

Graduate Student Training in Course Design: A Crucial Component in Transforming Academic Programs

As language educators in higher education, we have been charged by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages to transform our academic programs by “Replacing the two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole” (237). Our goal is to produce “educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence”; who are “trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture”; who “comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies”; and who “grasp themselves...as members of a society that is foreign to others” (237). These goals are in line with an increasing call in higher education to stress the development of analytic skills and multicultural tolerance in our students in order to prepare them to contribute intelligently and think critically in society.¹

The MLA Ad Hoc Committee additionally recommends that new courses and programs be developed through collaboration among all members of the teaching corps – not just tenure-track scholars. With a reported 57.4% of first-year language courses taught by graduate student teaching assistants at doctoral-granting departments (240-1) and with the charge to redesign our curriculum as a key step “in creating an integrated departmental administrative structure in which all members contribute to defining and carrying out a shared educational mission” (241), it stands to reason that a crucial component in implementing the goals set forth by the Committee is graduate student training in developing curricula, which “holistically incorporate content and

cross-cultural reflection at every level” (239) and courses, which emphasize translingual and transcultural competencies.

As the future educators in undergraduate education, graduate students must be prepared to meet the demands of implementing the proposed programmatic changes and curricular reform. We must begin at the source by preparing these students for designing courses that effectively foster such literacies as analysis of cultural subsystems, scholarly paradigms, genre, symbolic systems and traditions. Yet there is a relative absence in most graduate programs of systematic training in such content course design. Typically, graduate students receive funding as research or teaching assistants, but such positions provide little training in effectively structuring courses to meet overriding or even specific objectives, and it is possible for these students to complete their graduate careers with little awareness of or experience with such processes, even when they get the opportunity to modify existing syllabuses for their own classrooms. Systematic training would, in addition, prepare our graduate students for a competitive job market which emphasizes finding “instructors who are able to develop and teach broad-based courses aimed at producing the translingual and transcultural competencies” (MLA Ad Hoc Committee 241).

I argue, therefore, that the Committee’s recommendation that “graduate studies should provide substantive training in language teaching” (241) must include a systematic approach to training graduate students in the development of courses that promote analytic literacies and translingual and transcultural competencies. Without this training, our future post-secondary educators may simply replicate what they have inherited from coordinators or experienced in their own courses as students (without understanding the underlying processes or “teaching decisions” in designing a course), and may be unable to accommodate changing needs or emerging trends in education. Our field cannot afford to ignore this key element to reorganizing

language education. As Griffin states, if we expect graduates to have an influence on the schools they enter as novice educators, “we should work with them in ways that raise penetrating and thought-provoking questions rather than perpetuate acceptance of the norms of the schools and classrooms in which they find themselves” (13).

This essay provides an example of one approach to training graduate students in designing content courses for the undergraduate curriculum. It takes the idea of a *cognitive apprenticeship* (as exemplified in Atkinson) as the backbone for creating a course that integrates critical disciplinary analyses into a learning sequence for lower-division humanities students. First, I introduce the use of a cognitive apprenticeship as a way for disciplinary expertise to be broken down into learning sequences, especially in a mentoring relationship between faculty and graduate students in particular area studies. After that, I exemplify how one specific historical site of disciplinary knowledge -- nineteenth-century European and American theories and representations of biological typing -- can be transformed into a learning sequence for undergraduate students in both language-learning and interdisciplinary contexts.

Setting the Terms: From Disciplinary Knowledge to Pedagogical Sequence

A dialogue between graduate students and faculty members about the pedagogical challenges presented by specific disciplinary and content frameworks provides the most effective introduction to the potentially daunting array of skills required for effective teaching of complex literacies. In turn, anchoring pedagogical decisions in expert ways of knowing is absolutely fundamental to any course design that purports to address the higher-order critical skills involved in a particular discipline. As scholars, graduate students themselves are apprentices: they are learning the critical analytic, rhetorical, and research skills of their disciplines. When mentors

and their graduate apprentices turn to the pedagogy of these disciplines -- when they are challenged to break down this expert knowledge into teaching sequences--, however, the challenge is even greater.

Teachers who want to foster students' critical appropriation of these analytic, rhetorical, and research skills must have a strong command of a range of ways of knowing encompassed in their disciplines as part of general critical thinking and critical writing imperatives. At the first level, they must know how to make content accessible to students -- a comprehensibility criterion. Beyond that, they must know how to engage students so they can make sense of academic traditions, and how to utilize students' developmental levels and interests as foundations upon which to create opportunities for understanding (Griffin). These latter goals, I believe, are the foundations for critical literacies: means of understanding that can bring students to see in new ways, directed by disciplinary and cultural imperatives that lead them to conscious, mindful considerations of what certain bodies of knowledge imply for their worlds, the original contexts of that knowledge, and for their own lives.

In course design, graduate students in a discipline, therefore, are engaged in a cognitive apprenticeship as a scholar-in-training, even at the same time they are confronting the need to construct and implement equivalent apprenticeships for their own students. According to Atkinson, a cognitive apprenticeship is:

based on the notion that all significant human activity is highly situated in real-world contexts – and that complex cognitive skills are therefore ultimately learned in high-context, inherently motivating situations in which the skills themselves are organically bound up with the activity being learned and its community of expert users. (87)

That is, the pedagogical challenge graduate students are confronting is the need to identify aspects of *expert knowledge as learning sequences* within a cognitive apprenticeship process that will be different at each level of the curriculum. They are seeking to transfer the cognitive apprenticeship they are engaged in -- a description of a kind of scholarly analysis and learning -- into a pedagogical framework. Therefore, when graduate students engage with a faculty mentor in a cognitive apprenticeship approach to pedagogy, they are brought to consider what kinds of modeling and analysis are appropriate for learners at specific levels as they explicitly raise their awareness of instructional decisions and processes at all levels of course design. As they do so, these graduate students will be pushed further along their own cognitive apprenticeships as scholars, as they are given the opportunity to practice these acquired skills in a highly relevant context – within their own department and field of study, but in the applied context of teaching rather than research.

With regard to the current discussion of course design, I turn now to one specific context to describe and exemplify how an analysis of a set of scholarly literacies can be used to stage critical cultural learning contexts. In this case, I target a particular content -- nineteenth-century theories of biological typing and their reflections in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and film -- as being relevant to fostering critical cultural literacies in the undergraduate curriculum and exemplify how a course could be designed around them. As a European phenomenon, this lends itself to language-specific course development or to the interdisciplinary and comparative approaches recommended by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee.

Designing a course on biological typing requires, first of all, adherence to a typical sequence of course design. The conventional top-down approach to such design can easily be summarized, as I have done here in Table 1 and will describe in more detail below.

[Table 1 about here]

Each of these phases requires specific decisions about what would be teachable and learnable within a literacies approach that stresses critical thinking and critical expression. The daunting process of course design is broken down into manageable steps of completion that guide graduate students toward course development driven by overriding objectives for skill-building in the established literacies and competencies.

Step One: Establishing the Course Content

In establishing the course content or theme (Step One), the instructor must necessarily consider pragmatic concerns such as one's own interests and training, the needs and interests of the student population, and how the content would fit into the curricular needs of the department and the university. A brief description of the course content I have selected to exemplify this process is necessary in order to provide examples during the discussion of the design framework.

During the nineteenth century, changes in science paralleled changes in society and led to new ways of thinking about the world. A famous example is Darwin's theory of natural selection in his *Origin of Species* (1859).² A logical consequence of Darwinian thought was the idea that "bad" and "good" traits actually exist as properties of organisms, and that "badness" might be explained biologically. Such early theories planted seeds for the development of physical anthropology and Social Darwinism.

Overall, science slowly yielded tools for social control and social management. One of these "new" sciences, biological typing, took insights from Darwinism and from physical anthropology and tried to identify and codify patterns of physical "difference" within human

populations. Biological typing, in this way, was the legal precursor to today's racial profiling and a major tool for marginalizing whole populations on the basis of race and ethnicity.

The development of biological typing laid the groundwork for investigations to scientifically explain asocial behavior as part of what we would call today genetic inheritance. Scientists attempted, for example, to isolate biological traits, which allowed for physical identification of the criminal (Lombroso), the mentally ill (Nordau), the "hysterical" female (Maudsley), and the "degenerate" race (Lombroso). These physical profiles became popularized in Europe through the cultural production of the period: in literature (Holmes' "Lascar" enemies; Tolstoy's *Resurrection* [1899], Bram Stoker's *Dracula* [1897]), in museums (ethnographic portrait busts), and, then later, in film (*M* [1931], *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* [1975]).

This theme -- the historical development of biological typing, its demarcation of the criminal, the insane, the feminine and the "degenerate" races, and its influence on European culture -- speaks to a broad and interdisciplinary student base with interests in history, sociology, psychology, gender, language and cultural studies. Just as critically, it lends itself to fulfilling a common mission at universities - to promote understanding about diversity and what forces work against fostering acceptance of others within a dominant culture. The history of biological typing addresses issues of representation of specific subcultures in society and encourages cross-cultural reflection of how the representation of these subcultures has developed both historically and in contemporary society. This historical content, therefore, recommends itself not only as part and parcel of the Western heritage, but also for its relevance to current issues of diversity.

Step Two: Specifying Literacies to Establish Learning Goals

Literacies in instruction design. Step Two of the course design framework involves determining what specific literacies can be most appropriately developed within the context of the course content. Since the 1980s, the term “literacy” has morphed from its original meaning of basic reading and writing competence in a language to use of the term in an ever-increasing array of contexts. Basic language literacy and its focus on decoding skills are no longer adequate for dealing with the complex abstract relationships existing in an increasingly more advanced world. Literacy instruction must, rather, focus on the thinking skills required for academic advancement, higher-order interpretation and cultural transmission (Gordon and Thomas). Such thinking skills constitute the ability to navigate the language of systems such as technology, practices, or a mode of reasoning (Lankshear and Knobel). This paradigm shift in the concept of literacy has led to a variety of literacies specified in educational settings such as *cultural literacy* (Hirsch, Kett, and Trefil), *three-dimensional literacy* (Green), *powerful literacy* (Gee), *multiliteracies* (Kalantzis and Cope), and *critical literacy* (Hammond and Macken-Horarik) among many others.

The utility of using such “thinking” literacies as overriding course objectives cannot be overstated. Again, judging from the vast number of published “how-to” articles on teaching, there is a prevailing tendency in instructional design to focus on how course contents are selected and transmitted to students, rather than on the students' abilities to work with, evaluate, or even confront them. It is too easy to assume, that language students already know how to “read” or analyze a text critically in their native or foreign language – that they know how cultural stereotypes work and what they imply. Thus in the average classroom, students might be introduced to novels or films that present powerful images of marginalization, stereotyping, and

infringement of civil rights. Courses purporting to teach the costs of such stereotyping for individuals include an eclectic mix of content or texts, which can be very interesting for the students and provide them with points of identification with the marginalized. Yet all too often, these texts have been assembled simply to “cover” a certain period, topic or language skill, and not necessarily with an eye toward developing the students’ analytic skills. At the same time, these students are often left to their own devices when instructed to “draw insightful conclusions” to share in class discussions or papers, or even worse, to parrot the instructors’ politics without learning to exercise their own critical faculties. This is not only a disservice to students; it also constitutes a waste of valuable opportunities to equip them with general analytic life skills by means of the target language.

For the course content under consideration here, two literacies – one explicitly critical, aimed at production, and another cultural, aimed at comprehension – become clear possibilities for integration as course objectives. I first provide definitions from the background literature for each in order to discuss my working definition of *critical cultural literacy* as employed in the sample course development.

Critical literacy. Critical literacy has traditionally been associated with examination of power systems within institutions to further social justice. According to Shor, the goal of critical literacy is to question the knowledge one receives in order to challenge inequality and be a productive member of an activist citizenry. In the broader sense of the term, critical literacy includes numerous domains (e.g. *political economic literacy* or *social and interpersonal literacy*) and involves the ability to “analyze and utilize knowledge structures, differential contexts, and hypothetical relationships; to think about and interpret text; to solve problems; and to identify the

interests served by and the implications of information mediated through literacy” (Gordon and Thomas 72).

In the present case, texts on social stereotyping implicate their environments and their historical moments. They offer images of individuals for societies to act upon, just as they set systems of value into play. For learners to become critically literate about such texts, they must learn to decipher the ideologies inherent in the texts' contents and to compare them with the texts' contexts. Those contents, however, require a different kind of historical and cultural literacy of readers, which constitute another set of necessary outcomes for a course containing them.

Cultural literacy. Bennett and other advocates define cultural literacy in the traditional sense as a specified body of knowledge that enables readers to read certain kinds of texts that are shared by highly literate Americans. Hirsch, Kett, and Trefil state, however, that cultural literacy is not confined to an acquaintance with the "big C" culture of the arts or a prescriptive list of books, but rather with the basic information possessed by literate Americans in a broad spectrum of human activity and needed to thrive in the modern world. On a more general level, cultural literacy becomes "an individual's command of the information, problem-solving strategies, symbol systems, and currency (instruments of exchange) of the cultures, which form the contexts of his or her life" (Gordon and Thomas 72).

In the case of biological typing, the nineteenth-century literacy on which the texts rest is a set of markers which purportedly defined biological types and their probable social pathologies. Such markers, in turn, were used as the basis for various juridical, social, and moral decision-making strategies that still influence today's sense of what an ethnicity or national type implies.

Critical cultural literacy. The selected course content – the history of biological typing – thus clearly provides a particularly salient context for teaching both critical and cultural literacies

through critical analysis of authentic texts. Out of these texts, students need to learn to discern often very different cultural perspective than are in use today; they need to be aware of the uses and abuses of science to justify various forms of social control by governments and institutions. It is possible, therefore, to structure a class that helps students not only in developing their language skills and an understanding of how science and its representations have influenced popular beliefs and marginalized specific populations, but also in developing the crucial skills in critical, cultural and genre literacies espoused by Purves, Verduin, Weil, Byrnes and Maxim, and Swaffar and Arens.

Given the above definitions of critical literacy and cultural literacy, I believe it is fruitful to combine the two and to define *critical cultural literacy* for use as an overriding course objective: the ability to critically analyze representations in cultural artifacts (in this case popular texts and film) for cultural perspective, social control and influence and for the implications of such representations in the societies in which they occur.

After defining critical cultural literacy as an appropriate goal for the class, and identifying an appropriate text corpus on which to base it, the next task involves determining how this literacy informs the main “learning goals” for the course and what learning tasks evolve. Building a selected literacy into the overriding objectives for the course ensures that students do more than build linguistic proficiency and master a body of facts from the text contents: they achieve critical educational skills which correspond to new global criteria for literacy.

With this in mind, the main learning goals that could be established for this particular course design could most profitably be stated as three: namely, 1) to foster the ability to explain how representative scientific developments have contributed to changes in social thought and in the representation of social types; 2) to exemplify how scientific developments have influenced

other domains or been used by official interests for social or political ends (e.g. criminology, physical anthropology); and 3) to suggest how biological typing persists, even in contemporary societies that pride themselves on attention to social justice and type-blind treatment of individuals.

Step Three: Determining the Most Appropriate Genres and Texts

Step Three in designing such a course involves determining the most appropriate genres or texts to convey the content and develop the literacy at the base of the learning process. What level-appropriate genres or texts not only typify the given theme, but also lend themselves to specific analyses? For our example, one must consider which genres are best suited for the content of biological typing established in Step One and the goal of developing critical cultural literacy established in Step Two – which kinds of texts would be most accessible to the students, challenging them without necessarily shocking or overwhelming them.

In this case, the genres of film and popular fiction from the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries straightforwardly reflect the influence and representation of biological typing in cultural thought. It thus becomes feasible to take these two genres that recur across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to create four thematic units that comprise parallel text selections (the criminal, the insane, the feminine, and the “degenerate” race). By structuring four parallel units, each of which move across popular and scientific texts addressing biological typing, the assignment sequence is designed to help students scaffold and transfer their skills from each preceding unit to achieve increasingly more advanced analysis. That is, they learn to *read* (in texts) and *see* (in film) evidence of stereotyping in four different varieties, and to spiral upward in the sophistication of the analyses required of them. To foster these skills, the syllabus

is designed to move from the historically explicit texts about the criminal and the insane, into more modern and subtler types of discrimination through biologically marked representations of women and other races.

From the point of view of course development, Steps One through Three that I have just outlined are the general “framing” decisions and content analysis – in this case, the choice of using film and popular fiction to reflect the influence of biological typing, and the goals of teaching students how they might analyze such representations as uses of science for various political and social ends. In contrast, Steps Four and Five involve the didactization of these content decisions. That is, they implement a series of tasks designed to reenact a cognitive apprenticeship for critical cultural literacy -- to reenact those analyses typical for literate analysts of such cultural texts.

Step Four: Designing Daily and Weekly Unit Objectives

As conventionally summarized, Step Four of course development involves designing a clear progression of daily and weekly unit objectives, which move student thought from concrete to more abstract, from comprehension to production, from more familiar and overt to less known and more covert. A tool that can provide mnemonics for course designers to help structure such learning sequences is Bloom’s taxonomy, which describes this process moving from the knowledge to evaluation stages.³

Using Unit Two “The Criminal” to exemplify: in the first week students 1) complete assigned readings of secondary literature on the history of criminal science to gain background knowledge about criminal anthropology (Gould’s “Politics” and “Measuring Bodies”).⁴ In the second week, they 2) apply this knowledge to representations of the criminal in an example of

popular detective fiction (Doyle's "The Adventure of the Final Problem") and in film (Lang's "M"). They thus learn to match the concepts of science to descriptions, activities, and judgments in these texts -- to tie the abstracts of science to concrete attributes and actions in the world. Finally, in the third week, they 3) compare the criminal representations of the nineteenth-century texts and the early twentieth-century film based on them with clips from a popular contemporary detective series ("NYPD Blue"). These comparisons lead the learners to draw conclusions about how depictions in the TV series still might reflect how the criminal is biologically represented in the media today and how that inheritance might reflect or contribute to underlying stereotypes in popular sentiment.

Such a sequence allows students to confront racial and ethnic typing in today's world gradually, yet with great precision; they may draw their own conclusions, but they will understand how to construct an argument for or against how stereotyping factors into today's justice system. In the first of the four thematic units, exercises lead the learners more stepwise into these conclusions; by the fourth unit, the course can assume greater autonomy and thus more independence for learners in making arguments of this sort.

Step Five: Determining Measures for Evaluation

The final step in planning a course (Step Five) is determining the appropriate measures for evaluating achievement of the course objectives - figuring out how to assess and test not just a particular politics, but the students' growing abilities to construct salient cultural critiques on the basis of textual evidence. How does one grade these assignments to allow students freedom of expression and opinion, while discouraging bad logic? Given the overriding goal of development of critical cultural literacy, one could focus on how an argument is constructed

from stereotype. I believed in this case that a précis format (see Appendix A for précis guidelines based on Swaffar and Arens) is most applicable for structuring analysis to prepare students for eventual production of independent arguments, and for promoting critical comparisons among the secondary literature and the primary texts and films of popular culture.⁵

The précis format requires the systematic and structured presentation of students' ideas advocated by Gordon and Thomas to avoid random, emotional or unsubstantiated arguments. By requiring (dis)confirmation of ideas by means of textual evidence or references, students see texts as constructs, which can be discussed in very explicit ways and can be analyzed, compared, criticized, deconstructed and reconstructed (Hammond and Macken-Horarik). In addition, by raising awareness of perspective via the précis, students can analyze what is included or excluded by the writer and form assumptions about how power is exercised through various forms of discourse (Cummins).

To assist students in constructing comparisons based on textual evidence, initial précis in the class are structured like worksheets, including a predetermined topic, focus and categories, with students filling in what they consider points of evidence. In the example for this sample course (see Appendix B), students apply knowledge gained from reading a secondary source on the use of popular detective fiction for advancing national interests (Thomas' "The Fingerprint of the Foreigner") to a primary source (Doyle's "The Adventure of the Final Problem") to determine what tenets of criminal anthropology are represented in the text and the implications of legitimizing a pseudo-science in popular fiction to promote a political agenda within society. Later assignments leave the topic, focus and categories sections of the précis open to guide students gradually toward autonomous critiques.

A final paper assigned for the class is set up to have the students replicate in their own work how the class design proceeded -- to produce a rhetorically polished version of these critical cultural logics. Students select as their paper topic an area of stereotyping that they find interesting, collect and synthesize information from their own sources, and evaluate the value of such sources for examining the effect of biological typing in contemporary society. In this assignment, biological typing becomes a current concern, through which analytic literacies and language skills are developed while exploring the implications of nineteenth century scientific and cultural beliefs in their own lives and contemporary society.

Conclusion

A crucial component to achieving the goals outlined by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages is to establish a systematic approach for training our graduate students -- the future educators in higher education -- in developing programs, curricula and courses that respond to the call for a more holistic, “unified language-and-content curriculum across the four-year college or university sequence” (236) and which produce “educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence” (237). If we are to transform academic programs to meet the changing demands set forth by the Committee, we cannot assume that graduate students adequately transfer field knowledge into pedagogical practice. We must equip them with the necessary tools and require them by means of a cognitive apprenticeship to actually apply these skills in course design.

In this essay I have outlined and exemplified a five-point planning framework that may be used to guide graduate students in developing language or interdisciplinary courses around established outcomes in analytic literacies or translinguistic and transcultural competencies. The

most productive use of this framework is within the context of a cognitive apprenticeship under the tutelage of an experienced faculty member. In the first semester, students work with their faculty mentor to develop a course and then offer the course in a subsequent semester. While teaching the course, the graduate student continues to meet with the faculty mentor to reflect on the effectiveness of the course design, classroom activities and achievement of the established outcomes. The student then enters the job market with some experience in both developing and teaching a content-driven course targeting specific literacies.

An additional dimension comes into play in developing courses: by undertaking a cognitive apprenticeship in transferring scholarly practices into a classroom framework and by breaking down the specific content area - in this case biological typing - into teaching sequences, graduate students are challenged to reexamine the means by which cultural studies is done – how research and critical analysis is approached within this specific academic discipline. In a sense, students “see” a distinct methodology for the first time – the concrete steps necessary for successfully analyzing cultural artifacts from a particular cultural space, and their resulting implications for societies. When transferring these steps into a pedagogical framework, they realize that it is not enough to understand the how of cultural studies, but they also have to determine the most effective means for approaching the methodology with students – how to draw upon their background knowledge and skills and at the same time bring them to increasingly more sophisticated interaction with the content. In this way, graduate students gain a better understanding of how cultural studies fits within the broader context of global imperatives in education – as one academic tradition that contributes to building literacies, competencies and new perspectives on how knowledge is informed by and informs specific cultural contexts. They see at a macro-level how scholarly disciplines can intersect to build

literacy skills at each level of instruction to achieve the overriding objectives in a general college education.

Notes

1. See Schmidt and Mosenthal for a comprehensive discussion of multicultural literacy and arguments for its inclusion in higher education. See Schroeder for a discussion of the need to restructure university-level curricula to accommodate a changing student base and emphasize universal skills instruction based on a new model of literacy to improve cultural capital in American society. See O'Neil for a discussion of skill deficiencies that must be addressed for preparing students as successful members of the workforce and a synthesis of governmental commissions, taskforces and studies that have attempted to document the growing need for a more highly skilled workforce.

2. See Bowler for a standard account of Darwinism.

3. See Bloom and Krathwohl for a complete description of the cognitive domains of educational activities. A general summary of all three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) is available on the web (Clark).

4. I am using examples of texts appropriate for the development of an interdisciplinary course taught in English. However, since biological determinism was a European phenomenon, appropriate texts in a variety of languages are readily available for constructing a content-based language course.

5. See Swaffar and Arens for a thorough description and examples of how to construct a précis.

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Appendix A: Précis Assignment Guidelines

Format for Précis (weekly assignments)

There is a difference between a text's facts and the strategy used to present those facts. A "précis" (ˈpray-see) reflects this difference. It is designed to reflect the structure of a text's argument, not just a set of notes on the text's contents. A précis is one typed page long.

No matter what type, a précis has three sections:

1) A statement about the text's **FOCUS**. This is the main issue that the text addresses.

**You write a concise statement (1-2 sentences) of that focus.

Likely alternatives:

- issues or problems
- representative concerns of a group, or its interlocked set of beliefs
- institutions/systems
- events and their characteristics or repercussions

E.G.: "The structure of the mind and how it relates to behavior in the social world." What not to do: Do not include journalistic commentary, or examples, or evaluations -- just state what the topic is.

2) A statement of **LOGIC** and **GOAL** (its **Intent**), which will introduce a **CHART WITH HEADINGS** encompassing the text's data in two parallel columns of notes (usually with page references to the reading).

**You write a sentence describing the logic pattern (E.g., "By examining the sources of _____, the author shows the consequences of _____"; "In order to _____, the text correlates the _____ and _____ of social behaviors.")

Typical verbs indicating such logic: compare, contrast, link causally, cause, follow from . . .

**After that, you write two column headings creating classes of information which the author systematically correlates with each other. Under these headings, you typically add three or four examples which fit the content of the text into its form.

Typical categories of information:

- characteristics of a model, role, event
- stages in an event or process
- sources, conditions, or restrictions on a contexts
- participants or interest groups
- effects, impact, consequences
- goals, purposes to be realized.

3) A paragraph (ca. 3 sentences) indicating the **IMPLICATIONS** of the information pattern. This is not a description of the information pattern or focus, but rather an extension of the covert statement implied by the information and pattern. **That is**, what is this text/précis *good for*, especially as seen from the outside? In setting the argument up this way, what is being hidden, asserted, or brushed aside? What is new or old-fashioned about the correlations made? Who would profit most by this arrangement?

Grading

clear focus = + 1

logic statement clear = + 1

information pattern clear and pertinent = + 1

consistency (does logic match information match focus match implication?) = + 1

implications (are they pertinent, well-expressed, well-thought-out? do they follow from the development of the argument, or come from nowhere?) = + 1

TOTALS: + 5 = A; + 4 = B; + 3 = C; + 2 = D; + 1 = F. Assignments are **one** page long; *top grade is 90 (unless extraordinary synthesis happens in the implications).*

Guidelines from: Swaffar, Janet K., and Katherine Arens. *Remapping the Foreign Language Curriculum: An Approach Through Multiple Literacies*. New York: MLA, 2005.

Appendix B: Example Précis

Thomas & Doyle Readings

Complete the précis based on the readings assigned for today. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

Focus: The emergence of criminal anthropology in detective fiction of the nineteenth century and how it was used to suit national interests (e.g., British imperialism).

Logic: A comparison of what tenets of criminal anthropology are reflected in Doyle's work.

Tenet of Criminal Anthropology	Reflection in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Final Problem"

Implication: (of legitimizing a pseudo-science in popular fiction to promote a political agenda within society)

Steps in Course Design	Description of Steps
Step One: Establishing the Course Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What content can I reasonably teach? 2. Who is my audience? 3. What needs can this content meet at the student, department and university levels?
Step Two: Specifying Literacies to Establish Learning Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What literacies can best be fostered via the established content of the course? 2. Based on the content and the literacies selected, what are my main learning goals for the course?
Step Three: Determining the Most Appropriate Genres and Texts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there particular genres or texts that are most appropriate for the course content? 2. Do these genres or texts lend themselves to building the selected literacies for the course?
Step Four: Designing Daily and Weekly Unit Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a logical way of sequencing the material (e.g., chronologically, by subject)? 2. Is there a logical means for dividing the material into shorter units? 3. What are my weekly and daily goals? 4. Do I have assignments ordered from concrete to more abstract, from comprehension to production, from familiar and overt to less known and more covert? (consult Bloom's Taxonomy)
Step Five: Determining Measures for Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I assess or test the students' growing abilities in the selected literacies? 2. What form of assessment would best reflect what the students have been learning? 3. How can I grade these assignments to allow students freedom of expression and opinion, while discouraging bad logic?

Table 1: Steps for Course Design