Teaching to Wave: scaffolding Teaching bilingual students with discourse semantics and semantic waves

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To become a K-9 teacher in Denmark, tertiary education students must successfully complete a number of competency area assessments, one of which is Teaching bilingual students. At the Metropolitan University College, this course is a concentrated half-module taught in 26.5 hours over six weeks. The content draws on the fields of educational linguistics and ‘Sydney School’ genre pedagogy as well as more broadly on second language education research. The written assessment requires students to apply relevant theory and knowledge to one of their main teaching subjects followed by suggestions for pedagogical practice. This paper reports on an attempt to scaffold these tertiary education students’ final assessment by introducing students to analytical tools from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton, 2014). The concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density as well as the notion of semantic waves (Blackie, 2014; Maton, 2014) are used to map high-achieving papers, while examining the different linguistic resources employed from a discourse semantic perspective (Martin & Rose, 2007) ie. use of nominalization, grammatical metaphor and sentence structure. As such, semantic waves and discourse semantics are used both as content and as methodology, teaching students to meet their own assessment requirements through these concepts and modelling their use in the classroom. Explicitly teaching LCT and related linguistic patterns allows them to focus on strategies for scaffolding success, both their own and that of their future second-language students.

References

