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**TEACHING GENERATION 1.5 STUDENTS IN CONTENT-BASED READING COURSES
IN A COLLEGE ADJUNCT MODEL: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY**

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Abstract

College adjuncts are designed to assist Generation 1.5 ESL students to develop academic language proficiency, learning strategies, and study skills necessary for succeeding in connected mainstream courses. Despite the abundance of literature, little ethnographic research has been done on content-based language adjuncts. This study views the adjunct program as a culture situated in the larger context of the university mainstream and describes how teaching and learning take place in such an academic culture influenced also by the students' home cultures. Multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, document examination, and observations, are used for triangulation. The findings indicate that the adjunct reading courses in the program have been a major effort in socializing the students into the academic culture of the university. In this mainstreaming process, the students are also provided with various opportunities and ways to acknowledge their own experiences and to respectfully discuss and analyze content-course reading materials with the unique lenses that their own cultures have given them. The study reveals that there are a lot more complexity, dilemmas, reflexivity, efforts, and at times even struggles to a successful adjunct program/course than its outward success can tell.

Introduction

With a continuing increase in immigration, more and more college-age non-native speakers of English are planning or striving to complete post-secondary or university education in this country (Rosenthal 2000 p.72, in Kasper, et al. 2000). These immigrants usually have diverse language and literacy backgrounds and have been recently defined as Generation 1.5 (Blumenthal, 2002). To assist these students in making smooth transitions into the college mainstream, content-based language adjuncts have been designed and integrated into college transitional programs. Many have written on the successful experiences of this model as leaders of and instructors in such programs (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Higbee, et al., ed, 2001; and Kasper, et al., 2000), yet few ethnographic studies have been done on content-based reading courses in a college adjunct model. This paper will report a mini-ethnographic case study addressing this less ethnographically researched area. Viewing the adjunct program, the transitional college that the program is in, and the entire university as different but related local cultures, it seeks a cultural interpretation of the people and activities involved in the reading courses in the adjunct program.

Research Questions

1. How do different people perceive themselves (their teaching or learning) in relation to the adjunct reading courses and the content courses? Why do people perceive the way they do? How are people's perceptions influenced by their micro- and macro context?
2. How do different people from different positions and viewpoints (program leader, teachers, and students) understand/interpret the goals and teaching/learning theories of the reading adjunct model?
3. How do teachers translate the goals and theories into their own practice?
4. How are the students making use of these adjunct classes? What are the students' understandings about the way their teachers teach (methods and approaches, reasons for educational choices and actions)?

Research Methods

The Unit of Analysis:

This study is a one-semester mini-ethnographic case study that takes place in a large mid-Western U.S. university. The adjunct program, as embodied by its reading courses, is the unit of analysis. Altogether the program has four reading adjunct courses connected to four content courses. Given the specific semester, three reading instructors are available for interviews and two reading courses are open, both of which I observed.

Key Participations

The key participants are four staff members of the adjunct program (one program director and three reading adjunct instructors) and three students who are currently taking a reading adjunct course. All names here are pseudonyms.

Data Collection Methods

Multiple sources of data for triangulation are gathered to describe what it is like to teach and study in the reading adjuncts of the content-based program:

1. Interviews with reading teachers, Ann, Nancy, and Cleo (audio-taped)
2. Interview with Ruth, the director of the program (audio-taped)
3. Interview with the students, Suresh, Naimo, and Lina (audio-taped)
4. Formal classroom observations
5. Casual interviews and observations
6. Examination of content textbooks
7. Examination of course syllabi and class/homework handouts

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with the qualitative analysis software NUDIST Nivivo. Initial broad categories were formed and node reports were made. Then the initial node reports were analyzed and coded sentence-by-sentence and new categories were formed within each broad category. Minor modifications were made across categories.

Researcher as Human Instrument and as Context

Fetterman (1998) argues that “good ethnography requires both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives” (p.22). Before conducting fieldwork, I have been immersed in the program as an instructor for more than a year, which has provided me some firsthand insider experiences with teaching immigrant students. On the other hand, Walcott (1999) points out, “outsider (or insider) perspective refers to an *orientation*, not a *membership*” (p.137), which validates the possibility for an insider to distance oneself and view a culture from a social scientific framework. Throughout the study, I have followed Stake’s (1995) data generation pattern from the etic (asking research questions) to the emic (fieldwork) and then back to the etic (data analysis).

Ethnographic fieldwork is also an interactive process. Whichever perspective, etic or emic, the researcher takes, the participants will always assign different roles to the researcher in different situations. The roles that I take and am assigned to, together with the relationships that I form with my participants *are* part of the research context (Graue & Walsh, 1998). How much of an insider or outsider I am depends on with whom I interact and what role my participants perceive me to be in. The researcher is an inescapable and inseparable part of the environment in which the participants exist, act, and express/exchange their views. My role as an instructor is a natural part of the program; my role as a researcher, however, is NOT. My presence will always be felt and be unnatural if I take or am perceived to have taken “the researcher (outsider) role.” Therefore, while formal interviews and classroom observations are crucial in gaining outsider insights, it is also of vital importance for me to have casual conversations and observations when I need to gain insider knowledge and perspectives. I have also been constantly reminding myself that my words, actions, or even presence may influence the way people act, especially in formal situations where I am viewed as a researcher.

Literature Review on Cultural, Theoretical and Program Contexts

The ESL Students and the American Academic Culture

ESL (English as a second language) students in an adjunct program are often from many different countries. The composition of these immigrant students is diverse in terms of their language proficiency and literacy levels (Rosenthal, 2000, p.73). Some came to the U.S. from their home country where they have finished high school. These students usually have obtained better and fuller literacy skills in the first language (L1)¹. The overall English language proficiency of these students is limited. Some students stayed in refugee camps for a few years, missed three to five years of schooling, and were directly put into socially proper, age-appropriate grade levels regardless of their loss in content area knowledge. These students tend to have better oral English skills, but their academic (language) skills are not as high as those whose schooling has not been interrupted. Some came to the States with very little schooling and low literacy level, L1 or L2, and are now acquiring literacy in their L2. What these diverse groups of students have in common is that they all need to be acculturated into the mainstream academic culture of their universities/colleges, whereas they have little knowledge of the conventions or expectations of such higher educational institutions.

¹ Second language is to be shortened as L2.

Swales (1990) points out that each academic community has a culture, an accepted discourse, and a set of expected behaviors of its own. Compared with the more identifiable, ritualistic culture such as festivals, the academic culture in a university is much more implicit and hidden at a deeper level. U.S. universities as an academic discourse community have unique characteristics that are different both from higher or secondary educational institutes in a different country/culture and from the high school academic culture here in this country. Students in U.S. universities are expected to attend credit-based classes, participate actively and often cooperatively in class, read a heavy load of textbooks and printed materials in the academic discourse of a given field, write academic papers using appropriate academic discourse and genres, communicate appropriately with the “right” personnel to solve relevant problems, and submit assignments in a timely manner. To most freshmen ESL students, the university and its academic culture are far from familiar. At the behavioral/ action-oriented level, different cultures may have different schooling and classroom interaction patterns. At a more conceptual level, different cultures may view what counts as learning, as good teaching, as being intellectual, etc., differently. The academic readings that they are required to deal with at college are written in genres and discourse patterns (general and field specific vocabularies, terminologies, and sentence/essay structures) that are not part of their daily-life English (Swales, 1990). Even when ESL students have had a certain amount of schooling in the U.S., the university is still an unfamiliar spectacle. High school experiences can be very different from that of the university in classroom dynamics, teacher-student relationship, course requirement, study skills, etc. Students, especially ESL students, need to be trained to acquire such academic language proficiency in order to be part of the university mainstream (Swales, 1990).

Theoretical Context of the Adjunct Model

Language Learning Theories

Krashen (1982) argues that language learners should acquire an L2 through meaningful communication instead of grammatical drills stripped out of context. He proposes that an L2 is best learned when learners are placed in naturalistic environments, faced with authentic tasks, and using the language with authentic purposes. Content-based language teaching is based on this theory of authenticity in meaningful context in which the learners learn content-area knowledge via the L2 just as what native speakers do with their first language. The adjunct model pairs a content-based language course with a content course that has both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS), which makes language acquisition even more meaningful and authentic.

Cummins (1981) draws a distinction between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Collier and Thomas (1997) have found that students generally acquire the more difficult CALP at a much slower rate than they acquire BICS in the elementary/secondary school settings. This, complicated by the fact that the university often requires higher levels of CALP in different discipline genres, a few years of high school education is often not sufficient for these students to succeed at college. Murie and Thomson (2001) hold that “language learning takes time” (p.18) and that ESL students who have not met required schooling years or university entry scores should continue to receive language support throughout their first two years at college (p.19).

Language Teaching Theory: Vygotsky's ZPD

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) informs the content-based adjunct at both the macro program design level and the micro classroom teaching level. Vygotsky points out that effective learning takes place within the ZPD, the zone between the lower boundary where the learner can actually accomplish a task on her own and the upper boundary where the learner cannot accomplish the task on her own but *can* accomplish with the help of an expert and/or a better performing peer. In this theory, language is a tool that assists in the learners' cognitive development. Vygotsky advanced the field's understanding of language learning – language is not only an ability that is acquired through content learning but also a tool that can in turn assist the learner to gain content knowledge. At the program design level, adjunct courses help the students move from where they are to where they can be in terms of both language acquisition and knowledge learning. At the classroom level specific objectives are achieved through cooperative learning and mentor/teacher assistance.

Reading Theories and Approaches to Teaching Reading

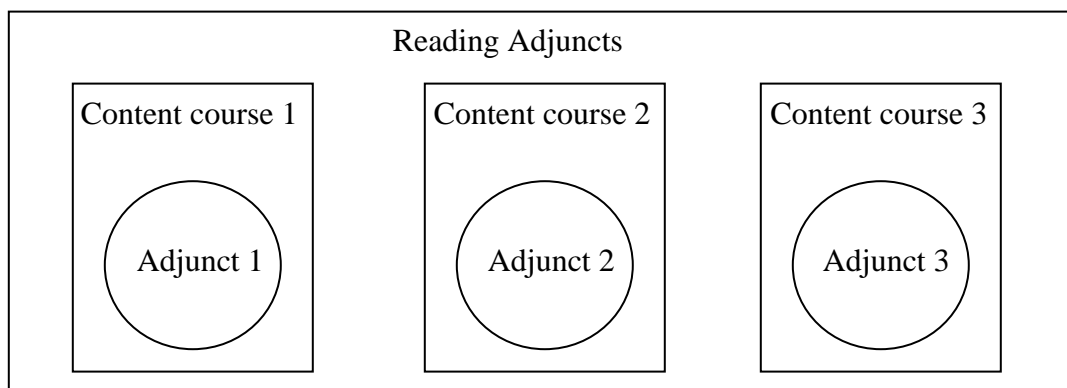
Bernhardt (1998) points out that there are three theoretical viewpoints of reading: the cognitive view, the social view, and the sociocognitive view. As a cognitive process reading is “an intra-personal problem-solving task” (p.6), involving decoding of the printed text. The readers need to know how words are spelled and how sentence structures are formed to be able to understand the meaning of the text. As a social process reading is knowledge-based and, together with literacy acquisition, is seen as “part of the processes of cultural transmissions, enculturation, and socialization” (p.9). As a sociocognitive process, reading is not only a decoding task of basic semantic and syntactic structures, but also a (re-) constructive interaction that involves general and field-specific background knowledge, reader goals, writer intentions, the reading task, and the subject matter content (Bernhardt, 1998; van den Broek & Gustafson, 1999). The reader plays a very active part in this process of interaction and (re-) construction. Meta-cognitive abilities (monitoring, organizational, and strategic abilities) are also recognized as important for effective reading. ESL students need training in all of these elements in their reading process (Bernhardt, 1998).

These theories have given rise to different approaches to teaching reading, among which the top-down vs. bottom-up teaching and strategies vs. skills training are the most prevailing. While reading skills are automated, routinized, and inflexible, strategies are goal-oriented and adaptable, involving reasoning/critical thinking and meta-cognitive awareness (Dole, Duffy, & Pearson, 1991). The bottom-up approach teaches the students basic skills such as phonemic knowledge, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. The top-down approach, on the other hand, works with the students' background knowledge, meta-cognitive study skills, and discourse level components (Paris & Paris, 2001). Paris and Paris (2001) call for a more balanced use of teaching methods and approaches.

Program Context: Curriculum Structures of The reading Adjunct Model

Originated from late 70s and the 80s in the United States, the content-based adjunct model has been used as an important curriculum design for college ESL students. The reading adjunct course is usually closely tied with one content area course. While the content professor teaches the regular subject area course that has a mixture of NS and NNS of English, the adjunct language teacher helps only the NNS with both the academic language and the content-area knowledge and

skills. Students in this model usually take several content and language adjunct courses at a time (Murie & Thomson, 2001). The reading adjuncts can be diagrammed as the following:

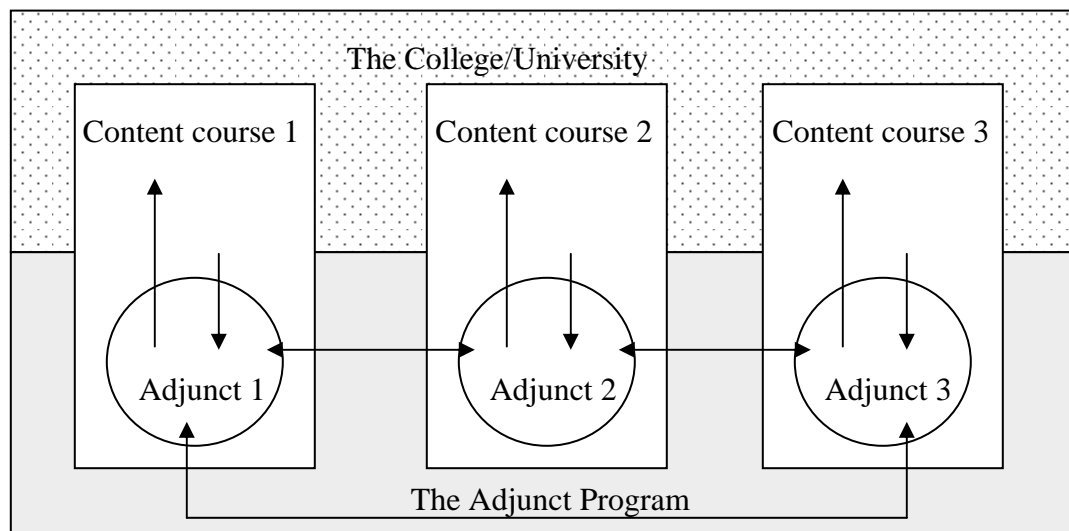


Results Analysis and Interpretation

As the research progresses, two more questions emerged from fieldwork in addition to the initial questions: (1) what is the relationship among the reading and content classes in relation to the program and the college/university? And (2) what is (are) the role of culture(s) in the students' learning in the reading classes as well as in the program?

Relationship Among Courses: The Reading Adjuncts Diagram Revised

Collaboration is key to the adjunct culture. It manifests itself in these particular adjunct-reading courses in ways that are both similar and different from Murie and Thomson's (2001) description of a general adjunct model. There is first of all the regular component of a close relationship between the content courses and their adjunct as characterized by syllabus sharing and planning, class visits and note-taking, and formal as well as informal meetings. And yet it is not only the reading adjunct instructors that are reaching out and adapting their courses as much as they can to the content courses; the content professors also reach out to the reading instructors and more importantly to the students by visiting the reading class and giving talks and guidance. The content courses are connected and embedded both with the college/university and the adjunct program. It is interesting to discover that the reading instructors also collaborate but in a different way. As Ruth, Nancy and Ann mentioned, because of the uniqueness of the content course materials and instructor individual preferences, the reading classes teach different skills/strategies or different aspects of these skills/strategies so that students will not have senses of repetition and will learn new things when they take different adjuncts. While there is coordination in instructional emphases among the reading courses, there are also overlaps for recycling. This has given a more complex picture of the reading adjunct as illustrated below:



The Adjunct, the College, and the University: Arguments and Counterarguments

This particular adjunct program for ESL students is embedded in a transitional college within a large state-owned mid-Western university. The transitional college is designed for both NS and NNS students whose test scores are a little below the borderline of being admitted into the university mainstream. The college offers a variety of credit-bearing courses (humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences). The reading adjuncts are courses offered by the adjunct program together with other language courses.

Casual conversations and formal interviews with the different parties involved in the adjunct program reveal interesting similarities and differences in opinions on the value/validity of the program. Ruth, the director, sees the program as a very good and useful system to help minority ESL students who would otherwise not have a chance at all to go to university make their way into and be successful in a higher educational institution. Similarly, the reading instructors, Ann, Cleo and Nancy, have the same perception about the value of the program. But not all ESL teachers shared the same opinions. One debate seemed to be on the amount and difficulty level of the work and the students' proficiency levels. The content courses are tough in many cases even for NS students and the reading load is heavy, with a typical week having around 200 pages of academic books to cover for a student who takes a regular set of 4 courses a semester. Both Ruth and Nancy recalled that they used to have a reading teacher who quit on the program in the first few weeks of her teaching, arguing that it was *"not fair to quote and quote put poor ESL students into a learning situation like this where they would ultimately fail"* (Nancy, formal interview). However, Ruth and the present reading instructors in the program argue against pigeonholing ESL students as weaker learners. Ruth's counterargument is that ESL students should be allowed to fully develop their academic potentials in the real content courses offered by the college or the university despite their less than perfect English proficiency. From this perspective it is also not fair to exclude ESL students from the chance to study authentic materials as a regular freshman, just as Cleo said:

Everybody should have the same opportunity to go to college even if you are not a native speaker or the smartest learner. Even if you don't have perfect English, you can go to college and succeed. This is what education is about, isn't it?

On the more practical side, Ruth argued that having these students taking traditional ESL classes would use up too much of their financial aid before they can even take the content courses. The adjunct model is a way of solving this problem so that the students do not have to wait to learn the knowledge they aspire to. Ruth, Cleo, and Nancy mentioned that many of their ESL students are the ones who participate in class discussion, answer questions in class, get good grades, and stay at the top of the class in spite of the difficult contents, and Nancy would challenge anyone who tells her that these courses were not fair.

The students' attitude towards the adjunct program is more complicated. On the one hand, the students are "*highly motivated to do well*" for themselves, their families, or their villages and will "*do whatever it takes to succeed*" (Nancy, formal interview). They generally like the support provided by the program and feel that they have benefited from taking the reading adjuncts (interviews with all three students). On the other hand, they do not want to be in the program, which is a sentiment that is especially strong during the first semester of their freshman year; they want to be a regular college student and join the mainstream of the university. The transitional college with the adjunct program in it, according to Nancy, is at times considered "the joke of the university" because:

(It is) not as legitimate as the Institute of Technology or the Business School, some of the big name places that get tons of funding from the federal government, from grants, from military projects, from industry, from business, from local government.

The reading instructors are also aware of their students' discouragements and resistance, as Nancy described:

Yeah, students are quite open about that with me and during the fall semester they ask me "why do we have to do this," "why do we have to do that?" ... We get a lot of resistance because people are functioning in AP courses in high school, taking advanced math and sciences and all of a sudden they land here in this college?

The fact that the college and its programs are academically stigmatized and considered to be a lesser version of other "more legitimate" colleges of the university is seen as an important contributing factor to the students' unwillingness to study in this college. This stigmatization of the college (and of the adjunct program being an even lesser version of the college) seems to be in sharp contrast with the students' actual achievements. The key participants explained that students in the adjunct program have the highest GPAs in the transitional college and have the best transfer rates to highly competitive programs such as computer science, pre-med, and business school. Nancy told her students that they were lucky to be automatically enrolled in adjunct classes that would help them greatly in learning the content and that the program is:

The one door at the university besides Continuing Education that says, “So, you made a few mistakes in your life; so, you are not a native speaker of English, but who cares, come on in anyway and we’ll see what we can do with you.”

The Forming of a Local Academic Culture

The program is influenced by many cultures, the academic culture of the college, the culture of the university mainstream, and the collective and personal cultures that each student and instructor bring with them. The dominant cultural groups in the program are Vietnamese and African (Somali, Ethiopian, Liberian) students. Occasionally, the program will have one or two students from East Europe or the Middle East. Even though Ruth sees the possibility of a problem when a student does not belong to any of the major cultural groups in the program, she has also observed “*a lot of bonding and friendship across the cultural groups*” and “*students continue on studying with each other, helping each other out*” even when they are no longer in the program.

In certain classes, the reading materials reflect a particular culture and in many cases the Western culture. The human anatomy and biology textbooks, for example, present the Western view on medicine and the health science. In contrast, in the sociology and anthropology courses, socioculturally relevant issues such as beliefs, religions, gender, sex, race, class, and social institutions are discussed in the reading materials and in class. However, cultural differences in what topics are appropriate for public discussion, if not critically reflected by the instructors, may give false indications on the students’ level of reading proficiency. Cleo explains that one of the seeming “reading comprehension” problems is actually the students’ difficulty with the Western academic culture. On one occasion in her class, for example, the students felt so uncomfortable with a certain chapter’s graphic descriptions on “sex” and sexual activities that they avoided discussing the real issue in the textbook and talked about biology in an anthropology discussion. Cleo, as with the other reading instructors, has been at times confronted with the dilemma between understanding where the problem comes from and having to assess the students’ academic performance according to standard university/course criteria.

In most cases where situations are less starkly uncomfortable, “*The students seem to rise above their historical and political differences when they are in class*” (Ann). All three instructors hold that the benefit of discussing sensitive topics far exceeds the few drawbacks, because the courses are the places where they can express their own cultural or religious beliefs, analyze them, and feel secure about doing it. On the other hand, Ann also mentioned that she would be very cautious not to touch upon topics such as abortion because the issue is so sensitive that she does not want a fight breaking out in her class. To acknowledge the students’ cultures, Ann finds supplementary materials that represent views other than the Western perspective. Nancy perceives that her students were able to ask (and feel comfortable asking) a lot of questions about cancer and sex and other health issues that they would have no opportunity of asking elsewhere. At the same time, the instructors have commented that they will also respect and support the students who wish to be seen as no different from their mainstream peers and that the students should not feel obliged to stick to their ethnic identities if they choose to take on a mainstream perspective. Cleo tries hard not to impose her own opinions on the way her students interpret the reading material as long as they have understood the basics of the text. The instructors also integrate role-plays, simulations, presentations, and projects to encourage the students to be an expert of a small area so that they will be able to use the skills and knowledge in the content class and be proud of taking ownership of that

part of the content knowledge. When students are presenting information or discussing concepts as a whole-class activity, the teacher and the students all offer ideas, thoughts, and alternative interpretations. Both the teacher and the students are resources of ideas and knowledge.

The academic culture in these reading classes appears to be a negotiated space created by the students and the teachers together. The teachers and students have jointly shaped a culture of their own – a local, academically oriented culture of a learning community that is influenced by but reaches beyond the daily life culture of the individual and has *become* part of the college and university culture.

Interpreting the Goals and Teaching/Learning Theories of the Reading Adjuncts

The goals of the adjunct course are to help students: (1) understand the content of the reading; (2) develop understanding of academic discourse; and (3) develop meta-cognitive skills and study skills needed for both the content courses and the college career as a whole. Language learning in these reading adjuncts is seen through the lenses of L2 literacy development. The instructors see L2 literacy as the CALP part of language development, which is the focus of the reading classes. However, as Nancy analyzed, the reality of literacy and language is far from the simple picture that theory presents. Many of the students in the program function in three or four languages before they learned English; therefore, English is not their L2 but L4 or L5. They may have one or two home languages, a language of the religion, the then English. Some students are literate in their L1; some are not but are in their L2 and are now trying to gain literacy in English. She also points out that the *academic discourse* of English is so different from the daily life register that it may be considered another language in itself. With this level of complexity, teaching the academic discourse seems to be crucial to the students' understanding of content reading materials.

In terms of reading theories, all instructors seem to agree that reading is a sociocognitive process and that both top-down and bottom-up ways of teaching are important and are integral parts of their reading classes. They hold that the reading courses should help the students develop their analytical, holistic, and meta-cognitive skills together. Viewing the academic community (the institution) as having its own rules and ways to navigate, the instructors also interpret as part of their responsibility to teach students how to meet with class/homework requirements, where to find help, and how to talk with professors.

With regard to teaching theories, the instructors consider learner-centeredness to be key to the program and the reading classes. For Ruth, a learner centered program entails helping the students fulfill university requirements for different subject matters:

We pick content courses with a couple things in mind. One, we want to look at the distribution requirement that students have. We don't want all the content courses in the humanities. Students also have to fill (both) science and social science requirements. So we look for things that will fill the requirements that the students have at the university.

For Ann who teaches reading in sociology, student-centeredness means relevance of the course content to the students. She sees the program's choice of sociology, anthropology, and literature as an effort of acknowledging the students' knowledge background, as the issues of race, gender, class, and religion are the major topics of these content courses. Cleo interprets "learner-centeredness" as

putting the students' learning process instead of product at the center of her classes. She normally just sits back and listens when her students discuss in class and let them experience the process of making meaning from the reading. Each reading course also has a different reading skills/strategies focus from the rest of the reading courses so that the students will "keep learning new things."

In general, the students, especially the three students who participated the interviews, seem to appreciate the type of assistance provided by the reading adjuncts and its relatedness to the content course. They understand the techniques of many of the study skills and reading skills such as finding the main idea, recitation on the content classes, reading difficult and large volumes of materials, and fast-reading by focusing only on main points. They also appreciate that the adjuncts have given them a safe place where they can ask questions that they do not feel comfortable asking in a large class with NS speakers present and that they can discuss a lot of things in class without having to worry about people not liking their perspectives. When asked if they would choose a general reading course that is not in adjunct with a content course, all three of them answered "No," because they think that the adjuncts helped a lot in their content learning.

Interestingly, Suresh mentioned that he did not want to take a reading adjunct any more even though it has been helpful. Now he knows what to expect and do in the content courses and taking an adjunct in the second semester would seem to be unnecessary for him, although it may be useful for "the students who really have poor reading abilities." Naimo and Lina are taking the sociology course and its adjunct this semester and are advised to take the anthropology for next semester. However, they predicted that the sociology course and the anthropology course would be almost the same and so there would be no point in taking the other if they have taken one already. The students' conversations indicate a lot of confidence in what they will be able to accomplish after a semester's training in the reading adjunct. Yet, they do not seem to have known about the distinct differences among the content (and the adjunct reading courses) and the difficulties of the content courses that lie ahead of them. Neither do they seem to realize the reasons for the combination of the courses, which Ruth describes as both giving variety in terms of fulfilling university requirements and juggling with course difficulty levels so that students who take a difficult course such as Math and Human Anatomy could also take an easier course such as anthropology or general art. This design is intended to ensure students' concentration of efforts and achievement of good GPAs. But this point seems difficult for students to understand. Some students consider those courses whose credits do not count towards their major as "unnecessary," despite the valuable language and learning skills that they can learn as well as the strategic importance of these courses.

Working with Reality: Metacognitive Skills and Accurate Understanding

Scaffolding is knitted into the structure of the two reading courses in facilitating the content courses as a whole. Both Ann and Cleo's classes follow roughly the same structure of *recitation*², *preparation*, *presentation*, and *debriefing*. *Key concepts review* occurs in the recitation phase in Ann's class, but after the presentation phase in Cleo's class. The recitation phase is where most study skills are dealt with. Both use the recitation time to clarify and explain assignment requirements and the importance of certain assignments in the grand schema of the course, to talk about how to do certain assignments/projects without revealing the answers, and to clarify confused

² Assistance with the homework requirements, content information, project "how-to," etc. is broadly defined as recitation.

content knowledge from the most recent content class. Ann's recitation style is more explicit including teacher and student initiated questioning, answering, and explaining. But Cleo's recitation has both hands-on activities and explicit elements. In one of her hands-on activities she gave the students the assignment requirement sheet and ask them to answer questions and later share and discuss what the assignment asks them to do. Below is an example comparison of Ann's more explicit instruction and Cleo's hands on activity in helping the students figure out what an assignment was about:

Ann's Blackboard	Cleo's Blackboard
1) Topic/introduction, your interest and background knowledge 2) Assumptions 3) History of your organization 4) Field notes: Relate to articles and concepts 5) Themes 6) Research (readings) and service learning	Answer the following questions on the part of the assignment you've been given: 1) What is the purpose of this part? 2) What specifically do you need to do for this part? 3) What will a paper have in it? 4) How long will it be? 5) Is there any special notes or anything to be careful about

While Ann's explicit recitation guide directly targets at the requirements and knowledge in the content course (which also provides a good model for the students to formulate recitation guides by themselves), Cleo's guided discovered asks metacognitive questions that will enable the students to formulate a recitation guide on their own.

What is interesting is that most of the students seem to be more used to Ann's way of recitation than Cleo's. Class observations show that some students have difficulty understanding activities on study skills that are more meta-cognitive and removed from the content of the reading that they are dealing with. Whenever Cleo asked the students to do an activity on understanding what the assignment was about, several students would ask either their peers or Cleo several times despite the high degree of clarity of her instructions:

So, are we reading the chapter?

We need to read the chapter first, right?

What? We are not reading the book? What are we doing?

The observations also discovered that many students were repeating the same pattern of not knowing how to talk about content issues in depth despite teacher's constant modeling in class and through homework handouts. It did not seem to have dawned on them that they could think in the ways that were demonstrated by their teachers or that, to think in more depth, they could ask themselves the same questions that their teachers were asking them.

Coming from home and academic cultures where the grade is more important than how the grade is achieved, the students are more used to seeing content-oriented discussions as more helpful than metacognitive-skill development discussions where there may be no immediate gains on

content-area knowledge. Comments such as “just tell me what I’m supposed to do with the assignment” or “I just want to know the correct answer” can be heard quite often. While good grades *are* important, the relevance of metacognitive skills to gaining good grades and to college success in the long run is only beginning to be discovered by the students. Ann and Cleo, as with the rest of the instructors in the program, are trying very hard to design more metacognitive activities and provide more quality modeling.

Ann and Cleo are especially concerned about their students’ unwillingness or sometimes inability to (correctly) interpret the opinions expressed by the authors in the textbooks. Both argue that critical thinking and critical reading cannot be achieved without a good understanding of the text itself. They tried various ways to solve this problem. Ann asks her students to use their own words and be specific in their paraphrases when the class was learning the concept of “institutional scapegoating:”

And then they put on their definition part: “Institutions like to scapegoat.” Well, you are using the same words in your definition and it still doesn’t show me what it means. ... So they go back and try to (be more specific) by looking at the example ... and breaking it down more into parts. What’s an institution? What does scapegoating mean? And how does the example given here illustrate what that does or how that’s done?

Still struggling with this issue, Cleo designed a set of questions to train her students to focus more on the “literal and analytical” text-based meaning without undermining the value of personal opinion.

I usually set it up along the structure of first, what was your personal reaction to the reading, then, what’s the thesis, and how did the authors support their thesis and what kind of evidence are they using, asking them to actually dig into the text. (Cleo, interview)

1. Respond personally to the reading... 2. Respond literally to the reading... 3. Respond by interpreting the reading... 4. Finally, apply the reading. (Cleo, extracts from reading assignment requirements)

Ann and Cleo believe that critical thinking comes next after the students have gotten from the text what they should be critiquing about. Their critical reading consists mainly of what they term as “application” questions such as:

“How would you apply the theories in sociology to this research?” or the next question would be a critical reading exercise: “How would you critique the author’s research? Did they use enough methods? Did they sample the right kind of population?” Or “is there something that’s left out?” Or “Would you argue with their conclusions?”

It seems that as the students are gaining college literacy via the L2, they also need to learn ways of thinking academically and professionally in the L2, which their home culture and/or their high school academic environment may not have prepared them fully. This learning process, in a lot of cases, involves acquiring knowledge and awareness that go far beyond content-area knowledge or L2 fluency, such as, how to be analytical in order to break down and learn new concepts, how to

postpone personal judgments until after they have understood the text well, how to dissociate their own opinions from the author's opinions so as to have an accurate understanding, and how to critique academically with appropriate genre(s).

While some students' home cultures may de-emphasize critical thinking in school settings, their high school experiences in the U.S. may have over-emphasized expressing opinions. The sensitive nature of the discussion topics in many of the readings and the cultural distance of such discussion topics from the students' home cultures may also be the reasons for them to have difficulty understanding, talking in academically acceptable ways about, or refraining from jumping into conclusions on what they have read.

Implications

There seems to be great resonance between the director's and the instructors' interpretations of program goals and founding theories. Instructors' reports and classroom observations indicate high degrees of reflexivity and consistency in goal and theory translation and implementation. Students seem to appreciate and understand a lot about the purposes of the program, the courses, and the strategies/skills that they have learned from the reading adjuncts. There are, however, some misunderstandings and confusions about program level course combination and about the purposes and techniques at the methods level in study skills and reading skills such as peer cooperative learning in group-works and meta-cognitive study skills training.

A program level suggestion would be to add a program course combination and design component in freshmen orientation and program out-reach activities. Copies of books or typical chapters and sample mock tests of each content course could be brought to students to give them a "feel" of the demands of the freshman year and the necessity for supports. The course combination philosophy could also be discussed with freshmen or potential students.

At the adjunct course level, more explicit discussions and teaching may be presented to students in the language they understand and accept without using too many professional terms. Dole et al. (1991) differentiated explicit teaching from direct teaching. The former makes clear the goals, purposes, methods, and even some theories/philosophies behind a given pedagogical action and is conducive to student motivation and achievement, whereas the latter is a much less satisfactory way that teaches grammar by reciting grammar rules. Clear and explicit instruction is needed on why certain pedagogical actions are taken (such as meta-cognitive study skills and teacher/peer modeling) and how these relate to their learning. With the "why" question answered, it may also be beneficial to train them on how to ask questions to facilitate peer discussion and to interact with peers in academic settings.

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