

NEGOTIATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL PEERS: CRITICAL STRATEGY FOR A READING AND WRITING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract

The following paper focuses on the description and exemplification of a strategy which is the core of the Academic Reading and Writing Program (PROLEA, for its acronym in Spanish) conducted at the Universidad de Flores (UFLO), in Argentina: the “negotiation between professional peers” or “negotiation between teaching partners”. The Program’s pedagogic design is based on the Sydney School’s developments in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The negotiation between peers comprises the work between a professor on academic and professional literacies, who is a member of the Program, and the professors of each of the specific subjects involved. In order to successfully implement the SFL pedagogic proposal at this educational level, the realization of the negotiation between professional peers is necessary. This negotiation entails a series of agreements between the professors involved about the teaching of the curricula contents through reading and writing tasks. First in this paper, the negotiation between peers is characterized, and its function and value in the Program are highlighted; second, two scenarios of application are presented in order to show this strategy’s contribution as well as its difficulties and the way of resolution of the problems found.

Keywords: Negotiation Between Professional Peers; Reading and Writing Program; Curricular Content Teaching; Academic Literacy; Argentina.

Introduction

The available strategies for teaching academic and professional literacies in Latin America are varied and include courses at the beginning of the university studies, workshops as part of a degree curriculum, syllabus topics included by teachers in their specific subjects, writing centres and literacy programs across the curriculum (UNLu, 2001; Carlino, 2006; Parodi, 2010; Vázquez et al, 2012; Núñez Cortés 2013; Molina Natera, 2014). There is also a long tradition of other

initiatives in different countries around the world (Fullwiller & Young, 1982; McLeod & Soven, 1992, among others). However, a recent survey (Thaiss, 2010: 259, 260) has shown that teaching literacy across the university curriculum is a common practice, comprising not only teaching academic discourse in English as a second language or for foreign students (Hyon, 1996; Hyland & Hamp Lyons, 2002; Coffin et al, 2003; Ravelli & Ellis, 2004; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Coffin & Donahue, 2012) but also in different languages, including Spanish, to native speakers with limited or

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no experience in this register (Bazerman, Bonini & Figueiredo, 2009; Bazerman, Krut, Lunsford, McLeod, Null, Rogers & Stansell, 2010; Thaiss et al, 2012; Lillis et al, 2015, among many others).

In the frame of the variety of actions in Latin America, the Universidad de Flores (UFLO) in Argentina is implementing an Academic Reading and Writing Program (PROLEA)¹ which extends from the beginning until the end of each degree by assigning a subject per year to the interdisciplinary work between the subject matter professors and an academic and professional literacies professor, a member of the Program (Moyano, 2004; Moyano & Giudice, forthcoming). A direct precedent of PROLEA is the Program to Develop Academic Literacy across the Curriculum (PRODEAC for its acronym in Spanish), at the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS) (Moyano, 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2011b; Moyano & Natale, 2012). PROLEA-UFLO was installed at the request from the higher authorities of the University, the Rector and Vice-Rector, who invited Estela Moyano to design an institutional literacy program. Then, between 2012 and 2014 an interdisciplinary research project, which had among its objectives to survey information concerning the literacy practices promoted by the teachers on their classrooms,² was conducted. The professors in charge of courses considered the core of the degree were queried about the assignments they required of their students, and asked for samples of the literature provided as readings, of writing materials produced by the students and of evaluation instructions. The results not only offered a diagnosis of the difficulties to guide literacy activities, but also this interaction triggered a reflection process among the professors who asked for assistance to resolve them (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2016).

Consequently, the Program was initiated as a pilot experience in the Psychology School in 2013. This pilot was supervised by a linguist and expert in literacy who afterwards became the Coordinator of the Program, Estela Moyano, and the actions were performed by another expert in academic and professional literacies, Jacqueline Giudice. The Director of the Psychology degree, Marcelo Godoy, was also involved, and played the role of negotiating the pilot implementation. After

an evaluation of the pilot, in which the institutional authorities were involved, the Program was installed across the Faculties at the University in 2015.

PROLEA's main goal is to teach students how to approach different genres, from the context of academic studies and the professional context they will be introduced to once they graduate. Another goal is not only to assist the specific subjects' teachers to implement reading and writing tasks that will contribute to the overall curricular learning, but also to enrich their generic and linguistic awareness as most of them did not have the opportunity to reflect upon this phenomenon during their formal training.

The educational program follows the Sydney School pedagogic proposal in the frame of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, 1999; Rose & Martin, 2012), which was adapted to the Argentinian context (Moyano, 2007).

This modified proposal entails three different stages: Joint Deconstruction (in the Sydney School's terms as it will be explained immediately), Joint Designing and Writing and Joint Editing. The Joint Deconstruction of texts consists in the whole class analysis of models which allows students to identify, through detailed reading, the schematic structure of the text as an instance of a genre as well as the relevant specific characteristics of scientific language described in this theoretical frame (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin & Veel, 1998; Wignell, 2007; Banks, 2008; Hood, 2010; cf. also in Spanish, Oteiza, 2009; 2010; Oteiza & Pinuer, 2010; Moyano, 2012a; 2013; 2014; 2015). Additionally, given that it is not possible to perform the Joint Writing on this educational level except in very specific cases that involve teaching a specific disciplinary language resource, the next instance of this proposal consists in the Joint Editing of texts written by the students, working towards Individual Editing, as done by expert writers (Moyano, 2010; 2011a). This stage consists in a whole class analysis of some of the texts produced by the students, in order to evaluate the schematic structure and the language used, making the changes needed to reach a good enough text within the genre.

The selection of this teaching model is based essentially on Halliday's theory of learning (1993; 2004),

which implies that content learning takes place through learning the language used for its construction, that is to say, construing a theory of an aspect of the world, i.e. construing concepts. Learning disciplinary contents, then, implies using the appropriate linguistic resources: not only a subject specific lexicon, but also new grammatical and discourse organizations, which lead to a genre-based pedagogy (Martin, 1999; Rose & Martin, 2012). In addition, this theory proposes that the learning process occurs by interaction, the exchange produced within a context of shared experience (Martin, 1999), in which the concept of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1978) and of zone of proximal development (Vigotsky, 1998) become relevant. This relates to a visible or explicit pedagogy, in Bernstein's own terms (1990), i.e., to be clear regarding the objectives to be achieved throughout the teaching process, the procedures to follow and the assessment criteria.

To carry out this teaching process, the Program proposes interdisciplinary work between a professor from the PROLEA team and the professor(s) in charge of the subject participating in the Program. These activities are carried out by implementing a strategy called "negotiation between professional peers" or "negotiation between teaching partners" (Moyano, 2009; 2010; Moyano & Natale, 2012, Moyano & Giudice, forthcoming). This device is critical for the proper functioning of the pedagogy proposal chosen to teach academic and professional literacies and it has a recurrent character: it takes place before starting the teaching process and remains active throughout its development in order to make any necessary adjustment.

This paper will describe this strategy and explain its functions and value, as well as its challenges, and then will present two cases of negotiation between professional peers that have been carried out for three years at UFLO Psychology School as part of the PROLEA.

Negotiation between professional peers or teaching partners

Before starting working inside the classroom, meetings between the PROLEA professor and the professors from the subject that participates on

the program are necessary. The function of these interdisciplinary meetings is to establish agreement on the line of work to follow in order to teach students how to perform the reading and writing tasks. During the meetings each professor would bring to the discussion his or her own knowledge and experience. However, it is important that the PROLEA professor takes the role of leading the meeting to ensure all objectives are met.

The key points to be worked during the negotiation process will be described below, along with the role that each professor has during the teaching process and the value they add to the Program. Even though some of these key points have already been presented on a previous paper (Moyano, 2010), they will be treated with more detail thanks to the experience gained over the years of practice.

* *The role of academic reading and writing teaching in the core or a subject matter.* The first item to agree in the negotiation between professional peers relates to the importance of counting on a pedagogic sequence that provides the students guidance about the reading materials and the texts they need to write on the specific subject. Carlino (2005) has pointed out that, in most cases, the writing tasks are linked to the assessment of the content learning. Based on Halliday's learning theory mentioned earlier, the PROLEA proposes that not only reading but also writing play part on both understanding and learning the course contents. Consequently, devoting teaching time to enhance students' development of literacy becomes necessary. Since reading and writing activities are carried out while teaching the subject contents, one of the points of the agreement would be that the subject professors, who select the readings, not only will provide detailed reading guidelines including questions for the students to resolve, but also will anticipate the content of the texts to read (Rose & Martin, 2012). The PROLEA professor will take part of the classes specially to guide the students in the writing task. For those instances, the professional peers will select texts that would serve as writing models. So, the first activity will be the Joint Deconstruction of a text. This task requires identifying genre stages and phases on the text (Martin & Rose, 2007), carrying out a detailed reading that allows also the identification of

linguistic resources of the discipline. In order to make this happen, the texts should be adequate to the subject and class level, either written by subject matter experts or produced by former students. Regarding the writing task, it is important to guide the writing plan or text design and to carry out Joint Writing activities every time a new academic language resource is taught, such as abstraction, grammatical metaphor, or projection in academic texts. Having Joint Editing classes to work on the text produced by the students will allow, on the one hand, to re-enforce the learning process of the particular genre and the discourse of the discipline, and on the other hand, the editing work itself, a key practice for expert writing that can only be learned through explicit teaching. This is how reading and writing will integrate the course development by adding to content learning, and at the same time, it will contribute by teaching skills needed not only to have a good academic performance, but also to perform future professional activities that will imply reading and writing.

* *Planning reading and writing activities across the subject matter.* The activities mentioned earlier need to be distributed in the available moments throughout the course duration. Many professors may consider them as a waste of time against teaching the actual course contents, which only re-enforces the need to explain the role of language in any learning process and work on agreements about this. The negotiation between peers plays a key part on determining which would be the most accurate moments to carry out the Program activities. These activities need to be conceived by the subject matter professor as related to the function of teaching contents. The support obtained and, consequently, the students' acceptance of a work method that seems to be strange to the context depends on this mutual agreement. Any decision should be added to both the Program and the course syllabus and schedule, so they become formal agreements.

* *Identifying and characterizing genres to be produced by the students in the subject matter.* The requirements that the students' productions need to meet in the different moments for writing production have to be perfectly defined along the course outline. This activity is key for the negotiation between

professional peers, and the PROLEA professor plays a main role here. As pointed out by Martin & Rose (2008), within a framework of teaching through written genres, it is the linguist's responsibility to describe these genres in all strata of language and context. Even though the linguist is able to provide assistance, the subject matter professor is responsible for identifying which genre within the specific disciplinary culture is relevant for student production in the context of the course. If the students are asked to produce macro-genres (Eggins & Martin, 2003) in which the elemental genres described by the theory could be identified (Martin & Rose, 2008), investing time to teach these elemental genres during the first years of the degree becomes important. The PROLEA professor has the responsibility to help the subject matter professor to contextualize the academic and professional genres, by posing questions that bring into focus the issues most relevant to the cultural context. During the lessons, the results of this contextualization will be presented to the students by the subject professors, in order to provide legitimacy to this practice, at the same time as the interdisciplinary work is brought into light. The contextualization relates to who produces the genre at stake, to whom it is addressed and the hierarchical relation between interactants, the purpose pursued and the social activities they carry out. This information helps to control the descriptions made by the PROLEA professors, especially when they work with professional genres only available within the real field of professional activity. In most of these cases, actual models cannot be obtained (Moyano, 2012b), so linguists need to rely in the experience of the subject professors with those genres. The PROLEA professors will be in charge of leading the Joint Deconstruction and Joint Editing activities with the students.

* *Elaboration of guidelines and rubrics.* Another function of the negotiation between professors is to make agreements about the documents that will be used for tasks' assignment and evaluation. Since the reading and writing guidelines are often given orally (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2016), an agreement about the need of providing detailed written guidelines to accurately orient students is another step of this strategy. Following Bernstein (1990), who remarks that

in a visible pedagogy the criteria used for assessment are explicit, the elaboration of rubrics is very important. The PROLEA professor is in charge of this work, considering genre characteristics to be taught in each class. During negotiation, the course professors will judge and share the evaluation criteria that will be used, ensuring also that only the contents taught will be evaluated. Key points related to the subject matter content may be added to the rubric. These documents (guidelines and rubrics) will be also useful for the Joint Editing, and as orientation for the Independent Editing for the last version of each written production.

As mentioned before, the negotiation between professional peers is recurrent. A single instance before starting the teaching process in the classroom should not be expected to be sufficient to reach and maintain agreement. The documents that will be shared with the students will also emerge from negotiation. These documents are the schedule of reading and writing, guidelines, genre descriptions and rubrics. To elaborate these documents will require more than one encounter. Also, in many cases, during the first Program implementations on a given subject, agreement adjustments will be required, as subject matter professors become used to these innovations.

Negotiation as a way of conflict resolution

The practice developed within university studies, as any other human practice, follows some rituals. It fits a certain *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1996; 1999), built by both professors and students, related to certain ways of behaving during teaching-learning processes inside the university classrooms. An academic reading and writing program such as PROLEA challenges that *habitus*, generating some resistance in the participants involved. For instance, some of the professors of specific subjects that join the program resist changing the way of teaching contents, which often takes the form of lecture classes. Also they may resist the proposal of applying a pedagogic device of genre-based literacy, as a resource for teaching the subject contents and adequate communicational skills development for both academic and professional contexts. Furthermore, they may

consider intrusive the presence of an external professor that may jeopardize their classes. The students feel this proposal as an additional effort and until they have their first satisfying experience they also show resistance.

This is why the negotiation between professional peers becomes a critical strategy. The way that this practice is carried out is crucial and requires special attention from the PROLEA professor. While the PROLEA professor proactively presents the proposals and the relevant theoretical base and experiences, s/he also has to acknowledge the responsibility and prominence of the subject professors to carry out their own work. This extremely delicate balance to maintain is key to the success of a program such as PROLEA.

It is important to clarify that *habitus* reflects internal dispositions that may accept modifications when the context for the production of inner schemes changes (Bourdieu, 2006; Tovillas, 2010). This is how the change of positions and attitudes can be obtained towards the activities carried out for teaching contents through genres. This is the essential function of the strategy called negotiation between professional peers. To meet the objectives established is key to conform a solid team, in which every professor has its own role, a role previously agreed on.

Some authors have pointed out that institutional support is fundamental to accomplish success in teaching academic and professional literacies across the university curriculum (UNLu, 2001; Carlino, 2005; Bazerman, personal communication, 2007). Some experiences of implementation of literacy programs of this type (Moyano, 2010; 2011b; Moyano & Natale, 2012; Moyano & Godoy, 2015) have proven how accurate this statement is. Having a successful negotiation process between the Program Coordinator and the University authorities increases the odds of maintaining processes of negotiation between professors. Just as counting on the support of the subject matter professor becomes a positive influence in the students' acceptance of work with a genre-base pedagogy, so also the superior management authorities' support facilitates a process in which the negotiation between professional peers gains importance and reaches better agreements as time passes. However, the acceptance of the device

is not always immediate: having it installed properly and showing results requires several instances, being accomplished after a few implementations of the Program in each subject matter.

The institution authorities' support, the strategy used by the Program's participants, the passing of time and the repeated implementations will be the factors that will lead to gradually transforming these new practices into a new *habitus*.

Two cases of negotiation between professional peers: the promotion of evolution in teaching academic and professional literacies

The purpose of this part of the paper is to exemplify the negotiation between professional peers and its impact in learning, with two cases of implementation held at the degree of Psychology at UFLO. These narratives can function as a contribution to the installation of Programs of this kind in other universities.

Case One

This first scenario of negotiation between peers comes from a course from the freshman year for the Psychology degree. Since the course is required on the first half of the year, all its attendees have just begun their college studies. The students in this course, therefore, are considered the most vulnerable group in reading and writing skills and performance needed to pass the course, particularly since UFLO does not provide any preparatory course in academic literacy. This subject matter is 64 hours long.

Initial situation

Even though the professors of this subject had established enhancing literacy skills as an objective, the way they approached this task did not have the desired result. During 2012, the students made two written productions: an individual examination and a final written work in groups. The first evaluation consisted of a multiple-choice exam, with the addition of one or two questions that needed further written development. The questions aimed at evaluating the reading of the required

texts, which consisted exclusively of popularized science books written by experts in the discipline. Although students were advised to read the complete books, only a selection of chapters was flagged as mandatory. The material was photocopied and compiled into booklets with chapters from different books, different styles of texts written by various authors, omitting publication information. This way of organizing the reading material promotes fragment reading, out of context and with no hierarchical order. The teaching method for each lesson consisted mainly in a presentation by the professor, assisted by slideshows as teaching support. These slides were handed to the students, despite the resistance of the head teacher, who admitted that most students were "tempted to study only from the slideshow, instead of the actual text" (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2016).

The second writing work required by the end of the course was made collaboratively in groups, and the products were evaluated by the subject professors as poor. During the interview, the subject professors showed lack of genre and linguistic awareness, as already found on prior studies (Moyano, 2009). In fact, the teachers described this activity as "a written work". In SFL theory, this expression refers only to the mode of the text, not to the genre it instantiates. This is to say that this expression doesn't allow to identify a genre according to Martin & Rose (2008), i.e., to assign a purpose and a schematic structure to it. When the PROLEA professor asked about the main characteristics of the text, the subject teachers classified it as a sort of report, the result of a group investigation in which students were required to link theoretical concepts with statements obtained by conducting interviews. The teachers did not make clear what was expected from those texts, nor gave any reference to put in context this work within a specific academic or professional practice. There was no description regarding the schematic structure and language resources, nor models to show to the students. Work instructions were provided orally and by different professors, a fact that explains the different outcomes and results that the subject professors described as "poor". Consequently, they decided to grade the papers with a "concept grade" instead of an actual grade (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2016).

The analysis by the PROLEA professor of a sample of papers written by students confirmed the subject professors' impression. Among them, some texts only presented the interviews and a summary of the different theories based mostly on the slides presented in class, without reaching the main objective of the work: to analyze the statements obtained using a theoretical framework. Introductions were omitted; those texts which had a conclusion presented basically a personal opinion on the course experience or about conducting interviews, but no mention of the phenomenon observed or its significance. They were written in informal language, far from the academic. References were either absent or incomplete.

Evolution of the negotiation between professional peers

** First implementation.*

The Program was linked to the subject in 2013, after the students sat for mid-term exams and received the first guidelines for the final written work. The subject matter team of professors was conformed by two teachers, who were distributed in three shifts. In negotiation between peers, the professors established the Program's intervention to assist with the final written work.

The PROLEA professor observed a few classes and met with the faculty members to agree on the genre. She recommended placing the working guidelines in an academic context: a workshop for which the students needed to elaborate a paper on a research and present it in a few minutes. It was intended to find a model to present to the students but none was found, since the texts already published were too difficult to reach for the students according to the level of their writing development (i.e., too far from the zone of proximal development), and those produced by former students did not meet the expectations of the subject professors.

Consequently, the teacher partners described in negotiation the genre and produced the guidelines that would also serve as a sort of contract for evaluation. In this contract, there was explicit instruction about the academic kind of work that had to be done and

the genre was specified: a paper reporting on a brief research task. The genre was described following Martin & Rose (2008): the stages were defined (Introduction, Development, Conclusions), along with a brief explanation for the different minor text units or phases (mandatory or optional) that were to be incorporated into each text. The document contained the formal requirements and due date. Also the guidelines for the bibliography section were handed in.

The PROLEA professor presented the guidelines to the students with the presence of the subject professors. Since the students had already conducted the interviews on which to base their investigations, they used the opportunity to try out a possible analysis, and requested further details to elaborate this analysis. The subject matter professors were able to intervene in the discussion to specify the technical aspects, and the PROLEA professor explained some discourse features of academic texts. The students also inquired about how to elaborate the bibliography section accordingly. This request from the students triggered the subject professors to review the way in which the readings were presented to the class and made them decide to include the due references. However, this was done the following year.

On this first implementation, it was not possible to fulfill all the methodology requirements of the genre-based pedagogy. There was no text to serve as a model for Joint Deconstruction, and the subject professors refused to give time to perform Joint Editing classes. Strategically, the PROLEA professor offered to assist students in their text-editing via e-mail, although such a procedure is not recommended for several reasons (cf. Moyano, 2010). The students participated willingly, and their production improved compared to the first drafts and the texts produced in prior years--results that the subject professors also noticed. Most students were able to produce texts adequate to the genre requested. Introduction, Development and Conclusions were differentiated and References were included. However, the language used was quite informal, and when academic or scientific language was incorporated it was a transcription from the reading materials presented in class. This was pointed out as an issue by the PROLEA

professor in the negotiation. This situation triggered the need of having Joint Editing classes to guide the students through scientific language resources and also the need to diversify the reading materials containing the specific language and concepts that students should learn.

** Second implementation*

The following year, the negotiation between professional peers was held at the first meeting of the subject matter professor's team, which indicated significant progress. When discussing the reading materials selection, two were set aside for the PROLEA professor's analysis: an article pulled out from a specialized journal and a paper presented by a subject matter expert. Another achievement of the negotiation was that the head professor's mandate omitting multiple-choice questions in the exams, and adding questions requiring students to relate theories and concepts. A teacher showed concern about the amount of workload resulting from this methodology change. However, the head professor based the decision on the need of testing the students' full comprehension of the reading materials along with providing them a chance to improve their writing skills. Based on prior years' experience, the head professor also communicated the decision of not sharing the slideshows used in class with the students. Another point was the importance of preparing students for the assessments. The head teacher asked faculty members to prepare questionnaires about the reading materials to serve as a study guide. In addition, the first PROLEA's intervention was set, a class to work on the Deconstruction of answers to exam questions. A second, and even more important, intervention was arranged: the Program would intervene in the preparation of the final required paper. It was agreed that the guidelines prepared during the previous year would be handed in to the students in advance. The document was reviewed and edited considering students' previous performances. The PROLEA professor insisted in the need to present a model and also requested conducting classes on Joint Editing. Despite some teachers' resistance, arguing lack of time, the head professor agreed on two meetings for the Joint Editing, to be added to the schedule.

During the PROLEA intervention, guidelines for the final paper were presented. The students worked in groups to write their papers and sent their drafts to the PROLEA professor. In a new negotiation, she agreed with the more committed subject professors to perform two classes of Joint Editing. Before these classes, some fragments of the students' texts were selected to discuss with the group in a Joint Editing. During these encounters, the joint work was oriented towards bringing these texts closer to the genre and type of language requested. However, the interaction was more active via e-mail than inside the classroom. There were cases in which drafts were sent over three times. This caused a high workload to the PROLEA professor, who once the course ended reminded the subject professors why this kind of correction was not included in the Programs methodology (Moyano, 2010). That year, oral expositions and written reports showed a notable improvement compared with the production of the previous course. There was also an evolution from the drafts to the final versions in terms of genre and disciplinary language (Giudice, 2014). The papers produced served as model for future implementations.

** Third implementation.*

As said before, during 2015, UFLO's Superior Council made the Program official, extending it to all the University, which showed progress regarding its acceptance by University authorities, resulting in acceptance by the rest of the community (Moyano, 2011b).

During the first meeting of negotiation between peers, the subject matter professors included on the subject syllabus a note indicating that the PROLEA was involved. This made explicit the interdisciplinary methodology among the students and naturalized it. The subject professors planned the reading activities according to the recommendation proposed before: the mandatory texts selection was more diverse, reading comprehension activities were designed, and a questionnaire to provide orientation for the assessments was also included. The moment in the course established for the PROLEA intervention was in time to assist with the final paper. The guidelines

provided in previous years were revised, and then expanded adding a list of references to help with grammar and language issues, proper quotation use, etc. Another significant improvement was the addition of three interventions conducted by PROLEA, to carry out Joint Deconstruction and Joint Editing activities.

Both working guidelines and the schedule for PROLEA's intervention were available to students as part of the subject syllabus since the first day of classes. This established beforehand the requirements to pass the course. Another relevant change after the negotiation between peers is that the paper would be graded, which elevated the importance of the task. Even though student's participation through email draft sending was optional, it was also clarified that for the final grade all PROLEA's consultation about the evolution of the written productions would be taken into account.

In addition, the head professor presented the PROLEA to the students. She summarized the advantages of implementing the Program based on her own experience, telling how she struggled as a student to solve difficulties at the time with reading and writing academic texts without any help. She mentioned the importance of having these kinds of programs as part of the institutional policies and highlighted that having PROLEA raised the status of UFLO among other Universities. This kind of support generated a good work environment in those shifts where PROLEA intervened.

During that semester the basic activities of genre pedagogy took place: Joint Deconstruction and Joint Editing. The first one was conducted when guidelines and instructions were presented. Preselected text fragments of generic models were read out loud and the students received orientation in interaction to find alternative ways to organize the text content validated through scientific knowledge. The students were led to identify genre steps and phases of the genre (Martin & Rose, 2007) and to identify academic language resources. In this opportunity two or three Joint Editing classes took place, depending on the group of students. These interventions were a key moment on the overall Program implementation. They were conducted in the classroom with the subject professor's help to clarify theory concepts. Before the class was over, the students

were asked to review their own writing productions by applying what was learned and to re-send a new draft. The PROLEA professor elaborated a new guideline including what was agreed with the students. During the next meetings different drafts were jointly edited, and there was a final correction to each individually via e-mail a week before the due date. This correction contained precise instruction for Independent Editing.

The use of this methodology was a great breakthrough compared to prior implementations. This change was possible thanks to the improvements in the negotiation between professional peers: the professors were more aware of the importance of the language when teaching a discipline. Far from considering this task "a waste of time", professors offered their active participation in these classes to review concepts that seemed confusing, proposing new formulations and new readings for the bibliographic materials. Students were able to conclude their writing process successfully. There was a high level of participation, and even those students who had greater difficulties at first achieved great progress (Moyano & Giudice, forthcoming).

The final grade on this paper was remarkably better than the grades on the mid-term exams, leaving a positive appreciation of the Program among the students. Also faculty members made a positive evaluation of the experience, by pointing out that thanks to this activity students achieved a comprehensive understanding of the theories and objects of study. Likewise, the incorporation of technical language was better than through standard examination.

Case Two

The second scenario is a freshman subject matter for the second semester, 64 hours long.

Initial Situation

This course used a textbook produced ad hoc by the head subject professor as its single bibliographic source. During an interview in 2012 to carry out the research mentioned before, the head subject professor made clear that this book aimed at guiding, summarizing and explaining in straightforward language all items on

the course syllabus, which was considered extremely long by other teachers of the course. Even though this professor admitted the problem of not having primary sources, this had no resolution due to lack of time (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2016).

As assessment, until 2012 the subject professors assigned two exams and a “written work” to be done over the course of the semester. This practice shows the same lack of genre and linguistic awareness noticed in the initial situation of Case One. Later inquiries helped to determine that the instructor wanted students to be able to analyze and interpret a clinical diagnosis using different theories and approaches.

As shown in Giudice, Godoy & Moyano (2016), professors were unable to provide students with clear instructions to carry out the required writing tasks. Although the required genre is very frequent in professional life, the subject professors neither contextualized it for the students nor gave them any description or useful models. The unique guideline was a list of questions to help orient the analysis. This led students to produce plain answers to those questions, as if filling out a questionnaire.

During the interviews the subject’s head professor was able to understand that the lack of precision regarding genre has an impact on the students’ productions. This is why these interviews not only provided ethnographic information, but also triggered a reflection and exchange process that set the ground for the Program implementation (Giudice, Godoy & Moyano, 2013; 2016).

Evolution of the negotiation between professional peers

** First intervention*

In the second half of 2013, when the pilot of the Program started, the subject head professor himself requested support from PROLEA in the course. The peer negotiation process started with the three subject matter professors, who, coordinated by the head, take over one section on different shifts.

Before starting the semester, during the process of negotiation, the PROLEA intervention was set to assist with the final assessment in three moments throughout

the semester. The PROLEA professor proposed to determine the genre required for the production. She advised to integrate what was called “written work” into a cohesive text, to be produced at different stages, but also to be recognizable as a socially established genre, and not as just a mere response to different questionnaires. It was quite difficult to have the subject professors aware of the importance of the genre itself, especially because they claimed to pay attention only to content.

The PROLEA professor reinforced the importance of delimiting the work instructions within a real context of a professional situation in which the students will participate in the future. It was agreed to consider the text required as a paper for a conference, in which the students had to present the analysis of a case from different perspectives.

A model of the genre to deconstruct was also sought, but none was available. Just as in Case One, the texts found in specialized journals were too far from the experience of the students, and the productions by former students were unsatisfactory. The participants agreed to elaborate a guideline for the students. In this document, the genre and its features were explained according to Martin & Rose (2008): the stages were delimited (Introduction, Development, Conclusions), along with a brief explanation for the different phases of each stage. Since the subject professors showed resistance to quit using the questionnaires, they were integrated to orient students to do the analysis and organize the structure of the Development stage.

The guidelines stated also that students should write the Introduction and the different parts of the Development to meet three deadlines following a tentative schedule, having the opportunity of being guided by the subject professors in adjusting the concepts applied to the analysis. PROLEA would join this process by offering the students the option of submitting their drafts two weeks before presentation. The due date for the final presentation was established. The PROLEA professor committed to conduct a brief Joint Editing class a week after receiving student’s drafts but the lack of fixed schedules had a negative impact on this objective. In fact every intervention of the Program had to be negotiated with each subject professor with

different outcomes. In the first intervention it was only possible for two of the three sections to present the guidelines to the students.

The subject professors proposed the task to the students and outlined the theoretical framework. The PROLEA professor described the communicative situation for the paper and announced the methodology proposal of the Program. In one of the sections the professor in charge was not able to participate in the negotiation and was not aware of the Program intervention. He found out about the new working methodology at the same time as his students, even though he had a positive reaction, and publicly valued this new way of work as “very interesting”. This situation generated a slight feeling of discomfort among the students. This setback shows the importance of including every professor involved when the negotiation between professional peers takes place.

Two of the three groups of students sent their drafts by email to the PROLEA professor. These texts showed serious issues for genre realization. In fact, they were merely the transcripts of the answers of the questions provided to guide the analysis, which in most cases consisted of quoting the textbook.

A Joint Editing class was conducted, paying attention to the guidelines. Some of the students’ texts submitted were edited, turning them into a cohesive text, demonstrating how to construct one section within the Development. However, one of the subject professors admitted that she had already accepted and corrected the papers, claiming that “the content was fine”. Here it was necessary to re-negotiate with her and remind her of the agreements reached and the commitment to keep them with the students.

In the next instance, the students still showed issues in adequately understanding the genre. Many fulfilled the Development stage by merely elaborating a chart. The following intervention was devoted to explaining the proper use of the multimodal function in this kind of text and to lead them through the Joint Editing.

These two interventions took place in a very narrow time frame in two of the three existing sections. In the section that the students had already showed their discomfort, they asked “not to be disturbed”

by the Program. Then, the head professor decided to accept this demand. This situation shows again how a poor negotiation process impacts negatively and how the most resistant students tend to agree with those teachers who refuse PROLEA’s proposal.

Leaving this section aside, most students participated by sending their drafts at least once. As it was not possible to negotiate more Joint Editing classes, the assistance was provided via email, regardless of the concerns already mentioned (Moyano, 2010), hoping that by enhancing writing skills the Program’s acceptance would be greater in the future.

This way the students were able to produce a case analysis with a length between 15 to 20 pages. Some of these texts were close to reaching a professional level and were selected as genre models for future implementations. The subject professors mentioned that the current productions were “more legible” than those of prior years, and showed their satisfaction with this progress.

** Second intervention*

The following year PROLEA was not renewed, despite the fact that it was requested by the Psychology degree Director. When the class period started, the students requested PROLEA’s intervention again since they had a good experience in the course mentioned as Case One.

Halfway through the semester, the head professor sent via e-mail the guidelines negotiated the prior year to produce a paper of case analysis. It was not until that moment that the PROLEA’s teacher could start working, proposing a new negotiation, but the head professor allowed each professor to decide by themselves the actions to follow. Consequently, each subject professor agreed with the PROLEA partner to dedicate one class for Deconstruction and two for Joint Editing.

For the Deconstruction class, the genre was presented, with its stages and phases, by using as example the models obtained in the prior implementation. The linguistic realization was successfully accomplished – with special focus on citations – and multimodal resources were discussed. Having the chance to observe with an example how to analyze and apply different

theories and concepts helped the students to discuss theories and concepts involved, which was also helpful with their upcoming mid-term exams. This instance reinforced the idea that Deconstruction implies teamwork between the PROLEA and the subject matter professors. This activity was carried out in all the sections of the course and had positive impact on the students' texts, compared to the prior year. However, the Joint Editing classes agreed upon could only be done partially, and so were complemented with e-mail exchanges.

There was a remarkable change of attitude from the professor who did not participate in the Program the year before. While presenting the PROLEA in the classroom, he was surprisingly enthusiastic. He shared his own experience as a doctoral student, and the challenges he faced at the time of producing the writings requested as a consequence of not having a better training in this respect. As analyzed in previous studies (Moyano, 2009, 2010) and seen in Case One, when the professor changes attitude it has a positive impact on students. Unlike the previous year, when that section was excluded from the Program, this time this was the only one able to carry out Joint Editing classes, in which the subject matter professor also participated, helping to solve conceptual confusions and the use of technical lexicon accurately. Students were required to execute the Independent Editing of their text applying what was worked on in the classroom.

The high level of commitment of that section was translated as a positive evolution of the students' papers (Giudice, 2015). The professor thanked PROLEA's intervention in front of the students, pointing out the notable difference of the texts' quality compared to the prior year's production without PROLEA's participation.

* *Third intervention*

In 2015, when the semester was about to begin, and considering the prior communication issues, the Coordinator of PROLEA requested a negotiation meeting with the subject's head teacher, the Psychology degree Director and the Program's professor. The Program's participation was re-negotiated. The head professor showed his concerns and proposed carrying out the interventions exclusively via e-mail, due to

lack of time and because the classroom interventions "irritated" some students. He also said that this attitude might be due to "fatigue", since the students had already had the experience of working with the Program in the subject mentioned as Case One. He wondered then if it was necessary "to insist again" on teaching literacy.

The PROLEA's Coordinator explained both the epistemological and methodological basis of the proposal, why genre work is recurrent, since in every case different text types were required, and that it is not possible to achieve managing disciplinary language in only one intervention. She explained why Deconstruction and Joint Editing classes were needed. The Psychology degree Director also reminded him that PROLEA had acquired institutional status, with the objective to develop literacy skills among UFLO's students. The subject matter professor who had a good experience the past year spontaneously defended the Program. He highlighted its value and originality and also emphasized the notable improvement in students' writing productions.

During this negotiation, then, the head professor accepted a new implementation and agreed to have one class for model Deconstruction and two for Joint Editing. E-mail corrections could only be done with the last draft before the final work, one week before its due date. The PROLEA professor requested to establish a schedule in advance and to add it to the guidelines.

That year all planned activities took place. The students got the chance to rewrite their drafts and practice Independent Editing from what they had learned at Joint Editing classes.

After this process, the final works reached their best level. This confirms the hypothesis that Joint Editing classes sustained for more than a single semester allow Independent Editing routines to be established that tend to improve the use of disciplinary language resources even when the genres are different.

Final Remarks

The present paper presents a strategy called "negotiation between professional peers" or "negotiation between teaching partners", considered

critical for an Academic Reading and Writing Program that proposes interdisciplinary work across the university studies, and inside their core subjects. First, a description of the device was offered, pointing out all the agreements that the professors involved needed to establish in order to obtain a good outcome from modifying traditional teaching practices. The functions of these agreements were pointed out, along with their value and also the challenges that emerge and the need of institutional support.

This strategy should benefit the construction of a solid team, that allows teaching subject contents through genres, this is to say, in Halliday's (2004) words, learning **through** language as well as learning **about** disciplinary language and its proper use for social purposes. The main objective is to favor the students' development of academic and professional literacies, so they can access the new content with better results along with better social practices through discourse.

Secondly, two experiences of negotiation between professional peers and its effect on the PROLEA implementation for each case were presented. In both, the progress and setbacks are visible, as part of the device installment process and addressing challenges to accomplish the Program's objectives. The paper makes evident also the value that the negotiation between peers has for the development of students' skills and how this evidence emerged through the evolution of the quality of their written text as well as their attitude towards the proposed tasks.

It is of relevance to acknowledge that both PROLEA and the subject matter professors learn during this process. The first group learns new genres and how they are used in context, gets specialization in the discourse of different disciplines, and learns negotiation techniques with a theoretical basis. The second group becomes more aware of the value that the academic and professional genres have as social practices and their realization through the discipline's own language, which has been called "genre awareness" and "linguistic awareness" (Moyano, 2009). This awareness will expand for both those who did not previously have it and those who had it partially. They gain also a better comprehension of the role that literacy plays in content

learning and its value, in a way that modifies their teaching practices, providing students the resources to be able to carry out independent learning in the future. Finally, the negotiation between peers contributes to a new institutional *habitus*, which allows new ways of teaching subject contents and academic and professional literacy skills.

Notes

1. This work has been produced in the frame of a research Project conducted at and financed by the Universidad de Flores (UFLO), directed by Estela I. Moyano: "Seguimiento y evaluación del impacto de un programa de lectura y escritura académica a lo largo de una carrera universitaria".
2. "Discurso disciplinar y géneros en la enseñanza universitaria de la psicología y el derecho", investigation conducted at and financed by the University of Flores (UFLO), directed by Estela I. Moyano.

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