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Title	Acknowledging first year students' 'brought along' experiences on an academic literacy course.
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Abstract:

I outline a 'blended' curriculum with a digital literacy component, which shifts the shape of literacy practices and students' learning agency on an academic literacy course. The pedagogy strives not merely to assimilate students in the disciplines, but to narrow the gap between the literacies they bring to the academy and the academy's literacies, and to value what they bring. I discuss the affordances of digital literacies to support the analytical mode, allowing for students' reflection and ownership of these concepts in writing. Central to our pedagogical imperative is the recognition of students' experiences. This is especially important because the acquisition of academic literacies has always been seen as one of the important vehicles for widening and sustaining access to the university for *all* students. Through this analytical mode, students may play a more active role in knowledge construction by placing themselves at the centre of the knowledge making project.

Outline:

Situated within New Literacy Studies, this presentation looks at how a new 'blended' curriculum model with a digital literacy component, shifts the shape of literacy practices and students' learning agency on an academic literacy course. The students registered for the course form part of the Humanities extended degrees, and often enter the University with lower NBT and NSC scores in English Home language. As such, the course attempts to teach academic literacies and critical engagement with sociological concepts common to the Humanities, particularly 'identity'. The pedagogy strives not merely to assimilate students in the disciplines, but to narrow the gap between the literacies students bring to the academy and the academy's literacies, and value what they bring along. This for us comprises an ethics of care. The incorporation of digital literacies aims to expose students to the complexity of academic texts and hold them longer in an analytical mode instead of expecting them to hastily arrive at an opinion in any academic debate. The presentation focuses on the affordances of digital literacies to support the analytical mode so that students can reflect the relevance of debates around 'identity' from their standpoint, and take ownership of these concepts in writing. This pedagogical imperative is central to an ethics of care whereby students' experiences are acknowledged and they are given the resources to apprehend new perspectives in academia. As such, we argue that a broader view of academic literacies is crucial to understanding this interplay between digital literacies and students' identities and agency as writers in the academic context. This is especially important because the acquisition of academic literacies has always been seen as one of the important vehicles for widening and sustaining access to the university for *all* students. In this case, we discuss how, through the analytical mode, students may play a more active role in the construction of these literacies by placing themselves at the centre of the knowledge making project.

The presentation begins with a historical tracking of this course, first based in an academic support programme in a university in South Africa, which was introduced in order to cater for an increase in diverse, non-traditional students, and the challenge of how to meet the needs of our new intake of students. We moved from a focus on academic support to one on academic development, with the understanding that actually the university itself needed to change in order to foster an 'ethics of care' approach to student diversity. This brought about a pedagogical shift - from teaching academic literacy skills – to the relationship between academic literacy practices and identities that are brought and shaped within these.

Our course finally adopted a blended curriculum approach, involving both a face-to-face, and an online aspect; it became more thematic, working with concepts common to the Social Sciences, such as that of 'identity', and it adopted a process approach to the teaching of academic literacy. In this, it involved a pedagogical shift from a focus on academic literacy, to one on the interrelationship between academic literacy practices and identities that are brought and shaped within these.

Our course acknowledges the fact that academic can be alienating and that it values the discourses that students do not possess. We attempt to validate students' brought along capital – and to steer away from the deficit view; thus from a pedagogy of assimilation to one of transition. In this, we attempt to support students in taking ownership of their learning.

We attempted to move towards a pedagogy of care – in legitimating the beginner status of the 'non-traditional' students. In my presentation, I describe the typical transition that our students undergo in moving from their homes/schools to the university environment and demands. This involves various aspects relating to self-perceptions, expectations, discourses, race, class, backgrounds, and so on. I outline how our course attempts to help them confront the university's institutional culture – in terms of, for example, privilege, difference, othering, and sameness. We did this through focussing on the social construction of the overarching theme of identity, and the related themes of language, culture, gender, and race.

We questioned ourselves as to how we could create a space for combining disciplinary knowledge and students' brought along experience. As a result of many discussions, we adopted a blended approach – involving face-to-face sessions, and a digital space in which students were able to engage both personally and with each other on a digital platform. In this, we found that we were able to sustain students longer in an analytical mode – through, for example, the scaffolding of reflections, the turning of deficit into value, the promotion of agency, the transference of learning into disciplines, and the ownership of learning. Our 'ethics of care' approach acknowledges that academia can be alienating - in valuing discourses that students do not yet possess, and is premised on developing students as a whole.

In our course, we aim to validate students' brought along capital as a foundation for engaging in academia – steering away from the deficit view; from a pedagogy of assimilation towards one of transition.

In this presentation, I give examples of students' transitions through this journey. And open this up for discussion.