

GICEOLEM research: between AcLits, WAC/WID and 'didactics' of situated reading and writing to learn practices.

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Coloquio
Aclits,
UFMG,
Belo
Horizonte,
2015

GICEOLEM research: between Aclits, WAC/WID and 'didactics' of situated reading and writing to learn practices



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Plan

- *Giceolem overview*
- *Theory and methods*
- *An example of previous research*
- *An example of current research*



Group for Educational Inclusiveness and Quality
by Taking Care of Reading and Writing
in all Subjects

*Linguistics Institute
University of Buenos Aires*

CONICET



GICEOLEM

- *Research team and research-training group*
- *Graduate students, established and young scholars*
- *Multidisciplinary team*
 - *Pedagogues, linguists, psychologists, a biologist, and a Math teacher*
- *Fortnightly 5 hours meetings to*
 - *discuss work in progress, share what we write, give and receive comments, and discuss other authors' papers that can nurture our research.*



2013/12/04



GICEOLEM



- *Research program with several related projects*
 - *In different disciplines*
 - *In secondary, tertiary, and graduate education*
- *How reading and writing can be dealt with in context within the disciplines to help student understanding, participation and meaning making*

Theoretical (hybrid) foundations



- *U.K. AcLits*
- *U.S. WAC/WID/New Rhetoric*
- *Australian integrated approach*
(Chanock; Purser & Skillen; Zadnick & Radloff)
- *French Specific Didactics*
(Mathematics, Language practices)
- *Argentine Interdidactics (study practices in Sciences and Humanities)*
(Lerner & Aisenberg)

AcLits



- *Writing and reading are social literacy practices and not only individual skills*
- *Writing and reading practices vary across contexts*
- *Students face unfamiliar literacies. Thus their difficulties can not be treated as a deficit*
- *Research addresses literacy experiences and practices, and not only texts (student mistakes)*
- *Research addresses teachers, institutions and students, and not only students*
- *Institutional practice of mystery (Lillis, 1999)*



WAC



- *Writing as a way to examine students, not to teach them?*
- *as a means of demonstrating knowledge rather than of acquiring it?*
- *“Assumption that writing is a single, generalizable skill, learned (or not learned) outside a disciplinary matrix –in secondary school or freshman comp- and not related [...] with a discipline” (Russell, 1990)*

WAC



- *“Writing helps students make connections*
- *WAC helps faculty make connections, with students and with each other”*
(E. Maimon cited by Russell, 2000)
- *“From the transmission model to students actively involved in constructing their own knowledge using oral and written communication as one of the tools for that construction.*
- *Writing is a means not and end: student improvement in communication skills is not the only goal”*
(McLeod, 2000)

Our previous research (2004-2010)



| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| Interview studies | Higher Education | University Reading culture. An exploration of reading practices in first year Social Sciences courses from the perspective of professors and students (V. Estienne) |
| | | Writing and Reading in first year Humanities and Veterinarian Sciences (G. Fernández) |
| | | Writing practices at the beginning of higher education. Professors and students' perspectives in several majors (E. Diment) |
| | | Grading exams at the university. Meanings of this practice for students and professors (S. Di Benedetto) |
| | Research Education | Graduate students experiences (obstacles and support) in doing their thesis and dissertations (P. Carlino, S. Reisinger) |

Our previous research (2004-2010)

- *Research questions*
 - *Undergraduate students and teachers viewpoints about reading and writing practices in different subjects across the university*
 - *Graduate students and advisors' viewpoints about the experience of doing/advising a thesis/dissertation*
- *Interviews*



Our previous research (2004-2010)

- *Inspired by Lea & Street (1998) research, we explored students and teachers' perspectives.*
- *to make pedagogical and institutional practices observable by their actors and stakeholders, and open them to critique.*

Reading and writing in Argentine universities



- “[A question posed by the teacher] asked, «What does Althusser add to Marx?»». Oh, thanks to this question, I’ve only just known that I have to study Marx and Althusser together, because they complement each other, but I had seen them separately. With this question, I already know that I will be asked about their relationship, but without it, I don’t know.”

(1st year Education student)

Reading and writing in Argentine universities



- *“Usually, the exam always comes back with a check mark and a grade. Very rarely does the teacher guide you through her/his assessment. [...] What they do is to underline what is wrong [...] and you know that it is wrong but you don't know why, whether it's unnecessary, it's the opposite, or what”.*

(3rd year Law student)

Didactics of Disciplines



- *TDS: G. Brousseau*
- *Didactical transposition: Y. Chevallard*
- *Joint action: G. Sensevy*
 - *Motu proprio participation*
- *Didactical Engineering: M. Artigue*
- *Didactic Triad*
 - *O. of teaching, teacher, student*
- *Object of teaching*
 - *Writing & reading as specialists do, in a specific field, to become a part of*
 - *Writing & reading as learning tools, to learn the concepts of that field*
 - *Disciplinary concepts, methods and epistemologies*

Our current research aims

- *Teaching conditions (didactic milieu / situations, and teacher interventions)*
- *encourage or hinder understanding, engagement, participation and meaning making*
- *of all the students and not only of those from families with an academic background.*

Our current research

- *Class observation*
 - *Class activities*
("didactic milieu")
 - *Teacher-students*
interaction
- *Teacher and*
students'
interviews
- *Textual material*
- *Two types of*
studies
 - *Naturalistic*
 - *Design-based*

| | | |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Naturalistic studies | Higher Education | Reading and writing in pre-service teacher education: The uses and meanings teachers and students give to literacy when teaching and learning in History courses (M. Cartolari) |
| | | Writing to learn in Engineering: A case study on the final written work in Electronic Engineering (J. Zambrano) |
| | | Arguing and writing to learn in two university disciplines (Linguistics and Biology) (E. Molina) |
| | Research Education | Peer review and peer interaction in doctoral writing groups in Education and other Social Sciences (L. Colombo) |
| | High school | Reading and writing in high school subjects (Social Studies, Geography, Economics) in a high risk school (N. Rosli) |
| Design-based (interventionist) studies | Higher Education | Design and implementation of a teaching sequence that integrates reading and writing mediated by technology in Biology classes in pre-service teacher education (L. Alfie) |
| | | Reading and writing to learn in Numerical Methods (Engineering) course (G. Cordero) |
| | High school | Reading and writing to learn in high school. Design and implementation of a teaching sequence in Biology (C. Roni) |
| | | Writing as a mediation tool for epistemic dialogue in Math classes in high school (I. Venazco) |

**Design-
based
(interventionist)
studies**

**Higher
Education**

Design and implementation of a teaching sequence that integrates reading and writing mediated by technology in **Biology** classes in pre-service teacher education (**Lionel Alfie**)



Reading and writing in Biology classes

- *Teacher and researcher co-design a teaching sequence*
- *Teacher implements it*
- *Researcher observes, audio-records the lessons, and interviews students and teacher*

Biodiversity and landscapes changes (1st year t. education)



- 1. Reading and discussing bibliography*
- 2. Students interview neighbors*
- 3. Discussion about how to analyze interviews by relating them with concepts from the reading materials*
- 4. Individual/in groups and in/out of class analysis*
- 5. In-class discussions about the first analysis*
- 6. Students consult the professor about their drafts*
- 7. Students turn in assignments via the online platform Edmodo.com*
- 8. Teacher feedback through Edmodo*
- 9. Students turn in revised drafts*
- 10. Students defend orally their written works*

Qualitative analysis

(Maxwell & Miller, 1998; Maxwell, 2012)



- *Categorizing strategy*
 - *Similarity relationships*
 - *Based on resemblances or commonalities independent of proximity in time or space*
 - *Different units*
 - *Speech turns, segments or whole lessons*
 - *Patterns of contextual concomitances*
- *Connecting strategy*
 - *Relationships of contiguity*
 - *Based on contextual connections or associations between close events*
 - *Joint action*



| Teacher and students speech turns | Types of actions |
|--|--|
| 176M:...Then, let's see, when we were reading the answers, what did the interviewees said? We have to pay attention to the [landscape] elements [mentioned in the readings] that they recognized, for example, there were many trees, animals | Makes explicit that in the analysis that the gathered empirical material has to be related to disciplinary concepts |
| 177Ao: The streets | Contributes according to what the teacher asks |
| 178M: Streets were dirt roads | Completes idea |
| 179Aa: There were ditches | Contributes according to what the teacher asks |
| <p>180M: There were ditches or channels. The, when we analyze the interviews with the category "changes in the landscape" we have to look for the elements they mentioned in their answers</p> <p>For example [...] you will say: "OK, out of the 36 interviews, we analyzed eight", [or] seven, [or] four, and that would be the same that randomly. An analysis was performed of certain amount, 36 interviews were conducted but this group analyzed seven, then, "in the interviews that were analyzed we found that the landscape elements that were mentioned were: ditches, dirt roads, groves, certain animals, street lights" that can also be included. Later we will go over that, let's see some real examples from your interviews.</p> | <p>Validates answers</p> <p>Models how to draft the report</p> <p>Models how to analyze and draft by relating the empirical material with theoretical concepts already studied</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>217M To analyze this [the categories from the bibliography] in the interviews, it is useful to choose colors. For example, to analyze the category one in red, category two in green, to analyze category three, blue. Then, you have to read the interviews in group and decide if that answer goes in red, green or blue. OK? The, you have to do that now, in each group you will start reading each interview and see what category you can relate that with. As most probably you will come up with some doubts, here we are [teacher and teaching assistants] to address them [...], but I am telling you that in a research you always solve this things by agreeing with other researchers in a research team. OK, questions? [short silence] As clear as water. I think we should devote twenty minutes here so you can start reading the first interview and check if you find some difficulties with it because next week we are already starting with the writing and you have to have the material read and analyzed for that. In that case you will discuss here any questions or doubts you have. C'mon, let's work!</p> | <p>Explains how to read in order to relate the empirical material with the theory (an specific research practice)</p> |
| <p>For twenty minutes, the students work sitting in groups. They talk to each other, read the bibliography and the interviews, going off topic from time to time. During the group work, one student calls the teacher to ask her a question</p> | |
| <p>218A: I, for example, grab a ruler, a color pencil and... [silence]</p> | <p>Asks how to do the activity</p> |
| <p>219M: And you mark, you will have to, with Word, use italics, quotation marks, and , suppose, María, seventy [the age of the interviewee], to know what we are talking about, and even in some cases you change the name to the person, "interviewee one, interviewee two." In this case that's not a problem because we don't know who the interviewee is.</p> | <p>Explains how to write according to a way specific to qualitative research</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| 219M:... I [talks to one student who did an inaudible question] give them the prompt, the mid term and with the mid term here we will start writing, I will upload it to Edmodo and we will work, next week we will start working individually and in groups. The group work will be a Power Point or Prezi presentation with the results of all the group's interviews, then you will have to come up with an individual work, an autonomous writing, with each member's interviews. | Defines individual work and group work |
| 220A: Our own? | Asks about the assignment organizational aspects |
| 221M: yes, the one [interview] that each one of you did | Answers |
| 222A: For next Friday, isn't it? An analysis has to be done | Asks about the assignment organizational aspects |
| 223M: For next Friday | Answers |
| 224A: Underlined | Asks about the assignment key aspects |
| 225M: Underlined | Answers |
| 226A: What we want to be in the assignment | Asks about the assignment key aspects |
| 227M: Those categories marked by underlining, categories that then you will have to use to write, signaling relationships with the text we read | Answers and makes explicit what is expected for next class |



Student interview

A2: One word that it is used a lot in this subject is “make relationships, make relationships.” “Make relationships” does not mean much to me [...] in my opinion, the great problem is that I did not understand what she wanted [the teacher] and when I ended up putting it out there, it had nothing to do with it. Then, [...] I rather her to pose a question before telling me “make relationships” [or] how are these things related”.

(post sequence interview with a first year student)

Lionel Alfie's

Student interview



A2: The assignment prompts are so hard to understand

E: And, ¿did you ask about them?

A2: Yes, we all of us had to ask because nobody understood.

E: With that help, were you able to understand what was being asked?

A1: To tell the truth... [no]

[...]

A3: The take-home mid term had prompts that were hard to understand.

E: Yeah, yeah, I understand.

A1: Instead of posing individual questions, there is some kind of story...

A2: Sincerely, that, to me, it ´s very hard to get. As I told you, if you ask her, if you know what to ask her, she will tell you exactly what you need. But if you don't, you just listen to her without understanding.

I: Sometimes you don't even know how to ask a question

A2: Exactly

| | |
|--|--|
| 356M: Now what I want is for you to share some answers that you got [in the interviews conducted with neighbors] so everybody can evaluate if the answer is well related to some category or why you associated that answer with the category, because that's what you have to develop in the mid term exam, so we will do this first orally | Defines the task |
| 357A1: Teacher, do you want me to read what we did? | Intervenes on her own initiative (motu proprio) |
| 358M: Sure | |
| 359A: The first question [to the interviewee] says [reads] "What elementary school did you attend to?, what does the landscape from your house to your school look like?" "The person remembers that in that time there were only two schools in the surroundings. The person says that the school was twelve blocks away from his/her house, there were dirt roads, a few trees, and almost the whole area was countryside, besides in the way to school he/she had to cross the train tracks, the load train track", There [in the interview fragment] what we did is components [refers to identify landscape components] | Reads |
| 360A2: Changes in the landscape [a student from another group talks] | Motu proprio intervention |
| 361M: Let's see. You put that as part of the components [addresses group A1] | Shows disagreement |
| 362A1: Because he/she talks about the space | Motu proprio justification of what was done |
| 363M: Then notice that we don't have the category components in an explicit way, but in which category [would be included components]? | Gives back the problem and regulates towards the bibliography categories |
| 364A1: Landscape changes | Responds |
| 365M: Changes, of course. To talk about changes I have to describe what was there before, then in order to refer to what has changed [I would have to write] "such person claims that X years ago the landscape was composed of dirt roads, without trees, with a train track, a load train track, which was the only thing that came through.". Good. | Validates and models how to textualize |
| 366A: In the three interviews we did there are some landscape changes, they are pretty similar | Motu proprio intervention |

Conclusion



- *Situated observational research is needed to foreground teaching in which writing and reading to learn in the disciplines is (or is not) helping student understanding, participation and knowledge making.*
- *Class transcripts enable different analysis. Particularly they are a stable record of teacher-students interaction that cannot be fully understood only by observation without audio recording.*



Conclusion

- *“Critique is cheap, change is costly” (Russell, 2000)*

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Bienvenidos

Este sitio fue creado para todos aquellos investigadores, docentes y autoridades educativas interesados en conocer los avances de las investigaciones que se realizan en el GICEOLEM.

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SOBRE EL GICEOLEM

Who we are

Current research by GICEOLEM

Quiénes somos

¿Cómo funcionamos en el GICEOLEM?

Áreas de investigación

Who we are



The GICEOLEM,
Group for Educational Quality and Inclusiveness by Taking
Care of Reading and Writing in all Subjects,

is based on the Linguistics Institute of
Universidad de Buenos Aires.

Our multidisciplinary team comprises pedagogues, linguists, psychologists, a biologist, and a Math teacher. We study the relationships between teaching, learning, reading and writing in different disciplines at the secondary, higher education and postgraduate levels. [Read about our understanding of academic literacies](#)

Our main contribution attempts to show in what ways reading and writing can be dealt with and taught in context and meaningfully in all disciplines and levels of education, avoiding exercises that fragment and distort reading and writing practices.

Most of our members work with the CONICET, the University of Buenos Aires and other national universities.

We are on FACEBOOK
and Twitter

<https://sites.google.com/site/giceolem>