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## A university bridging course focusing on academic reading and writing skills

### ABSTRACT

The University of the Free State, like all tertiary institutions in South Africa, is faced with the challenge of redressing inequalities in higher education and providing access to students from previously disadvantaged school systems. A bridging programme was created for this purpose. This paper describes and explains the English language course that is part of this bridging programme. The English course aims at addressing the low language proficiency as well as the immediate communicative needs of the target group, viz academic literacy. English is the chosen medium of instruction of this student group and for all of them English is their second or third language. The paper outlines the course objectives and components, explains the rationale behind the components, and provides specific practical information about implementation. The reading component of the course includes intensive reading, extensive reading (with graded readers), and vocabulary development. The writing component works towards the expository essay via developing students' sentence control, clarity of expression, organisation, and awareness of audience. This article is adapted from a paper read at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual SAALT Conference on 4–6 July 2001.

### Keywords:

academic literacy; language development

### Introduction

The University of the Free State is faced with the challenge of establishing a framework within the university for redressing inequalities in education with regard to access and opportunities for students whose schooling has left them unprepared for tertiary learning. A one-year bridging programme, called the “Career Preparation Programme” (CPP), was created for this purpose. The CPP aims to make tertiary learning accessible to a group of underprepared students who would,

traditionally, have been excluded from this privilege. The majority of students in this programme are from the previous Department of Education and Training (DET), who obtained M-scores between 9 and 26. Within the programme, students choose courses from the natural sciences, the social sciences, or from business studies. If students successfully complete the programme, they gain admission to the University, the Technikon, Vocational Colleges or Technical Colleges in the region. This arrangement was concluded after lengthy negotiations with local community leaders and leaders in education in the Free State region (Strydom 1996: 11).

One of the courses in the programme is an English Language course. Students in this course generally enter with D or E matric symbols for English. However, the majority, (69%) fall in the E category, and the E and F categories together account for 75% of the students. Quantitative data obtained from a Language Placement Test revealed that this group achieved an average score of 22% which was compared to the results achieved by full-time students on campus who took the same test. The full-time, first-year students achieved a score of 47%. Thus, the learners on the bridging programme could be labelled high-risk learners (Van Wyk 2001: 196). Although the duration of the English course is one year, given the scheduling of semesters, our actual classroom contact with the students is only about 28 weeks. There are two classes per week, totalling a weekly contact time of 4 hours.

The course focuses on developing students' academic reading and writing skills to a level that will give the students a fair chance of success at university study. Research (Tucker 1988: 49, Grabe 1986: 36) backs up the view by Blue (1993: 5) that "the most important factor that needs to be considered in relation to academic success is simply proficiency in the language of instruction". Thus, the challenge facing the curriculum designer was to facilitate Second Language Acquisition (SLA) while, simultaneously, easing students into the conventions of academic discourse.

This paper states the objectives that have been chosen for this course, the reasons for choosing these particular objectives, and then the methods selected in the hope of achieving these objectives.

### **Academic reading**

The following main objective was identified on the basis of a needs analysis (cf. study of learners' prior learning, proficiency testing, analysis of samples of students' writing, matriculation results and classroom observation in Van Wyk 2001). The main objective for the reading component was:

- To improve students' ability to read [academic texts] with comprehension and critical attention. This objective formed the general guiding objective and was the basis on which methods, materials, activities, and sub-objectives were selected.

The sub-objectives needed to achieve the main objective, are, in no particular order, as follows:

The first sub-objective is:

1. An awareness that reading is an active process. While reading, a good reader is doing many things, often unconsciously such as
  - thinking about what is being read;
  - matching new incoming information with existing information already in the mind;
  - agreeing or disagreeing with what is being read;
  - evaluating logic of what is being read;
  - monitoring understanding; and
  - noticing, understanding, and integrating meaningful relationships within the text, and

determining what is important.

The second sub-objective is:

2. An awareness that reading and thinking are very close friends.

The third sub-objective is:

3. An awareness of the importance of reading fluency.

Reading fluency does not mean speed reading. One reader may read fluently at a speed of 200wpm, another may read fluently at a speed of 300wpm, and another at 400wpm. All these readers may be reading fluently. The notion of fluency in reading is somewhat similar to that of fluency in speaking: both are characterised by a smooth flow, an effortless movement, and an absence of struggling with individual words.

To avoid misunderstanding, it must be stressed that this fluency does not mean that readers are skimming over words, omitting words, or sampling words every now and then. Proficient, fluent readers do read word by word. Research on the eye-movements of normal proficient readers clearly indicates that the vast majority of content words are directly fixated upon (Harrison 1992: 9).

Reading is a precise process. What makes a reader fluent is that these fixations are so quick and accomplished with so little effort that the result is an apparently smooth effortless flow. This fluency is vital to good reading because all readers have limited cognitive capacity (sometimes called attentional resources, or working memory). If a reader is struggling with word by word translation, if he or she is devoting too much attention and effort to individual words, then that reader will not have adequate remaining cognitive capacity needed for “higher-level” reading/thinking skills (such as making connections, drawing inferences, evaluating claims or detecting weaknesses).

Reading fluency gives a student the freedom to *think* about what he or she is reading. A student achieves reading fluency by developing an “automaticity” in both word recognition and lexical access (Adams 1994: 840). Automaticity refers to the efficient use of the eyes in reading and seeing what is there “automatically, in a series of fast and accurate fixations” (Eskey 1986: 7). Word recognition is the recognition of the printed word on the page. Lexical access is the subsequent retrieval of the word’s meaning from the mental lexicon. For fluent reading, both of these processes must be quick, accurate, and relatively effortless.

In other words, reading fluency is achieved by developing a large sight vocabulary – words that are recognized and understood on sight, without conscious effort (Day & Bamford 1998: 13). The best, and perhaps only way, to achieve a large sight vocabulary – and thus reading fluency and thus adequate available cognitive resources for global understanding – is through extensive reading. Extensive reading is a recognised approach to the teaching of reading and involves learners engaging willingly in much reading, thus, real-world reading of texts for pedagogical purposes (Day & Bamford 1998: 5). A programme of extensive reading develops the following skills:

### **1. Text Processing Skills**

There are a number of common features in English texts that can cause difficulty for second-language readers. Although each feature may not carry great importance by itself, an accumulated misunderstanding of these common features can cause significant misunderstanding of the entire text.

These features include anaphoric reference, extended noun phrases, an absence of overt

markers (e.g. relative clause markers), ellipsis, substitution with synonyms or superordinates, common words used with secondary meanings, transitional signal words, orthographic signals, and sentences that deviate from the normal Subject-Verb-Object pattern. Students must become aware of these potentially problematic features and be given the chance to practise processing them correctly.

## **2. Vocabulary Knowledge**

Studies consistently show a strong relationship between students' vocabulary knowledge and their reading comprehension (Adams 1994: 840, Grabe 1986: 41). While it is true that some unknown words can be guessed (to a certain extent) from context clues, many times this is not the case. A wide and deep vocabulary knowledge is necessary for successful reading.

Although the English lexicon probably comprises well over 100 000 words, and the average native-speaking university student will know around 20 000 words, the bulk of any given text will be composed of a much smaller set of words. On average, 80% of a text will be drawn from the 2000 most common words in English. It is essential that second-language readers have a thorough knowledge of this foundation set of common words.

The next most important set of words for university students is the set of academic vocabulary. This academic vocabulary consists of words that typically occur with high frequency across a wide range of academic disciplines. This is not a technical vocabulary that is confined to one academic field. This academic vocabulary includes words such as: analyse, approach, assess, constitute, consist, derive, establish, factor, distribute, function, indicate, occur, principle, process, interpret, vary, role, significant, similar, and theory. Analyses of a large number of academic texts have produced academic word lists of various formats. One of the first lists was produced by Paul Nation (and contained approximately 850 words. A new list produced by Averil Coxhead (Coxhead 2000: 213–238) contains 570 words. These 570 words account for roughly 10% of any academic text. Thus if the reader has a thorough knowledge of the most common 2000 words and a good knowledge of a further 570 academic words, that reader will know nearly 90% of any given academic text. Thus, any programme of academic literacy should contain a strong component of vocabulary building based, ideally, on such a deliberate selection.

The methods used to achieve the reading objectives of the course are described below.

## **Reading methods**

A major part of the reading course is an extensive reading programme. Basically, extensive reading means involving students in as much reading as possible.

## **Extensive reading**

We require students to read roughly two books per week (the books each being 50–100 pages in length). Getting the students to be willing and able to read this amount requires the following:

- The books must be interesting and enjoyable to read;
- The books must be relatively easy to read (i.e. the texts should constitute comprehensible input where the bulk of the text is well within the reader's competence Samuels 1994: 834);
- The teachers must convince the students that all this reading of relatively easy books is worthwhile.

The best way to ensure that the books are interesting is to have a wide variety of books on hand, and then to allow students to choose books for themselves. One way to ensure that the books are relatively easy is to use graded readers. Students are placed at reading levels by means of a reading proficiency test. We have found that the majority of our students fall within two reading levels (roughly in the “low intermediate” range).

We require every student to read 10 books at their initial reading level (This occurs over a period of five to six weeks). Students then move up to the next level and, again read 10 books at that level. This brings us to the end of the first semester. Students continue moving up level by level. By the end of the year, students have read approximately 40 books and have normally moved up 4 levels.

This extensive reading brings a number of benefits to the students. Some of these are the following:

- it improves their reading fluency (Day & Bamford 1998: 16, Harris & Sipay 1990: 435–436);
- it expands their sight vocabulary through meeting the same words over and over again in different contexts and with different meanings—this is especially true for the most common 2000 words in English, which graded readers use extensively (Huckin & Haynes 1993: 290, Nation & Coady 1988: 108);
- it enlarges their general vocabulary through incidental development while reading ( Day & Bamford 1998: 17);
- it improves their background knowledge through reading many books with different topics, settings, and stories (Grabe 1986: 36);
- it improves their ability to process quickly and accurately various sentence structures through encountering these various structures over and over in comprehensible contexts (Day & Bamford 1998: 19); and
- finally, it gives students a positive attitude towards reading in English (Day & Bamford 1998: 33–38).

An extensive reading programme is a programme based on the notion that a person learns to read by:

- reading;
- meaningful engagement with interesting books;
- starting at an easy level and progressing gradually to a high level;
- developing an enjoyment of reading; and
- building fluency through a wide and deep sight vocabulary and through an ability to automatically process sentence structures (Day & Bamford 1998: 45).

Concerning the day-to-day running of an extensive reading programme, the teachers have a number of roles. The first crucial role is to convince the students that the programme will make them better readers. At the beginning of the year, we have an orientation session and we explain to students the rationale and benefits of a reading programme. Throughout the year we remind students that reading improvement is a gradual process and that their consistent effort is making them better readers.

Students are required to keep a reading log of all the books they read and to write a short reading reaction for each book they read. During the first semester, these reading reactions follow a standard format, and then in the second semester, students can choose for themselves the format

in which they want to react to the books they read. To help them, we provide a list of slightly creative formats to choose from. Each of these formats is aimed at a different audience and encourages students' awareness of audience.

The books we use include a number of series:

- the "Oxford Bookworms Library";
- the "Cambridge English Readers";
- the "Heinemann Guided Readers"; and
- the "Penguin Readers" (published by Maskew-Miller-Longman).

This series is large and includes adaptations of well-known contemporary fiction. The best guide for choosing both the series and individual books within the series is written by David Hill (1992: 42–163) at the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER). One of the main objections to a programme of extensive reading is usually the cost involved and the administering of the books.

The cost is dependent on the number of students in the programme and the number of reading levels that the books must cover. For a one-year programme like ours, the cost per student will be between R100 and R150. An adequate but minimum number of books can be purchased for roughly R100 per student. A higher cost per student will of course mean a greater number and variety of books.

### **Intensive reading**

Intensive reading is the second method used on the programme. Intensive reading focuses the learner's attention on features of the text such as lexical features, syntax, cohesive devices and discourse markers. Other features, such as discriminating and understanding the difference between the main ideas of a text and the secondary ideas, grasping the relationship between ideas, separating fact from opinion, distinguishing and relating ideas, comprehending conventional use of abbreviations, drawing inferences and conclusions, deducing unknown words, understanding graphic presentations such as data and diagrams, are important in any intensive reading approach where academic reading is developed (Spack 1993: 184–194, Blue 1993: 7). All of the above-mentioned textual features play a part in comprehending an academic text. Mere knowledge of technical vocabulary will not suffice and study/reading skills are not acquired automatically. These have to be acquired through focused instruction and intensive practice in a core classroom reading component (Jordan 1997: 8, Leki 1993: 15, Jensen 1986: 114).

The intensive reading lessons are divided into three stages: pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading. In the pre-reading stage students are helped to activate their background knowledge on the topic of the passage and they are provided with a purpose for reading. One way to do this is by teaching students a reduced version of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), in which they survey the passage's title, section headings, and diagrams or illustrations. At the same time, they form questions about the content of these surveyed items, questions that may be answered during the subsequent reading. This procedure only takes a couple of minutes and it activates the students' minds and their background knowledge on the up-coming passage.

The second stage of a typical intensive reading lesson incorporates while-reading questions that accompany the reading of the passage. While-reading questions are crucial because these are the questions that can get involved in the students' actual reading process. In order to develop reading skills, each student's individual reading process needs to be probed and adjusted— this is best done with focused while-reading questions. These questions draw students' attention to the

problematic textual features mentioned earlier (anaphoric reference, heavy noun phrases (e.g., subject of the main clause, subject of the subordinate clause, object of the preposition), ellipsis, substitution, and so on) and also to meaningful relationships within the text (examples, explanations, qualifications, contrasts, orders of time or ideas, causes, results, paraphrases, and so on). While-reading questions provide students with the opportunity to notice and process these relatively small but cumulatively important features, and students do this while they are reading, before misunderstandings accumulate (Cohen, Rosenbaum-Cohen, Ferrara & Fine 1988: 158–164).

The third stage of a typical intensive reading lesson is the post-reading questions and activities. We begin with a small number of basic comprehension questions which give students feedback on how well they have understood the passage as a whole and at the same time will, hopefully, give students a sense of achievement. Another set of questions will work on developing particular reading skills, such as formulating the main ideas of paragraphs or summarising the gist of the passage. A third kind of question can focus on developing students' critical thinking by requiring them to analyse and evaluate the writer's statements and arguments. These questions not only demand critical thought but may also provoke students' personal opinions, and thus can lead into group discussions or writing activities. Most students enjoy expressing their personal views in group discussions, so these discussions not only provide a sensible follow-up and closure to a reading lesson but also act as a small reward for effort devoted to the preceding reading lesson.

The textbook we use is *Making Connections* from Cambridge University Press. It is written for students in the Intermediate – High Intermediate range of reading proficiency. Its passages are academic in nature, and it contains a selection of while-reading and post-reading questions. It also has lists of academic vocabulary that include definitions, example sentences, and reinforcement activities.

The reading programme also includes a component of vocabulary study. Vocabulary development is stressed in the course. Students do not explicitly study the base 2000 words; as this set of words is developed through extensive reading. Explicit study is reserved for words from the textbook's academic word lists. Students study lists containing about 15 academic words. This initial study comes reasonably close to "rote memorization", but learning new vocabulary is a lengthy process, and this rote study is only the first step in that process. Students then move on to reading passages that contain these words in context; they also work through various reading exercises that reinforce the meaning of the words, and they are tested regularly. Tips and instructions on how to learn vocabulary words are also given to students and students also complete a variety of word games in class which reinforce the words they have learned. These games include word generators, word puzzles and matching meanings with words. So at a rate of 15 words per week, over a 28 week course, students can learn close to 420 important academic words.

In sum, it should be mentioned that a reading comprehension test was taken down at the beginning of the year and the same test was taken down again at the end of the year by both an experimental (CPP – Eng) and a control group (CPP – Soc/Psy). The test consisted of five passages with 27 items. The experimental group demonstrated an improvement of 8.5% in reading comprehension whereas the control group remained the same (an insignificant 2.2% difference was recorded). The reading rate (words per minute, with comprehension check) of both groups was tested and the experimental group started with a reading rate of 150 wpm and ended with an improved 178 wpm whereas the control group remained the same, viz. 143 wpm. Thus, we have support of some success.

The writing component forms the only other component of this programme of academic literacy.

## **Academic writing**

The main objective for the writing component is the ability to express information, ideas [in expository writing] clearly, relevantly and logically. Sub-objectives needed to achieve the main objective are:

- Firstly, sentence control is critical. Students' writing can be difficult or impossible to understand because the sentences in which they express themselves are simply "out of control" in the sense of not adhering to any standard sentence structure. In other words, the problem is not one of not minor grammatical errors that do not interfere with meaning, but of global structural irregularities that do interfere with communication;
- Secondly, an awareness of audience is essential. One reason that students' writing can at times strike a reader as unclear, illogical, and poorly organised is that many students have not developed an awareness that they are writing for readers or for an "audience". We have read many students' papers that are extremely difficult to understand; yet when asked to reread the writing, the students find it perfectly acceptable and understandable. When we ask a student what a particularly opaque portion of the passage means, the student can usually, without hesitation, tell us what it means to him or her. In the student's mind, the writing makes perfect sense. We need to instill in students the notion that when they write and when they review their writing, the important question is not whether the writing is clear to themselves, but whether it will be clear to another reader. Is the writing so clear, so logical, and so well organized that another reader will have no choice but to understand it?
- Thirdly, clarity of expression and organisation are important sub-objectives in the writing programme; and
- Lastly, relevance and logic are the final objectives of the writing component.

## **Writing methods**

The first attempt at achieving the objectives is the use of a Sentence Grammar Module. Second-language writers cannot rely on native-speaker intuition when they are writing. If these students want to control their sentences (to the degree expected at university level), they must learn that control explicitly (Ferris and Hedgcock 1998: 39).

## **The sentence grammar module**

We have written a short module (40 pages) that presents the basics of written English sentence structure. The topics in the module include the basic parts of a sentence: Subject, Verb, Object, Subject Complement, Prepositional Phrases, Adjectives, Adverbs, Participles, Auxilliary Verbs, Modal Verbs, Gerunds, Infinitives. The module emphasizes the three common dependent clauses: Adverbial Clause, Relative Clause, and Noun Clause. It also looks at "reduced" Adverbial and Relative clauses in the form of Participial Phrases. The module attempts to move the students through a progression towards a final objective which is the following:

Students have a knowledge of the existence of sentence structures.





Students are able to recognize and name these sentence structures.



Students are able to produce these structures in a controlled environment (e.g. Exercises).



Students are able to use a variety of standard sentences (especially sentences with various dependent clauses and participial phrases) in an uncontrolled environment (e.g. reading reactions and essays) to express their ideas and opinions. In addition, it is hoped that if students are familiar with grammatical labels, they will be better able to understand and use the feedback given in class about their writing throughout the course of the year.

The students work on the module out of class. In class, the topics are briefly introduced before answers are checked and problems resolved. Students write weekly tests on the module's content. It should be stressed that this explicit study of sentence grammar is not an end in itself: its purpose is to help students write more effectively, so that their sentences communicate their ideas rather than obscure them. The second method used to achieve the writing objectives is the writing process itself.

### **The Writing process**

The writing process focuses on the immediate needs of the learners in that they are trained in the kind of writing demanded by the academic community. As writing expertise is "a gradually building dialectic process between domain knowledge of the writer and the specific tasks" (Grabe & Kaplan 1996:245), it is important that a writing programme should run simultaneously with a reading programme (such as the one described above) which aims to build this world or domain knowledge. The expository essay provides students with opportunity to work with problem-solving tasks in writing as well as extends their domain knowledge. As academic writing requires analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information from many different sources, this process of reading-for-writing has to be taught explicitly. Students read extensively and then respond to their reading in writing and also write expository essays based on academic readings. It is important, then, to make academic texts accessible in terms of logic of an argument as well as the linguistic features of the text as described in the section on intensive reading.

Students are taught the traditional writing process of planning, writing, revising, and editing. During the revision stage, co-operative work is strongly encouraged and students are provided with a checklist of criteria to look for in their partner's essay. Students exchange their writing, read each other's writing, and then comment and discuss. It is emphasised to students that if any part of their partner's writing is at all unclear, then they must talk to their partners about that part. The partner/writer can then decide if revision is needed to express his or her ideas more clearly. The feedback and discussion during this revision stage focuses on content and clarity. At times we provide a question form that partners can use to help them give feedback to each other. When this peer reading stage becomes a regular routine, students benefit in a number of ways:

- When students know that their writing is going to be read by their classmates, most will put more effort into that writing;
- When students regularly read their classmates' writing and have classmates read their writing, they become more aware that writing is done for an audience; they realize that when they

- write, they must write in a way that will be clear and convincing to other readers; and
- The writer becomes more aware of the specific ways in which his or her writing (although perfectly clear to him- or herself) may not be as clear to another reader. The next method used to achieve the objectives of the writing component is the writing of reading reactions.

## **Reading reactions**

As mentioned earlier, we require students to write reading reactions for each book they read in the extensive reading programme. Since they read one or two books per week, this means writing one or two reactions per week. During the first part of the course, they are all required to use the same general format. This format has one page and two paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the student tells the setting of the story, describes one or two main characters, and very briefly explains the story's basic plot. To do all this well in one paragraph does require some thought. In the second paragraph, the student gives a personal reaction to the book. Here they write about things such as:

- Did they enjoy the book? Why or why not?
- Did they like or dislike a particular character? Why?
- Did the story remind them of a personal experience?
- Did the story teach them any lesson about life?
- If they were the author, would they change any part of the story?
- Was the book believable and realistic?
- Would they want to read another novel by the same author? Why or why not?

These reactions not only allow us to monitor the students' reading, but as importantly they provide a moderately undemanding context in which students develop their writing skills. Although the reactions certainly do require thought and effort, they are not as cognitively demanding as argumentative expository essays. The novels that form the basis of this writing are fresh in students' minds; students do not need to create entirely new ideas or arguments. Students can therefore devote their attention and energy to expressing their thoughts about the novels in a clear and organised way.

To reinforce the notion of the writing process, we require students to write first drafts that are then put through a revision process in class. Students exchange reading reactions and read each other's writing. Since students are all reading different books, classmates will read reactions about books that they have not read themselves. If any part of the reaction is unclear, the classmate will notice and inform the writer.

In addition, since all students are using the same general format for their reactions, if any of the required content is missing (e.g. setting, character descriptions, brief plot description, personal reaction, reasons for the reaction), then the classmates will again notice and point this out to the writer. Students are provided, at least initially, with guideline questions to help them during this peer revision and feedback. After this revision stage, students continue with the editing stage in the process. These moderately undemanding reactions provide a useful context in which students:

- learn the writing process (planning, writing, revising, editing);
- become aware that they are writing for an audience;
- improve their control over sentence grammar;
- and improve their overall clarity of expression and organisation which includes the organising of paragraphs and the writing of topic sentences and supporting sentences.

Once students have developed these writing skills, they are better able to deal effectively with the second semester's writing task—the expository essay.

### **The Expository essay**

The Expository Essay is introduced in the second semester. The emphasis here is on the whole academic writing process. In other words, the writing process of planning, writing, revising, and editing helps students acquire the crafting skills of good expository writing (Ferris & Hedgcock 1998: 39). The planning stage involves thinking, discussing, generating ideas and organising ideas. Grabe & Kaplan (1996: 346) emphasise that guided discussion and critical reading “need to be seen as central to the inquiry that constitutes successful academic writing”. Therefore, much attention is devoted to the planning stage of the essay as well as intensive reading of the selected text on which the writing task is based. Students need to be explicitly taught how to read critically. The writing stage is completed by students at home and when they return to class the revising stage is practised. Revising includes adding missing information, removing irrelevant information, expressing existing information more clearly and rearranging the order of information. The editing stage follows where students check spelling, punctuation (especially full stops at sentence boundaries), grammar (especially verb tense, subject-verb agreement and pronoun usage). Students work in pairs or small groups during any of these stages of the writing process, but ultimately each student is responsible for handing in his/her own essay. Feedback is done individually by the teacher as well as in plenary sessions. Topics are based on selected reading passages which students are required to read before writing the essay. These reading passages are chosen from various sources such as newspapers and magazines and academic texts. The selected text is introduced in class using the intensive reading techniques outlined above and student awareness is raised to features such as openings and closings, paragraph organisation, distinguishing fact from opinion and how to add supporting detail. Once the text has been made accessible to the students, they are given the opportunity of responding to an expository essay prompt based on the ideas in the text as outlined above.

### **Conclusion**

Academic literacy is taught in context with a focus on the real-world skills needed by the learners in their present context, viz. the academic discourse community. The reading and writing process act as scaffolding for each other in the acquisition process as the ability to produce a written text in an academic setting is dependent on an initial reading task.

In conclusion, an academic literacy programme should aim to socialise learners into academic discourse and the kind of tasks required in this context. The above programme attempts to achieve this while, simultaneously, facilitating Second Language Acquisition. The course is currently being presented in Bloemfontein as well as several other rural regions in the Free State.

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