

Teaching Critical Discourse Analysis Across the Disciplines

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Discourses have no discrete boundaries because people are always, in history, creating new Discourses, changing old ones, and contesting and pushing the boundaries of Discourses. (Gee, 2011, p. 37)

I: Introduction

In 1999 the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) developed a site-visit report recommending that the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC) should revise its General Education core. At the time, the College of Arts and Sciences and the eight professional schools each had its own version of General Education requirements. Further, programs within each school had variations. An undergraduate's General Education requirements might be anything from 12 hours to 68 hours, depending on the program of study. In addition to being confusing, this meant that students transferring internally would inevitably lose a significant number of credits because General Education credits earned in one school were not applicable to a degree from the school or program across the street. Even more troubling to those of us who are invested in the teaching of Communication across the Curriculum, the teaching of Written Composition and Speech Communication was largely disconnected from the rest of the curriculum: the most telling sign of this disconnection was that the Written English Proficiency Test (WEPT) given to students after they had completed 60 hours to assess their competence in written English required them to demonstrate command of MLA format, a format used in few places beyond the English Department. WEPT assignments, readings, and grading were managed by teachers in the English department with minimal input from Writing Intensive teachers in the College of Arts and Sciences and no input from anyone beyond the College. If a student in any discipline failed the WEPT, s/he was required to take a course exclusively offered by the English Department. While a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program had been in place since 1997, the teaching of "academic writing" was largely restricted to the English Department; WAC courses outside the Arts and Humanities were overseen by a committee chaired by an English Department compositionist. "Writing Intensive" courses were almost exclusively offered in discipline-specific majors with an emphasis, not on writing in different contexts, but on writing discipline-specific genres in very specific academic contexts such as Economics, Geosciences, Mathematics, and Psychology.

When the HLC returned in 2008, two years after the publication of Margaret Spellings' *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, UMKC had

made no progress in terms of restructuring the General Education curriculum. This provoked the HLC to suggest that the university was in danger of losing accreditation if it did not develop a more coherent system of General Education and a more rigorous process of assessment within five years. The HLC required the identification of learning outcomes for the General Education program, the mapping of these outcomes to courses, the alignment of our program curricula, the identification of ways to assess student achievement in terms of learning outcomes, the documentation of these achievements, and the use of samples of student work and student feedback to identify programmatic weaknesses.

With the panic button pushed, the Provost's Office, and the offices of the Deans and the Faculty Senate organized committees and workshops designed to figure out a solution. What follows is a critical report on the major overhaul of UMKC's General Education program that took place from 2008 to 2015. While we begin with a general overview, our emphasis is on the process we went through to engage faculty in conversations about critical thinking as a transdisciplinary practice and about ways to use the teaching of reading and writing so that students *and* faculty learn to “make sense of the diversity they encounter” (Moore, 2011, p. 229) as they navigate relationships between and among “different communities” (p. 230), academic and professional. While these conversations ranged widely in their scope as we developed, approved, and applied Student Learning Outcomes, questions of orality and literacy formed a central thread, leading to a consensus that the teaching of reading and writing was the core of the core. As a direct consequence, the new curriculum was built around the Discourse Program, a sequence of three courses that replaced the university-wide requirement for two courses in English Composition and one course in Speech Communication.

II: The New 30-hour Core Curriculum

UMKC's new 30-hour General Education curriculum was developed with the explicit goal of creating structures that improve how we support and assess student work in the full range of majors and professional schools while stimulating and nurturing more productive conversations between and among faculty across the curriculum. After years of relative passivity and neglect, the faculty and administration were called upon to re-think General Education requirements. And they were called to do so by thinking critically about a number of institutional boundaries that had become hardened through decades of habit-driven practice. Colleagues familiar with the field of Discourse Analysis realized that the first step in the development of a new approach to General Education was to challenge and change the “habitus” of faculty across the curriculum. As Pierre Bourdieu (1977) has suggested, it was necessary to expose and analyze the “system of durable, transposable dispositions” (p. 72) that construct and reproduce relationships between and among academic disciplines as they are mediated by faculty expectations about the role of General Education in relation to the goals of specialized degree programs. Instead of developing a curriculum that conforms to extant understandings of non-specialized education, we set out to develop a program that interrogates received understandings of relationships between discipline-specific education and “general” education. We recognized from the beginning that, while “critical thinking” remains a central goal of

any General Education program, the term itself has become a shibboleth, repeated ad nauseum in pedagogical conversations but often without adequate interrogation of what it means for students and teachers to engage in meaningful, applied critical thinking. To ensure that meaningful processes of applied evaluation, contention, and struggle were embedded in our program, we channeled the theory of discourse articulated by Norman Fairclough in *Discourse and Social Change*, accepting that the study of discourse is a “three-dimensional” process involving active interactions between and among texts, discursive practices (of production, distribution, and consumption), and social practices (see “A Social Theory of Discourse” in Fairclough, 1992).

Further, we approached the cross-disciplinary conversations in ways that are akin to the Bourdieu-inspired method described by Tim John Moore (2011) in *Critical Thinking and Language*: “the idea of critical thinking would seem to deny reduction to some narrow and readily-identifiable cognitive mode” and is, instead, “a fundamentally polysemous term” (pp. 107–108). Our first challenge was, then, not just to engage faculty in conversations about definitions and applications of “critical thinking” in different academic and professional contexts, but to ask faculty to “abandon all theories which explicitly or implicitly treat practice as a mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of pre-established assemblies, ‘models’ or ‘roles’” (p. 73). Before we could develop a General Education curriculum that would respond adequately to the needs of faculty and students in the full range of academic and professional disciplines, we needed a significant number of our faculty to shift from highly specialized, discipline-specific definitions of “critical thinking” to a “transdisciplinary” approach—“one which assumes a diversity of understandings and practices of critique (different types of habitus), and which in turn seeks ways to encourage students to explore and try to make sense of the diversity they encounter” (p. 229). The key was to convince faculty that conversations between and among different academic cultures are crucial to the development of a successful General Education curriculum that genuinely enhances more specialized, discipline-specific education. Our working argument was that an effective General Education curriculum would produce better citizens *and* better architects, engineers, nurses, pharmacists, scientists, and teachers because it would teach critical thinking not just as a matter of evaluation and verification, but as a process for “challenging the assumptions that underlie accepted knowledge” (p. 199).

In 2009, a number of faculty who had already demonstrated an investment in the development of a new General Education curriculum were consolidated into a General Education Advisory Task Force with representation from Arts and Sciences, Biological Sciences, Business, the Conservatory, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Law, the Libraries, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and the Provost's Office. A significant number of the members of this committee (8 out of 14) had taken part in seminars organized by the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching (FaCET) during the period between 2003 and 2009, when the FaCET Director was devoted to the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Language Awareness (CLA) in the effort to increase, explore and celebrate intercultural and interdisciplinary collaborations across campus. During the six years prior to the

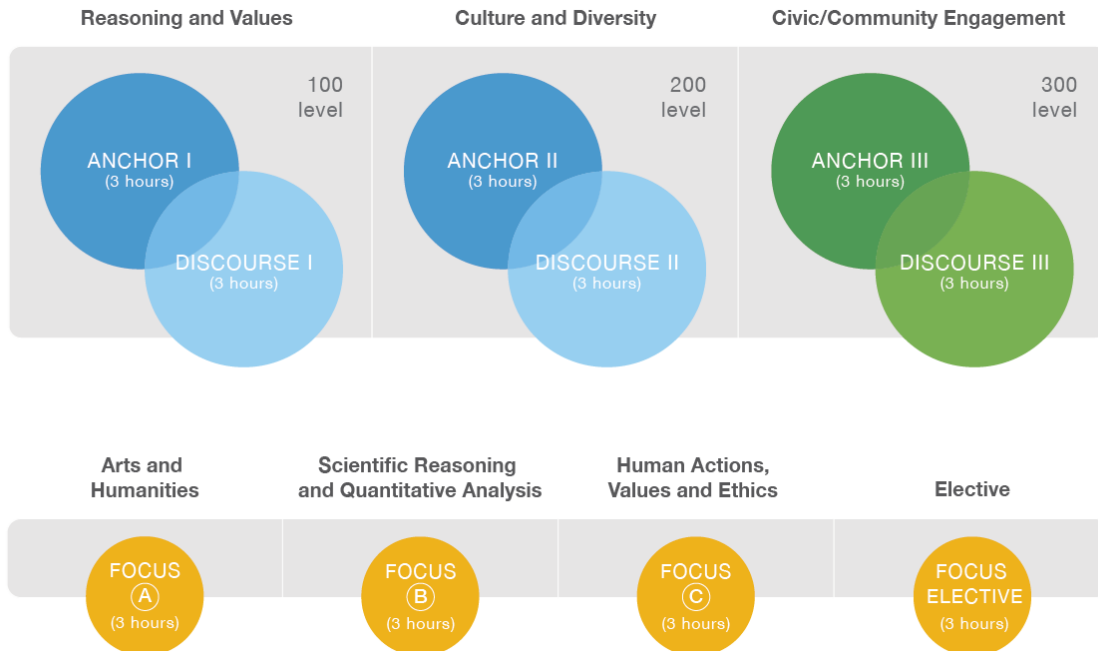
creation of the Task Force, more than fifty percent of the full-time faculty at UMKC had engaged in at least one FaCET seminar on subjects including “Diversity Made Meaningful,” “Intercultural Pedagogies,” “Assessment for Change,” “Universal Design for Learning,” and “Critically Thinking about Critical Thinking.” Consequently, the conversations between the members of this “think tank” were driven by ideas derived from the fields of CDA and CLA. Crucially, this meant that there was broad agreement about the importance of “discourse” as a protracted subject of inquiry. We recognized that academic and professional formations are the product of “particular combinations[s] of different discourses, different genres and different styles” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 358) and that a key goal of a General Education program should be to teach students how to evaluate *and* challenge these discourses, genres, and styles.

In May 2010, this task force published a report with guiding principles that were taken directly from the Spellings report: these included the goal of developing “measurable student learning outcomes” and a curriculum that would help students “integrate learning.” The task force also recommended the creation of a 30-hour undergraduate core curriculum for the entire campus, easing transfer from other institutions, simplifying changes of major at UMKC, tying the curriculum to the university’s mission, and aligning the General Education curriculum with state and national guidelines.

After a summer institute of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in June 2010, which was attended by five UMKC faculty and a Provost’s representative, the Advisory Board made clear that any reform of General Education should be based on measurable student learning outcomes while reflecting “our unique university mission,” addressing “the needs of our student population” while facilitating “student success” by directly connecting General Education with the major and life-long learning while providing at least one high impact learning experience. The next step recommended by the advisory task force was the creation of a General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) with the specific task of

reviewing and making recommendations regarding the General Education Program (including an assessment plan) that not only will bring it in compliance with HLC expectations but that will also be a signature UMKC program that emphasizes student success and builds on faculty expertise and that strengthens the university’s degree programs and supports the university’s mission.

The first order of business of the GEOC was to develop Student Learning Outcomes with a deadline of December 2010. These SLOs would then be used as the basis of a new model of General Education and a “comprehensive implementation plan.” As the diagram of the “University of Missouri–Kansas City’s General Education Core” suggests, we designed a program of study with the intention of delivering a specific set of Student Learning Outcomes:



The core is organized around nine SLOs approved by the Faculty Senate in April 2011: the Discourse classes directly address "Communication Skills" and "Technology and Information Literacy"; each of the Anchor courses is devoted to an SLO, "Reasoning and Values," "Culture and Diversity," and "Civic and Community Engagement"; and the "Focus" courses are intended to deliver courses that emphasize "Arts and Humanities," "Scientific Reasoning and Quantitative Analysis," and "Human Actions, Values, and Ethics." Given that UMKC offers an Interdisciplinary PhD, it is little surprise that the entire structure is intended to teach "Interdisciplinary and Innovative Thinking" (though this SLO is most evident in the intended interactions between the Anchor classes and Discourse classes, which are described more fully below). We were able to create an interdisciplinary model of General Education because a critical mass of the faculty at UMKC had been thinking in terms of applied interdisciplinarity for many years through their work with Interdisciplinary PhD students. Further, we were confident the approach would be approved by the Faculty Senate because we had used FaCET to cultivate conversations about intercultural critical thinking, introducing a large number of faculty to the idea that critical thinking is a mobile concept, a concept that changes definition and application as we shift synchronically and diachronically (both going from one discourse formation to another at the same institution *and* as educational and professional orders of discourse change in response to systems of assessment, feedback, and revision).

Throughout, we remained conscious of the Higher Learning Commission's findings about UMKC and the Spellings report issued in 2006. We were particularly attuned to the claims that "most colleges and universities don't accept responsibility for making sure that those they admit actually succeed," that "many students who [do] earn degrees have not actually mastered the reading, writing, and thinking skills we expect of college graduates," and that "[o]ver the past decade, literacy among

college graduates has actually declined" (Commission on the Future of Higher Education, 2006, p. vii). The Spellings report pointed to a number of "significant shortcomings" in Higher Education that contribute to a situation in which "[e]mployers complain that many college graduates are not prepared for the workplace and lack the new set of skills necessary for successful employment and continuous career development" (p. 3). The report suggests that a key component of this lack of preparation is the teaching of college literacy. The authors cited a National Assessment of Adult Literacy claim that "the percentage of college graduates deemed proficient in prose literacy has actually declined from 40 to 31 per cent in the last decade [1996–2006]."

These troubling findings led us to do our utmost to create meaningful, reciprocal connections between courses that traditionally teach "content" and those that have been defined in terms of "skills." The main manifestation of this effort was the deliberate centralization of "Communication Skills" with direct contact between teachers of the courses focused on critical orality and literacy and teachers of interdisciplinary courses that were more content-driven. GEOC acknowledged that the sequence of three Discourse classes was the backbone of the new curriculum, and they formed a subcommittee charged with designing how this sequence worked. The subcommittee, sponsored by the Chancellor, began as a group of four faculty members with experience administering the existing programs in Composition and Communication. After a series of preliminary conversations about ways to combine the programs, the subcommittee invited fourteen longtime teachers of English Composition and Speech Communication to develop syllabi for the three courses. Before we could proceed, these courses needed the approval of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee and GEOC. And, while there was considerable resistance to the effort to combine the teaching of reading and writing with the teaching of speech and listening, there was vocal support across campus, especially in professional schools that have, traditionally, been marginalized in terms of their understanding of the kinds of writing and speech necessary to a solid education. At UMKC the main resistance came from within the College of Arts and Sciences, especially from those who were most deeply invested in the traditional pedagogical and economic structure associated with the delivery of Speech Communications and English Composition as separate subjects. The most vocal support came from those in the College who are deeply committed to CDA and CLA and from those in Biological Sciences, Business, the Conservatory, Education, Engineering, and Health Sciences who saw the potential pedagogical and economic benefits of a more cross-disciplinary, SLO-driven approach.

Responding to Elizabeth Wardle's June 2009 article, "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?", the expanded subcommittee acknowledged that our established practice of teaching Academic Prose in two courses, English 110 and English 225, with a third required course in "Speech Communication," Communication Studies 110, suffered from the problem that the skills taught in these classes were "radically different from other academic activity systems in [the] use of writing [and speech] as the object[s] of primary attention rather than as [tools] for acting on other objects of attention" (Wardle, 2009, p. 766). Instead of following the WID model, with its emphasis on discipline-specific

writing, we set out to connect the teaching of "Communication Skills" with "other academic activity systems" so that "[t]ransfer to such varied systems" was more effective (p. 766). Beyond "teaching students general things about academic language use that will help them write during college" (p. 766), we wanted to create a structure in which the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening was integral to the work students were doing in their other subjects, but we wanted to do so in ways that facilitated transferability. We thus began our reform of the General Education core curriculum with a radical re-examination of the goals of First-Year Composition, Communication, and Writing Across the Curriculum, accepting Wardle's argument that we should no longer ask teachers of First-Year Composition and Speech Communications to teach students "to write [and speak] in the university," but that we should, instead, construct these courses "to teach students *about* writing [and speech] in the university" (p. 767). Again, instead of building a program around the teaching of specific genres and skills, we built a program that equips students to use writing and speech as tools to expose and analyze the cultural norms and practices that comprise the "habitus" of any given discourse community, thus equipping them to figure out which written and spoken genres are appropriate as they move between and among different disciplines, professional contexts, and cultural situations. Given our institutional commitment to interdisciplinarity—we are one of the few doctoral universities to offer an Interdisciplinary PhD—and given our relatively large number of faculty who have engaged in conversations about relationships between and among different discourse communities, academic and professional, we were in a position to institute a pedagogical model that requires ongoing collaborations between and among faculty across campus. In other words, our re-examination was not just about student learning, it was also about faculty interaction. Our working premise was that students can learn to negotiate professional and disciplinary boundaries by observing how faculty from different academic and professional disciplines negotiate syllabi, assignments, classroom presentations, and other aspects of the pedagogical apparatus.

The first major step in building the new model for teaching literacy and orality was the agreement to call the new, three-course sequence "Discourse 100: Reasoning and Values," "Discourse 200: Culture and Diversity," and "Discourse 300: Community and Civic Engagement." As these names indicate, beyond teaching "Communication Skills," the Discourse courses are designed to complement each of the team-taught Anchor courses, sharing an SLO with the associated course, requiring ongoing interactions between teachers of different courses *and* between teachers in the same course. We thus built the Core Curriculum so that different "doxic" cultures (as Bourdieu puts it) are in ongoing negotiation as courses are developed, approved, implemented, assessed, and revised. Guided by the overall summary of the review of General Education presented to the Faculty Senate in Fall 2010, we set out to provide three sets of interlinked, interdisciplinary courses that "challenge students to think across boundaries in a way that more closely resembles real-world situations, preparing them better for 21st-century careers" (see <http://www.umkc.edu/core/index.cfm>). In addition to accepting Wardle's argument, our working assumptions were aligned with the argument presented by the 2010–2011 Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication: "the power of language

and learning how to properly communicate in civil and productive ways are areas that need developing inside and outside of academia" (Pough, 2011, p. 302). Again, we recognized from the beginning that a successful interdisciplinary program engages both its students *and* its teachers in "civil and productive" communication.

With Pough, many of those on the team that helped to shape the new Discourse sequence wore "critical interdisciplinary lenses" and were, thus, "distrustful of disciplinary strongholds, rigid definitions, and boundaries that sometimes police the kinds of inquiry and knowledge that academic disciplines both value and make room for" (Pough, 2011, p. 305). As we proceeded from meeting to meeting, we thus sought ways to create and implement a curriculum that "would allow for a more dynamic interplay" between and among "the work of many disciplines" and the work of "critical interdisciplinary studies" (pp. 307–308). And we returned to the idea that it was crucial for us "to expand the way we think about teaching our students to be communicators: writers, speakers, listeners, but most of all thinkers"—that is, not just teaching them how "to write and speak pretty words" but how "to listen, to *really* listen" (pp. 308–309). As Wardle put it, we were determined to create a backbone for the new core curriculum that avoided the teaching of "pseudotransactional" genres, of genres that are taught in one context and that are, supposedly, applicable in other contexts. Instead of teaching genres, we transformed the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening so that students learn to engage in critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness as active processes of inquiry that both evaluate and challenge the orders of discourse they are being asked to assimilate and demonstrate as they become professional Engineers, Musicians, Nurses, Scientists, Teachers (p. 769). Again, instead of equipping them with sets of skills and genres designed to be transferred from one academic situation to another, we wanted our students to be equipped with techniques that enable them to figure out and to challenge the discursive conventions and expectations of any given context (academic, professional, personal, and cultural).

But, as Mary Louise Pratt (2007) argued in her seminal essay "Arts of the Contact Zone," the most productive sites of critical inquiry are those where "cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (p. 575). These sites of critical inquiry tend to be characterized by territorial habits and conservative conventions, but they are also defined in terms of active conversations between and among specialists with different understandings of what it means to be "critical." In the case of academe, these habits and conventions are broadly shaped by the legacy of the great divide between the Arts and the Sciences identified by C. P. Snow. In addition to being deeply established at structural levels, they are also fiercely defended. Taking note of the fact that these structural divisions and sites of contention were an ongoing part of the process of negotiating the new curriculum, we decided these divisions and sites would be excellent subjects for discourse analysis in the sequence of three Discourse classes. The seminars and discussions we had engaged in at FaCET and on the various General Education committees had already made us conscious of a number of the boundaries between different professional and academic cultures that structured universities and colleges in the period after C. P. Snow described the unfortunate entrenchment of the absolute distinction between creativity and empiricism. As we moved from a wide range of disparate requirements tailored to each major and school

to a thirty-hour core curriculum that is shared across the entire undergraduate curriculum (see diagram), we repeatedly encountered the resilience of boundaries that were formed in the wake of World War Two, when Euro-American colleges institutionalized the separation between "the Arts" and "the Sciences," and when academic discourse formations began to function as clusters of distinct "units" with centralized administrative structures at meta levels (through the offices of the Chancellor and Provosts and through university-wide faculty organizations such as the Senate and other campus-wide committees) and with distinct pedagogical and administrative structures at local levels (through the offices of Deans and Chairs and through school-based faculty organizations and committees). Again, in developing the Discourse sequence, we took these habits and conventions into account; instead of assuming distinctions between Arts and Sciences, between the "College" and the "Professional Schools," between professional schools defined in terms of "Health" and "Non-Health," we defined the Discourse classes as a place where students would engage in the identification and analysis of the habits and conventions that have constructed the various divisions and disciplines in contemporary American universities and other professional institutions. And we did so by challenging faculty to share, evaluate, and challenge habituated understandings of discipline-specific keywords, goals, methods, and grading criteria.

It is crucial to this report that the process we are describing involved a series of complex negotiations and imaginative solutions. As suggested above, institutional assumptions and structures designed to preserve and protect the separations described in the previous paragraph have been a constant source of tension and conflict between and among faculty and administrators. Entrenched ways of thinking have created major resistance to reform. For example, the English Department continues to assert its "right" to control the teaching of written English, resisting the hiring of Discourse teachers by other departments and schools, doing its utmost to force GEOC to revert to the teaching of separate courses in English Composition and Speech Communication. The new structure has also created problems for students: for example, the linking of specific Discourse classes with specific Anchor classes creates scheduling nightmares. There is clear evidence that longstanding institutional structures continue to impede implementation. As we have begun to suggest, discipline-specific models of understanding problematize the teaching of techniques and strategies that are designed to equip students to think critically across a range of contexts, not just academic, but personal, professional, and cultural. But these more restrictive models of understanding remain central to our new curriculum. The four required "focus" courses are distributed among subjects that are defined in terms of the Arts and Humanities, Scientific Reasoning and Quantitative Analysis, and Human Actions, Values, and Ethics. In other words, while we have changed the general education requirements previously instituted by individual academic units, we have not necessarily changed the models of understanding that shaped those requirements. Innovative as it may be, we have retained the separation between the Arts, the Sciences, and the Social Sciences, creating a "Core Curriculum" that is "interdisciplinary" at one level (Anchor/Discourse) but that is entirely discipline-specific at another level (Focus).

III: The Discourse Program

As suggested above, the working premise of the General Education Oversight Committee was that orality and literacy should be the backbone of General Education. We agreed that the sequence of courses replacing the course in Speech Communications and the two courses in English Composition should be taught in ways that were integrated with the work students were doing in their academic and professional lives. Early conversations made it clear that faculty in the professional schools were unimpressed with the current state of communication skills among their students. The main problem was the lack of "portability" from classes focused on writing and speech to academic and professional contexts that require students to use oral and written language to explain ideas and projects in fields that are educational, mathematical, mechanical, medical, musical, and scientific. As we have already suggested, those of us who are familiar with CDA and CLA shaped the conversation by citing the Spellings report's findings on literacy and articles by prominent researchers in College Composition and Communication, including Pough and Wardle. As a result, our goal was a program of study designed not to teach specific genres of writing and speech but to equip students with the working ability to analyze discursive practices and conventions in ways that would allow them to produce and perform the kinds of speech and writing necessary to whichever contexts they might encounter.

Our working assumption was, then, that an effective education teaches individuals how to communicate with, and to challenge, people in similar disciplines, professions, and cultural contexts *and* how to communicate with, and to challenge, those in different disciplines, professions, and contexts. We deliberately avoided the goal of teaching engineers how to write like engineers, nurses to write like nurses, chemists to write like chemists. Instead, we set ourselves the goal of teaching students how to figure out what kinds of writing and speech are necessary to any given context. In other words, we set out to teach them to engage in intertextual and interdisciplinary negotiations that challenge and change how disciplinary and transdisciplinary orders of discourse work. Our colleagues in the sciences and professional schools made clear to us that success in their fields is never just about the ability to function strictly within the extant parameters of that particular discourse community; success in one field always requires communication with those who have been trained in different professional fields. Doctors interact regularly with accountants and lawyers; school administrators interact regularly with social workers and politicians; construction engineers interact regularly with urban planners and geologists. In other words, we were encouraged to build a sequence of courses that emphasize interdisciplinarity. Advanced communication skills are not about learning specific genres that are, supposedly, appropriate in a very specific context. Advanced communication skills are about the ability to adapt and revise, to negotiate and shift, to interact and intervene. When we enter professional, academic, and cultural contexts as active players, we are expected to communicate effectively with people who speak, read, write and listen in ways that are sometimes radically different from the forms of written and spoken communication performed by our closest colleagues and acquaintances.

An example of the curricular change implemented through the new General Education curriculum at UMKC is what happened with a course from the previous General Education Program. "Terrorism, Civil War, and Trauma" was developed in 2004 by faculty from History and English. The "Cluster Course" (CC) fulfilled a General Education requirement for all students and introduced students to different disciplinary approaches to a specific subject. In 2009, 2011, and 2013, faculty from Anthropology and English taught the course. In 2014, under the new model, the course was revised and taught as an Anchor II course called "Empire." The CC version of the course was defined as an "interdisciplinary course [that] uses techniques from the disciplines of Anthropology and English Studies to examine the modern experience of terrorism and civil war in the light of African and Euro-American film, history, literature, philosophy, and politics." In practice, the assignments and structure of the course emphasized disciplinary difference rather than interaction. The schedule separated the teaching into "chunks," with a series of classes taught by the English instructor followed by a series taught by the anthropologist. In the 2009 syllabus, the assignments were defined as follows:

The first essay (minimum four pages) should respond to material presented in the introduction and/or the first case study (Ireland). The second essay (minimum four pages) should respond to material presented in the introduction and/or the second case-study (Rwanda).

Students were exposed to the two different disciplines but there was little negotiation between the disciplines. It was a matter of juxtaposition rather than interaction. All written work was graded separately, depending on which department the student was associated with. When the course was revised for inclusion as an Anchor course in the new General Education Program, the teachers worked hard to create a transdisciplinary structure with content that challenged and re-negotiated boundaries between different orders of discourse:

This course applies theories and methods from multiple academic disciplines to understandings of Empire as military, economic, political, and ideological expressions of power. Students will be taught to demonstrate an awareness of specific aspects of global culture using the disciplines of English Literature, Social Theory, and Anthropology. The course uses techniques of critical discourse analysis and the analysis of specific social formations to encourage cross-cultural explorations of the ways in which contemporary situations have been shaped by the formation, collapse, and legacy of empire. The course teaches complex understandings of the terms "culture" and "diversity," defining and testing them in the context of specific case studies.

This commitment to a transdisciplinary approach was reinforced by the collaborative development of a glossary of keywords that were discussed regularly in class—"Agency," "Culture," "Discourse," "Representation," "Text"—and by a more dynamic movement backwards and forwards between the instructors in the classroom, by the

shared grading of five tests instead of two essays, and by recurrent conversations about relationships between and among different cultures, academic, professional, social, and political. Even more importantly, the interactive relationship between and among the different kinds of knowledge and the different orders of discourse presented in the Anchor class was the main subject of the associated Discourse II classes. Also focused on "Culture and Diversity," the seven sections of Discourse treated the Anchor class as a case study, with assignments asking students to apply and interrogate specific keywords, to describe and analyze how the two Anchor teachers performed and challenged disciplinary boundaries, to situate themselves in relation to the subject of "Empire" by considering their positions as individuals, as professionals, and as products of specific cultures. In many ways, the Discourse sections functioned as meta-courses, providing students with the opportunity to test and challenge "a diversity of understandings and practices of critique (different types of habitus)," encouraging "students to explore and try to make sense of the diversity they encounter" (Moore, 2011, p. 229). Further, because the Anchor and Discourse teachers negotiated the syllabus and schedule before the semester began and engaged in regular conversations during the sixteen-week term of the class, regularly discussing these conversations in the classroom, students witnessed the kind of collaborative interaction we were asking them to perform.

The interdisciplinary method described above is built into each Discourse class because each is designed in collaboration with the teachers of the associated Anchor course. This association between two distinct classes gives students the opportunity to experience the dynamic interaction between different disciplinary approaches, helping them become more conscious of the ways that knowledge is constructed and performed in different contexts, encouraging them to engage in deep critical analysis of the places where "cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt, 2007, p. 575). Instead of teaching specific genres and styles, the Anchor and Discourse teachers teach techniques of discourse analysis and critical language awareness, giving students the tools to decipher the forms of "discourse" (the speech, writing, and other modes of communication) shared by specific groups of people. By learning to define and describe the structures and strategies associated with specific discourse communities, students gain important insights into how people in any given profession and/or culture communicate with one another and how they communicate with people in other professions and cultures. Instead of being taught to arrive in a given situation equipped with a ready-made genre (genres they will learn much more deeply when they are actually in the professional and other contexts that require those particular forms of expression), students are taught how to position themselves in the most productive ways possible.

Our teachers remain conscious that received systems of communication certainly shape any given discourse community, providing internal definition that makes one community distinct from another, allowing members to position themselves in relation to the members of other professions and cultures. Our Discourse and Anchor classes are, then, heavily focused on the analysis of how discourse communities are constructed and how they function. Students learn that specific discourse practices define specific discourse communities, shaping how they operate as discourse formations, defining who belongs and who doesn't, influencing

how power is distributed and how changes are made, determining which behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable, and so on. By learning techniques of critical discourse analysis, students are in an excellent position to become major players in the discourse formations of the various communities they join, contributing to the ways they work, shaping internal and external relationships, influencing how they exert power.

The overall goal of our General Education program is, then, to teach students how discourse communities work, teaching them how to identify and analyze the modes of communication and interaction that form mutually accepted systems of conventions and codes, including working agreements about the definition of key words and phrases. Students learn how to expose, critique, and challenge hidden models of understanding, turning deeply internalized, "received" codes and conventions into subjects of inquiry and opportunities for change. By learning how to decipher these hidden codes, students develop the ability to "see" the inner workings of any given discourse community, becoming increasingly able to function as insiders, actively contributing to different discourse communities not just as functional operatives but as active, game-changing players.

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