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From “Additive” to “Integrative”: Experiences of Faculty Teaching Developmental Integrated Reading and Writing Courses

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Abstract

This paper documents the perceptions and experiences of faculty members in the midst of statewide reform efforts in Virginia and North Carolina to integrate developmental reading and writing courses. Using interview and focus group data from 161 faculty and administrators in both states (combined) as well as three detailed case studies of faculty teaching newly integrated courses, we describe how departments and faculty approached the task of course integration. Findings suggest that while instructors had a generally positive impression of integrating the two disciplines, implementing these new courses was not without challenges. A common approach to course design, which we term “additive,” involved combining assignments and activities from the old standalone courses. We identify a range of factors associated with using the additive approach, including conceptions of literacy learning focused on the mastery of discrete skills, professional development aimed at exchanging activities and materials between reading and writing instructors, and lack of a clear framework for an integrated course design. Instructors using the additive approach reported that they could not cover all of the content/activities from the previous courses under the accelerated course structure, and worried they that they were not able to provide students the literacy skills they needed to be successful in college.

Yet some faculty used or began to adopt what we call an “integrative” approach to course design in which few standalone components of the previously offered courses remained. Integrative course design tended to emphasize metacognition, extensive text-based writing, and embedded skills and strategy instruction, often offered in a “just-in-time” fashion. Faculty perceived that these more “integrative” course elements were associated with improved literacy learning. The findings presented have implications for creating support resources and professional development for departments and faculty who are new to teaching integrated reading and writing courses. The paper includes several curricular examples which can be adapted and used by faculty teaching integrated developmental courses.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Perspectives From the Literature	2
3. Research Context.....	5
3.1 Statewide Developmental Reading and Writing Redesigns	5
3.2 Research Design and Data Sources	6
4. Findings.....	7
4.1 The “Additive” Approach to Integration	9
4.2 Creating “Integrative” Courses as an Alternative to the Additive Approach	15
5. Discussion and Conclusion.....	21
References.....	24
Appendix.....	28

1. Introduction

Increasingly, community colleges and other broad-access postsecondary institutions are looking for ways to improve the outcomes of students referred to developmental writing and reading. Roughly one third of incoming community college students are deemed underprepared in these areas and referred to remedial programs (Perin & Charron, 2006; Jenkins & Boswell, 2002). Traditionally, remedial requirements have typically been structured as a series of semester-long courses offered in two separate departments. In one common configuration, developmental writing courses are offered through the English department and reading courses are housed in a standalone department. A national study of 51 Achieving the Dream colleges found that over three fourths of them offer either two or three levels of developmental reading, meaning that depending on their scores on the placement test some students face up to three semesters of developmental courses, potentially in both writing and reading, before gaining access to college-level work (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

Unfortunately, research on developmental education has shown that students placed into multi-course developmental sequences are unlikely to persist to enroll in college-level English (e.g., Calcagno & Long, 2008; Perry, Bahr, Rosin, & Woodward, 2010). Moreover, studies of placement practices and policies have shown that many students referred to developmental education are “underplaced” and could succeed in a higher level course (Scott-Clayton, Crosta, & Belfield, 2014). Thus, reformers are making changes to developmental course structure, curriculum, and pedagogy to accelerate students’ progress through these requirements. An important strategy in this effort is combining discrete reading and writing courses into a single course, which eliminates points at which students can exit the sequence and offers a quicker path to college-level courses.

The purpose of this paper is to document the perceptions and experiences of faculty members in the midst of statewide reform efforts in Virginia and North Carolina to integrate developmental reading and writing courses. Using interview and focus group data from 161 faculty, administrators, and writing center staff as well as three detailed case studies of faculty teaching newly integrated courses, we describe how departments and faculty have been approaching integration. Our analysis examines the challenges that

emerge with one common approach to combining the disciplines and how faculty tend to refine their strategies over time. The findings presented have implications for creating support resources and professional development for departments and faculty who are new to teaching integrated reading and writing courses. The paper includes several curricular examples (see Appendix) which can be adapted and used by faculty teaching integrated developmental courses.

2. Perspectives From the Literature

The integration of reading and writing courses in developmental education is part of a broader movement to accelerate student progress to college-level coursework. However, an additional motivation for integration is informed by theory and empirical research on reading and writing processes. Several decades of scholarship point to the shared thinking practices that underlie both reading and writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Spivey & King, 1989). Theories of literacy maintain that teaching reading and writing in isolation from one another is less authentic to real-life literacy activities and less effective for students' learning and development (McCormick, 1994; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Shanahan & Lomax, 1988; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998). Many studies have focused on literacy teaching strategies for younger learners. Findings suggest the efficacy of "meaning-centered" instruction that integrates reading and writing in open-ended literacy tasks (e.g., reading real books, journal writing), particularly when paired with some targeted skills instruction (Cantrell, 1999; Rasinski & Padak, 2004). This "balanced literacy" approach has been applied in high schools and adult learning contexts as well (Beder, Lipnevich, & Robinson-Geller, 2007; Lester, 2000).

Surveys of instructional approaches have shown tendencies for teachers of lower-skilled learners to employ segregated skills-based instruction at the expense of meaning-centered instruction, which may further exacerbate gaps in achievement (e.g., Teale, Paciga, & Hoffman, 2007). The prevalence of decontextualized instruction in developmental education classrooms has been well documented (e.g., Callahan &

Chumney, 2009; Rose, 1983). Grubb (2012) called this “remedial pedagogy” and offered examples from developmental classes he observed at 13 community colleges. In writing classes these included sequential instruction on grammar rules, sentence-level writing, combining sentences, writing paragraphs, etc. In reading classes, he reported a focus on finding topic sentences, graphic organizers, and vocabulary comprehension. Grubb posited that this “part-to-whole” approach replicates instruction that was previously ineffective for students in high school and that fails to help students understand how and when to apply the skills that are emphasized in the remedial classes. More specifically, he showed how the separation of reading and writing results in missed opportunities for students to see connections across competencies (e.g., viewing readings as models for writing).

More than three decades ago, Rose (1983) argued that basic writing courses in college should incorporate more reading. He argued that “a major skill in academic writing is the complex ability to write from other texts—to summarize, to disambiguate key notions and useful facts and incorporate them in one’s own writing, to react critically to prose” (p. 9). Integrated reading and writing courses are seen as a way to provide students more meaning-based instruction that develops the thinking practices that will prepare them for the types of literacy activities they will encounter in college-level coursework (e.g., El-Hindi, 1997; Hayes & Williams, 2016; Pacello, 2014). Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986) offered a widely cited and replicated description of an integrated composition course. They explained that students in such an integrated course must “shuttle between languages—theirs and ours—between their understanding of what they have read and their understanding of what they must say to us about what they have read” (p. 4). Similarly, Lea and Street (2006) provided a theoretical framework for academic literacy that foregrounds the sociocultural practices of academics within disciplines. In this view, postsecondary literacy instruction should introduce students to the dynamic and complex discourses they encounter in higher education (Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). Hern and Snell (2013) wrote that accelerated developmental courses should “look and feel like a good standard college English course, only with more support and guidance” (p. 7). In their vision of a “relevant thinking-oriented curriculum” that offers skills instruction “to grapple with challenging college-level tasks,” reading and writing would

naturally be integrated because writing in response to texts is fundamental to college-level literacy tasks.

In addition to the promised instructional benefits of integrating reading and writing, evidence suggests that student outcomes, including course pass rates and retention rates, are positively impacted by the integration of the disciplines. In one of the few evaluations focused specifically on the learning outcomes of students in a course that combined reading and writing, Goen and Gillotte-Tropp (2003) found that students in their integrated developmental course had stronger course outcomes and better performance on assessment measures relative to peers in standalone reading and writing courses. An evaluation of reforms to developmental education in nine California community colleges found that students enrolled in accelerated integrated reading and writing course sequences were more likely than their peers in standalone courses to enroll in and complete college-level English within one year (Hayward & Willett, 2014). The move toward contextualizing developmental skills education within college-level disciplinary content has similar aims as the effort to integrate reading and writing, and evaluations of contextualization reforms have also shown evidence of improvement in student outcomes (e.g., Cox, Bobrowski, & Spector, 2004; Jenkins, Zeidenberg, & Kienzl, 2009; Perin, 2011).

Under these kinds of reforms to developmental reading and writing, community college faculty are being asked to teach new content in new ways. Reforms focused on integration require transformative change at the level of college structures, processes, and individuals' attitudes and beliefs (Klempin & Karp, 2015). Research on the experiences of instructors working in reformed contexts has shown the challenges of adopting new ways of teaching (e.g., Bickerstaff & Cormier, 2015; Edgecombe, Cormier, Bickerstaff, & Barragan, 2014; Furco & Moely, 2012). A survey of instructors who attended a National Association of Developmental Education summit on integrated reading and writing identified time management, balancing instruction across disciplines, and finding appropriate curricular materials as top-ranking challenges in teaching integrated courses (Saxon, Martirosyan, & Vick, 2016). While literature on professional development has pointed to promising practices to support college faculty as they refine and improve their practice generally (e.g., Centra, 1989; Cox, 2004; Van Waes, Van den Bossche,

Moolenaar, De Maeyer, & Van Petegem, 2015), increasing our knowledge of the questions and obstacles faced by instructors in specific contexts can inform more targeted resources and support. Although the literature on literacy instruction is extensive, the empirical research on teaching in integrated developmental reading and writing courses is limited. This paper addresses this gap in the literature by providing an in-depth investigation of the experiences of instructors new to teaching integrated courses.

3. Research Context

3.1 Statewide Developmental Reading and Writing Redesigns

In 2013 and 2014, respectively, the community college state systems in Virginia and North Carolina rolled out major changes to their developmental reading and writing course curricula and structure. Namely, they introduced an integrated course structure in which developmental reading and developmental writing courses were combined, reducing the number of required courses students would need to be eligible for introductory college composition and other college-level courses. For a complete description of all aspects of these statewide redesigns, including the new placement tests, see Kalamkarian, Raufman, and Edgecombe (2015).

While both states integrated the disciplines, the resulting course structures differ. In Virginia, students with a developmental referral are placed into a tiered, variable-credit, one-semester structure. Students with lower or mid-range scores on the placement test are referred to an eight-credit or four-credit integrated course, respectively. Both provide a direct, one-semester pathway to introductory college-level English. (Higher scoring students who do not meet the college-ready benchmark are referred to a corequisite support course to be taken in conjunction with college English; however, that course is not a focus of analysis in this paper.) In North Carolina, the course sequence is comprised of three eight-week integrated courses. Students can complete two of these courses in a single semester; therefore, students who place into the lowest level can complete their developmental requirements in one and a half semesters (Kalamkarian, Raufman, & Edgecombe, 2015).

The planning processes for both statewide redesigns included the convening of statewide task forces—comprised of system-level staff, college administrators, and faculty—that took responsibility for proposing principles for reform and translating those principles into curriculum guides, course structures, and learning objectives. All community colleges in each system were required to eliminate old standalone courses and offer the new integrated courses using the prescribed learning objectives. However, colleges were given discretion over curricular materials and pedagogy. Leading up to the roll-out and during early semesters of implementation, each state hosted statewide or regional professional development events designed to bring faculty together from across colleges. For example, the Developmental Education Symposium in Virginia served as a working meeting to inform faculty and administrators about the redesign components (Asera, 2011, p. 21). As will be discussed below, individual colleges designed professional development opportunities for their faculty to prepare them to teach the new courses.

3.2 Research Design and Data Sources

The Community College Research Center (CCRC) partnered with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to examine the statewide redesigns in both states. The Analysis of Statewide Developmental Education Reform (ASDER) was a four-year study that took place from 2012 to 2016 and explored the nature, implementation, and early outcomes of the developmental education redesigns. A component of ASDER focused specifically on the integration of reading and writing with the aim of addressing how colleges are implementing the new courses and structures as well as examining faculty perspectives and experiences teaching the integrated courses.

Over the course of two years, qualitative data were collected at 21 community colleges across Virginia and North Carolina. The sources for this analysis include 161 interviews and focus groups with developmental English and reading faculty, administrators, and writing center staff in both states. Additionally, we also conducted three in-depth case studies of developmental instructors in Virginia. Instructors were selected based on recommendations from colleagues. We sought nominations from individuals knowledgeable about the reform to identify three individuals from different

colleges who were each thinking critically about refining their teaching practice in the integrated course structure. The selected instructors were considered leaders in the reform efforts at their colleges and were selected in part because of their involvement in shaping the redesigned courses within their institutions. Instructors were followed for two semesters, during which time researchers conducted classroom observations, in-person and phone interviews, and focus groups with students enrolled in their classes. Additionally, instructors independently completed audio-recorded reflections focused on lessons and curricula implemented in the integrated courses. Lastly, researchers categorized and analyzed the curricular materials used in their courses each semester. Selected materials from those case studies are presented as artifacts of practice throughout this paper. Across both semesters, researchers conducted a total of four interviews and two classroom observations with each instructor, and each instructor recorded a total of two audio reflections.

Interview transcripts from the broader dataset as well as the case study interviews and other case study materials were coded using Dedoose qualitative analysis software. The research team developed a series of initial codes to organize transcript excerpts in the broader dataset. Examples include professional development, integration of reading and writing, student learning, and curriculum. These codes were refined, with additional specific subcodes added as they emerged from the data, and then applied to the case study data sources. The findings presented below emerged from thematic analysis of both the case study data and the broader interview dataset.

4. Findings

While the formal structural and curricular integration of reading and writing was new for the vast majority of instructors who participated in interviews and focus groups, most interviewees reported including some degree of integration in their previous standalone courses. As one instructor described:

In the reading courses [students] were doing a lot of writing anyways. They would be writing summary response or a literary analysis, that kind of thing. And in the writing

courses we were reading a lot of essays as a basis for a lot of the writing that we would do, and we would analyze and look at how essays were written.

This natural, if informal, integration emerged for some participants from previous teaching experience in K-12 settings where the subjects are taught in tandem. For others, it reflected their understanding of how reading and writing are linked in practice. As one instructor explained, “The major strength [of the reform] is the incorporation of the reading and writing. Allowing students to see that they coexist, and in order to be successful in one, we have to be proficient in both.” Among faculty, integration was seen as more closely aligned to the types of literacy tasks students would be asked to complete in college. As one instructor said, “I do think that it seemed a little too remedial to teach reading by itself.”

Our analysis did surface some skepticism about integration, including its considerable implications for the college’s departmental structures. Previously, most colleges offered developmental writing through the English department and developmental reading in a separate standalone reading department. The streamlined course structure in conjunction with the new assessment and placement test meant that colleges offered fewer developmental course sections than before, and there was concern that part-time or full-time faculty might be laid off. Likewise, colleges were working to ensure that faculty members were properly credentialed to teach the new courses, and in some cases supporting faculty to become credentialed to teach relevant college-level courses, given the reduction in developmental course offerings.

Even instructors who reported some informal integration under the old course structure acknowledged that the newly redesigned courses would require a significant change to instruction. One faculty member who previously taught developmental reading described it this way:

My focus was let’s say 70 percent reading, 30 percent writing [in the old reading course]. And the writing instruction was mostly focused on comprehension kinds of activities. They would write papers, but I would be grading them to see if they had comprehended the reading, not quite as specifically for writing structure.

In the sections that follow, we use interviews, observations, and classroom artifacts to analyze how instructors took up this challenging charge of combining their previously separated subjects into a single course. We first describe the most prominent way that instructors and departments went about integrating the two subjects in the early semesters of implementation. We call this the “additive approach.” Our data indicate reasons why study participants designed their course in an additive fashion; analysis also reveals the significant limitations of this way of organizing the course. Later, we describe what we call an “integrative” approach to instructional design. Integrative courses alleviate many of the challenges inherent in an additive course design, and we present several examples from instructors using an integrative approach.

4.1 The “Additive” Approach to Integration

In the initial stages of the integrated course implementation, observations and interviews revealed an instructor tendency toward course design which we call “additive.” In this approach, instructors with expertise in teaching one discipline added new activities or assignments to previously used course material as a way of integrating the two disciplines. For example, an instructor who has historically taught reading may incorporate supplemental assignments that are focused on writing. Individual assignments, assessments, and instructional activities are primarily tied to a learning objective related to either reading or writing.

One writing instructor demonstrated her use of this approach as she described maintaining previously used assignments while looking for ways to fit in new activities from the other discipline: “I thought, well, I’ll just keep the comp quizzes. They used to be grammar and punctuation, and I can throw the reading in. So you are just kind of throwing things in where they fit.”

In some cases, use of the additive approach was reinforced by the way the department or instructor elected to structure the course. For instance, at some colleges integrated courses were co-taught by two instructors, each primarily responsible for one discipline. Instructors reported organizing their course into designated “reading days” and “writing days.” One instructor explained her positive view of this approach:

I think the idea of integrating the two, whether [as a] reading “week” or “session” or “class,” will help the

adjuncts. Certainly it would help me if I teach them to be able to approach reading as a separate task but also relate it, perhaps the next day, as a writing opportunity.

This instructor demonstrated her understanding of integration as ensuring that tasks from both disciplines are included, even if they remain separate within the course design. A large number of instructors perceived that integrating their course meant including equal parts reading and writing in terms of both instruction and assignments, and the additive approach allowed instructors to see that equal treatment was given to both disciplines.

Lacking a framework for integration. Our analysis identifies several intersecting factors that led to the predominance of this approach, especially in the early semesters of implementation. These include the framing of learning objectives, the availability of curricular materials, perceptions of the importance of skills mastery, and the nature of professional development. Looking across these factors, explored in this section, we find that faculty using the additive approach lacked a framework for integration. As one instructor explained:

But [they were] very separated before because it's very different skills and strategies. So finding out how to integrate them is very difficult to do. There is overlap in that we all communicate with the same purpose. We all use the same patterns, so that's a doorway into the integration. But writing is so different than reading.

A significant challenge instructors pointed to was the lack of integrated learning objectives. For example, in Virginia most of the eight learning objectives for the new integrated courses, which are described in the state's curriculum guide, focus primarily on reading or writing (e.g., "Analyze college-level texts for stated or implied main idea and major and minor supporting details"). North Carolina's curriculum guide provides three overarching goals for each course, which are integrated (e.g., "Students will demonstrate the use of reading and writing processes"). But under each goal, student learning objectives and competencies are segregated (e.g., "Students will demonstrate the use of pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies"). While these curriculum guides were developed with the intention of offering faculty suggestions for lessons in which

they could implement the learning objectives, the lessons remain isolated within the separate disciplines. One faculty member summarized the issue:

I would say overall I think one of the challenges with these courses ... is we have all those student learning outcomes we have to cover that are written in an isolated format, this discrete list of skills, and so it really is up to the instructor to figure out how to integrate them.

Because instructors could not look to the learning objectives for suggestions on *how* to integrate, they sought out other curricular resources to guide their course design.

In particular, faculty looked to textbooks to provide a framework for integration. At many colleges, the early planning for implementation revolved around the search for a textbook that would assist faculty in meeting the course learning goals. Almost universally, participants cited this as a challenge. At the time of the data collection, instructors listed a very limited number of textbooks designed by publishers for integrated developmental courses and reported dissatisfaction with the available choices. Problems included low-quality readings, poor organization, dense or confusing structure, or content that was too easy or too challenging for students. Additionally, interviewees reported that some texts which purported to integrate the disciplines did not:

Yeah, we're looking for a textbook that integrates the reading and writing. We haven't found that it really exists yet. Because it's so new that all of the publishers that we've looked at [are] basically doing reading, writing, reading, writing. They are taking what they have and trying to combine it.

Some departments continued using the curricular materials from previous standalone courses; in other cases, newly adopted "integrated" textbooks reinforced an additive course design.

Analysis of interviews also shows how respondents' focus on skills mastery also contributed to the use of the additive approach. Participants expressed a desire to ensure that students have received instruction in a list of literacy skills or strategies: for example, finding the main idea, writing sentences free of grammatical errors, building vocabulary, writing a thesis statement, etc. This was a concern that was often mentioned in relationship to students with reading difficulties. For example, one instructor explained:

“We do have students who can’t read. I mean, they cannot read so the whole language approach is only but so helpful.” When these discrete skills were foregrounded, the resulting course featured a series of activities and assignments geared toward each.

Interviews also suggest a lack of confidence with the second subject area, which likely contributed to instructors holding on to pieces of their old course that worked well. One interviewee described a lack of confidence among instructors in both disciplines:

The fear that I personally have, having never taught formal writing before except for in a public school, but never at this level and never having any higher level education to prepare me for that... [is]: ‘Am I doing it to the level that it needs to be done?’ And then you have writing faculty who have all their experience in writing with no background in reading. So a lot of us are kind of hoping we are doing well on both.

While both state systems provided some professional development opportunities at the launch of the reform, most professional development for instructors preparing to teach in these courses were organized by departments within colleges. Interviews suggest that among the most popular professional development offerings were cross-training sessions led by faculty at colleges in which reading instructors trained writing instructors and vice versa. A reading instructor explained: “We took all the writing instructors and then I gave them a crash course in terms of reading—how they could take an existing activity that they already did and add a little more reading to it.” This focus on sharing one’s expertise as an instructor of one discipline and exchanging strategies used in the previous courses upheld the notion of these content areas as distinct, leading faculty to potentially leave these trainings with a collection of activities and assignments but without a framework for assembling them or combining them in an integrated way.

Challenge of time. Our analysis of interview and observation data shows that while an additive approach is a logical strategy for integrated course design, faculty reported frustrations derived from attempting to cover the course competencies in this way. Chief among those challenges, as reported by faculty, is the lack of time. One instructor reflected on the first semester teaching the new course:

It was a massive amount of material that they wanted us to put into one semester’s worth of work. It was extremely difficult, and my primary concern during that time was to

touch upon all that I was told we had to include. So, it was an unusual feeling for me. I'm not typically frantic in offering up instruction.

In both states, integrated courses did not simply combine the number of contact hours from the previous reading and writing courses. Instead, the redesign was intended to accelerate student progress to college-level English. For example, a student who may have previously been required to take a three-hour reading course and a three-hour writing course may now be assigned to a four-hour integrated course. Thus, it is not surprising that faculty reported that they were unable to include all of the activities and assignments that would have appeared in the old courses. For some interviewees, it was troubling to lose activities and assignments that students previously found engaging: "I used to do Jeopardy-type game reviews with them, but again I just don't have time to do it anymore." Others worried about the loss of time for reading comprehension activities and vocabulary instruction.

Most commonly, however, instructors reported spending less time on grammar instruction than they did in standalone writing courses.

I haven't been able to work on grammar and punctuation like I would like to. Usually the way a composition class is set up, or the way I would set mine up [is that] we spend a lot of time on grammar and punctuation. When you are trying to get the writing and fit the reading in, something has to fall to the wayside.

This was a point of concern for respondents who believed that students referred to developmental education need more explicit grammatical instruction and practice to improve their writing. Yet finding time for grammar was a challenge given the volume and range of learning objectives covered by the new course. The North Carolina curriculum guide states that decontextualized skills instruction should be deemphasized: "Grammar instruction should be included in the context of activities and/or during lab time" (NCCCS, 2013, p. 5). Instructors in North Carolina reported that they were aware that they should spend less time on skills, yet it appeared that faculty needed additional resources and support to understand how to operationalize this principle of the redesign in the classroom.

Some respondents reported that they were making sacrifices in other areas to continue to emphasize skills instruction. For example, one faculty member said:

I feel like [critical thinking] is one area that is really sacrificed in the new redesign. We are so focused on getting so many skills taught that when we then get to the higher level thinking we are out of time.

Another described her attempt to maintain previous content, only now at a faster pace:

The way it is now, I basically teach two skills a week, one reading skill, one writing skill. We have two days on that skill, and if they don't get it then there is no backtracking or trying to help them understand it. We are moving on from there.

Overall, despite most respondents' theoretical support of integration, in the early semesters of implementation they expressed concerns about how to effectively ensure that students would leave their courses with the skills necessary to succeed at the college level. Many interviewees approached course design by selecting a series of texts, assignments and activities, each primarily focused on reading or writing. However, given the reduction in credit hours relative to the previously separate courses, instructors were not able to devote as much time to the same activities and assignments as they did in the standalone format.

In the next section, we discuss an alternative approach to course design which largely avoided combining previous course content. Instead, instructors using this approach were able to create a course that was integrative rather than additive, typically by designing much or all of the course from scratch. Some instructors were able to take an integrative approach early on, perhaps as a result of previous experience teaching literacy. For others, this way of integration emerged over time as instructors refined their course design in response to the challenges they experienced. As will be discussed below, these courses shared several characteristics, including a lack of emphasis on discrete literacy skills in favor of more complex and contextualized literacy tasks aligned with the types of assignments students could expect to see in college-level courses.

4.2 Creating “Integrative” Courses as an Alternative to the Additive Approach

In response to the challenges of the additive approach, instructors reported seeking alternative instructional strategies that would result in integrated assignments, assessments, activities, and instructional objectives and that would minimize reading- and/or writing-only components. In this section, we draw on the data to describe several strategies faculty used to create what we call “integrative” courses. Table 1 provides a summary of these strategies. Many individuals interviewed for this research described courses that included elements that we consider integrative, as well as those we would classify as additive. However, interview data suggest that a small but growing group of faculty, including all three of the case study participants, were working to eliminate some additive features of their courses and incorporate more integrative course components, like those described in this section.

Table 1
Strategies Used to Create “Integrative” Courses

Strategy	Description
Metacognition	Invites students to explicitly reflect on the relationship between reading and writing in order to promote self-awareness of literacy skill use and processes.
Course Design by Theme	Course is structured around a single theme. All texts and assignments are connected to this theme. A single “anchor text” may be used throughout the course as the basis for the variety of assignments and activities.
Text-Based Writing	Use of writing assignments that are tied to a text. Examples include summaries, journal articles, personal responses, and critical response essays.
Embedded Skill and Strategy Instruction	Embeds skills and strategies in the context of the thematic and text-based activities described previously.

Metacognition. Some instructors designed course activities focused on building students’ metacognitive understanding of reading and writing as highly interconnected processes. Instructors who used this approach felt that asking students to explicitly think about and reflect on the relationship between reading and writing facilitated students’ self-awareness of when and how they were employing various literacy skills and processes. One instructor explained:

So it's just constant. [Showing] here's the relationship [between reading and writing]. So I don't know how to describe that as a specific strategy other than it's just constant reference. Referencing when we are writing to something we saw as readers. When we are reading to something we were doing as a writer.

In a brainstorming activity in another instructor's class, students were asked questions such as, "How is writing part of the reading process?"; "How is reading part of the writing process?"; and "How do we use writing to help with reading?" Instructors tended to use this pedagogical approach in conjunction with other metacognitive prompts to help students understand their thought processes as readers and writers. In a way, instructors felt that employing metacognitive strategies in the classroom allowed students to better understand the course goals by instilling in them the idea that learning both skills in conjunction would ultimately benefit them as both readers and writers.

Course design by theme. Courses that were more "integrative" in design were frequently structured around a single theme. Common themes in our dataset included broadly applicable ideas like "struggle" or "success" that were perceived to be relevant to students' lives. In theme-based courses, all texts and assignments are connected to the topic. As one instructor explained, this allowed for clearer and stronger connections between the reading and writing components, as they would naturally be related thematically. An instructor described:

We read a novel together. And that became kind of an anchor. So we had other readings that related that—more informative readings related to some of the issues that emerged in the novel. And then writing assignments might be [writing a journal] response to a reading.

Instructors who designed their integrated courses using a theme often used a single "anchor text" throughout the semester as a basis for a variety of assignments and activities. Artifact 1 (see Appendix) presents examples from a course in which students selected a non-fiction book from a list and completed a series of related journal assignments over the course of the semester. The instructor designed these journal assignments to help students practice research, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and analytic skills. The instructor explained her rationale for shifting from a more skill-based approach to organizing the course around the anchor text:

I think that the idea of not doing reading comprehension, but doing broad general assignments about the books, it makes it less again frightening or intimidating to the student. It's not an assignment, it's a joy. I mean it's taught me that it works. It broadens their thinking capacity, the big think critical and analytical skills [are] dealt with well. And it does address all of the elements of all the other course outcomes. Because it does learning outcomes, within vocabulary, within synthesizing, within constructing all the elements in the writing process, it does all that and the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review). Yeah it does it all. I think it's worth it.

Another approach to a theme-based course design uses multiple carefully selected related texts. Artifact 2 lists the reading assignments in a course designed around the theme of “struggle.” This instructor explained the benefits she perceived in a theme-based course: “I think it kind of unifies what we are doing and it allows for us to use the same articles or readings in different ways. It gets rid of some of the duplication.” In this class, for example, journal assignments completed for each reading prepared students for a “source integration essay” in which students draw on perspectives from multiple class readings as well as outside sources related to the course theme (see Artifact 2).

Our data suggest that a thematic course design offers instructors a framework for structuring an integrated course and provides clearer opportunities for contextualized skill instruction.

Text-based writing. Instructors reported that text-based writing assignments were at the heart of their integrative courses. Examples include summaries, journal entries, personal responses, and critical response essays. In her first semester teaching the integrated course, one instructor retained two standalone assignments that were not tied to course readings: “I did two papers that were not connected with anything that they read—a narrative paper and a descriptive paper—and those were the worst things that they wrote the entire semester.”

As an alternative, this instructor later developed an ongoing “quote book” assignment that allowed students to consistently engage with an assigned book via written responses. Students were assigned to write mini-essays about 15 quotations they selected from the assigned text for the course. Each mini-essay was expected to address their rationale for choosing the quote, its meaning and significance in the text, and its

connection to their own experiences. Artifact 3 presents the rubric for this assignment. The instructor found the quote book assignment particularly useful because in addition to giving students opportunities to integrate quotations into their writing and critically respond to the text, it supported students' textual analysis and close reading skills. Another instructor similarly focused on the use of quotations to prepare students to write a literary analysis essay. The assignment to prepare students for that essay is found in Artifact 4.

One instructor identified the summary/response essay as the assignment that truly reflects the spirit of integrated reading and writing courses.

The summary/response is that which needs to be what is highlighted because it's the only thing that marries reading to writing. The marriage of reading and writing is within the summary/response obviously because they are reading something and then they are responding to it. So unless we are doing that as instructors then you're not doing the marriage of it because you have to get the main topics correlating, you need to go ahead and get the verbiage down correctly about what the author is saying versus what you perceive the author to be saying.

See Artifact 5 for a sample summary/response prompt assigned early in the semester in one course. Summary/response essays were common among the faculty interviewed; however, they were often a single assignment in a broader course design that included additive elements like non-text-based writing and standalone reading instruction. Course designs that we classify as integrative were built around multiple opportunities for text-based writing.

Embedded skill and strategy instruction. In their descriptions of courses that were more integrative, faculty reported that explicit skills instruction tended to be embedded in the context of the thematic and text-based elements described above. While instructors who described moving away from standalone grammar or reading strategy activities continued to express questions about how much instruction in these areas was enough, most instructors identified benefits to this contextualization. One advantage is that students had more opportunities to apply the skills in reading and writing activities similar to what they would encounter in college-level courses, which instructors saw as more relevant and practical:

I always worry that because there is not as much of an explicit or lengthy focus on certain strategies that they may be getting less, but I hope that the integration of the reading and writing has made them more real and more usable.... Integration is better in terms of how they're making sense of a lot of the strategies that we're focusing on.

Another instructor echoed this view, emphasizing students' ability to transfer these skills to other courses:

It's constant application, application, and application. They have done their journal, and I have written down if it's a comma splice, I have written down if it's a fragment, now fix it. We'll do a quick mini-lesson—this is how you can fix it. And I just love that everything we do is application. So they're not feeling like they're just learning this for this [course].

Instructors embedded instruction using mini-lessons, like the instructor quoted above, or via personalized feedback to students. They also incorporated smaller skills-focused activities within the context of larger assignments. For example, the instructor who assigned the source integration essay (see Artifact 2) embedded related short skills lessons and activities in the classes leading up to when that assignment was due. In one class observed, a case study instructor distributed paragraphs from students' draft essays that they were instructed to revise individually first and then to discuss as a class. During this group discussion, the instructor took about 15 to 20 minutes to point out various grammatical issues, and to facilitate an extended conversation on subject-verb agreement.

Among those who worked to move away from decontextualized skill instruction, it was considered a more efficient and effective way to ensure students had opportunities to receive personalized support to address areas of weakness within the accelerated course structure. However, instructors widely reported that embedding skill and strategy instruction was an area for further development in their own teaching.

Faculty satisfaction with integrative courses. Faculty who described teaching what we call “integrative” courses reported more comfort and satisfaction with teaching, as compared to those who described an additive approach. The interview data were collected over three semesters, and thus the dataset includes interviews with instructors who were brand new to teaching in the reform as well as those with one or more

semesters of experience teaching integrated reading and writing. Some respondents had transitioned from a more additive to a more integrative course design over one or more semesters, and they felt they were seeing improved student engagement as well as learning. One reason for this is that an integrative approach was perceived to minimize the repetition that may occur across standalone courses:

In the past I've had students in my English [writing] or in my reading class who had a different instructor for their respective English or reading class, so there would be times when we were sort of stepping on each other's toes teaching the same things in different ways. So I think it increases their engagement that way by making sure they are not repeating things. It's a more challenging format which increases involvement. I also think it's nice to sort of have a space where we can teach them to write like readers and read like writers and see them as two sides of the same coin.

In comparison to standalone skills-based activities, text-based writing assignments gave instructors more valuable information about students' literacy proficiencies and weaknesses.

One thing I think it has really done is it has helped me identify very clearly who needs more work. I thought in the past that those [textbook] exercises worked properly, but it's far more clear if I said read this passage and then explain in a short paragraph. ... I can see instantly whether or not they have a clue [about] main idea and support.

Instructors who used an integrative model also reported that students were able to take a step back and gain a better understanding of how reading and writing processes complemented each other overall:

I think [we experienced] the reawakening of the components of reading so that we are not just teaching a writing course. There is so much more involved. And we still squeeze the [grammar and mechanics] in. But at the same time [we gain] that whole thought process where you see the whole thing. You got to see the whole thing sometimes before you understand what it is.

In this way, faculty who found a strong framework for integrating reading and writing both addressed the frustrations described by those with an additive course design

and perceived the improvements in engagement and comprehension promised by previous research on integrated reading and writing.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis presented here seeks to understand the perceptions and experiences of faculty members teaching in newly integrated reading and writing courses. Interviews suggest that instructors had a generally positive impression of integrating the two disciplines. However, implementing these new courses was not without challenges. A common approach to course design, particularly during the early semesters of implementation, involved combining assignments and activities from the old standalone courses. We refer to this as the “additive” approach and identify a range of factors that lead to its use, including conceptions of literacy learning focused on mastery of discrete skills, professional development aimed at exchanging activities and materials between reading and writing instructors, and a lack of a clear framework for an integrated course design. Instructors using the additive approach reported that they could not cover all of the content/activities from the previous courses in the accelerated course structure, and they worried that they were not able to provide students the literacy skills they needed to be successful in college.

Our data also include instances of faculty using what we call an “integrative” approach to course design. In integrative courses, reading and writing are integrated at the level of the assignments, activities, and assessments, so that few standalone components of previous courses remain. Integrative course design may feature emphasis on metacognition, extensive text-based writing, and embedded skills and strategy instruction, often offered in a “just-in-time” fashion. These approaches resemble practices identified in literature on high-quality postsecondary literacy instruction (e.g., Hern & Snell, 2013; Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). The artifacts of practice, drawn from case study faculty, offer suggestions for instructors teaching in developmental courses who are looking to move away from an additive approach and toward the use of more authentically integrated activities and assignments (see Appendix).

These findings suggest a number of implications for departments, colleges, and districts considering integrating their developmental reading and writing courses. While the structural components of integration present their own challenges (e.g., instructor credentialing and placement policy), the instructional complexities associated with this reform should not be overlooked. If learning objectives, course outlines, and other curricular materials emphasize discrete reading and writing skills, faculty are likely to design courses that are subject to the limitations described above. In an effort to cover a long list of reading and writing skills, instructors may inadvertently uphold the “remedial pedagogy” approach observed by Grubb (2012) in standalone classes. The “cross training” approach to faculty development was popular among colleges in our study, in part because it draws on each institution’s considerable internal expertise. However, our analysis suggests that teaching integrated courses is different than teaching either reading or writing courses, and thus colleges may need to look to external resources specifically designed for postsecondary literacy instruction.

While integrated reading and writing in developmental education is new in many places, some colleges and programs have a long history of integration at this level (see, for example, Edgecombe, Jaggars, Xu, & Barragan, 2014; Goen-Salter, 2008; Hayes & Williams, 2016; Scrivener & Logue, 2016). The California Acceleration Project (CAP)¹ is one source of resources for departments and individual faculty seeking a framework for course design. CAP provides supports and trainings for faculty in California’s community colleges seeking to accelerate student progress to college-level English. Integrating reading and writing courses is a primary strategy for that acceleration, and the project’s website and publications provide instructional principles, sample curricular materials, and in-class activities specifically designed to prepare students for college-level literacy tasks in the context of an accelerated integrated developmental course (e.g., Hern, 2016; Hern & Serpas, 2016).

The present study draws on interview data with over 161 instructors and administrators involved in the early implementation of integrated developmental reading and writing courses in Virginia and North Carolina. Their perceptions and descriptions of their courses are valuable. No other studies of this scale have looked closely at how

¹ See www.accelerationproject.org.

faculty from standalone reading and writing departments experience the transition to teaching integrated courses. As the popularity of integrated developmental reading and writing courses continues to grow, additional research is needed to further investigate the themes discussed in this paper. This paper also draws on observations of and artifacts obtained from three instructors considered leaders in reform who participated in case studies of their instruction and experiences transitioning to the new courses. Future studies should systematically document larger numbers of classrooms to test and refine the additive and integrative frameworks presented here. Additional research is also needed to examine the learning outcomes as well as the persistence and progression of students who enroll in integrated courses. Examining outcomes across instructional approaches ranging from integrative to additive would inform instructional design efforts. Finally, additional research is needed on approaches to professional development and ongoing instructor support and their impacts on faculty and on student outcomes.

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Appendix

Artifact 1: Assignments Focused on a Single Text

Select One Title from this List:

1. *Born To Run - A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* - by Christopher McDougall
2. *The Possibility Dogs: What I Learned from Second-Chance Rescues About Service, Hope, and Healing*, by Susannah Charleson
3. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, by Sheryl Sandberg
4. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* Hardcover, by Malala Yousafzai
5. *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife* Paperback, by Eben Alexander
6. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot
7. *The Sociopath Next Door*, by Martha Stout
8. *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, by Cheryl Strayed
9. *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism* Hardcover, by Naoki Higashida

Journal Assignments (Selected):

1. Journal Entries:
 - Looking at your book, what do you think it will be about? Why did you choose this book?
 - Is this an argumentative, informative, explanatory, or narrative nonfiction book? What do you think the author thinks or feels about his/her subject?
 - How do you identify with the writer?
 - Describe the book as you would explain it to a friend.
2. Scholarly Article Summary and Response
 - Locate and Print a scholarly journal article related to your nonfiction book.
 - Write a brief one (1) paragraph summation of your article.
 - Write a one-paragraph response to that article.
3. Short Essay
 - Craft a well-organized journal-essay about your nonfiction book which utilizes at least one quote from an outside source and one quote from the book. The subject matter is up to you, but it may include:
 - How the book is directly connected with your life by way of its argument, characters, and plot. Use specific examples and characters from your book to compare or contrast.
 - How the book correctly or incorrectly displays a group of people or characters within it. Use specific characters and situations from your book to support your claim. Develop your essay by organizing it in order-of-importance format.

**Artifact 2: Readings and Assignment for a Course Designed on the Theme of
“Struggle”**

Course Readings:

“I Went to Some of DC’s Better Schools. I Was Still Unprepared for College.” by Darryl Robinson

“The Joys of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie

Talking a Stranger through the Night” by Sherry Amenstein

“Right Place, Wrong Face” by Alton Fitzgerald White

“On Dumpster Diving” by Lars Eighner

Steve Jobs’ Commencement speech to Stanford

“The Pursuit of Just Getting By” by Amy Widner

“Just Walk on By” by Brent Staples

“Gabby Giffords: Portrait of a Brain Being Rebuilt”

Night by Elie Wiesel

A Long Way Gone by Ishmael Beah

Source Integration Essay:

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate...

- some higher level reading and writing practices, such as the ability to integrate information you have read from different sources with one another and with your personal experiences.
- that you are able to draw conclusions based on the integration of texts, prior knowledge, and experiences.
- that you are able to locate trustworthy sources.

Also, it will require you to reflect on your personal and academic development.

Assignment/Topic

We’ve discussed and written about many readings related to struggles and overcoming struggles during this course. Your assignment is to write a paper in which you:

- Define what it means to struggle and consider how your definition is unique to you. You could use sources to support your definition.
- Identify the struggles you are facing in your life that are impacting your success as a student.
- Identify the characteristics you need to apply or the actions you need to take to overcome your struggles. Integrate sources to support your points.
- Analyze and reflect on your path to success and overcoming your struggles. Consider where you are on the path to success, how you plan to apply the characteristics and actions you identified, what is standing in your way, and what is helping you along your path. Integrate sources as appropriate.

Source Requirements – 5 Sources Minimum

- You should incorporate at least two of the readings we have read in class into your paper, although you are encouraged to use more.

- You must use at least one additional source from *Storycorps* or *This I Believe*, although you are encouraged to use more. Print the source that you choose.
- You must use a book (ebook or print book) from the library or an article from the library databases. If you use a source from a database, you must print it.
- Your fifth source can be any of your choosing.
- You must also demonstrate appropriate documentation of all sources using MLA format for Works Cited and in-text citations.

Artifact 3: Rubric for Quote Book Assignment

Quote Book on *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother* by James McBride

Step 1:

As you read *The Color of Water*, mark any part of the text that you find interesting or meaningful. Use your sticky notes to mark the passage, and write a brief comment on the sticky note about why that part of the text is meaningful to you.

Step 2:

After you have read the book, select 15 quotes to write about. The quotes can be from any part of the book. Each quote you select should be interesting and meaningful to you.

Step 3:

For each quote, write a lengthy paragraph that discusses who is speaking, the context of the quote, its meaning in the book, and how it is meaningful to you.

Your quote book should meet the following requirements:

1. Uses Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1 inch margins, a heading, and double spacing. The writing uses appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure. (20 points)
2. Begins with an introductory paragraph that explains your overall ideas about the book. (10 points)
3. Contains 15 quotes that are interesting and meaningful. Each quote should be at least two sentences long. (10 points)
4. Contains a detailed, coherent, and thoughtful discussion of each quote that includes:
 - a. Who is speaking
 - b. The context of the quote
 - c. The meaning of the quote in the book
 - d. What it reveals about the people in the book
 - e. Why you chose it
 - f. How it is meaningful to you (50 points)
5. Quotes must be properly cited. (10 points)

Artifact 4: Preparation for Literary Analysis Assignment

1. Choose a theme you would like to write about for the literary analysis using the lists we compiled in class. State the theme you have chosen *in a complete sentence*. Please keep in mind that you are writing only about one theme and one book.
2. Break the theme you chose into 3 or 4 sub-points. These could be used to form topic sentences in your paper.
3. Complete the passage/quote chart on the back of this sheet. **List examples and direct quotes/passages from the book that support or illustrate the theme you chose.**
 - Include **at least two direct quotes/passages but no more than three**. Place quote marks around passages so that it is clear you are copying directly from the text. Use a passage/quote when:
 - The words in the passage or quote are more powerful than a paraphrase.
 - The language is of high quality due to factors like elegance, clarity, or imagery.
 - The language provides rich material for interpretation and analysis.
 - Describe examples in your own words.
 - Include page numbers for each example and quote/passage in the left column so it is clear where you found them.

Example of a well-selected quote: “I believe children have the resilience to outlive their sufferings, if given a chance” (Beah 169).

Example of a poorly selected quote: “Not more than a week later, I was talking at gatherings in Freetown about child soldiering and how it must be stopped” (Beah 169).

Page(s)	Examples and Passages/Quotes

Artifact 5: Summary Response Prompt from Early in the Semester

STEP 1: Actively reread the article. Complete the Summary/Response Planning sheet.

You have already read “In Praise of the F Word” and written an in-class summary and response. Now that you have received feedback, reread the article. Make annotations in the margins about important points. Complete the Article Analysis Guide. Write ideas **in your own words!!!**

STEP 2: Write the summary/response essay using your Article Analysis Guide.

- A. Write an **introduction** in which you grab the reader, give any background on your topic, briefly mention the article and author, and state your thesis.
- B. Write a **summary** in which you state the **author(s), title, topic, thesis, and major supporting points from the article**. Don't let minor supporting points like examples distract you. You should be able to summarize the article in one paragraph. If it takes you more than one paragraph, the summary probably includes too much detail or is redundant. Below are some additional tips about the summary itself.
- **Summary writing:** It's *not creative writing*. Be *direct, concise, and precise* when writing the summary paragraph.
 - **Your opinion:** Save it for the response. Your opinion should NOT be in the summary.
 - **Referring to the author's name:** Use the full name of the author the first time you reference him/her. After the first reference, use the author's last name. Never use the author's first name alone; it sounds too informal.
 - **Don't start your summary:** The article I read was... OR I thought the article was...
 - **Possible ways to start the summary:**
 - In the article “[article title]”, [author's name] writes about [topic]...
 - According to [author's name], the author of “[article title]”, [thesis]...
 - [Author's name] writes about [topic] in the article “[article title]”...
- C. Write a focused **response** of two or three paragraphs. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that supports *your* thesis (not to be confused with the article's thesis). Feel free to use quotes in your response, but limit the number of quotes (no more than two). *Your* voice should be the predominant one. Integrate information from the article with your experiences/prior knowledge.
- D. Write a **conclusion** that reemphasizes your thesis, shares final thoughts, and brings closure.