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A Bourdieusian approach to academic reading: reflections on a South African teaching experience

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As in many other parts of the world, 'academic literacy' has emerged as both a concern and a contested concept in South African universities. In this article we focus specifically on academic reading, which we argue is a relatively underemphasized aspect of academic literacy. This article is the product of reflections on academic reading during and subsequent to the development and presentation of a postgraduate module presented at Stellenbosch University. It briefly explores the literature on academic literacy; develops the Bourdieusian perspective on academic reading that we used to develop the module; and concludes with a discussion of the module. Our intention was to make 'reading as social practice' more visible to students. Bourdieu's concepts of 'competence', 'habitus' and 'field' set the scene for a discussion of the role of reading in different disciplines and more generally within the social sciences and humanities.

Keywords: academic reading; academic literacy; language; higher education; South Africa

Introduction

This article argues that 'academic reading' is a fundamental social research practice. Reading nevertheless tends to be underemphasized in many postgraduate programmes and courses on 'academic literacy' in South Africa, which tend to focus on writing as a generic set of scientific skills. From a Bourdieusian perspective, we argue that 'reading' serves to position future academics in disciplines (at both national and international level) and to shape their trajectory within wider interdisciplinary fields.

This article has three overarching objectives. Firstly, we demarcate and explore bodies of literature in which 'reading' has been theorized as a 'social' research practice. Noting the predominance of psycholinguistic approaches to academic literacy, we focus particular attention on two alternative approaches that have emerged in recent decades: systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and the 'academic literacies' (AL) tradition. In the second section we make the case for a Bourdieusian approach to academic reading. We explore the extent to which concepts such as competence, habitus and field contribute to make the relevance of 'reading' visible within an

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internationalized higher education field in which the English language is dominant. Thirdly, we provide an account of a postgraduate module that sought to make 'reading as social practice' visible to postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University, to promote a critical understanding of the students' own academic reading (and writing) practices; and to explore the ways in which reading is entangled with social positioning and the development of an academic voice.

Academic reading as a social competence

'Academic literacy' is a relatively young field of enquiry, which draws on a much larger and older body of research on 'literacy'. Lea (2008, 230) notes the recency of studies focusing on the university: before the mid-1990s research was predominantly concerned with school-based, community and work-place literacies. Given the continuity of processes associated with learning at different levels and the relatively recent development of university-focused research, it is very difficult to isolate a set of literacy-related theoretical orientations that relate uniquely to higher education. Divisions within the field of academic literacy have their origins in the wider contexts of literacy research and it is within these contexts that a broad division between 'non-social' (or psycholinguistic) and 'social' orientations to literacy has emerged.

Non-social approaches to academic literacy tend to focus on what Halliday (1978) terms an 'intra-organism' capacity for speaking and listening. Writing, printing and other forms of material culture are held to be essentially derivative of our 'innate' capacity for thought and speech. Reading and writing therefore tend to be treated as technical extensions of these natural capacities. A psycholinguistic orientation tends to predominate in academic literacy – or 'scientific writing' – programmes. This is evident in the tendency to underemphasize reading relative to writing, and to focus on writing as a generic transdisciplinary skill. Most of the writing guides available for postgraduate students at Stellenbosch University demonstrate this tendency (see Harvey 2003; Lourens 2007; Murray 2009).¹ This 'writing skills' orientation facilitates the establishment of transdisciplinary academic literacy programmes and a more general market for 'academic literacy' as a standardized product.

Social approaches, on the other hand, tend to break with the often implicit organic assumptions about language evident in many psycholinguistic approaches to academic literacy. But while social approaches tend to share what Halliday (1978) terms an 'inter-organism' or semiotic orientation to language, they differ considerably in the manner in which literacy is theorized and researched. Within the broadly defined field of 'academic literacy', two dominant 'social' approaches to literacy can be identified: 'SFL' and 'AL'. 'SFL' is a term used to describe a research tradition inspired by the work of Michael Halliday (see Halliday and Martin 1993; Norris and Phillips 2003; Fang 2004; Coffin and Donohue 2012). 'Text in context' tends to be the focus of this research tradition, but the study of academic literacy within a systems orientation to language means that SFL researchers tend to adopt a more 'etic' or outsider epistemology. One obvious indication of this is the prevalence of the term 'scientific literacy' in this tradition.

A second influential approach to the study of academic literacy is commonly referred to as 'AL'. Here ethnographic research has been instrumental in the development of the concept of 'multiple literacies' (Wortham and Rymes 2003). In terms of this trend, where 'literacy' (singular) has traditionally been associated with basic

competencies in ‘a language’, ‘literacies’ is a term increasingly associated with more specific contexts of literate practices (such as a university). Researchers in this tradition share an epistemological commitment to an ‘emic’ or insider understanding of the meanings that students attach to these practices (Lillis and Turner 2001; Wortham and Rymes 2003; Wingate 2006; Spolsky and Hult 2010). Lea (2008, 231) notes the relatively recent emergence of what she terms an ‘academic literacies model’, which is ‘concerned with issues of meaning, identity, power and authority in student writing’.

The key difference between these two approaches is the manner in which ‘academic literacy’ tends to be ‘operationalized’ as an object of research: SFL research tends to employ various forms of discourse analysis and tends to focus on text in context; while AL research tends to involve the ethnographic study of situated literacy practices (Coffin and Donohue 2012, 64). While differing in the epistemological status that is attributed to the reader and the researcher, both of these traditions are clearly social. We believe that Bourdieu’s work – and notably his attempt to transcend what he terms ‘objectivist’ and ‘subjectivist’ accounts of language – provides a means of bridging research in these two traditions. We cannot however develop this claim here and in the following section we are merely concerned to explore what we consider to be key aspects of a Bourdieusian approach to reading.

Reading as a key aspect of the academic habitus: a Bourdieusian approach

The English word ‘skill’ tends to connote ‘technical mastery’ and this is no doubt part of the reason why the word has fallen out of favour in critical discourses on academic literacy. For this reason we prefer the term ‘competence’, which in Bourdieu’s (1996, 412) work conveys a legal association: an association that underpins an analytical distinction between technical and social competences. While not denying the significance of technical skills, Bourdieu draws a distinction between a ‘technical skill’ and the legally inscribed ‘social dignity’ that precedes it in the ‘classification struggles’ that are a defining feature of educational systems and the associated markets for certified competences.

[We] cannot establish once and for all and for all cases how much of each of the forms of academically guaranteed competence is strictly technical skill and how much strictly social dignity. First of all because there is no definition of technical competence in and of itself ... dominants always tend to impose the skills they have mastered as necessary and legitimate and to include in their definition of excellence the practices at which they excel. (Bourdieu 1996, 119)

The value of a certified competence is therefore always underpinned by the power of symbolic imposition: ‘Technical skills’ are thus contextually defined and imposed categories of practice. But ‘contexts’ are not just local or interactional spaces, but rather symbolic spaces that may extend across the globe. And to the extent that they become inscribed in law and/or institutionalized in a market, the skills associated with these contexts become ‘real’ by virtue of their legitimacy and their scarcity.

This insight lends itself to a somewhat paradoxical understanding of ‘academic reading’ as both a social and a technical competence in the context of South African higher education. Firstly, reading is a technical skill to the extent that it is associated with the recognition of discursive properties and the mastery of discursive

strategies that are considered ‘internal’ to the written form of any given language. Thus, in South Africa the eleven official languages each have their own written standards and each language therefore enjoys *de jure* legitimacy and constitutes a universe of social and technical competencies in its own right. But within the sphere of higher education, academic reading is increasingly associated with *de facto* competency in English. The status of English in education has deep roots in both the British colonial and the apartheid periods (notwithstanding the rise of Afrikaans during this latter period) and in this sense has been historically imposed. But the legitimacy of English also derives from its current global status and its post-1994 status as the *de facto* medium of integration in educational fields that were previously fragmented under apartheid. In South Africa, English is therefore the quintessential example of what Bourdieu terms a ‘legitimate language’ (1991).

Legitimate languages are invariably sustained by powerful state-based education systems and the markets for credentials that they unify. In South Africa, English and Afrikaans are the only languages that have functioned as legitimate media for research and teaching in higher education. Since 1994 the status of English has increased considerably and this has come largely at the expense of social space that was traditionally reserved for Afrikaans. In higher education the status of English is manifested most vividly in the realm of reading, where – particularly in the humanities and social sciences – it is increasingly the exclusive medium for accessing formal academic discourse (mostly in the form of books and journals). Bourdieu uses the term ‘doxa’ to refer to the symbolic power of classificatory systems – producing tacit or mis-recognized agreement on the fundamental stakes in a field – and it would seem that South African higher education (and postgraduate studies in particular) is increasingly unified by a doxic commitment to English as the principal academic medium for reading and – to a lesser extent – writing.²

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus³ is also useful as it provides a means of forging an approach to academic reading (and literacy more generally) that is neither overly structuralist (in either a cognitive or social sense) nor relativist, that is, predominantly concerned with the small-scale description of agency. The term ‘habitus’ conveys the idea of ‘embodied structures’; of habit-sets that tend to manifest aspects of the wider social context in a manner that both constrains and – to the extent that old habit-sets become conscious – enables action and voice. ‘Reading practices’ can be thought of as the products of habitus, to the extent that class-based reading habits compounded in successive learning contexts (e.g. a middle-class English-speaking home and an English medium model C school⁴) correspond with (or fail to correspond with, as is increasingly the case with Afrikaans) the tacit reading-expectations (or ‘doxic’ expectations) of lecturers. These reading expectations and associated habits conspire to produce success within any given academic field. Higher education can be thought of as an elevated domain of reading and writing in which the successful socialization of students into a discipline or field and the acquisition of a field-specific habitus assumes a level of congruence with literacy habits instilled at school. In South Africa this tends to mean a complex of language habits associated not just with English or Afrikaans, but a historically privileged English–Afrikaans bilingual habitus associated with historically white schools.⁵ The value of a pedagogic focus on reading in specific disciplinary contexts (rather than writing for generic ‘scientific’ purposes), lies in the potential to make visible what is typically invisible: the range of field-specific expectations that underpin the prescription of readings and the

associated range of concordant/discordant habits that promote/impede both the integration of reading and writing and the development of strategies for moving through and up an academic field.

Academic reading is associated with processes of legitimation, not simply by virtue of the 'emic' appreciation of qualities considered internal to a text, but also through its association with a 'closed group of professional readers who accept as self-evident an "internalist" definition of reading' (Bourdieu 1991, 153). Thus, students need to recognize that reading influential authors is important both for understanding the substantive ideas at stake in a discourse community and for understanding how the appropriation of these ideas can facilitate their entry into the discourse community or subfield in question. Academic reading as a process therefore constitutes relatively discrete fields or markets for discourse and a student's capacity to enter the field (to exercise academic voice) is premised on his or her ability to 'read' or recognize the positioning of significant others within the field.

In the light of the preceding discussion, a key objective of the module outlined in the next section was therefore to make 'academic reading' more visible as a social competence specific to research in the humanities and social sciences. As such, it involves 'reading' in a number of senses: (i) the ability to 'read' or recognize unequal power relations within these broad fields; (ii) the ability to select and 'read' significant others within 'my field'; and (iii) the ability to read (and write) actively in both a technical and a social sense, where the latter involves situating oneself and establishing an academic voice.

The module: academic reading (and writing) as social research practice

The context: a South African university

A pilot module titled 'Academic reading (and writing) as social research practice' was presented in Stellenbosch University, from 14 to 15 November 2011.⁶ This is one of the oldest historically white universities in South Africa. It has also featured prominently in the wider debate on transformation in South African higher education. This debate can be summarized in terms of the different constellations of interests associated with demands to either retain or relinquish Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. While Afrikaans has an historical association with 'white' Afrikaner nationalism, this history is complicated by the fact that the town of Stellenbosch is situated in the predominantly 'coloured'⁷ and Afrikaans speaking Western Cape Province.

Since 1994 Stellenbosch University has responded to these pressures in two noteworthy ways. Firstly, with respect to language, the University has evolved an increasingly complex language policy, in terms of which the official commitment to Afrikaans as the 'default language' at undergraduate level tends to mask de facto internal variation and an overall shift towards a form of institutional bilingualism.⁸ Secondly, the complex interplay between demands for language maintenance, racial equity and institutional transformation has resulted in the bifurcation of the student demographic profile. Thus, while the undergraduate population is predominantly white (with a growing coloured minority) and bilingual, the postgraduate population is both ethnically and linguistically a lot more diverse. English is the predominant medium of instruction at this level.

The module and the lecturers

The title of the module reflects a theoretical and practical concern for ‘academic reading’, as outlined above. ‘Writing’ was parenthesized in the title in an effort to highlight two unique features of this module: an attempt to set the module apart from contemporary ‘academic literacy’ programmes and courses, which tend to focus on generic skills associated with ‘scientific writing’; and the desire to explore reading and writing as complex sets of practices within a particular ‘market’ for academic competencies (the humanities and social sciences).

The module aimed to provide students with a context for exploring ideas about reading. More specifically, we used Bourdieu’s (1975) article and a number of other authors as a means of fostering discussion about contrasting ‘rules’ and ‘strategies’ associated with writing and reading in different disciplines. We sought to problematize reading and identify processes associated with discipline-specific habitus and the reflexive development of an academic voice within an increasingly internationalized South African academic field.

The module was presented by both authors, one of whom is South African while the other is Argentinean. It was inspired by reflection on our respective academic and personal biographies, which has prompted us to ask questions about our respective positions in the national and international sub-fields of sociology. More specifically, we drew upon our experiences as different kinds of outsider in the British academic environment. As PhD students at the University of Warwick, both of us were foreigners, but Analía Meo – with Spanish as first language – had the additional sense of being a linguistic outsider. As a result of these experiences, both of us have come to appreciate the role that reading has played in our respective attempts to ‘map’ the complex power dynamics of the various academic ‘games’ that we have participated in.

The module took the form of 11 sessions spread over 2 days. Most of these sessions included a half hour presentation by one or both lecturers and another half hour devoted to discussion. The first five sessions (day 1) focused on reading and its role in the shaping of the broad academic field of the social sciences and disciplinary ‘sub-fields’. While sensitive to the wide range of disciplinary backgrounds in the class, we used these sessions to explore the ways in which the prescription of reading structures the process of inculcating ‘appropriate’ ways of doing research.

The second part of the module (day 2) examined how, when and why social agents within disciplinary sub-fields (such as professors, lecturers and postgraduate students) engage with reading. Here, the focus was on the ‘players’ of the academic game, rather than on the structures of their respective fields. We addressed the questions of why, how and when we read and focused our attention on the processes associated with developing an ‘academic voice’ – in particular learning to unpack what ‘they say’ in order to formulate what ‘I say’ (Graff and Birkenstein 2010). Reading was presented as a crucial element of the academic habitus that academics need to incorporate if they want to be ‘good players’, recognizing what is at stake and what are the ‘moves’ they need to make to situate themselves within an academic field.

The postgraduate students

The module was attended by fifteen participants: a small but diverse and dynamic group of postgraduate students. In terms of level of education, the participants

covered the full range of postgraduate studies: two honours students,⁹ eight masters students and five PhD students. The disciplines represented in the class included sociology, psychology, history, English and information science. The gender division was even and the five nationalities included South Africans (10), Zimbabweans (2), Ugandan (1), Briton (1) and Brazilian (1). Linguistic diversity was a particularly salient feature of this group: 12 of the students claimed to speak three or more languages. The status of English as the predominant academic language was evident in the responses to a question on languages used in higher education. All of the respondents claimed to have studied in English.

Student perspectives on academic reading and writing

Student perceptions before the module

The authors distributed two questionnaires, one before and one after the module, in an effort to: gauge a number of background variables; assess attitudes to academic reading and writing, before and after the module; and to assess the different components of the module. In this and the following section, we examine responses to questions exploring student perspectives on academic reading to assess the extent to which the module helped students to develop a sense of reading as a social competence.

Notwithstanding the diversity within this group, it was clear from the responses that we received that we were dealing with advanced students. Most seemed to have a general sense that academic reading involves a process of responding to what others have said in 'my' field. But to what extent is the field simply 'there'? We asked the students to reflect on what they considered to be 'the most important reasons for doing academic reading in your area of research'. In retrospect, our use of the word 'area' was a bit leading, and thus unfortunate. Quite a few students used the word 'area', in a manner that suggests an analogy between reading and a relatively flat and demarcated territory.

To be able to understand or be conscious of work done in the area being studied. (Respondent #1)

It gives me an understanding about the area of research, an overview of existing research and possible areas of further research. Broadens my knowledge of what reading is, how it works and why it is so important. (Respondent #7)

I feel that academic reading in my area of research is important in order to enrich my understanding of certain concepts and theories as well as to increase my exposure to different formulations, approaches and understandings. (Respondent #9)

It is important to keep up with the latest research and it is important to know the most important thinkers and theorists in your subject area. (Respondent #10)

The extracts suggest an understanding of reading as a relatively passive process (an essentially mental process of 'reading about ...') within a more or less clearly defined and relatively flat epistemic space. Thus, at the beginning of the module many of the participants seem to have had a general notion of academic reading as a crucial meaning-making process, but only two people conveyed ideas akin to the 'sociological' approach that we developed above. In their words:

Reading can only be described for me as a signifying, productive practice. Perhaps contrary to its modest, mundane appearance, reading is a highly intellectual exercise [...] it is

not a neutral but extremely ideologically, historically and politically charged practice. (Respondent #3)

I need to read in order to be able to move further in the field I am in. Publishing and reading are widely entrenched in my current job [...] as a second language English speaker it's important to be able to engage intellectually with readings, studies and research articles. (Respondent #14)

These two participants provide an interesting sense of reading as an active process of navigating the complex social and institutional topographies in which they are immersed in. While the first extract refers to power and the symbolic struggles that shape reading, the second extract suggests the role that reading plays in forging an academic trajectory. These more sociological takes on reading therefore pin down the role of social, political and institutional conditions in both knowledge production and the scientific career – key issues that we planned to explore in the module.

Student perceptions after the module

We received very good and generally positive feedback on this module. Overall the students found both the formal input and the open discussions very stimulating. Both of us came away with a clear sense of a need (at least in the South African context) for more teaching initiatives focused on academic reading. A significant criticism was that the module had been very intensive, perhaps covering too much conceptual ground in the allotted two days.

We used the second questionnaire to gauge the students' perspectives on reading after the module. Here we focus specifically on the responses to two questions: to what extent the module helped them think about their reasons for doing academic reading; and to what extent the module provided insight to the processes associated with academic reading and writing.

Most of the participants agreed that the module was very helpful in developing a more critical and situated understanding of reading. An examination of their views about why they read, reveals three understandings of reading that would seem to have been prompted by the module: (i) reading as something relevant, (ii) reading as part of a research design and (iii) reading as crucial to the development of an academic voice. These are evident in the following quotations:

The module has definitely helped me to understand reading as more than instrumental – critical to the research process. Making something as 'private' as reading a public matter made me see how collective this practice is. (Respondent #3)

It has helped me focus my thinking of my future writing and reading, and has also helped me understand the importance of understanding what is out there and analyzing that as a foundation for my study and future implications for publishing/writing. (Respondent #14)

It has helped me reflect on the issue of academic voice – how to make your voice heard in the thicket of other, bigger voices. It has also helped me reflect on how I read and write – two areas I had taken for granted. (Respondent #11)

These quotations suggest that the module helped to make reading more visible as a social and public competence, which is acquired and deployed within the boundaries of specific academic fields. The invisibility of academic reading – in this sense – can be attributed to the tacit or embodied nature of the practices covered by the term.

Academic reading has historically been constructed as an ‘individual’ and ‘private’ practice that only occasionally is done with others (Manguel 1997). In this way, reading is naturalized as a cognitive competence while its social character remains invisible. These extracts suggest that the module helped to denaturalize reading as a ‘private’ practice. Making visible reading as ‘collective’, ‘public’ and social competence was a key goal of the module. There is some evidence of the melting away of the individualized conception of reading that many of the students had at the beginning of the course.

The third and fourth quotes also illustrate, on the other hand, how the module contributed to develop a critical conception of reading as an ongoing and central aspect of the research process, which is always done with and against others and it is not confined to a particular stage – which tended to be the general view of the students at the beginning of the module. In addition to this, these extracts show how the module made participants aware of the connections between reading and writing and its central role to move across the academic field (by ‘publishing/writing’ or developing an ‘academic voice’ to distinguish yourself from ‘bigger voices’). These two quotes illustrate a move away from the notion of reading as a two-dimensional ‘textual’ space to a multi-dimensional social space (where symbolic power relations take place between actors occupying different and unequal positions within an academic field). It seems that the module contributed to make visible the embodied nature of academic reading as a social practice and, in this way, enriching students’ understanding of their reasons for doing academic reading.

Another way to assess the immediate impact of this module is examining participants’ opinions about the extent to which it provided insight into the processes associated with academic reading and writing. All participants agreed that the course offered important clues to unpack their relationships. In this regard, the great majority argued that the module helped them to understand reading and writing as complex, inter-linked and ongoing activities:

I have discovered something interesting in the course of this module: the concept of heteroglossia developed by Bakhtin. I’m not going to dwell on the theoretical implications of the concept right now, but just giving an example of how reading and writing can be seen as equally important intellectual artefacts; a site of epistemological struggle and political ideology. (Respondent #3)

It has provided quite a lot of insight, mostly because academic reading and writing so easily seems only to be a means to an end, versus something wherein the process itself has its own methodology and history. (Respondent #13)

The issues of academic voice and the politics of academic work have been crucial insights. As young scholars, getting a place to dance is crucial, and one needs to negotiate how this space is got without offending/disrespecting older dancers. (Respondent #11)

The last three quotes suggest that the module offered theoretical tools to unpack the historical, political and social character of reading and writing, and in so doing, helped participants to be more reflexive about the complex ways in which academics develop an ‘academic voice’ – a voice with scientific authority. The second extract also pins down the socially constructed character of reading and writing, which have their own ‘methodology and history’ (Respondent #13). The last quotation shows how the module has contributed to develop a reflexive approach on ‘academic voice’ and its political and situated nature. This participant uses the metaphor of ‘dancing’ to

capture the moves that academics (young and old) need to make to move across the academic social space – in order to accumulate cultural and symbolic capital (see Bourdieu 1975, 1996). This metaphor also points to the embodied nature of academic work. Making visible the socially constructed nature of an ‘academic voice’ and reading as one central element of this process were key aims of the model. In this sense, this course has helped to make the ‘dance floor’ (i.e. the social structure of academic fields and sub-fields), the ‘dancers’ (young and old academics, big and small ‘voices’) and their movements (which include conflicts, power struggles, and capitals) visible. In so doing, it has widened the participants’ ability to be reflexive about their own academic habitus and to think about ways of using this reflexive process to develop their academic trajectories.

Conclusion

In this article we have described and reflected upon a module – titled ‘Academic reading (and writing) as social research practice’ – which was presented at Stellenbosch University in November 2011. The parenthetical reference to writing reflects our initial sense that writing has been over-emphasized – relative to reading – both in written discourse on academic literacy and in academic literacy programmes. In the initial part of this article we sought to develop this idea. We noted how a ‘meaning construction’ orientation to reading and writing has developed within the context of higher-education based research. This tradition constitutes an important break with the more established psycholinguistic literature on literacy, which has tended to treat reading as a relatively decontextualized ‘skill’ or process of decoding text. We nevertheless argue that the new emphasis on ‘meaning construction’ tends to correspond with an emphasis on the creative processes associated with academic writing. The result is that practices associated with academic reading tend to be under-scrutinized and under-theorized. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, we argue that academic reading tends to be misrecognized: firstly, as a self-evident or ‘natural’ precursor to writing; and secondly, as an essentially individual phenomenon.

The module therefore focused particular attention on reading as a conceptually distinct set of social practices, while noting that reading and writing tend to be intertwined in practice. The two-day format reflected a broad conceptual division: on day 1 we focused particular attention on the structural or wider-contextual aspects of reading (i.e. how reading tends to be structured within a university environment, within the humanities and social sciences, within specific disciplines ...); while on day 2 we used this wider context as backdrop to a more focused discussion of individual reading practices and habits. The multi-disciplinary composition of the class made for a very insightful process of exploring both taken-for-granted ideas about reading and more or less unscrutinized reading/writing habits. We encouraged the students to think about these not just as ideas or habits, but as ‘habitus’, that is, historically inscribed dispositions and habit-sets associated with specific educational backgrounds and academic trajectories. We argued that this process of thinking about one’s academic reading trajectory was crucial, both in terms of developing an ‘academic voice’ (expressed through writing) and in situating oneself within an academic field. Our study of the feedback received from a relatively small cohort of postgraduate students in a South African university cannot be generalized, but the responses do provide preliminary evidence of a need for more explicit attention to academic reading in postgraduate teaching.

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Notes

1. An exception is Craswell and Poore (2012), which explores the role of reading in ‘building a position’.
2. The defence of Afrikaans as an academic medium at Stellenbosch University and a number of other ‘historically Afrikaans universities’ is typically associated with a minimal right to read in Afrikaans (in the form of administrative documents, course outlines etc.).
3. Bourdieu (1991, 59) defines habitus as ‘precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the coordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination’.
4. Model C schools are historically white public schools that obtained a degree of autonomy within the public school system after 1994. Thus, while they are increasingly integrated in terms of race, their relative wealth and exclusivity has put them at the centre of debates about the emerging class structure of the post-apartheid education system.
5. This argument is developed in Hill (2009).
6. The initial intention was to introduce this as a new module in the postgraduate curriculum. This was however not feasible, but aspects of this module have been used in both undergraduate and postgraduate modules – most notably the second year sociology of communication module.
7. Choices with respect to racial nomenclature are always difficult. In this article unmarked references to race follow current South Africa legal conventions, in terms of which ‘black’ is a umbrella term that includes ‘Africans’, ‘Indians’ and ‘coloureds’.
8. In November 2014 the Council of the University adopted a new policy that enshrines both English and Afrikaans as media of instruction at undergraduate level.
9. In South Africa ‘honours’ is a separate fourth-year qualification, which usually follows a three year bachelor’s degree.

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