Towards a critical understanding of the teaching of discipline-specific academic literacies: making the tacit explicit

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Abstract

This paper explores the process that occurred among a group of academics at a tertiary institution, as they worked collaboratively over a three-year period in an attempt to situate the teaching of academic literacies within the mainstream curricula of various disciplines of study. The study draws on interview and focus group data, which were produced, using narrative methods such as stimulated recall, free writing and visual representations. Framed by New Literacy Studies and Rhetorical Studies theory, and drawing on the data from participating academics, the paper explicates a model for the process of integrating academic literacies into disciplines. The unfolding model presents factors to be considered when designing integrated approaches to the teaching of academic literacies, and the findings suggest that higher education needs to create discursive spaces for the collaboration of language lecturers and disciplinary specialists. The paper concludes that it is through sustained interaction with language lecturers that disciplinary specialists are able to make their tacit knowledge of the literacy practices and discourse patterns of their disciplines, explicit. Such collaboration enables both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists to shift towards a critical understanding of the teaching of discipline-specific academic literacies.

Introduction

The study reported on in this paper explores the process that occurred between a group of academic literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists at a tertiary institution, as they worked collaboratively over a three-year period in an attempt to situate the teaching of academic literacies within the mainstream curricula of various disciplines of study.

Background

The research site is located at a University of Technology (previously a Technikon) where until fairly recently academic literacy (AL) was taught by a central language department, servicing the curriculum needs of the various faculties and academic departments. The only AL instruction in most

academic programmes was taught as a mandatory offering, namely Communication Skills, which was a largely generic, stand-alone subject. With institutional research beginning to show the inherent problems associated with this approach to AL instruction, and a growing realisation that AL played an important role in the conceptual development of students, the institution began moving towards a more integrated approach to the teaching of AL.

Institutional restructuring, resulting in the decentralisation of the language department and the shifting of the language lecturers into the academic departments of the various faculties at the institution, provided some impetus for language lecturers to embed their AL teaching in the mainstream curricula of the academic departments where they were placed. These shifts, along with an institutionally co-ordinated project to advance the integration of AL and disciplines of study, precipitated collaboration between the language lecturers and disciplinary specialists. This institutional project provided the research site for the study.

The institutional project involved collaboration between lecturers from different disciplines (disciplinary specialists) and AL practitioners (hereafter language lecturers) who formed partnerships. These partnerships in turn formed a transdisciplinary project team of tertiary educators, which was the institutional platform that networked the discipline-based collaborative partnerships between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists. This paper examines the processes that occurred between and among the partnerships as they attempted to negotiate common understandings of academic literacy (AL) practices within the mainstream tertiary curriculum, and theorises these processes through an unfolding model.

Theoretical framing

The study is framed by two theoretical traditions, New Literacy Studies and Rhetorical Studies. Gee (1990, 1998, 2003; Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996), a linguist who is also regarded as one of the founders of the New Literacy Studies group has contributed to a theory of literacy-as-social-practice through his theorising the notion of Discourse. He sees Discourses as encompassing more than language or literacies, to include not only ways of speaking, reading and writing within particular contexts, but also ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking and believing, that are acceptable within specific groups of people in particular contexts. This study draws on three core theoretical constructs emanating from Gee's more recent work (2003), namely, 'semiotic domains', 'affinity groups' and 'design grammars'.

Gee sees semiotic domains as embodied contexts along with their distinctive social practices through which content is constantly changed and negotiated, and cites academic disciplines as examples of semiotic domains. This view understands academic disciplines as dynamic spaces inhabited by people and their meaning-making interactions through words, sounds, gestures and images, rather than static objects defined as a body of content knowledge. Closely associated with the notion of semiotic domains is the notion of affinity groups, which refers to groups of people who share semiotic domains and amongst whom knowledge, skills, tools and resources are distributed in complex systems. These affinity groups share sets of practices, goals, values and norms associated with the semiotic domain, and can be regarded as 'insiders'. According to Gee, mastering a semiotic domain involves joining an affinity group as an apprentice.

This understanding of academic disciplines as semiotic domains, leads to understandings of students as apprentices to affinity groups of which their lecturers are members or 'insiders'. Learning is therefore seen as a process of becoming fluent in the social practices through which meaning is made in a semiotic domain. Learning is thus linked to the third theoretical construct, that of design grammars. According to Gee every semiotic domain has a design grammar, which is a set of principles or patterns through which materials in the domain are combined to communicate complex meanings. He distinguishes between the 'internal design grammar', which he refers to as the ways in which the content of the semiotic domain is presented, and the 'external design grammar', which he refers to as the on-going social practices that determine the principles and patterns through which the semiotic domain communicates meanings. In order to learn authentically and participate in an affinity group, a student must master the design grammars of the semiotic domain. Critical learning, according to Gee, is achieved through an understanding of both the internal and the external design grammar of a semiotic domain, and is crucial for a meta-understanding of the semiotic domain.

Rhetorical Studies propose a theory of literacy that sees literacy as socially constructed and argues that the linguistic resources individuals draw on to produce text (whether spoken or written) are shaped by a lifetime of interaction with others. This proposition is closely aligned to the way that the New Literacy Studies understands literacies. However, researchers in the Rhetorical Studies tradition (Geisler, 1994b; Bazerman, 1989, 1991 and 1994) have gone further into theorising the nature of expertise. Geisler asserts that expertise is achieved through the interaction of two dimensions of knowledge, the 'domain content' and the 'rhetorical process'. According to Geisler, gaining expertise in the 'domain content' involves working with abstract representations of disciplines and applying those abstractions within different

contexts and adapting them to case-specific data. Her studies show that while 'domain content' expertise is generally developed during the undergraduate years in higher education, the knowledge of undergraduate students continues to lack a 'rhetorical dimension', which refers to an understanding of the complex relationships between the author of a text and the intended audience, as well as the broader social context within which such a text operates. The 'rhetorical dimension' of a field or discipline would entail knowing when, where, to whom and how to communicate the 'domain content' knowledge. Geisler claims that the 'rhetorical process' underpinning knowledge in disciplines, remains hidden for most students because they are taught to view texts as "repositories of knowledge, completely explicit in their content but utterly opaque in their rhetorical construction" (1994b, p. 39). Both Geisler and Gee agree that knowledge of the 'rhetorical process' has a tacit dimension, which makes it difficult for experts to articulate, and therefore difficult for students to learn – an understanding on which this study builds by exploring empirically how this tacit dimension can be made explicit through a process of interaction between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists.

Methodology

As the focus of the study was on the process underpinning an integrated approach to the teaching of academic literacies, as well as on how the participants understood this process and constructed themselves within it, it was appropriate to use 'ex post facto' (Freeman, 1996) data rather than real time data. This type of data required a data production plan that enabled participants to recall and reflect on past experiences. The data production plan included the following:

- Stimulated recall: A session with participants, using data from the institutional project to stimulate reflection on their project experiences.

- Free-writes: A stimulated free-writing exercise, on project participants' lived experience of the project.

- Individual project portfolios: The researcher compiled, printed and bound individualised project portfolios for each consenting participant, including their free-write and various pieces of project documentation representing their participation in the project. This was then used as a stimulus for their creation of a visual representation in preparation for the individual narrative interviews.

- Visual representations: All consenting participants were requested to create a visual representation reflecting their lived experiences of the project.

•   Individual narrative interviews: All consenting participants were interviewed individually using their free-write and visual representation to generate a narrative of their project experiences. All interviews were audio-taped (and where permission was granted, video-taped) and transcribed for analysis.

•   Focus groups: Three focus group sessions were held, one with language lecturers only, one with disciplinary specialists only and one with a mix of both groups. All focus groups were audio-taped (and where permission was granted, video-taped) and transcribed for analysis.

Analysis of findings

Transcripts from interviews and focus groups were open-coded (Geisler, 2004; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) according to the themes emerging. These themes informed an unfolding model (see figures 1–4) for the process of integrating academic literacies into disciplines. As previously mentioned, the participants in the study were a group of language lecturers and disciplinary specialists who worked collaboratively. This group I refer to (in figures 1–4) as the 'transdisciplinary collective' of tertiary educators, which was made up of lecturers from different disciplines as well as language lecturers. This transdisciplinary collective comprised partnerships consisting of collaborating language lecturers and disciplinary specialists, whom I refer to (in figures 2–4) as the 'collaborative partnerships'.

Transdisciplinary collective

The discursive process that took place in the transdisciplinary collective was seen as crucial to the development of individual and collective understandings of what the integration of academic literacies into disciplines of study entailed. This process of transdisciplinary engagement seemed to be an important factor in clarifying lecturers' thinking about the relationship between language and disciplinary content, but also in developing new understandings about teaching and learning generally, and focussing the lecturers on their role as tertiary educators. The findings revealed four factors (see figure 1) that influenced the development of a collective identity among these tertiary educators:

Figure 1: Factors influencing the development of a transdisciplinary collective
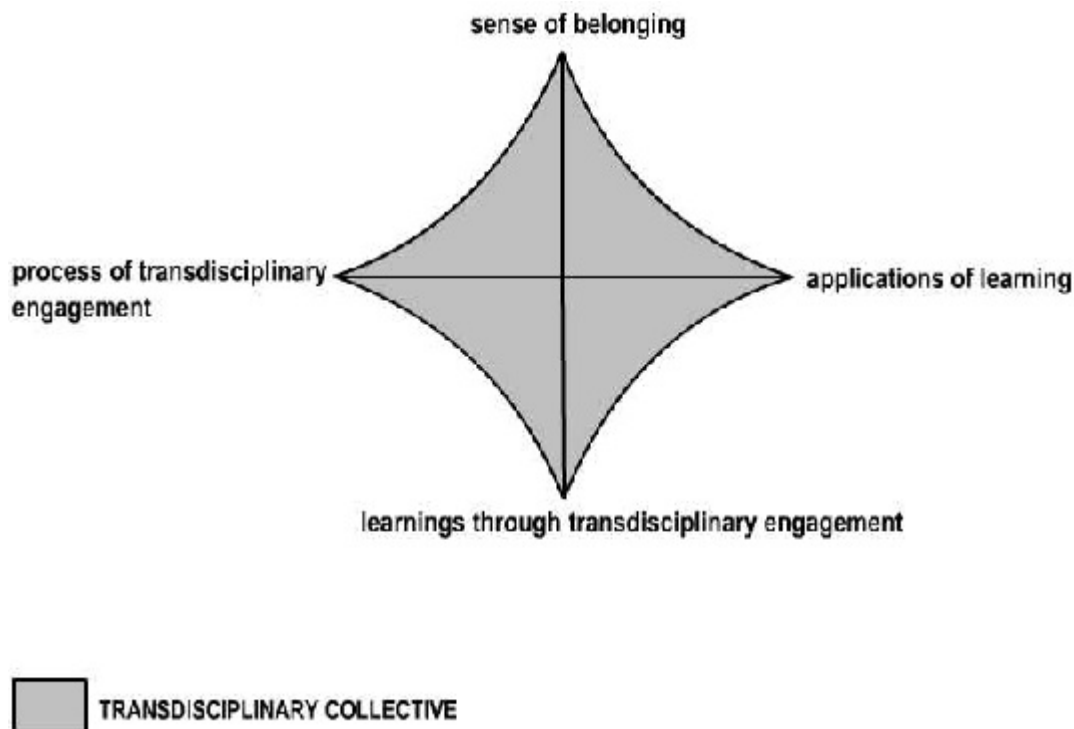
* The first factor was *a sense of belonging* – to a community that was bound by a new integrated approach to the teaching of academic literacy.

* The second factor was the *process of transdisciplinary engagement* – through which lecturers shared practices from a range of disciplinary perspectives.

* The third factor was the *learnings* that crystallised *through* the processes of engagement in the transdisciplinary community, and

* The fourth factor was the *application of the learnings* arising from the processes of engagement in the transdisciplinary community.

The discursive process of transdisciplinary engagement is a key factor when tertiary educators engage with their existing practices and explore unfamiliar approaches to teaching. The transdisciplinary character of the group seemed to raise the debates around teaching and learning to a level seldom reached within disciplinary groupings, one where ideas could be tested against practices from a range of disciplines, as illustrated in the following transcript from one of the participants:

You have people who were coming from different disciplines, but incredibly supportive of what you were trying to think through. To me that was what I found really extraordinary. . . I think because there's a sort of critical evaluation that you often get from your own discipline peers, it is in fact much less useful sometimes because they always weigh it against their own practices in the same thing. . . So therefore when someone from Radiography talks about it, maybe I'm seeing it in an Architectural way but I'm coming from my side of it, I can talk about it. . . They (transdisciplinary collective) could see what you were trying to do. Because they were outside of your discipline they were open to the ideas of how you were doing it. We were all kind of doing it to each other. It was opening windows into our content, into the disciplines that we were dealing with. You were opening a window and you got a glimpse into Law, into all sorts of different fields that people were doing. . . it's like a little window into an aspect of somebody else and you're looking into it, and then when you could comment and you felt quite happy talking about something like that, a different sort of feel because of what it was and the way it worked. . . it really worked incredibly well in that process.

Collaborative partnerships

The study investigated two levels of interaction among participants, one level within the collaborative partnerships and another level within the transdisciplinary collective. The data show that participants distinguished between their participation in the collaborative partnerships and their participation in the broader transdisciplinary project team, which was made up of the collaborative partnerships. The findings reveal that these two levels of interaction contributed to participants' development in different ways. The interaction within the transdisciplinary collective appeared to lift the participants outside of their disciplines and focus them on issues of teaching and learning, which cut across disciplines. This process was instrumental in developing a collective identity as tertiary educators or teachers. This collective engagement also provided a discursive space for them to negotiate an integrated approach to the teaching of ALs and to develop shared understandings of what it meant to integrate AL and disciplinary content.

However, the interaction that took place between the collaborating language lecturers and disciplinary specialists, in their partnerships, was instrumental in shaping both language lecturers' and disciplinary specialists' understandings of their respective roles and identities beyond that of tertiary educator/teacher, to include that of Discourse teacher. The discursive process of a language partner questioning and asking for clarification regarding disciplinary discourses, led to discussions and the developing of new understandings and insights for both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists. The findings revealed the following factors (see figure 2) that influenced the development of reciprocal identities, as Discourse teachers, between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists:

Figure 2: Factors influencing collaborative partnerships
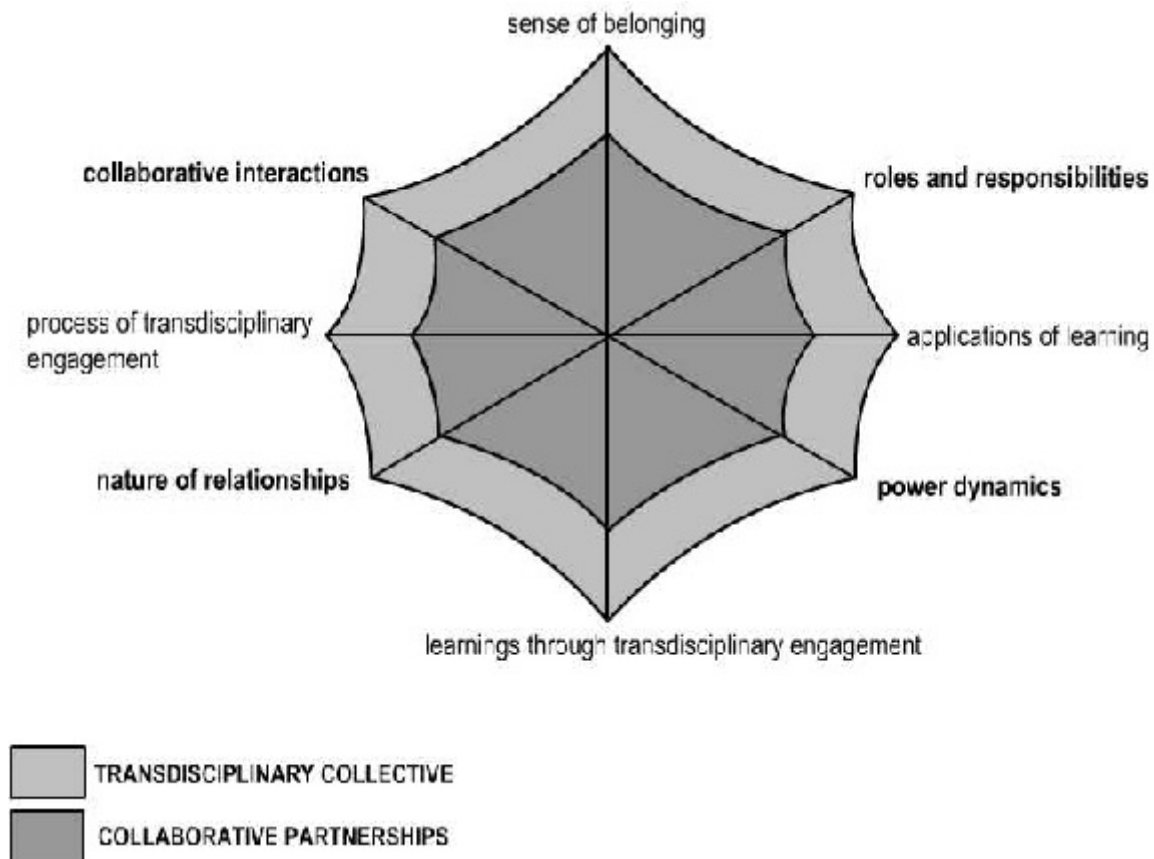
- The first factor was the *collaborative interactions* through which the disciplinary specialist partners made explicit, to the language partners, their tacit knowledge of the workings of Discourse within their disciplines. For disciplinary specialists, the process of interacting with someone who was not from the discipline helped clarify how the discourse of the discipline might be ambiguous and impeding students' access to the disciplinary content.

- The next factor was the *nature of the relationships* between the language lecturers and disciplinary specialists, which was influenced by personality, educational vision, commitment and so on. Efforts at integrating AL and disciplinary content were negatively affected by personality differences between collaborating partners. It seems that the passage of time played an important role in allowing for personalities to gel. Time was also found to be an important factor in developing a shared identity across the transdisciplinary collective.

- Another factor was the *power dynamics* emerging within the language lecturer/disciplinary specialist partnerships. This was influenced by notions of expertise. Language lecturers constructed themselves as educational experts, often

conflating academic literacies with teaching and learning issues, while disciplinary specialists saw themselves as lacking expertise in educational matters. This had a significant effect on the dynamics of power operating in the collaborative partnerships, and set the scene for how the power relations played themselves out in the partnerships.

•   The final factor was the *roles and responsibilities* negotiated within the collaborative partnerships, which influenced division of labour and how participants understood the nature of their integrated approach. Notions of expertise also influenced how partnership roles were defined. Where division of labour was more equal and where the language lecturer was not regarded as 'the expert' in the partnership, role reversal occurred, and disciplinary specialists emerged as initiators. When disciplinary specialists, rather than language lecturers, initiated and produced integrated teaching materials, there were deep levels of integration. However, in partnerships where this level of integration did not happen, and where language lecturers assumed the role of primary writer, the integration was more superficial and the texts lacked authenticity. It seems that the depth of integration achieved, when language lecturers take on a primary role, is compromised.

When language lecturers were unable to access the more technical disciplinary content, which is the deeper level of discourse where students really need linguistic access, they attempted to induct themselves into the discourses of the discipline. However, language lecturers attempting to become 'experts' in the disciplinary discourses, crossed into the disciplinary domain of the collaborating partner, and often further undermined the disciplinary expertise that the disciplinary specialist brought to the partnership. This disempowered the disciplinary specialists, most of whom already felt that they lacked expertise in the collaborating partnerships.

In partnerships where deep levels of integration were achieved, language lecturers, rather than inducting themselves into the discourses of the disciplines, 'lifted' the disciplinary specialists out of their discourses by asking questions that a novice to the discipline would. Through this process they shifted the disciplinary specialists to making explicit the rules governing their disciplinary discourses, and in this way unlocked their tacit knowledge of the workings of these disciplinary discourses. This process is articulated in the following piece of the transcript where a participant outlines the challenge he faces as a disciplinary specialist, in bringing his tacit knowledge into the realm of overt and explicit teaching, and how his interaction with a language partner helped to do that:

> *When one's in a particular discipline with a knowledge base that you have, you don't tend to realise that the language of describing it is often very dense, it's packed with jargon and sometimes ones way of saying things, often makes assumptions about a whole kind of knowledge base that you have. . . you can so easily disempower students by doing that, to me was something which I'd never thought of. . . .and working as (collaborative) partnerships, where you're dealing with someone who*

*isn't from your discipline, who's saying "but I don't understand, just explain that for
me". Just working with a language person, you suddenly realise that you're veering
way into the discipline, like talking out from the discipline rather than bringing
people in with you into it, that's always sort of hard when you're in something
because it's like sitting in some kind of cocoon in a way, and then talking to someone
outside, describing what's around you and you're very familiar with all these things
and this other person can hear you but they really aren't sure what you're actually
meaning and it's only when you move outside it, that is where I found the language
person helped a lot. . . the notion of the discourse is that when you're inside one and
you've been inside one for a long time, you forget what it's like to be outside of it.
You don't actually know, it's like so much part of you that it's hard to step outside of
it. As soon as you move into the field of one's own discipline, the rules of the
discourse take over, it's not a sort of conscious thing. It's actually quite unconscious.
You're simply doing it. . .*

This process of collaborative interaction focused the collaborating
partnerships on disciplinary discourses, and was instrumental in expanding the
emerging collective identity as tertiary educator/teacher, to include a
reciprocal identity as Discourse educator/teacher, between the language
lecturers and disciplinary specialists.

Conceptualisations of academic literacies (ALs)

The social process of discursive engagement that occurred in both the
transdisciplinary collective and the collaborative partnerships seemed to
influence a conceptual process for individual participants. Through this
process the individuals making up the transdisciplinary collective developed
and attributed meanings to the concept of ALs. A number of factors (see
figure 3) appeared to shape how individual lecturers made meaning of the
concept of ALs, and its implications for teaching.

Figure 3: Factors influencing conceptualisations of academic literacies
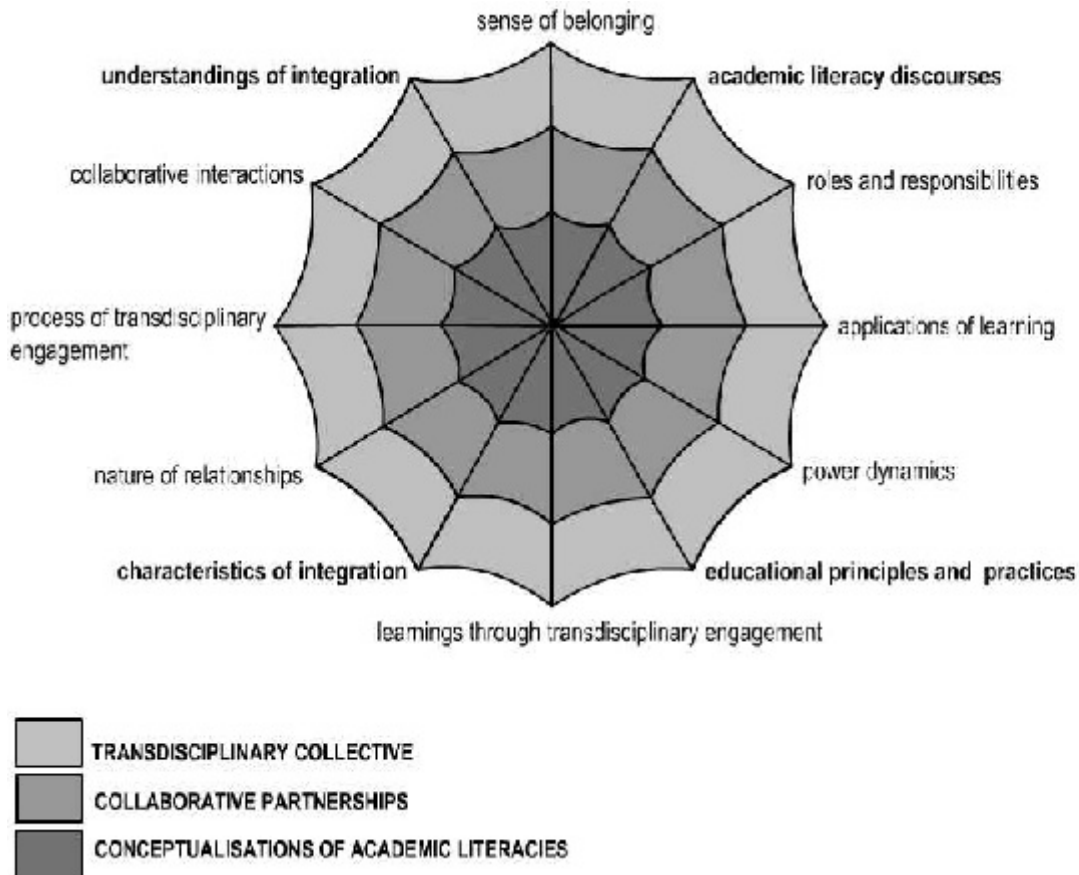
One such factor related to the *characteristics of integration* that shaped how individual lecturers made meaning of the concept of ALs. The nature of the practitioner seemed to be an important characteristic for successful integration of AL and disciplinary content. Lecturers who were relatively new to academia seemed to be more receptive to new approaches and not in a comfort zone in the way that more experienced lecturers might be. Timing also seemed to be an important factor for the lecturers involved in this initiative. When this initiative coincided with lecturers' reflection on own practice, such as at the end of the first year of teaching, and when the lecturers themselves were open-minded and receptive to other perspectives, then integration appeared to be more successful. Another important characteristic for successful integration of language and disciplinary content seemed to be a criticality in lecturers regarding the nature of knowledge production in both their own discipline and in other disciplines. Insight into how knowledge was produced within their own disciplines, and the implications of this for teaching and learning, were important characteristics for successful integration.

• The next factor shaping how individual lecturers made meaning of the concept of ALs, was the implicit theories informing their *educational principles and practices*. Those lecturers who understood knowledge as something to be imparted, and the curriculum as a body of content, were inclined to understand ALs as an autonomous list of generic skills which could be taught alongside a disciplinary curriculum. Where partnerships understood ALs as an autonomous list of transferable generic skills, they tended to integrate these 'skills' alongside a disciplinary curriculum, in a rather superficial model of integration. On the other hand, those lecturers who understood knowledge as discursively constructed, and the curriculum as how the discipline intersected with the world, were inclined to understand ALs as being deeply embedded within the ways in which the various disciplines constructed themselves through language.

• Another factor that appeared to shape how individual lecturers made meaning of the concept of ALs, was the *academic literacy discourses* prevailing within the broader institutional context. The data revealed three dominant institutional discourses. One that understood language as an instrument of communication rather than as a means for making meaning, one that conflated academic literacy and English proficiency, and another that framed students in a deficit mode. All of these discourses shaped both lecturers' conceptualisations of ALs, as well as how they implemented academic literacy interventions at the institution. These discourses tended to reinforce notions of ALs as autonomous generic skills, which in turn led to calls for interventions such as separate remedial classes in English and add-on, generic academic literacy skills-based courses. Such discourses also tended to construct AL practitioners as being responsible for the development of students' disciplinary literacies, and exonerated disciplinary specialists from the need to reflect on how they were or were not making explicit for their students the rhetorical nature of their disciplines. These dominant institutional discourses often limited lecturers' understandings and practices, structuring their discursive engagement and the ways they conceived of integrated materials and collaborative teaching.

• The final factor was the *understandings of integration* that individuals brought to their partnerships and to the collective. Through their collaborative engagements in the partnerships and the collective, the participants not only developed shared understandings of what it meant to integrate AL and disciplinary content, but also shifted from their initial understandings of what it meant.

Participants had varying notions of what it meant to integrate AL and disciplinary content. Some understood it as integrating their own subject area with the subject area of their collaborating partner, as illustrated in this excerpt from the data:

> *There's almost a mutual coming together, in other words she's got to go somewhat into the discipline of language, and the language person has to come some part into the discipline of (Business).*

This type of understanding is reinforced by tertiary curricula with mandatory subjects like Communication Skills, or separate courses in AL. Where Communication Skills did not form part of the disciplinary curriculum, and where ALs were not taught through a formal subject, it seemed to lead to understandings that saw ALs as embedded within disciplines. Few of the lecturers understood integration as being about making explicit and giving students access to the workings of disciplinary discourses. The following excerpt from the data illustrates this understanding:

> *Initially one could have said you only need to know the words and the meanings to understand (the discipline) better. But you need to do more than that, you need to be able to place the term where it comes from, what it means, what the implications are, how just one word changes the whole meaning, how language sets up relationships of power, how it sets up relationships of equality or inequality. So it's getting deeper into conceptual understanding of these things. And I think it's not only a matter of having certain language proficiency, it's more than that. . . It's because words ultimately operate in a context, but it doesn't only operate in the context of a passage or in the context of a book. It operates in the context of a reality, of a life; it operates in the context of your experience.*

For many of these lecturers, their understandings of integration developed over the three-year period of their participation in the institutional project, from understandings of AL as a body of knowledge comprising an autonomous set of generic skills transferable to any discipline of study, to understandings of ALs as embedded within the discourses of academic disciplines.

These shifts in understandings of what it meant to integrate language and disciplinary content were also instrumental in shaping participants' changing conceptualisations of ALs. Those participants who began to understand language and content integration as being about making explicit the workings of disciplinary Discourses, started reconceptualising their notions of ALs. They articulated conceptual understandings of ALs as being multiple, embedded within particular disciplinary contexts, and therefore not easily transferable to other contexts. This understanding emerged as a result of the

social processes of collective and collaborative discursive engagement, and also as a result of the expanding collective identity as Discourse educator/teacher. These new understandings and expanding identity gained significance and were cemented in the social context provided by the collaborative partnerships and the transdisciplinary collective, while the process of reconceptualisation appeared to further influence a process of identity construction among individual participants.

Academic identity

While the transdisciplinary collective provided a discursive space for the development of a collective identity as tertiary educators, it appears that the collaborative partnerships provided the spaces where language lecturers and disciplinary specialists could explore their respective roles and identities as Discourse teachers. For disciplinary specialists this meant expanding their disciplinary identities to include that of discourse teacher, and this process seemed to hinge on both language lecturers' and disciplinary specialists' understandings of language as deeply embedded within disciplines. This understanding, of the embeddedness of ALs within disciplines, seems to be at the core of expanding the narrow disciplinary identity of lecturers, to incorporate a broader academic identity, as illustrated by the innermost layer of figure 4.

Figure 4: A model for the process of integrating academic literacies into disciplines
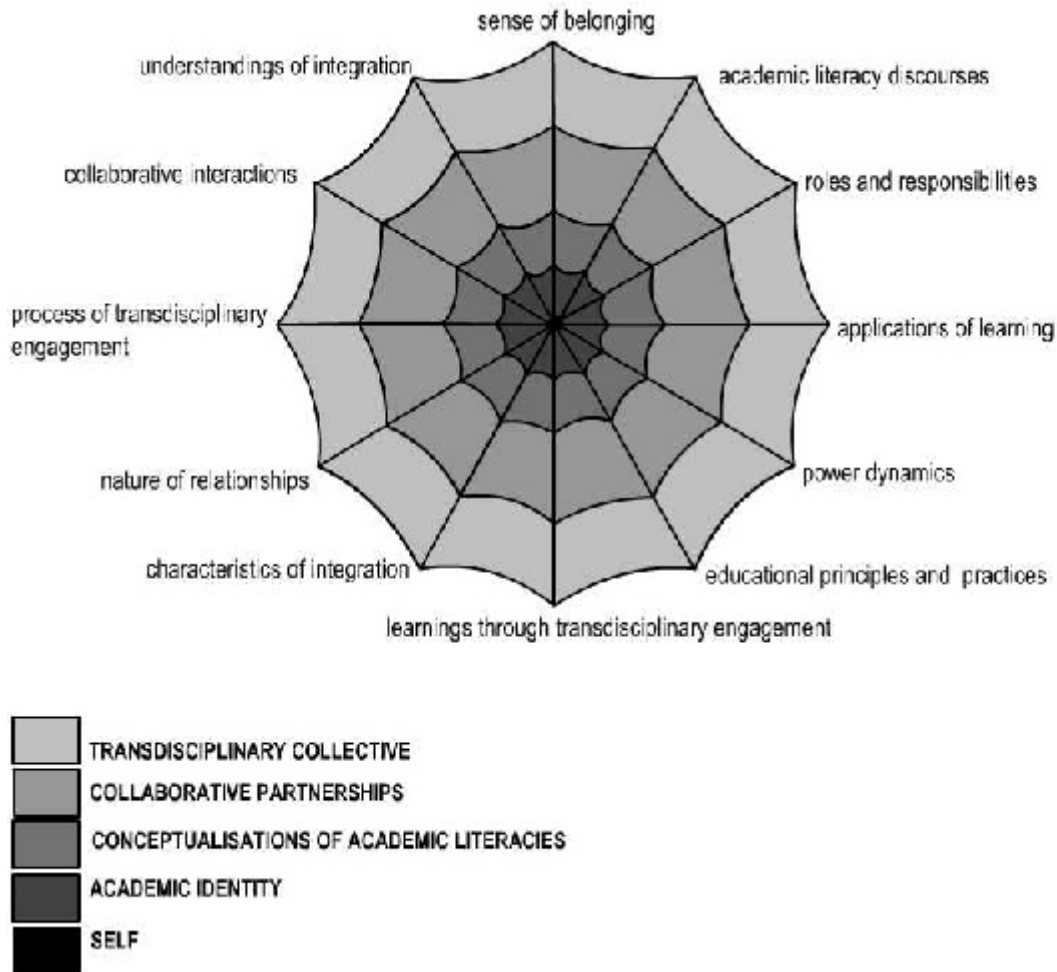
The findings revealed that the participants were involved in three processes, which should be considered when designing integrated approaches to the teaching of academic literacies. These three processes were dynamically interlinked, each precipitating and contributing towards a deeper level of change in participants.

The first process occurred in both the transdisciplinary collective and the collaborative partnerships in turn. This was a 'doing' process of discursive engagement between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists, and is depicted by the two outer layers of the model, the *transdisciplinary collective* and the *collaborative partnerships*. The factors that impacted most directly on this experiential process in the transdisciplinary collective were a *sense of belonging*, as well as the *processes of transdisciplinary engagement,* the *learnings* that crystallised through the processes of engagement, and the

application of the learnings arising from the processes of engagement in the transdisciplinary community (as illustrated in figure 1 of the model). While the factors that impacted most directly on this experiential process in the collaborative partnerships were the *collaborative interactions,* the *nature of the relationships,* the *power dynamics,* and the *roles and responsibilities* negotiated within the collaborative partnerships (as illustrated in figure 2 of the model).

The second process was a cognitive one that flowed directly from the process of discursive engagement with colleagues from different disciplines. This was a 'meaning-making' process of individual reconceptualisation, and is depicted by the third layer of the model, *conceptualisations of academic literacies*. The factors that impacted most directly on this process of understanding were the *academic literacy discourses* prevailing within the higher education context, the implicit theories informing individual lecturers' *educational principles and practices,* the *characteristics of integration* that shaped how individual lecturers made meaning of the concept of academic literacies, and the *understandings of integration* that individuals brought to their partnerships and to the collective (as illustrated in figure 3 of the model).

The third process flowed directly from the individual process of reconceptualisation of academic literacies. This was a 'becoming' process of academic identity construction, and is depicted by the innermost layer of the model, *academic identity*. These three processes were layered, fed into each other, and were linked to each other through the web of factors surrounding the model in figure 4. These factors and the processes linking them represent important considerations when designing integrated approaches to the teaching of academic literacies.

The findings seem to suggest that sustained interaction between the language lecturers and disciplinary specialists has value for both parties and facilitates the process of reshaping how both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists construct their roles and identities within higher education, a necessary element in shifting mindsets regarding the practice of AL teaching in higher education. All of the interrelated factors presented in the unfolding webbed model in figures 1–4, linked by a process of discursive engagement, feeding into a process of individual reconceptualisation, feeding into a process of academic identity construction, are instrumental in bringing about this shift in mindset.

However, the continuity and sustainability of interaction between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists appears to be compromised in the absence of a context which takes account of the factors outlined in the model. It appears that academic departments, with their strong disciplinary structures,

do not provide the kinds of spaces where such transdisciplinary engagement can occur. While the basis for academic communities of practice remains particular academic disciplines, the separation of academic literacy teaching from mainstream teaching will continue. It appears that the institutional project provided the kind of 'protected' discursive spaces, where the participants could engage with alternative discourses in an environment that was non-threatening and free from the hierarchical lines of power operating within academic departments and faculties.

Conclusions

Both New Literacy Studies and Rhetorical Studies allude to the tacit nature of knowing a Discourse. Gee (2001) refers to this tacit knowledge as something that is stored in people's minds, 'cultural models', that inform the social practices in which people in a Discourse community engage. While there are different interpretations in the literature as to the nature and forms of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1983; Nonaka, 1991; Eraut, 2000), theorists agree that this kind of knowledge is internalised, operates at an unconscious level and is difficult to articulate and make explicit. This has implications for what it means to develop students' disciplinary discourses.

Social theories of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2002) suggest that such tacit knowledge is acquired through being socialised into communities of practice through interaction with the existing members. New literacy studies theory adds that the literacy practices and Discourses of academic disciplines are best acquired by students when embedded within the contexts of such disciplines, where reading and writing are developed within the ways that particular disciplines use language. Gee (1990, 2003) argues that students are best inducted into the Discourse communities or affinity groups of the various disciplines of study by modelling themselves on others who have mastered the Discourses, the 'insiders' who are part of the affinity group themselves. The implications are therefore that disciplinary specialists are best placed to induct students into the Discourses of their disciplines, and that discipline-specific academic literacies are best taught within the contexts of particular academic disciplines or semiotic domains by 'insiders' who have mastered the Discourses of those particular academic communities.

I have problematised elsewhere (Jacobs, 2005) the notion that academic literacies are best taught by 'insiders' who have mastered the Discourses of disciplinary affinity groups. The findings from this study have shown that such 'insiders' or disciplinary specialists have a tacit knowledge and understanding of the workings of Discourse within their disciplines. While the tacit nature of such knowledge and understanding is unproblematic when

operating within an affinity group or disciplinary Discourse community, it does pose a problem for teaching and learning, where lecturers need to make explicit what is tacit for their students, who are not yet part of the affinity group to which their lecturers belong. This tacit knowledge remains unarticulated as they model appropriate disciplinary practices and Discourse patterns for their apprentice students in the classroom.

Theorists in the Rhetorical Studies tradition argue that while disciplinary specialists much better 'know' the rhetorical processes through which their disciplines communicate meaning, albeit tacitly, language lecturers can much better 'see' this largely invisible process because they treat language as opaque, something to look at (Segal, Pare, Brent and Vipond, 1998). However, this ability to 'see' the rhetorical processes through which disciplines communicate meaning, has led language lecturers (also referred to in the literature as rhetoricians, Discourse teachers and academic literacy practitioners) to take on the 'burden of rhetorical persuasion' (Geisler, 1994a) and increasing responsibility for making the rhetorical dimension of disciplinary knowledge explicit for students. This approach assumes that language lecturers have 'knowledge' of the rhetorical processes through which disciplines communicate meaning, rather than just an ability to 'see' these rhetorical processes more clearly (because they treat language as opaque) than disciplinary specialists. The findings from this study show that this assumption is flawed and often leads to a pedagogical position that suggests language lecturers know the rhetoric of disciplinary specialists better than they know it themselves (Segal *et al.*, 1998). It appears then that both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists need to own the 'burden of rhetorical persuasion' and redefine their respective roles within the process of making this 'invisible' process explicit for students at tertiary level.

The findings from this study have shown that the depth of integration achieved when language lecturers take on a primary role (as in many rhetorical studies reported) is compromised. In the studies reported by Myers (1990) and Bazerman (1989), rhetoricians use the tools of their language backgrounds to closely analyse the textual features of disciplinary texts. This study has shown that when such processes of textual analysis are not guided by the disciplinary knowledge of disciplinary specialists, it leads to language lecturers attempting to become 'experts' in the disciplinary discourses, which in turn tends to undermine the disciplinary expertise of disciplinary specialists. Deep levels of integration are achieved when language lecturers, rather than inducting themselves into the discourses of the disciplines, 'lift' the disciplinary specialists outside of their discourses by asking questions that a novice to the discipline would. In this way they are able to shift disciplinary specialists to making explicit the rules governing their disciplinary discourses.

This deep level of integration and the understandings underpinning it are closely related to the identities that language lecturers/academic literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists bring to their work in higher education. Strong 'tertiary educator' identities in language lecturers tend to dominate partnerships with disciplinary specialists and disable the emergence of 'tertiary educator' and 'Discourse teacher' identities in disciplinary specialists. In the case of disciplinary specialists, making language lecturers feel part of the discipline into which they are integrating is an important factor. This is achieved when disciplinary specialists frame language/communication as central to how their discipline structures and communicates its knowledge base. This in turn locates the language lecturer as being an integral part of the process of making explicit this tacit dimension, and influences how their roles and identities as academic literacy practitioners are defined within a discipline which is not their own.

These reciprocal processes of language lecturers 'lifting' disciplinary specialists outside of their discourses, and disciplinary specialists making language lecturers feel part of their disciplines, seem to enable the shifting of understandings of integration for both parties. Language lecturers/academic literacy practitioners, as well as disciplinary specialists, need to change their conceptualisations of academic literacies as an autonomous body of knowledge and the understandings of integration that arise from such conceptualisations. In this way language lecturers and disciplinary specialists can change the way they view each other, as 'outsiders', and find new collaborative ways for embedding the teaching of discipline-specific academic literacies within disciplines. Such collaboration is equally important for both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists.

Language lecturers are better able to 'see' the Discourses that shape the disciplinary genres, because they view language as opaque and also because the disciplinary content is foreign, so they don't get caught up in the meaning. This makes the generic structures and Discourse patterns clearer than when they are obscured by meaning, as is the case with disciplinary specialists who tend to view language as transparent and read 'through' the genres and Discourses to get to the meaning. Disciplinary specialists however, bring a tacit knowledge of their disciplinary genres and Discourses, and the purposes they serve in meaning-making, something they have gained over years of study and participation in disciplinary 'affinity groups', which is a knowledge base that language lecturers don't have. For both language lecturers and disciplinary specialists, integrated academic literacy teaching involves engaging with the nature of Discourse, and this study shows that making Discourse explicit involves more than being a member of a Discourse community.

While Rhetorical Studies and New Literacy Studies both speak to the need for interaction between language lecturers and disciplinary specialists in an effort to shift academic literacy teaching into disciplines, there is a gap in the literature as to how such interaction might happen and what the nature of it should be. While the 'burden of rhetorical persuasion' remains with language lecturers, academic literacy teaching will never become critical pedagogy. Language lecturers might have the rhetorical tools to make explicit what is hidden in Discourse, and ensure that students understand the rhetorical patterns underpinning their disciplinary knowledge bases. However, to push academic literacy teaching towards a critical pedagogy, language lecturers need to bring this tacit awareness, of the workings of disciplinary Discourses and the inequalities that Discourse practices often set up within classrooms, to a level of consciousness for disciplinary specialists. This will provide disciplinary specialists with a new critical perspective on the Discourses of their disciplines and in this way create opportunities for them to change or modify their classroom Discourse practices that continue to set up inequalities between students with academic 'cultural capital' and those who are not well 'precursed' for academia.

Disciplinary specialists are best placed to bring academic literacy teaching towards a critical pedagogy, since students need to understand and produce meanings in the disciplinary semiotic domain that are recognisable to members of that disciplinary affinity group. In addition to this, Gee (2003) states that critical learning requires students to think about the disciplinary domain at a meta level, and produce meanings that are not only recognisable but also novel and unpredictable. For disciplinary specialists to achieve a critical pedagogy in their classrooms they need to have reached this level of meta awareness themselves, before they are able to produce critical learners with a similar meta awareness. This is where language lecturers are able to play a vital role and in fact stand "at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural and political issues of our time" (Gee, 1990, p.68).

While Rhetorical Studies argue that language lecturers are best placed to deliver the rhetorical dimension of knowledge, and New Literacy Studies argues that disciplinary specialists are in the best position to deconstruct the rhetorical dimension of knowledge, this paper argues that it is through the interaction of disciplinary specialists and language lecturers that the rhetorical dimension of knowledge can be critically deconstructed for students. This paper proposes that disciplinary specialists need to be actively involved in this process rather than 'talked to' by language lecturers. Disciplinary specialists need to be working both within their role as a disciplinary affinity group member, while simultaneously having a critical overview of this 'insider' role, from outside of it. It is in engaging with language/academic literacy specialists who are 'outsiders' to their disciplinary Discourses that disciplinary specialists

find themselves at the margins of their own fields, and are able to view themselves as insiders from the outside, as it were. This shifting location from a purely insider perspective, to an insider perspective from the outside, shifts lecturers towards a critical understanding of the teaching of discipline-specific academic literacies. The model explicated in this paper theorises the process by which this dual critical identity can be crafted in practice.

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