

Elizabeth Petroelje Stolle, United States
Associate Professor, Grand Valley State University
stollee@gvsu.edu

Graduate coursework as professional development: Growing teachers to meet the literacy needs within the discipline

This study explored how two English language arts teachers in the Midwestern part of the United States applied university learning about disciplinary literacies within their pedagogical practices in the secondary classroom. Building on previous research focused on transforming university content area literacy courses, the university instructor developed a disciplinary literacies (DL) frame with the hope that there would be a greater carry over of teachers' university learning into classroom instruction. The theoretical framework came out of the theories linking literacy and learning in which individuals actively construct their own learning, and where learning is considered to be social as people learn from and with others. Using qualitative research methods, the data included: interviews, observations, artefacts, and a researcher's journal. Using content analysis and writing as a method of inquiry, analysis revealed rich examples of university learning, as the teachers took up disciplinary literacies within their classroom instruction. However, the application of university learning is highly individualised as each student transacts with the learning in unique and complex ways.

Therefore, the application of learning is multifaceted, specifically when considering the variables impacting teachers in the field. Much work is needed to decipher the full impact of university coursework on teachers' practices and knowledge growth.