

EDUC 172 Part 1-06

There are many different kinds of discourses. Discourses are lenses, ways of seeing reality and they're informed by many different things.

Each different academic subject that is taught in school tends to provide a perspective or a way of seeing a particular set of phenomena.

The subject that you teach, it's an academic discipline, and academic disciplines each generate discourses that have particular uses of words and phrases that are typical to them.

So when one engages a student's understanding by moving from a text to a discourse, one moves through the different language each on a discipline provides and shares in order to communicate its ideas clearly.

Disciplines have different ways of describing similar phenomena for different purposes. There are many different examples in which a similar object can be described in quite radically different ways depending on the discipline that is generating the discourse.

So all these different purposes contribute to our greater understanding, our different ways of seeing the world but they do so with the language that suits the particular purpose of the discipline.

We're going to explore this little more deeply, and the best way to do so is to try generating some of this text ourselves.

In teaching we do this all the time. We're constantly working with curriculum, transforming the ideas, perhaps that we have read, through disciplinary discourses that are maintained in writing and putting it into an oral context for the students.

We translate the ideas, compress and combining them in different ways so that our students can understand. As we've already said, some part of the composing process for sharing the discourse with students is a part of the students own curiosity guiding it. So that when we have the opportunity we allow the students questions to help shape and mold the discourse that is happening.

That way we bring them into it; they feel familiar and comfortable working with that language, reading it and writing it, speaking and hearing it.

So what we'd like you to do for the next exercise, and working in groups, I'd like you to choose an object. It can be any kind of object, it can be a natural object, a man-made object, anything that you collectively decide that you could describe using the particular disciplinary language that you use when you are teaching this specific subject to which you are an expert.

This will allow you then to explore some of that language more closely and engage you as a writer.

When you do this write enough to describe the object and use as much vocabulary and phrasing as you can in order to place that object clearly within the disciplinary perspective that you want to share.