CHAPTER 14.

A WAC/WID EXPERIENCE IN ARGENTINA: WORKING FOR A HIGH DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

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This chapter addresses the experience of a Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID) program in Argentina at the Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown. This university has created a Program of Professional and Academic Discourse Skills (Programa Competencias en Discurso Profesional y Académico) as part of its academic structure with a high degree of institutionalization. This institutionalization is manifested in different domains:

- First, the program is financed by the university, considering it as part of its budget, and is installed along the curriculum of all the degrees under an administrator that is a tenured professor;
- Second, it was installed by the university Organizer President from the beginning of the functioning of the institution in 2019, and then, after a period of intensive work, confirmed in 2022 by the Superior Council, which is the higher body of the university government;
- Third, it has the support of the academic area of government of the university in the organization of the work of each semester; and
- Fourth, it has political support that allows its progress as it grows in activities that enrich it, including research and community-oriented work.

The WAC/WID experience at Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown consists of the introduction of reading, writing, and orality regarding multimodal texts in several subjects along each degree and across the curriculum. This means that a language professor works in several subjects of the degree, teaching students how to resolve the writing or oral activities that their subject professors ask them to do. This design includes two intensive writing subjects in the first semester of each degree; one in the second, third, and fourth semesters; and one per year in the rest of the curriculum of each degree. The program is considered part of the WAC tradition because it is conceived as an initiative inside the specific subjects of a degree, different from separated composition courses (Bazerman et al., 2005). It is also considered as a WID program because it is oriented to teach the particularities of the discourse of each discipline in order to favor not only the competencies of mastering texts but especially the learning of the disciplinary contents (Bazerman et al., 2005; Thaiss & Porter, 2010). To do this, the professors that work in the program conduct research in the schematic structure of the genres at play and the characteristics of the discourse in the different disciplines in order to teach them to the students. This research is based in linguistic development, as will be explained later in this chapter.

This chapter justifies the necessity of teaching literacy across the university curriculum, presents the theoretical perspective that sustains the work developed, and explains the pedagogical proposal implemented. The program itself is described and some results are shown to demonstrate the evolution of the students in writing an instance of a genre in two disciplines. The work shows the achievements of the program design, its implementation, and its high degree of institutionalization.

CONTEXT

Public university education in Argentina is not only free of tuition and fees but it also doesn't demand any kind of admission exams. This means that the requirement for entrance to the university is only having finished secondary studies. Those candidates who have not completed secondary studies can have access to a university education if they are more than 25 years old and have professional experience in the field of the selected degree. All of these dispositions are interpreted as democratization of university studies and are socially considered of great value.

However, some scholars have called attention to the conditions of access to university studies as problematic. Ana María Ezcurra (2011), for example, considers it an "exclusive inclusion" that is socially conditioned. The "exclusive inclusion" refers to the fact that the success of each student in the process of university education depends on their cultural capital, according to Pierre Bourdieu (Tovillas, 2010). This position resonates with Basil Bernstein (1990), who states that success in education is conditioned by differences between restricted and elaborated codes, which are socially distributed. In fact, there is as a consequence a great percentage of attrition of students during the course of each degree.

It is necessary to suggest, then, that universities must propose creative solutions to the high attrition rates that affect the whole student population. One solution consists of deciding what to teach in order to reduce the breach between students, guaranteeing them the possibility of continuing and completing their degree. Teaching academic and professional literacy across the curriculum and along the different degrees emerges as an important resource so that students can complete their studies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The university is a social space in which students begin their new educational experience. This social space demands working with new genres, understood as staged, goal-oriented social activities realized through language (Martin & Rose, 2008). These new genres, then, imply new social purposes, new schematic structures (i.e., discourse organization in stages), and the use of new language resources, specially created to produce disciplinary knowledge (Christie & Martin, 1997; Halliday, 2004a; Halliday & Martin, 1993). These genres are specialized social activities that the students face for the first time in their educational trajectory. Hence, new processes of learning are necessary.

Students need to learn specific contents in different disciplines by managing their language and genres. According to Michael Halliday (1993), accessing new resources in the general system of language allows students to learn new knowledge; the developing of language is at the same time the developing of learning content. Language, as the most sophisticated semiotic system created by humans, is the condition and the resource by which the experience is transformed into knowledge. This conceptualization from systemic functional linguistics resonates with a long tradition, including proposals in philosophy, socio-historical psychology, and educational psychology, which argue that language is the means to constructing knowledge (Moyano & Blanco, 2021). Systemic functional linguistics proposes that language is the means to constructing the world (field), social activities, relations between participants (tenor), and resources of texture, i.e., construe text (mode) (Halliday, 1982). Pedagogically speaking, it is important to teach language in order to learn the resources to construct meaning; to teach about language, to systematize these resources and make them conscious; and to teach through language, in order to learn contents of different disciplines (Halliday, 2004b). Consequently, teaching language in these different aspects means that teaching how to produce a text involves all these approaches to language, which opens the door to produce new knowledge through writing. This practice of teaching is done inside the subjects of the different degrees, not separately.

Therefore, learning new genres and the language used to instantiate them in texts allows students to improve their performance at the university and, in the future, in their professions. To do this, the students also need to learn the processes of reading and writing to achieve autonomy in accessing and producing disciplinary contents. Estela Ines Moyano and Nestor Blanco (2021) have shown

the progress of university students in producing new knowledge through the improvement of text construction in a process of a genre-based learning, based on the developments of Jim Martin and his colleagues in the frame of systemic functional linguistics (Martin, 1999; Rose & Martin, 2012) and adapted by Moyano (2007).

The question then becomes: What do students need to know in order to develop disciplinary knowledge as well as academic and professional communications skills? First, the context of the sphere of production and circulation of the genre is at stake. Second, the genre itself—its social purpose, its schematic structure, and the specific language resources at play in the discipline—needs to be considered. Third, a procedure for approaching and producing new genres, which will give students independence in this process after their university experience, needs to be in place.

This position goes beyond WAC/WID traditions in respect to teaching language (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). The genre-based proposal presented here is implemented to teach not only the schematic structure but also the specific resources of language that characterize a genre to favor knowledge construction. This decision has been taken after a long experience with teaching reading and writing based in the concept of genre, register, and discourse developed by Martin and his colleagues (Eggins & Martin, 2003; Hao, 2020; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2007; 2008; Martin & White, 2005; Moyano, 2016; 2021a; 2021b, among others in a long tradition). This experience has taken place at different institutions in Argentina and has been communicated in different publications (Moyano, 2007; 2010; 2017; 2018, among others).

A PROPOSAL FOR TEACHING GENRES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND ALONG EACH DEGREE

In this section, I will approach different aspects of the proposal for the Program of Professional and Academic Discourse Skills at the Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown in Argentina. First, I will expound the logic of organization across the curriculum and along the degrees. Second, I will present the pedagogical design we apply repeatedly in each intervention. Third, I will discuss the strategy we use to work along the degrees. Finally, I will show two examples of the results obtained in the process of teaching genres.

TEACHING GENRE-BASED LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND ALONG EACH DEGREE

In 2019, after two attempts of organization as part of the process of creation, the Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown started its functions. One of the

innovative initiatives pursued in this period was the creation of what was called an "Area of Professional and Academic Discourse Skills" (Área de Competencias en Discurso Profesional y Académico). This area, integrated by language teachers and researchers, proposed the institutionalization of a process of academic and professional literacy across the university curriculum and along each degree.

The initiative consisted of designating several subjects as intensive writing throughout each degree's plan. The implementation included the participation of one professor of the created area in each of these subjects, as it will be described later, applying the pedagogical proposal presented in the next section. The subjects were selected in each degree in accordance with the contents to be developed, proposing as part of the minimum contents of the syllabus the inclusion of genres that are appropriate to them. This decision means that teaching academic literacy is mandatory in these subjects.

In the first proposal, the selection of subjects with intervention of the area was made intensively along each degree: two in the first semester (one common to all the degrees and one specific to each of them), and one subject per semester in each year until the end of each degree plan. This decision allowed students to learn different genres and macrogenres (Martin & Rose, 2008), as in the example described by Cecilia Serpa (2021) and in the cases shown by Moyano and Blanco (2021). It also gave students the chance to learn a procedure to write new genres independently, in other subjects or in the future, when working in their professions. This procedure comprises the three stages of the pedagogical proposal, including the negotiation of the field and the reflection on other variables of the context. The students are able to learn this process due to the explicit teaching (Bernstein, 1990) implemented in each subject.

The purpose of this initiative was teaching reading and writing in order to promote skills in producing new knowledge inside the disciplines. Managing resources of language to produce different types of meaning (the construction of the world and relationships plus the design of a text that deploys these meanings), as well as teaching different genres understood as social activities realized by language comprising those meanings, allow for the construction of new knowledge and the participation in different areas of social activity (Martin, 1993; Moyano & Blanco, 2021).

After the first implementation, and in light of the results obtained, some of the disciplines' professors posed the question about what to do in order to teach reading and writing when they are not accompanied in their courses by a professor of the Area of Professional and Academic Discourse Skills. This question led to a design proposal for an online course oriented to disciplinary professors. This course reflects on the theoretical justification of implementing the mentioned area and the reason why students benefit from learning academic and professional literacy. It also presents the pedagogical proposal of the area and suggests activities derived from it that a non-specialist in language can assign to students in order to work with reading, writing, and oral activities related to texts that instantiate relevant genres in the subject they teach. These practices allow the possibility of creating a sort of "big team" of professors at the university, guiding the students in gaining experience in literacy skills.

In 2022, the area was transformed into a program with a modification. After four semesters of teaching in teams, one subject per year of the degree (from the third year until the final) is selected for intensive writing. In this second part of the degree, the professor in charge of teaching academic or professional genres is discipline specific. To do this job, this professor has to take and complete a course taught by the professors of the Professional and Academic Discourse Skills program and receive supervision during the programming and implementation of the classes of teaching literacy. This kind of work redistributes responsibilities at the end of each degree.

GENRE-BASED PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL: READING AND WRITING TO KNOW (RWK)

The genre-based pedagogical proposal applied in the work of the program (Figure 14.1) has been developed and adapted (Moyano, 2007) from the Sydney School's Teaching Learning Cycle (Martin, 1999; Rose & Martin, 2012). Recently, it has been named Reading and Writing to Know (RWK). In the central column of Figure 14.1, the three stages of the process are deployed: Deconstruction, Construction, and Editing. The Construction stage is preceded by a substage, Text Design. As seen in the third column, every stage is initiated by a joint work between teachers and students¹ and then completed by groups of students to finally reach an independent product. This process is done in order to model the work in each stage and to provide scaffolding for the students' transition from heteronomy to autonomy. All of the stages suppose a negotiation of the field, as shown in the first column of Figure 14.1. This negotiation is understood as the topic of the text taken as model and the one elaborated and edited by the students. Then a reflection about the tenor, which comprise the relationships between interactants, and the mode, as the construction of text as ancillary or constitutive of the activity.

¹ When the pedagogical proposal is applied to the tertiary level, the Construction stage is not fulfilled by joint work between teachers and students, except when special kinds of resources are taught, e.g., the use of grammatical metaphor (Hao, 2020) or resources of engagement with other voices (Martin & White, 2005).

Field Negotiation	Deconstruction		* Joint reading * Joint reading in small groups * Individual reading	
Negotiation	Text Design	Construction	* Joint writing * Joint writing in small groups * Individual writing	
of Tenor and Mode	Editing		* Joint edition * Joint edition in small groups * Individual edition	



The stage called Deconstruction consists in jointly determining the genre at play, identifying the stages of its schematic structure realized by language in the text analyzed as a model, contributing to the purpose of the genre and the relevant linguistic resources utilized to create meaning. Before doing this, the professor has to research instances of the genre at play to identify these characteristics and select what to teach to the students. This research is made on the ground of the developments of the Sydney School on genre, register, and discourse (Eggins & Martin, 2003; Hao, 2020; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2008; 2007; Martin & White, 2005; Moyano, 2016; 2021a; 2021b, among many others).

In the Construction stage, the professors and the students at the university level work with the joint design of the new text, proposing the use of all kinds of schemas for planning, taking into account the field and the contents that will be distributed in the schematic structure of the genre. Then, the students produce the first version of the new text either in groups or individually and deliver it to the professor.

After a brief global commentary made by the professor, the students learn in a class dedicated to joint Editing how to use a guide to edit their own texts. This guide is constructed by the language professor following what has been taught in the Deconstruction stage. The subject professors may add some requests of disciplinary content to the guide. Finally, the students edit their texts following the guide and make the final delivery of the second version of the text. The evaluation of the two different versions is performed with a rubric made *ad hoc*. This rubric considers the different aspects of the texts that have been taught to the students—the schematic structure and the resources of Moyano

language at different levels of the text (discourse, grammatical, and graphic resources)—and may include the disciplinary content aspects added. Although both versions are evaluated to construe statistics, only the second version of the text is marked.

STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ALONG THE DEGREE

As introduced above, the program includes two intensive writing subjects in the first semester of all the degrees: one in the second, the third, and the fourth semester, and then one per year in each degree. Once the subjects in each degree have been selected, the strategy applied to teach how to write an instance of a genre during the two first years of instruction (four semesters) consist of a teaching association of a literacy professor and the professor of the discipline in which the process of teaching literacy takes place (Figure 14.2).



Performing different roles

Figure 14.2. Integration of teaching teams (Moyano, 2010; 2017; 2018).

These actors have different roles in the classroom as shown in Figure 14.3. The literacy professor is in charge of teaching the different stages of RWK, which consists of a process of learning new genres that the students need to incorporate for independent use in the future. The role of the discipline professor is to discuss the social context of the genre and the interpersonal interactions that take place through it as social activity as well as to reflect and discuss different aspects of the field of the text at play. This collaborative work enriches the process of reading and writing, giving the students the possibility of consciously associating the literacy process with knowledge construction.



Figure 14.3. Distribution of the roles of teaching (Moyano, 2010; 2017; 2018).

From the third year until the end of the degree, the instruction is the responsibility of the disciplinary professor guided by a literacy professor (Figure 14.4). To do this, they need to complete a course dictated by the team of the Program of Professional and Academic Discourse Skills. Their job with the students is also supervised by the more experienced professors of the program.



Figure 14.4. Second stage of the implementation of the program (since 3rd year of the degree).

RESULTS OBTAINED

In this section, I will show two examples of results obtained in different subjects with the methodology of intervention described.

Figure 14.5 shows the evolution in the grade obtained (represented by numbers in the scale from 0 to 10 in the vertical axis) by individual texts (represented by numbers in the horizontal axis). The texts, instances of scientific of technological projects, were produced in two different versions (the first as a draft, the second as an edited text) by students in a subject called Science, Technology and Society. This is a subject located in the first semester of the first year of all the degrees at the university. The figure shows the achievements of the first version of the text (light gray bars), influenced by the Deconstruction stage of the pedagogical proposal. The dark gray bars represent the second version of each text, after a process of Editing. The figure shows that all of the texts have improved, some of them in a considerable dimension (e.g., texts 11, 18, and 28). It is important to highlight that even the best texts have improved (e.g., 1, 3, and 32). These results imply that the students have made progress in managing the text and quite possibly mastering the genre. It is possible to say this from previous experience in which the students had to engage the same genre more than once (Moyano, 2007).

Figure 14.6 shows the results obtained in another first-year subject, Epistemology and History of Mathematics, this time in a degree of a complementary cycle oriented to give a university degree to teachers of mathematics. The texts produced by the students (displayed along the horizontal axis) were instances of an analytical exposition (Martin, 1989) and were produced in small groups. The light gray bars represent the first version of the texts, and the dark gray bars the second, after a process of Editing. As in the case presented before, the students' texts improved with the editing, as shown on the vertical axis, which represents the grade. In many cases, this improvement is considerable, and it is probable that the students have learned the genre after this careful production. This figure also shows a reduction in the breach between groups.



Figure 14.5. Results of the evolution of instances of a project in Science, Technology and Society, a subject of the first year of all the degrees at the university.



Figure 14.6. Results of the evolution of instances of the genre analytical exposition (Martin, 1989) in Epistemology and History of Mathematics, in a degree oriented to complete the university cycle of mathematics teachers.

Moyano and Blanco (2021) have shown from a qualitative analysis of one example of each of these cases that the evolution of improving the texts has impacted the evolution of knowledge construction in the selected field.

FINAL REMARKS

The main aim of the WAC/WID program at the Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown is to help students to develop skills in reading and writing academic texts in order to increase their knowledge construction along the plan of the degree they have chosen. This goal is a gateway to achieve success in their path through the university and their graduation. More than that, the work with academic and professional discourse competencies with the explicit pedagogical device utilized through the process of teaching in each of the designated subjects gives the students resources for accessing new genres in the future.

To achieve the purposes of the Program of Academic and Professional Discourse Skills, the commitment of a group of professors is not enough. The success of the pursued goals is a matter of institutionalization. When the institution is committed to the aims proposed by the program, which is based on a theoretical, pedagogical, and strategically oriented proposal, its functioning and positive results are almost guaranteed. This is why institutionalization is so relevant.

The institutionalization of a program is shown by various actions that can be summed up into features such as financial, academic, and political support. This support ensures that the authorities of different levels, such as coordinators of degrees, are also engaged with the program, which influences the disposition of the professors of the subjects at the beginning of the process. After the first experience of working in teams with the language professors and in light of the results obtained by the proposal, professors of the specific subjects of different degrees are, for the most part, notably committed to the program and involved in its goals and processes. Slowly, other discipline professors start to be curious about how to help students to increase their reading and writing skills and decide to enroll themselves in the course that the Discourse Skills program has prepared for them.

The main achievements of the program are the progress the students show in the development of reading and writing specific academic and professional genre skills as well as their consequent progress in knowledge construction in each subject. The students get accustomed to the program activities due to the frequency of the intensive writing subjects along the degree. They make a thorough work following the instructions given through the pedagogical proposal described here, and their texts show important progress from the first to the second version they write. The process with each genre is a new start, but they learn how to proceed as long as they revisit the process of accessing them (i.e., the RWK design). Knowledge about genres and disciplinary language is critical for students to progress in their autonomy. After that intense process of teaching and learning, they are aware of the main resources provided by their own language (Spanish) to construe texts as instances of academic or professional genres when they have a model to explore. This is an important accomplishment for the future when as professionals they will need to access new genres by themselves.

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Moyano

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