

Nora Nagy

Hungary, University of Pécs
nagy.nora@pte.hu

Making semantic waves in art exhibition reviews: Explicit disciplinary literacy development in undergraduate students

Keywords: Disciplinary literacy, Genre pedagogy, Legitimation code theory, Multimodal literacy

University students are expected to write a variety of genres, mostly from the genre families of arguments and text responses. In this case study, undergraduate English studies students were asked to write reviews of two exhibitions they visited during a semester as part of a course on multimodality and social semiotics. At the beginning of the course, students struggled to distinguish between and produce these genres, writing personal reflections and failing to connect their experiences with academic knowledge. Scaffolded writing tasks were used as teaching tools, and detailed feedback was given on the students' reviews. The students were also introduced to the structure of response genres (Martin & Rose, 2008) and the role of semantic waves (Maton, 2013) in academic writing. Drawing on the concept of semantic gravity within the Semantics dimension of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2013, 2014), student reviews were analysed to understand how different types of knowledge practices (i.e. disciplinary knowledge versus personal experiences) appear in the reviews. Based on pre- and post-intervention analyses of student texts, this study demonstrates how using LCT Semantics both as a teaching and writing tool and the explicit teaching of school genres contributed to more confident and successful written production.

References

- Martin, J. R. (2008). *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. London: Equinox.
- Maton, K. (2013). Making semantic waves: A key to cumulative knowledge-building. *Linguistics and Education*, 24(1), 8-22.
- Maton, K. (2014). *Knowledge & knowers: Towards a realist sociology of education*. London: Routledge.