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LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE BIG IDEAS OF SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ADHD AND THEIR TEACHERS THROUGH MULTILITERACIES AND RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY

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Abstract:
The increasing prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in primary school classrooms presents significant challenges for teachers seeking to support students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes within inclusive settings. This literature review critically analyses fourteen peer-reviewed studies to examine how multiliteracies pedagogy, underpinned by relational pedagogy, may support students with ADHD while also attending to teacher practice and wellbeing. Drawing on three interrelated theoretical frameworks—Vygotsky's social constructivism, multiliteracies pedagogy, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) the review synthesises evidence demonstrating that multimodal, collaborative, and socially mediated learning environments can enhance student engagement, agency, and participation. Findings suggest that multiliteracies pedagogy aligns strongly with neurodiversity-affirming perspectives by foregrounding student strengths, offering multiple means of representation and engagement, and reducing reliance on executive functioning and working memory. However, the review also identifies persistent gaps between theory and classroom implementation, particularly regarding teacher capacity, classroom management, and perceptions of pedagogical "chaos." The analysis highlights a need for research that bridges theory and practice through explicit implementation frameworks that support both students with ADHD and teacher wellbeing. Overall, the review positions multiliteracies pedagogy, when intentionally scaffolded and aligned with UDL principles, as a promising inclusive approach for improving educational outcomes for students with ADHD.

Keywords: ADHD and inclusive education; multiliteracies pedagogy; neurodiversity-affirming practice; Universal Design for Learning (UDL); relational and social constructivist pedagogy

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1. Introduction

Research by Efron *et al.* (2017) stipulates that seven per cent of primary school-aged children, those aged four to twelve years old, are diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The increased prevalence of ADHD presents a significant challenge for all teachers in determining how best to support the diverse needs of students with ADHD (Aldabbagh *et al.*, 2024; Ayano *et al.*, 2023; Davidovitch *et al.*, 2017; Efron *et al.*, 2017; Klau *et al.*, 2017). Students with ADHD suffer with far lower education outcomes, including academic, social and emotional and are less likely to participate in class activities, while also suffering with poor peer relationships (Berchiatti *et al.*, 2022; Koray *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, the intention of this research is to identify if the use of multiliteracies pedagogy that includes collaboration and multimodal texts as the centre principles of pedagogy can improve the academic, social and emotional outcomes for students with ADHD (Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Cope and Kalantzis, 2009).

2. Literature Review

This literature review critically analysed and coded fourteen peer-reviewed articles to synthesise and evaluate what research already informs us about using multiliteracies to support students with ADHD. The main ideas and contributions of research have been analysed and coded into three theoretical frameworks:

- Vygotsky's Social Constructivist,
- Multiliteracies Pedagogy,
- Universal by Design Learning (UDL).

2.1 Vygotsky's Social Constructivist

According to Azuka *et al.* (2024), the seminal work of Lev Vygotsky envisioned focusing attention and utilising the strengths of special learners, which would include students with ADHD. According to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, learning occurs through the interaction between an individual's mental processes and their connection to societal sociocultural processes (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Copsey Hayday *et al.*, 2007; Moudatsaki *et al.*, 2025; Vygotsky, 1978). This connection between an individual's mental processes and their sociocultural context plays a crucial role in multiliteracies pedagogy. As Cope and Kalantzis (2009) highlight in their article, true meaning makers and remakers of multimodal genres do so in connection with their sociocultural perspectives. Copsey Hayday *et al.* (2007) agree with Cope and Kalantzis (2009) by implying that meaning making occurs during multiliteracies learning as a social experience for the student that can support a diverse range of students. Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, as suggested by Azuka *et al.* (2024), Cazden *et al.* (1996), Copsey Hayday *et al.* (2007), and Moudatsaki *et al.* (2025), supports an alignment with a multiliteracies pedagogy that can be beneficial to students with ADHD.

Cumming-Potvin (2007) recognises the significance of social interactions in the learning environment by suggesting that learning is a complex and dynamic process that is intertwined in students' diverse social contexts, which includes their relationships with peers, teachers, family and friends. This social interaction, being central to part of the learning process, is important when supporting students with ADHD. This support is important as research by Moudatsaki *et al.* (2025) proposes that students with ADHD have negative experiences of social interactions, including fewer positive interactions with their peers that may lead to unproductive behaviours. However, Moudatsaki *et al.* (2025) argue that real-world connectedness to multiliteracies pedagogy, which includes the integration of technology and collaborative working, can reduce unproductive behaviours demonstrated by students with ADHD. Moudatsaki *et al.* (2025) take this a step further by suggesting that, through collaborative work with heterogeneous groups in a multiliteracies pedagogy discourse, not only do students with ADHD benefit, but also all students. This argument is supported by Fenty and Brydon (2019), who suggest that multiliteracies pedagogy can lead to improved cooperation and socialisation between heterogenous groups and students with special needs, for example, students with ADHD.

Another aspect of Vygotsky's constructivist theory is what he described as a student's zone of proximal development (ZPD). A student's ZPD resides in what Cumming-Potvin (2007) describes as Vygotsky's metaphor of scaffolding, which consists of two tiers. The first is what the student can achieve on their own, and the second is what a student is capable of achieving with some assistance. Strong, supportive scaffolding is a key component of Vygotsky's theory and integral to the use of a multiliteracies approach. Cumming-Potvin (2007) emphasises that effective scaffolding can lead to building stronger relationships, which are necessary to support students with ADHD. This scaffolding approach is reinforced by Copsey *et al.* (2007), who propose that multiliteracies pedagogy is a social exercise in which the teacher is not merely a transmitter of new knowledge, but scaffolds students to understand their new knowledge.

As highlighted, a crucial aspect of Vygotsky's constructivist theory is that meaning occurs when a student makes a connection between their mental processes and their sociocultural processes. Cazden *et al.* (1996) and Cope and Kalantzis (2009) both propose that a multiliteracies pedagogy challenges the traditional, culturally homogeneous nature of didactic teaching. Instead, multiliteracies provides the opportunity to provide an inclusive teaching platform, highlighting that heterogenous students who feel different to their homogenous peers can be inspired to be meaning makers through social interactions and appropriate scaffolding. Thus, providing a transfer of their new knowledge into new meanings that are relatable to their social connections, which further demonstrates how a multiliteracies pedagogy has Vygotsky's constructivist theory as central in the approach (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Copsey Hayday *et al.*, 2007; Moudatsaki *et al.*, 2025; Vygotsky, 1978). The aim of collaborative work that entails Vygotsky's theory is to facilitate the full social

participation of all students regardless of their ability or needs, and enable students to be active citizens that provides them with agency over their learning, which Blume and Bündgens-Kosten (2023) argue is vital to students educational outcomes and their wellbeing (Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

2.2 Multiliteracies Pedagogy

Hamilton and Petty (2023) agree with Azuka *et al.* (2024) and Cook (2024) that ADHD is a neurodivergent condition, whereby it represents a natural variation in how the human brain operates, specifically in how it experiences, perceives, and interacts with others in social contexts and objects in the concrete world. Hamilton and Petty (2023) go further to explain that there has been a paradigm shift from the medical view that labels and views ADHD students with a narrow focus on their deficits. However, in comparison, a neurodivergent paradigm views students with ADHD in context and recognises their strengths. The authors argue that any harm caused by this impairment is a result of the interactions between the student and the environment, not the student's fault. A neurodivergent paradigm is crucial to consider in this research, as a multiliteracies pedagogy emphasises viewing strengths rather than deficits (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Blume & Bündgens-Kosten, 2023; Cook, 2024; Cumming-Potvin, 2007). In response to this medial paradigm of neurodivergent students, Cook (2024) argues that students with ADHD possess extra energy, an increased ability to focus and are genuinely more creative, which are strengths that a multiliteracies pedagogy would allow to flourish.

Cazden *et al.* (1996) are the authors of the seminal work of the New England Group (1996), who first proposed the theoretical frameworks of multiliteracies pedagogy in response to the ever-evolving range of multimodal genres that were becoming commonplace. While this seminal work does not specifically address students with ADHD, it is foundational for research into how multiliteracies can support students with ADHD because the authors recognised that no one student is the same and that every student has their own unique needs, capabilities and strengths. The seminal work posits that multiliteracies is contextual and that the scaffolding provided is not didactic but rather active social interactions to help guide students to reach their full potential, supporting Vygotsky's constructivist theory. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) are authors of the original New England Group (1996), and their work builds on that seminal work, proposing that a multiliteracies pedagogy can deliver diverse meaning-making that is accompanied by a holistic approach, which could benefit students with ADHD. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) introduce the seven modes of multiliteracies as: written language, oral language, visual representation, audio representation, gestural interpretation and spatial representation. Crucial for this research literature review is the important distinction made by Cope and Kalantzis (2009) that learners may be more comfortable with one mode over another. Therefore, enabling them to make meaning from multimodal texts and draw conclusions to their real-world societal environment (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Copsey Hayday *et al.*, 2007). This distinction made by Cope and Kalantzis (2009) is strengthened by Hamilton and Petty (2023) who specifically addresses

neurodivergent students, including those with ADHD may express their learning journey in different modes, for example, an oral presentation or a written report, and may learn better by receiving content that is delivered in a multimodal way, for example, audio, visual and textual. Cumming-Potvin (2007) provide evidence of this in their study, where the subject of research struggled with reading comprehension but was able to demonstrate high multiliteracy skills when using alternative modes, such as a computer or encyclopedia.

The meaning-making delivered to students by adopting a multiliteracies approach is critical for students with ADHD. Sinzig *et al.* (2008) provide valuable insight into the impact that reduced executive function and inhibited memory have on students with ADHD, suggesting that they would struggle academically. Fenty and Brydon (2019) posit that for students who struggle academically, a multiliteracy pedagogy can help break the cycle of academic failure. Their research evaluated the use of a multimodal text, namely the graphic novel and demonstrated that by providing neurodiverse students with a text that interests them, they will find multimodal texts more engaging, enjoyable to learn with, and will create greater student motivation and engagement. The research by Fenty and Brydon (2019) is supported by the work of Falk-Ross and Linder (2024), who emphasise that the text genre used must be of interest to the student. Falk-Ross and Linder (2024) suggest that a classroom ecology that utilises multiliteracies pedagogy promotes extended critical thinking and improved motivation among students, leading to reduced unproductive behaviours and increased academic, social and emotional outcomes. Mirhosseini and Emadi (2022) agree with Falk-Ross and Linder (2024) and Fenty and Brydon (2019) by stipulating that the traditional approach to teaching fails to take account of the ever-evolving world of multimodal genres and disregards students' needs, leading to marginalisation. Instead, they argue for the use of multiliteracies pedagogy, demonstrating that when used to teach students English as a second language, it provides greater student involvement, fosters student ownership of their learning, and generates genuine enthusiasm for learning, as the content is delivered through real-world examples applicable to the students' lives. While Steinkuehler and King (2009) specifically discuss how multiliteracies pedagogy, when implemented with gamification, can have significant benefits for students with ADHD, most notably increased engagement with their learning. However, like Falk-Ross and Linder (2024) and Fenty and Brydon (2019), Steinkuehler and King (2009) stipulate that the context and content must be relevant to the students' lives.

Students taking ownership of their learning is addressed in numerous articles when examining how a multiliteracies pedagogy affects students. Blume & Bündgens-Kosten (2023) identified in their research that student agency is lacking in many schools and can be a frequent cause of unproductive behaviours. A lack of agency is of particular concern for students with ADHD, as they may process things differently compared to neurotypical students (Sinzig *et al.*, 2008). Attempts to mitigate the perceived problematic behaviours of students with ADHD as a direct result of frustration over a lack of agency come at the cost of the students' well-being (Blume & Bündgens-Kosten, 2023; Cope &

Kalantzis, 2009). Therefore, as Mirhosseini and Emadi (2022) demonstrate in their research, a multiliteracies pedagogy can improve student agency and confidence. Although it is acknowledged that their research was also related to students learning English as a second language, there are many benefits to a multiliteracies pedagogy.

While the literature review highlighted many benefits of a multiliteracies pedagogy, it also identified some concerns. Firstly, Mirhosseini and Emadi (2022) describe what they call an apparent mess that the teacher subject in their research felt when implementing a multiliteracies pedagogical approach; however, it must be noted that the research only had one subject teacher who may not have had the capacity to introduce a new pedagogical approach. Building on this description of a mess, Copsey Haydey (2007) stress that teachers must feel comfortable and see the deeper benefits of a multiliteracies pedagogy, as at times it can appear as surface chaos in comparison to an orderly didactic classroom ecosystem. Unfortunately, neither article discusses the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy with students with ADHD. These descriptions of a multiliteracies pedagogy being messy and chaotic raise the question of whether a multiliteracies pedagogy can be replicated with students with ADHD who typically require clearer predictability (Azuka, 2024; Cook, 2024; Sinzig *et al.*, 2008).

The literature review identifies that a multiliteracies pedagogy can be implemented with ADHD students and return equally great benefits. As highlighted by the Vygotsky constructivist theory, being integral to the approach, appropriate scaffolding with supportive relationships is required to meet the needs of all students. As part of a multiliteracies pedagogy teachers should adjust and adapt their teaching approach to provide guided instruction on how to interpret various mode of text and such scaffolding must not be didactic in nature but aims to increase students critical thinking and understanding, as opposed to being a mere transfer of knowledge (Copsey Haydey, 2007; Cumming-Potvin, 2007; Falk-Ross & Linder, 2024). While Sinzig *et al.* (2008) highlight that ADHD can cause limited working memory, the literature review identified how this can be overcome using a multiliteracies pedagogy. Fenty & Brydon (2019) identify how multimodal visual cues can provide students with external memory support, accompanied by graphic organisers, to facilitate their learning. One of the biggest benefits is that students can access content through various multimodal genres, which reduces the reliance on working memory (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Students are more engaged and motivated in their learning with modes that are of interest to them and make their learning more enjoyable (Fenty & Brydon, 2019; Moudatsaki *et al.*, 2025; Steinkuehler & King, 2009).

2.3 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Azuka (2024) introduces Universal Design for Learning by suggesting that it provides the framework for pedagogy with social justice and inclusion as the foundations, which aligns with a multiliteracies pedagogy. Universal Design for Learning is grounded in the concept that every student is different (Cazden *et al.*, 1996). Cope and Kalantzis (2009) argue that multiliteracies pedagogy recognises that heterogeneous students who feel

different from their homogeneous peers can still succeed in becoming meaning makers. The framework of Universal Design for Learning was developed by Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) as cited by Azuka (2024), with the aim of making education accessible and equitable for all students regardless of barriers they may face. As the literature analysis identified that students with ADHD will encounter issues as a result of their social interaction with the environment, the framework of Universal Design for Learning embedded into a multiliteracies pedagogy will provide a classroom that is more inclusive for students with ADHD (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Blume & Bündgens-Kosten, 2023; Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2014; Cook, 2024; Hamilton & Petty, 2023; Sinzig *et al.*, 2008).

Universal Design for Learning ensures that intentional adaptations are made to address the needs of diverse learners. Hamilton and Petty (2023) extend the fundamental framework of Universal Design for Learning by arguing that it provides more than an antidote or bolt-on provisions that align with the medical paradigm view of students with diverse needs, which is underpinned by a deficit lens (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Blume & Bündgens-Kosten, 2023; Cook, 2024; Cumming-Potvin, 2007). Cope and Kalantzis (2009) are explicit in their article about the benefits to diverse students that multiliteracies pedagogy allows, with its multimodal flexibility, thereby providing diverse learning opportunities for all students in line with the concept of Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2014). At the same time, Cazden *et al.* (1996) and Fenty and Brydon (2019) highlight the flexibility of a multiliteracies pedagogical approach that aligns with Universal Design for Learning principles. For example, by providing content in various modes that incorporate both visual and textual elements, students are offered multiple means of representation. Multiliteracies pedagogy affords multiple ways of engagement by providing students with real-world meaning-making through multimodal content, delivery and learning that sustains students' engagement by offering the Universal Design for Learning principle of multiple means of engagement (Fenty & Brydon, 2019; Falk-Ross & Linder, 2024; Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022; Steinkuehler & King, 2009).

2.4 Research Gap

There are clear gaps in the research literature review that support further research as to how a multiliteracies pedagogy can support students with ADHD to achieve better educational outcomes. Mirhosseini and Emadi (2022) and Copsey Haydey (2007) highlight the challenges of managing a classroom that uses multiliteracies pedagogy; however, neither article proposes a solution to the problem. Instead, Mirhosseini and Emadi's (2022) research is limited to one teacher teaching English as a second language, and Copsey Haydey (2007) suggest that teachers must feel comfortable with the approach without bridging theory to practice. Furthermore, their study is limited to a single qualitative study with limited generalisability. Sinzig *et al.* (2008) highlight the deficit functions of students with ADHD, namely reduced working memory and reduced executive function; however, no article analysed provided real context on how to bridge

the gap from theory to the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy for students with ADHD.

Azuka *et al.* (2024) also fail to provide implementation guidance on how Vygotsky's theoretical framework can be used, despite acknowledging it can be challenging. Cook (2024) provides excellent research on neurodiversity viewpoints and teacher attitudes; however, it does not address how multiliteracies pedagogy can overcome challenges. The research by Hamilton and Petty (2023) is unfortunately focused on college-aged students, rather than the target age group of this research. However, it does recommend that suitable adaptations be made for neurodiverse students, rather than merely providing them with bolt-on accommodations. Again, like the other research, it only provides a conceptual framework for Universal Design for Learning, with limited practical implementation. Further research that fails to provide systematic implementation methods is Falk-Ross and Linder (2024), although they do support the benefits that multiliteracies provide. Fenty and Brydon (2019) provide the most practical implementation guide in their research; however, it is narrow in context, as it is applied only to graphic novels and not the broader multiliteracies pedagogical approach.

Articles that provide partial solutions include Cumming-Potvin (2007), which demonstrates excellent results that can be achieved with appropriate adjustments and scaffolding to support a neurodivergent student. While the article provides rich context, it is limited in its scope to a single student, which limits its generalisability. Cazden (1996) and Cope & Kalantzis (2009) provide the foundation of multiliteracies and how it can be implemented. However, Cazden *et al.* (1996) make no mention of neurodivergent students. Cope & Kalantzis (2009) acknowledge that multiliteracies can be used to support learners who feel different from the heterogeneous groups within education, and that addressing this difference is essential to prevent exclusion.

The literature review has identified clear gaps in research that remain unsolved. It is proposed to develop research to address how a multiliteracies pedagogy can be adapted and implemented for students with ADHD to improve educational outcomes that will address the gaps of bridging theory to practice with implementation strategies and practical frameworks for managing the perceived chaos of multiliteracies pedagogy, as students with ADHD may struggle with planning and flexibility.

3. Big Theories

3.1 Vygotsky Theory

Vygotsky's constructivist theory posits that learners acquire knowledge in sociocultural contexts that involve interactions with family, friends, peers, and teachers (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Rader, 2010). Duchesne *et al.* (2021) build on Vygotsky's theory by proposing that it also encompasses purposeful learning, with the learner at its centre, and that activities must involve problem solving to avoid a recycling motion that results in no development of new knowledge. In his theory, Vygotsky also introduces what he termed as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the difference between what a student can

achieve on their own and with guided support to enable growth and development (Dai & Lin, 2025; Duchesne *et al.*, 2021). Vygotsky's theory is particularly relevant to this research as it recognises that social interactions with the environment that are crucial to learning and multiliteracies pedagogy can have an improved effect on reducing social exclusion and is adaptable to the diverse needs of students with ADHD (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Duchesne *et al.*, 2021; Galkienė & Monkevičienė, 2021)

3.1.1 Seminal Work

- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.

3.2 Multiliteracies Pedagogy

Multiliteracies pedagogy argues that traditional literacy pedagogy fails to meet the needs of students in the 21st century with ever evolving multimodal genres, including, linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and tactile (Cazden *et al.*, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Cazden *et al.* (1996) and Cope and Kalantzis (2009) emphasise that to interpret multimodal texts effectively, students require scaffolding that is more than the transmission of knowledge, but rather a process that enables students to become meaning makers. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) extend this further by stipulating that only through meaning making will students become knowledgeable, highlighting how knowledge has become the focus of the 21st century. While Kalantzis and Cope (2008) provide the contextual framework of how to implement a multiliteracies pedagogy using the principles of experiencing, conceptualising, analysing, and applying.

3.2.1 Seminal Work

- Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., Luke, A., Luke, C., Michaels, S., & Nakata, M. (1996). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60–92. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.66.1.17370n67v22j160u
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New Literacies, New Learning. Pedagogies: *An International Journal, 4*(3), 164-195. https://doi.org/10.1080/15544800903076044

3.3 Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning provides an inclusive and equitable education for all as its main foundation. Through incorporating the Universal Design for Learning framework, teachers can make appropriate adjustments to curriculum content, content delivery, learning objectives, resources and pedagogical approaches, which lends itself to being incorporated into a multiliteracies pedagogy (Meyer *et al.*, 2014). Universal Design for Learning theory recognises that every learner is unique and focuses on the strengths of individual learners, and not their deficits, while engaging their interests and sharing the

ontology and epistemology of all classroom learners, supporting a multiliteracies pedagogical approach (Meyer *et al.*, 2014; CAST, 2024; Mukhopadhyay, 2009; Slee, 2009).

3.3.1 Seminal Work

- Rose, D. H., & Meyer, A. (2002). *Teaching every student in the digital age: Universal design for learning.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal design for learning: Theory and practice*. CAST Professional Publishing. https://publishing.cast.org/catalog/books-products/universal-design-for-learning-meyer-rose-gordon

4. Paradigms

4.1 Constructivism

Azuka *et al.* (2024) describe a constructivism paradigm as having an envision that supports an inclusive pedagogy model for diverse learners, which is important for research on a homogeneous group of students with ADHD. Lincoln *et al.* (2011) provide great insight into understanding the paradigm of constructivism, particularly the methodology, which includes hermeneutical and dialectical. Hermeneutical seeks to understand and interpret subjects' experiences, and dialectical seeks to explore opposing views. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) suggest an opposing view of traditional literacies by building on their seminal work of the New England Group (1996) (Cazden, 1996), while Cumming-Potvin (2007) expressly states he used a social constructivism perspective of learning in his research to argue that knowledge is learned socially through external interactions. Given the context of this literature review and research, the constructivism paradigm is most suited as the conceptual framework to understand and fill in the research gaps that have been identified (Bell, 2005; Cooksey & McDonald, 2019; Lincoln *et al.*, 2011).

4.1.1 Relevant Articles

- Azuka, C., Wei, C., Ikechukwu, U., & Nwachukwu, E. (2024). Inclusive instructional design for neurodiverse learners. *Current Perspectives in Educational Research*, *7*, 56-67. https://doi.org/10.46303/cuper.2024.4
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, *4*(3), 164-195. https://doi.org/10.1080/15544800903076044
- Cumming-Potvin, W. (2007). Scaffolding, multiliteracies, and reading circles. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *30*(2), 483-507. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/scaffolding-multiliteracies-reading-circles/docview/215374643/se-2?accountid=17227

4.2 Neurodiversity

Cook (2024), Hamilton and Petty (2023), and Blume and Bündgens-Kosten (2023) all demonstrate that their research has utilised the neurodiversity paradigm as its foundational theoretical framework. Accardo *et al.* (2025) describe the neurodiversity paradigm as a shift away from the neurocognitive norm of differences and towards a better understanding that neurodivergence is a natural variation of being human (Azuka *et al.*, 2024; Cook, 2024; Hamilton & Petty, 2023). Cook's (2024) core argument is that current educational discourse continues to view neurodivergent students in a deficit way, rather than looking at homogeneous students as unique individuals with their own strengths that should be utilised. Hamilton and Petty (2023) explicitly state that they have used the neurodiversity paradigm to move away from the medical diagnosis of neurodivergent conditions that inherently come with a deficit lens and instead embed a discourse that recognises neurodivergent student strengths. At the same time, Blume and Bündgens-Kosten (2023) argue for neurodivergent agency and well-being by accepting neurodiverse ways of being instead of trying to enforce conformity to neurotypical discourse norms.

4.2.1 Relevant Articles

- Azuka, C., Wei, C., Ikechukwu, U., & Nwachukwu, E. (2024). Inclusive Instructional Design for Neurodiverse Learners. *Current Perspectives in Educational Research*, *7*, 56-67. https://doi.org/10.46303/cuper.2024.4
- Cook, A. (2024). Conceptualisations of neurodiversity and barriers to inclusive pedagogy in schools: A perspective article. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *24*(3), 627-636. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12656
- Hamilton, L. G., & Petty, S. (2023). Compassionate pedagogy for neurodiversity in higher education: A conceptual analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1093290. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1093290
- Blume, C., & Bündgens-Kosten, J. (2023). The role of digitality for neurodivergent English language learners: Agency and well-being within and outside the ELT classroom. *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, *48*(2), 213-237. https://doi.org/10.24053/AAA-2023-0012

5. Conclusion

This literature review concludes that multiliteracies pedagogy, grounded in Vygotsky's social constructivism and aligned with Universal Design for Learning principles, holds significant potential for supporting students with ADHD in primary school classrooms. The synthesis of fourteen peer-reviewed studies reveals that multimodal, relational and safe learning environments can meaningfully enhance student engagement, agency, and participation. Providing multiple modes of representation for learning reduces the reliance on working memory and executive functioning. Multiliteracies pedagogy aligns

with the practice of neurodiversity-affirming perspectives by foregrounding student strengths rather than deficits.

However, a critical gap persists between theoretical promise and practical implementation. Teachers face significant challenges managing the perceived "chaos" of multiliteracies classrooms. This perceived chaos is particularly relevant when working with students with ADHD who may require clear structure and predictability. The literature reviewed demonstrates a rich theoretical justification for the design and delivery of a multiliteracies pedagogy; however, it lacks comprehensive, replicable implementation frameworks that address classroom management, teacher capacity building, and professional well-being.

Future research must bridge the theory-to-practice divide by developing explicit implementation strategies collaboratively created with teachers. Through systematic frameworks that support both student outcomes and teacher practice, the promise of inclusive pedagogy can be fully realised in improving academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students with ADHD.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author
Mark McInnes brings a unique perspective to inclusive education, shaped by an extraordinary career transition from community service to educational practice. After 25 years in policing, where he dedicated himself to supporting and protecting the community, Mark recognised an opportunity to create even greater impact by working with young people during their formative years. This realisation led him to transition into primary education, where he could intervene earlier in children's lives and help shape positive futures. Mark's passion centres on inclusive education and ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or circumstances. He believes that education is the cornerstone of social equity and that all learners deserve access to quality, supportive learning environments where they feel valued and capable. Currently pursuing a Master of Education (Special

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