with each other that they were superheroes saving the world together.

Halfway through the program after two weeks, the teachers discussed among themselves their ideas on the multimodal learning that was implemented in the classroom and reflected on what was working and what was not working in the classroom and did some rearranging. They moved things around and added new art shelves that contained many different art projects and sensory objects. Another thing the teachers noticed was that the book area was not being utilized because the children didn’t know how to read. They found that having a teacher grab a book and go the book area encouraged the children to come and listen (Figure 10).
Some other children would go to the art shelves and choose different art projects. Some did salt painting one day, others played with clay, and some made beaded necklaces and bracelets. By providing these art shelves with a variety of different activities, the children were able to explore through art. By seeing the children use these art projects and learn about different art techniques together, I was able to conclude that multimodal learning increased social interactions (Figure 11).

![Art Projects](image)

Figure 11: Art Projects

**Theme Two: Social Interaction through Play**

Play is engagement in activity for enjoyment and recreation through creative expression. The free time/play not only helps the children learn and think at a higher level, but also teaches them social skills and emotional maturity. Smilansky and Shefatya (1990) contend that school success largely depends on children’s ability to interact positively with their peers and adults. Play is vital to children’s social development (Isenburg, 2006). While watching the children in the classroom act out during their play and dressing up as superheroes, one could see that they were learning to express themselves and interacting with the teachers and students by assigning roles to each
person. This formed bonds and friendships as they gained a respect for each other. It also allowed each child to learn about their individual personalities and who they are as an individual. Play encourages creativity and gives children an open mind (McNaughton 2003, Chapter 3). Free time helps the children find who they are as individuals and helps the teachers discover which modes the child enjoys learning. It gives them time to foster their own imagination and creativity in whichever mode they choose.

In conversations with the students, I asked them what their favorite area of the classroom was. Eight out of the students said they liked the new art shelves with sensory objects and art-based projects. Five of the students said they also liked playing dress-up in the dramatic play area during free play. Three of the children said they enjoyed taking pictures with the iPads (Figure 12) and three others said they liked the building block area. All of the areas that those students mentioned were areas where social interaction occurred. Many of the children had more than one answer so there is some overlap. As students were given the opportunity to learn in different ways and participate in areas that enhance their own development, they were able to interact with students of similar learning styles.

In this classroom, there was a lesson on teamwork. The teachers discussed how working together could help solve a problem faster. They did this by doing a series of timed puzzles. First, they had the students do the puzzles alone and then had them complete the
puzzles in teams. They then compared how much faster they completed the puzzles by working together with a team. This displayed how teamwork can help solve problems faster and taught the children how to work together. When the parents were asked if the children made friends in the program, all of them stated “yes”. Then, when the students were asked if they made friends, they also responded “yes”. They said that they made friends by “drawing” or “doing art projects” or “playing together”. I observed two of the boys in the class dress up as superheroes together and go on missions together. Also, two other students who play with the iPads enjoy taking pictures of other children in the classroom. There was always a group of students at a table utilizing the art-based projects and asking one another how to do a project. The students would teach one another and share with each other. Overall, the children were always spread out in groups throughout the different modes and never clumped too much at one center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Center/Activity</th>
<th>Technology (iPads)</th>
<th>Art Projects</th>
<th>Free Play</th>
<th>Bead Making</th>
<th>Block Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorite Activity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you meet friends?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Favorite Activities

Theme Three: Teacher Scaffolding

Teachers must help facilitate group play and must help guide their play at times. Although free time is about giving children the freedom to do what they want, sometimes they need the guidance so their time is valuable. For example, the teachers in this classroom would prompt the students by giving them questions to better understand the meaning in their play or drawings. Also, in regards to group interactions, multimodal
learning helps children learn to work with others, form friendships, and use others’ ideas to build upon their own. During the interviews, when asked if their child enjoyed the program, one parent stated “She likes this program, but is too shy to talk. She especially likes the teachers; she thinks they are very kind”. In a different interview, when asked if their children made any friends, the parent stated “Yes, but mostly they talk about the teachers (who have done an excellent job)”. Throughout my observation, I learned that providing different ways of learning enhances children’s development through different modes of expression and teachers have the opportunity to give the child these experiences.

Teachers also have the potential to access students’ multiple intelligences. “Gardner suggests that almost everyone has the ability to develop all the eight intelligences if they are given appropriate encouragement and instructions (Armstrong, 2000)” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 33). This encourages teachers to give the opportunity to their students to learn in different ways and explore their intelligences. In order to implement this, teachers can use multimodal learning to allow students to learn in different ways and also express themselves in different ways. During the interview process, the parents were asked, “What did you think about using different ways of learning through blocks, reading, arts, etc.?” One parent, who was a professor at a university at the undergraduate level, stated “one of the main things I have realized is that people have different learning styles/preferences”. Another parent said, “The method offers a variety of ways to examine the same topic and holds the interest of young learners…which is very effective”. It is not neglecting students’ interests, yet encouraging students’ interests as a basis of their assignments and curriculum. Teachers play a vital role in increasing
students’ self-worth and can do so by allowing for variety and implementing multimodal learning in the classroom.

**Summary of Key Findings**

In summary, the three key findings that facilitated interactions between the children by using the different modes were the environment, social interaction, and teacher scaffolding.

The children in this program utilized the environment that was provided for them to interact with their peers. The different stations throughout the classroom gave them options in what activity they wanted to participate in. The different toys, objects, and materials that were given to them facilitated their interactions with each other.

The students also interacted through play. They often did art projects with each other, played dress-up with one another, and played with the iPads together. Many students had similar interests and therefore gravitated towards the same stations as one another.

Teacher scaffolding also aided the interactions between the children in the program. The teachers guided them in certain activities and specific art projects if the students needed help. The teachers also asked questions to better understand the reasoning behind what a child is doing or how they are doing something.

Overall, the clear findings that were taken away from this study were how the environment, social interaction through play, and teacher scaffolding helped facilitate the interactions between the students by using the different modes.
Chapter 5.

Discussion

By providing different modes of learning, children can be comfortable with whichever area/center they choose because they are able to choose what they want to work on. When they are able to choose, they are able to do something that they know how to do and are comfortable with doing. It teaches childhood educators how to integrate play throughout the entire day and within all aspects of the early childhood program. When children are provided with a variety of toys and artifacts to play with, it allows children to express their individual identity (Pahl & Roswell, 2006). In doing so, it allows the students to learn in different ways and interact with other students based on similar learning styles.

Teachers have the ability to influence the interaction between the students: “Teachers who set reasonable limits on children’s antisocial behavior, promote problem solving in the classroom, and address bullying behavior effectively also create conditions children interpret as safe” (Kostelnik 2009, p. 107). Teachers are able to create and build friendships by the group work they create in their classroom and the opportunities the children have to interact with one another. Children who have friendships in the classroom engage more with those friends than non-friends where “knowledge is shared, ideas are challenged evidence is evaluated and options are reasoned about” (Howe 2007, p. 13). Peer interactions allows the children guide themselves in academic activities in the classroom especially when social interaction is encouraged in the classroom environment by implementing coordinated parallel group activity, guidance, and collaboration. This peer interaction can be most useful to a child’s skill development when the teachers facilitate and allow peer interactions (Rogoff, 1990).
The teachers facilitated class activities such as gluing things on a paper, or drawing, or painting, or other art-based projects (Figure 14). However, sometimes the children would struggle to do these activities and the teacher would guide them in doing so. They would not do it for them, rather just help and aid them through the activity so that it is still their work with minor scaffolding. Children do things repetitively to make an experience their own, as well as develop skills. It is the teacher’s responsibility to increase each child’s competence whenever possible. The sense of competence children gain from involvement in such real-life work is extremely beneficial and enhances the child’s self-esteem in a way that artificial or contrived activities never could.

Multimodal learning, arts-integrated approach, and studio-based thinking link a connection to strategies used within the classroom: mediums vs. modes, apprenticeship and social interaction. It is significant to identify these strategies in order to understand multimodal learning as a learning pedagogy. The common mistake of conflating modes and mediums is significant in understanding how to implement these modes of learning and what modes of learning multimodal learning encompasses. Multimodal learning
encourages social interactions by leading those students with similar types of learning styles to gravitate towards one another. Studio-based thinking exhibits a form of multimodal learning and allows students to develop their dispositions and habits of mind through visual art. Lastly, meaning making through different modes of learning will be discussed and how students gain more meaningful learning by using a mode that matches their individual learning style and preference.

**Mediums vs. Modes**

There are two foci at hand when it comes to early childhood education: ‘what’ the children are learning and ‘how’ they are learning it. Multimodal learning exemplifies the ‘how’ of the learning process. Many people conflate modes with mediums. Some people conceptualize multimodal learning as being just about the different communicative modes or different modes of expression. For example, people talk about a mode being art, which encompasses drawing, painting, singing, interpretative dance, etc. However, scholars today who are researching multimodal learning find it to be a much more complicated process.

**Mediums** are the way in which students can represent their ideas through the use of different art materials. Art media can include different sizes of watercolor markers, crayons, colored pencils, pens, polymer clay, natural clay, and paper in a variety of sizes, shapes, and thickness (Swann, 2005). The main focus of using mediums is to allow the students to make sense and manipulate of the properties of the materials in art. For example, in the School of Visual Arts program classroom, the different art mediums were seen through the different art projects that the students worked on every day. The children used paint, markers, tissue paper, and stencils. Only certain properties of any
medium can be varied which orients the child to certain classes of meaning. Children must make compromises when working with mediums because of the affordances of the medium and the meaning the child wished to express. Mediums have constraints, which make it difficult to symbolize meaning making (Forman, 1994). I saw this in the School of Visual Arts Program, as the art mediums throughout the room did not provide the meaning making that the other modes did. Students were able to explore their imagination and creativity when they used the different modes throughout the room, and not simply using art mediums. Modes have no such constraint and allow meaning making to develop through the use of the mode.

Mediums are merely the way in which students can express thoughts, and modes are the way they are able to develop meaning making. Modes are ways that students can construct meaning in a way that goes behind different art materials. “There are six design elements in the meaning-making process: those of Linguistic Meaning, Visual Meaning, Audio Meaning, Gestural Meaning, Spatial Meaning, and the Multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to each other” (The New London Group, 1996). The most significant of those six design elements is the multimodal mode as it relates to each of the different modes of meaning. Curriculum is constantly changing and transforming. Learners are now able to become designers of multimodal texts who create and analyze meanings through visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and linguistic semiotic modes. “When we talk about multi-modality in the local/global context we are talking about communication in the widest sense, including gesture, oral performance, artistic, linguistic, digital, electronic, graphic, and artifact-related. It is clear that the communication landscape has changed and with these changes we have witnessed
dramatic shifts in the way children make meaning from texts of all kinds (i.e. multimodal texts) in all places (i.e. at home and at school)” (Pahl & Roswell, 2006, p. 6). By implementing multimodal learning into the classroom, children are able to create new meanings and generate new pedagogies to their learning process.

**Apprenticeship and Social Interaction**

Educational theories of apprenticeship often are comprised of mental structures that represent individual understanding of experiences that shape a person’s social interactions with others. Learners feel apprenticeship is a "learning experience that expands their awareness of the factors that should be considered' helps them organize and pay attention to their thought processes while handling difficult tasks, problems, and problematic situations; and emphasizes the importance of particular aspects of such tasks, problems, and problematic situations previously ignored or regarded as unimportant" (Brandt et al., 1993, p. 59). One of the goals of apprenticeship is to learn problem-solving skills in a social setting. As seen in this study, the children often made friends with those who had the same interest in a certain area or activity throughout the classroom. They socially interacted with those working on the same activity and talked with one another, essentially problem-solving the activity they were participating in. Apprenticeship encourages learners to recognize the task, the problem, or the situation on their own but not in isolation from other students. It is teaching the learners to perform these cognitive self-regulation skills and specific tasks in a social setting with social interactions between other learners.

Rogoff (1990) explains that children’s cognitive development is an apprenticeship. It occurs during social activity when companions provide guided
participation and support and expand a child’s understanding of a skill by using the tools of the culture. Socioculturally organized activities encourage cognitive development where children are active in learning and interacting with others, and their partners who they are interacting with are active in structuring situations that allow children to gain experiences with culturally valued skills and perspectives. “Shared problem solving—with an active learner participating in culturally organized activities with a more skilled partner—is central to the process of learning in apprenticeship…Hence the model provided by apprenticeship is one of active learners in a community of people who support, challenge, and guide novices as they increasingly participate in skilled, valued socioculturally activity” (Rogoff, 1990, p. 39).

When children have more naturalistic interactions, outside school, they may serve as ‘important cognitive facilitators’ for each other. Children have more direct interactions with other children than with adults. For example, children may have companions at home (siblings), in the neighborhood, at school, in extracurricular activities, and almost everywhere that children go. One critical aspect of peer interactions may stem from their availability to the interactions as well as from the different ages or levels of status that they represent. Social interactions give children the opportunity to practice role relations as well as learn from more skilled partners who may interact more than adults. Peers provide a different type of interaction than adults do. As seen in this study, the peers engaged in playful interactions with each other, while the teachers used scaffolding to interact with the students. The children’s interactions foster exploration and imagination without immediate goals, which may lead to solutions later on to unforeseen problems. Children can motivate and cooperate with one another to allow for their choice of activity
(Rogoff, 1990). This was seen in the School of Visual Arts program. Students formed interactions with those who had similar interests and who participated in the same areas in the classroom. There interactions were natural and not forced. The activities they participated in drew them towards children with similar desires, therefore increasing the chance for them to build a relationship. They were also at a similar skill level, which allowed them to explore their ideas through talking and interacting with other children.

**Studio-Based Thinking**

In 2009, Kimberly Sheridan explored the learning opportunities that visual arts provide for children using the Studio Thinking Framework. In her book *Making Meaning*, she used the “Studio Thinking Framework, developed from research at Harvard University’s Project Zero that involved close observation of studio art classrooms to see what teachers intend to teach and how they teach it, to inform how we can think about learning in the early childhood classroom” (Sheridan, 2009, p. 71). She described teaching strategies that could be used to create a “studio classroom that fosters children’s development of broad habits of mind, such as becoming more observant, more engaged and persistent, reflective on their work, and willing to explore and express ideas” (Sheridan, 2009, p. 71). In her studies on Studio Thinking, she discussed how teachers can utilize the students’ habits of mind in the arts to build their knowledge through other learning areas as well. The classroom at the School of Visual Arts Program was set up in a way that allowed students to design their own projects and their own artwork. They had the ability to choose what activity they would participate in and had the opportunity to express their ideas and be imaginative with their thinking.
“Research related to design education suggests that a studio-based pedagogy is one method for cultivating students’ identities as designers, developing their conceptual understanding of design and the design process, and fostering their design thinking” (Matthews, 2010, p. 88). By having students think about design, teachers were able to encourage students to think more deeply about the world around them “as an integrated system of designed spaces and places, and gave them new lenses for making transparent the social processes that shape these designs – both in relation to how they are designed and how they are used or inhabited by people” (Matthews, 2010, 99). The teachers at the School of Visual Arts Program, including myself, used teacher scaffolding and questioning to build students’ knowledge and understanding about what activity they were interacting with and why they were doing it in a certain way.

Multimodal Meanings

Two key concepts help us describe multimodal meanings and the relationships of different designs of meaning: hybridity and intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992a, 1992b). Hybridity points to creativity and culture-as-process in today’s society. Hybridity examines a new way of thinking through established practices and conventions by using different modes of meaning. “This includes the hybridization of established ways modes of meaning (of discourses and genres), and multifarious combinations of modes of meaning cutting across boundaries of convention and creating new conventions” (The New London Group, 1996). For example, popular music portrays these creative ways of thinking. Intertextuality accentuates the potentially complex ways in which meanings (such as linguistic meanings) are composed through relationships to other texts (real or imaginary), text types (discourse or genres), narratives, and other modes of meaning. For
example, movies contain many cross-references. Multimodality is a “crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally” (Jewitt, 2008). It contributes to the meaning making process in different ways through the different modes. At the School of Visual Arts program, it was found that by using these different modes throughout the classroom, the children had a more meaningful experience because they were able to participate in something that was meaningful to them, and were also able to make meaningful interactions with other children through their activities.

During childhood development, children are constantly making sense of both symbols, which are objects filled with meaning constructed by society, and the “less concrete schemas, which are the conceptual frameworks that inform and shape many of our actions and practices as a society” (Bentley, 2013, p. 79). Symbols and schemas both carry meaning and can teach children how to participate in society. Multimodal learning allows for this meaning making process to happen. “Children use artistic practice to create powerful connections that are meaningful to them as they develop knowledge about the schemas around them” (Bentley, 2013, p. 79). Children have innate creative skills that they will utilize throughout their lives as they make meaning about the world and the experiences they have. Children are always making meaning and creating their own knowledge about the significance of social symbols and schemas. By providing different modes of learning, teachers can form the children’s meaning making about the world by supporting their elucidations as vital parts of their development. When teachers support the children in meaning making, they “allow for their unique interpretations, we support their artistry and generative thinking” (Bentley, 2013, p. 89). The students can
inquire into themselves and their understandings about the world around them. This supports the children in making sense of their world and assists in their learning development process.

These four items discussed are points for thought to bring us, as researchers, forward in the field. It is significant to discuss the difference between mediums and modes because it can change the way teachers implement multimodal learning and how they implement the pedagogy. In the School of Visual Arts, multimodal learning was implement and different art mediums were also provided in the classroom. Multimodal learning as a whole facilitates social interactions through the environment, social interaction through play, and teacher scaffolding as seen in the findings of this study. Studio-based thinking describes a form of multimodal learning and allows students to think about design through visual art. This program provided a variety of different art mediums for the students to choose from and use imaginative thinking to explore their ideas. Lastly, meaning making through the different modes of learning explains the meaningful experiences children have through the different modes of learning. Overall, these four pedagogies were relevant points for thought in terms of this study and also move researchers forward in the field of education.
Chapter 6.

Conclusions

Conclusion for the Study

The main research question of this study was: How do students interact between each other by using the different modes we provide them in the classroom? The following are the three key findings that this study found and that answered how students interacted using the different modes: environment, social interaction, and teacher’s scaffolding. The environment of the different areas throughout the classroom provided the students with a space where they can explore and offered a variety of activities. The activities were often utilized by multiple students, which facilitated social interactions between the children through play and participation of the activities. Lastly, the teachers were able to facilitate the children’s play by using questioning and scaffolding. In this study, it was through the use of the environment, social interaction, and teacher scaffolding that fostered social interactions throughout the different modes in the classroom.

All students are different types of learners and have a different set of multiple intelligences, which need to be utilized. When students discover what type of learner they are, teachers can provide modes that fit best for each students’ needs. This study found that providing multiple modes in the classroom is a major component in facilitating interactions. These modes should facilitate positive social interactions to help foster the child’s growth and development intellectually, physically, mentally, and socially. If children lack social interactions as a child, they never learn the social skills that are a key factor in life such as the ability to share, compromise, work together, and respect others. Also, this study showed how adults have the ability to change the type of play and type of interactions the children are having by monitoring, asking questions, and interacting with
the children themselves. These observations support previous research done on this topic of social interaction with multimodal learning and how it is vital to establish different modes of learning within a classroom.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research could be done that compares those who do not have positive interactions or have negative social interactions. Future researchers could also look at the development of children who had negative social interactions in their childhood. Also, future researchers could look at the negative effects of multimodal learning and how the different modes do not always foster learning and that children are simply ‘playing’. Depending on the types of students in the classroom, some teachers may not be able to implement multimodal learning if they find their students often veer off task. It is critical for teachers to learn about their students and the way they enjoy learning.

**Suggestions for Practice**

Policy makers have the ability to construct policies in a way that includes multimodal learning. They are able to state what needs to be addressed and express the need to express that content in different ways. Policy makers should not put the stress of standardized-tests on elementary-aged students and on teachers. However, policy makers should make it a point to focus on the content of the tests, not just the way the test is composed. This way, teachers have the opportunity to teach the content that is on the standardized-tests, but do so in different ways throughout their classroom that works best for their individual students.

Teacher educator programs should also focus on teaching future educators about multimodal learning. In my teacher educator program, I was encouraged to use different
ways to teach and assess my students. I was able to take those strategies my professors used in our college-level class and implement those same strategies in my classroom during my student teaching experience. It is critical that other teacher educator programs use multimodal learning strategies in order to facilitate ways and approaches that those future educators can implement them in their future classroom.

A principal’s view and belief can severely impact the school. A principal should be open to new and different ways of learning, which is multimodal learning. A principal shall encourage his or her teachers to focus on the individual needs and interests of their students. One issue that a principal may have is the pressure and stress of AYP and high-stakes testing in today’s educational society. Therefore, the principal must be firm in "what” is being taught; however, should be flexible in “how” it is being taught. The teachers should teach the content that will be assessed on standardized tests, but should feel that they have freedom to teach in a way they think works best for their students. The principal should support this approach and guide other teachers to also implement multimodal learning because it benefits each individual student.

Lastly, teachers should use multimodal learning in their classroom. Using ways that cater to the individual needs of their students will better their understanding about the content being learned. Teachers have the ability to guide their learning by scaffolding their students using questioning techniques. Teachers should also make the environment nurturing and positive in order to make their students feel comfortable within the classroom setting. Students feeling comfortable will allow them to enhance their learning by expressing their thoughts and ideas to others and listening to others’ thoughts and ideas. Multimodal learning not only makes children feel comfortable because they are
competent in what they are doing, but also because it allows for relatedness and fosters social interaction between children.
Appendix A: Permission Slip for Parents/Guardians

Dear School of Visual Arts Parent/Guardian:

My name is Jessica Harmon and I am currently doing an inquiry project for one of my graduate level courses at Penn State. I am one of the teachers teaching the School of Visual Arts (SOVA) program this summer.

For my course project, I would like to ask 3-5 questions of your child near the end of our visual arts program about: What was your favorite part of this program? How was this different than any other school program you have been a part of? I also asked them to rank their overall experience at SOVA.

I would also like to ask a few of the parents about the program and your perception of its impact on your child. This data will be used solely for my class project. It will never be published or shared beyond my course; all children and adults will be given pseudonyms in my course paper. No photographs will be used for this project.

By printing your child’s name and signing your name below, you will be granting permission for me to ask you and your child a few questions based on this School of Visual Arts program which will in turn support my class project.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica N. Harmon
The Pennsylvania State University
Schreyer Honors College
Class of 2014
Early Childhood Education
Special Education and Deafness & Hearing Minor
Masters Candidate of Education
Atlas Thon-Recruitment Captain/Family Relations
Penn State Cheerleading
SOVA Instructor

________________________________________________
Child’s first and last name

________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian signature      Date
Appendix B: Interview for Parents

1. What did you think about using different ways of learning through blocks, reading, arts, etc.?

1. Did your children seem to enjoy this program? Why?

1. What did they seem to enjoy most?

1. Did they make new friends in this program?
Appendix C: Interview for Teachers

1. How did the different modes of learning change your style of teaching?

2. Do you think these different modes learning foster social interactions?

3. Do you think children could have learned more or less using only one mode of learning rather than multimodal learning?
Appendix D: Interview for Students

1. Rank your time at SOVA with the following faces: ☺ ☯ :|

1. What was your favorite part of this program?

1. How was this different than any other school program you have been a part of?
Appendix E: **IRB Exemption**

**Date:** June 25, 2014

**From:** The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
Philip C. Frum, Compliance Coordinator

**To:** Jessica N. Harmon

**Re:** Determination of Exemption

**IRB Protocol ID:** 45880

**Follow-up Date:** June 24, 2019

**Title of Protocol:** Multimodal Learning and Social Interaction in Early Childhood Education

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

**45 CFR 46.101(b)(1)** Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

**Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator’s responsibility to review** [IRB Policy III “Exempt Review Process and Determination”](#) which outlines:

- What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
- What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
- Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
- What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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[http://ilkogretim-online.org.tr/vol10say1/v10s1m26.pdf](http://ilkogretim-online.org.tr/vol10say1/v10s1m26.pdf)


National Art Education Association: University of Illinois, USA.

ACADEMIC VITA
Jessica Harmon
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Jnh5115@psu.edu

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University  University Park, PA
The Schreyer Honors College
• Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction – Early Childhood Education Option
• Bachelor of Science with Honors in Childhood and Early Adolescent Education Option
• PreK-4 Option
• Dual Minors in Special Education and Deafness and Hearing

WORK EXPERIENCE

Substitute Teaching Service Inc.  Centre County, PA
Substitute Teacher  August 2014-Present

Grays Woods Elementary School  State College, PA
Third Grade Intern  August 2013-May 2014
Student Teaching Experience

Camp Fun in the Sun  Long Valley, NJ
Owner and Manager  Summer 2003-2013
• Taught cheerleading and dance skills
• Managed and ran all aspects of the business including teaching, advertising and administration

FlorioSports LLC  Long Valley, NJ
Marketing Representative  Summer 2012
• Prepared website development and blogs for various products within the business

Giant Gymnastics Academy  Hackettstown, NJ
Gymnastics Instructor  Summer 2011-2012
• Taught cheerleading and tumbling from levels 1-5 to various age groups

Sunny Days Preschool  Hackettstown, NJ
Assistant Teacher  Summer 2011
• Worked in a preschool setting teaching various educational activities

Philadelphia Board of Education  Philadelphia, PA
Student Teacher  May 2011
• Assisted elementary school teachers in an urban school setting with various educational activities

Long Valley Junior Women’s Club Arts and Recreation Enrichment Program  Long Valley, NJ
Teacher  September 2007-June 2010
• Taught cheerleading, gymnastics and sports skills to elementary aged children
No Limit Tumbling, Inc. Boonton, NJ
Telemarketing Representative June 2009-August 2010
- Acquired communication skills while contacting various gym owners in an effort to sell products for No Limit Tumbling both through phone solicitation and personal meetings.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dean's List Standing University Park, PA
Schreyer Honors College University Park, PA
Student Council and Mentor August 2010-2014
- Served as a mentor for other honors student, conducted orientation tours, planned semi-formal and assisted in planning and participated in the annual Date Auction to raise money for breast cancer.

National Society of Collegiate Scholars University Park, PA
Member June 2011-2014
Pi Lambda Theta University Park, PA
National Education Honor Society March 2013-Present
Mortar Board University Park, PA
National College Senior Honor Society March 2013-Present

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Penn State Cheerleader University Park, PA
August 2010-2014
- Served as representative for the university at sporting events, local charities, and alumni events.
- Competed in UCA College Nationals.

Disability Studies Student Group University Park, PA
Secretary August 2013-Present
- Planned and organized meetings and events for the student group

The Penn State Dance Marathon (THON) University Park, PA
Atlas and Cheerleading August 2010-2014
- Participated in raising money for pediatric cancer.
- Prepared over 200 letters in soliciting funds for potential donations to THON
Acted as Recruiting Captain and Family Relations Committee representative