
Critical Language Awareness in Writing: Collaborative Podcasting on Identity Labels

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Our context & current research

Our context

Where

UCSB Department of
Linguistics

Where

English for Multilingual
Students Program

What

English for Academic
Purposes Program
(Undergraduate Pre-FYE
L2 Writing Courses)

Who

Predominantly Chinese
International Students
(slowly diversifying?)

**Why did we embark on this
project of implementing and
understanding CLA pedagogy in
our teaching?**

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

**Because of persistent,
noticeable problems**

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

Like

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

These:

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

1. Students using the word “**Native Americans**” in their writing thinking it means **local students**.
 2. Students not knowing the difference between the words **African American** and **Black** or current sources that engage in grammatical justice by capitalizing those identity labels (race vs. ethnicity vs. nationality).
 3. Student’s uptaking informal, outdated, or other identity or socio-economic status related language like **poor**, **savage**, etc. (Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities*) that they see in seminal readings and using them in their writing uncritically without learning the history of language change behind that vocabulary.
 4. Always focus on using the word “**skin color**” uncertain of how to use words such as race, backgrounds, socio-economic. Observed **discomfort**, scared to use those words in the wrong ways.
-

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

I have experienced first-hand the fact that many of my international students (and American students as well) often *do not have the everyday language to enter conversations about sociology, politics, racism, and social inequalities; some also feel that they are not or will not ever be affected by issues of racial or linguistic discrimination.*

Why? Because they mostly have not been afforded the opportunity or enter or join these conversations before by bringing in their own cultural background knowledge as a resource to develop greater cultural and linguistic awareness.

(Sengeh, 2023) Radical Inclusion- Step 1: Identify the exclusion)

Never given the *language or context specific cultural/historical input about race and class in America* needed to effectively join these conversations

Why did we embark on this project of implementing and understanding CLA pedagogy in our teaching?

Many Chinese international students “**place themselves outside of the U.S. racial system**” (Yu, 2022), which leads them to *believe that they may be unaffected* by issues surrounding race and prejudice—*or even worse that they can simply remove themselves from any situations or conversations regarding race in America.*

Influencing Scholarship

Shapiro (2022) Cultivating CLA in the Writing Classroom

- Chapter 1: promoting students' rhetorical agency to empower purpose-driven use of language
- Chapter 7: Teaching Inclusive Language

Yu (2022) The Racial Learning of Chinese International Students in the US

- p. 9: students are not familiar with identity labels like 'people of color,' 'minority,' 'Asian'
- p. 16: students place themselves outside the US racial system; US universities should better prepare them to confront US racial reality and invite them to discuss race and racism

Jiang (2024) Composing to Enact Affective Agency: Engaging Multimodal Antiracist Pedagogy in the First-Year Writing Classroom

- p. 551: activations of a variety of communication modes... allow students... to exercise their emotional capacity in shifting and challenging existing affective relations

Our Co-Mentorship (Research + Teaching)

Research: Our Co-Mentorship

Kept a weekly collaborative journal

Read, shared, and discussed scholarship on Critical Language Awareness in writing classes

Met in person to debrief our journal and experience

Took up leadership opportunities here at CATESOL and our Lunch and Learn program to share our advances in our SLW pedagogy informed by a CLA pedagogy

Future plans to debrief via extended collaborative journaling (reflective/reflexive practice)

Teaching: What we added into class lessons

Collaboratively re-designed a writing prompt and scoring rubric into a “collaborative podcast writing project”
*before the class started

Created new lessons/materials together:

- a. Dialogic/dialectical chat using UCSB’s Nectir platform
- b. Listening to a Code Switch podcast on the origins and views of the BIPOC acronym as a model)
- c. Discussed outlining for a podcast script vs. traditional paper

Asked our students for patience and feedback as we were exploring this type of CLA informed pedagogy and writing project lens for the first time

Informative Writing Project

Original/Old
Topic

Project overview: Objectively discuss the challenges that students face in the American public school system. Consider the similarities and differences between Gladwell and Kozol's arguments regarding educational advantages. Also consider how corporations today are addressing arguments about educational inequalities via their hiring practices.

The purpose of this project is to inform the audience about the topic by examining reading materials and synthesizing the information in your writing. Your personal opinions and feelings should not be the focus of this essay.

Collaborative Podcast Writing Project

New Topic

Project overview: Collaborate with one or two peers to create a podcast episode where you will explore aspects of your identity and share your reactions and takeaways from our class readings about inclusive language and educational segregation in the United States.

The purpose of this project is to engage in thoughtful and reflective discussion with your peers about identity language and systemic segregation and racism. Your personal opinions are encouraged along with your critical analysis of our class materials.

Collaborative Podcast Writing Project

Our Starting Goals

1. Draw more attention to ***social justice /sociology related vocabulary*** we were already teaching in our earlier informative paper genre ✓
2. Get students ***writing collaboratively with their real-time evidence*** of their ***conversations and learning as evidence*** for their script (***no AI*** for this!) ✓
3. Weaving in additional sources of ***evidence (course texts) that support/conflict*** with their new knowledge ✓

Podcast Recording & Script Scoring Rubric

| Evaluating criteria | Score | Advanced 4 |
|---|-------|-------------------|
| Introduction of podcast: briefly introduces the background of the speakers, and goals of the podcast. Gets the audience's attention by summarizing the group's overall reactions to studying critical language awareness and the history of educational segregation in the United States from your perspectives and identity affiliations. | /4 | Adequate 3 |
| Code Switch episode summary + response: clear summary of the Code Switch Episode + responses from students in the group with personal reactions and experiences studying about critical language awareness and terminologies from the podcast. | /4 | Developing 2 |
| Course texts summary + response: detailed explanations and analysis of your group's takeaways from any of the articles we have read about systemic racism in the American educational system. | /4 | Insufficient 1 |
| | | No credit 0 |

Podcast Recording & Script Scoring Rubric

| Evaluating criteria | Score | |
|--|-------|-------------------|
| Communication: ideas are organized and there are transitions between sections. Speakers negotiate meaning/recognize one another's ideas. | /4 | Advanced 4 |
| Audio quality, voice, delivery: smooth transitions, easy to understand, audio is clear and recording was done in a quiet space. Voice loudness and pronunciation. Appropriate rate of speed, pitch, and tone. Natural voice, no reading, appears like an everyday conversation. | /4 | Adequate 3 |
| Participation: overall involvement in the speaking process. Time split evenly between students. | /4 | Developing 2 |
| Script: students provide a well-written script that is free of major grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes. The Script incorporates the mandatory course readings and sources provided by the instructor of the 3C course. | /4 | Insufficient 1 |
| | | No credit 0 |

Our Presentation, Instructions and Scoring Rubric— For your reference later!



<https://tinyurl.com/3us3z6m5>

Slides also posted on Sched!

Student sample

B Before I listened to the NPR podcast., I didn't pay much attention to the use of these words. At the same time, it wasn't obvious for me to notice that there are offensive connotations behind these words.

A Me,too. Especially those of us whose mother tongue is Mandarin don't seem to be very sensitive to the use of words in a second language. And I didn't even know about terms like BIPOC before listening to this podcast.

B Yeah, I hadn't heard the term BIPOC before, POC is something I have heard of. After listening to the podcast I had my own thoughts, I think POC is like separating white people from other races in a segregated way. I think the word is very discriminatory.

A But actually, I'm actually still shocked that most people are willing to accept the term BIPOC, after all, it's not...particularly definitive.

B Agree, BIPOC is just better relative to POC, but it's not the best...

A Yes, that's what I meant.

(MUSIC)



02

Struggles & successes

Struggles and Successes

Marie's Student

Who owns collaborative writing?

Anna and Marie

Students resisting the conversational/turn-taking nature of podcasting (dividing up work)

Anna and Marie

Scaffolding two forms of critical thinking dialectic vs. dialogic thinking as the basis for developing the conversational content + student's chosen foci(topic) of the podcast.

Who owns collaborative writing?

Workload Concerns- The Nature of Collaborative Writing- Whose paper is it?

Discussion with a student about collaborative writing:

Whose paper is it? Does the writing have to be perfect 50/50 amount of work between both students?

Who owns collaborative writing?

Rosie: Professor Webb, I was so interested to hear your story last week about how published writing is a myth. It seems so perfect but there is so much failure that happens before a piece of writing is published.

Dr. Webb: Yes! We often don't talk about the failures and writing process of writers. We don't think about the struggles and how many people have looked at and contributed to a piece of writing before we read it.

Rosie: How about my podcast? I feel like I did more writing than my classmate.

Dr. Webb: I'm glad you are expressing that concern to me. In any collaborative writing there tends to be one person who does a majority or more of the writing. Still, the piece belongs to both authors equally. Unless your classmate just did not contribute any ideas or any writing at all (then that is a problem and you should come talk to me about that!). But, in most collaborative writing in published pieces that I have done with other co-authors, one person does tend to write a little bit more than the other or a lot more! Still, I could not have published the work without them. I could not have done the research or the work without them. Maybe I take the first author (my name goes first) on the publication because I did a little more work or more of the writing or analysis. But, I often find that my co-authors do more of the editing or organization of sources or literature review. Or they have contributed so many important ideas to the piece that I could never have done on my own.

Who owns collaborative writing?

Rosie: Wow, I never thought about that before. So really all collaborative writing is both of ours even if there is something that I just wrote myself in the piece.

Dr. Webb: Yes, you wouldn't have the writing without your co-author. So even if you wrote like one specific line, it is both of your writing! That line belongs to both of you! It is shared!

Dividing up Work

Insights from our students' metacognitive reflections (written after completing the project)

Splitting up work by podcast sections:

[My partner] wrote the introduction part, and helped us transfer the topic to the podcast... Then, in the first part, I summarized the podcast and made our points... I wrote most of part 2... Part 3 was finished by [my partner], he wrote about his experience with a stranger... Eventually, we wrote the ending part together.

We decided to separate our podcast into five parts, and my task was to finish two parts, which are “Issues of Educational Inequality” and “POC Examples,” that related to articles and podcasts we’ve read since I had a lot of opinions that I wanted to express...

A My overall impression of listening to the hosts and their guests is that they are nice and feel they are talking hard problems with normal day life language. I did not even listen to podcasts before. I generally agree with their thoughts in the discussions, especially the statement, which states the acceptance of language changes over time. I did not have much experience in topics about race, since there is no need to talk about race in China. However, I think it is weird to ask about race, since it always has the feeling that people are different.

B Their podcast is interesting. They made many humorous jokes to express their opinions. I have never listened to this kind of podcast before. I agree with the claim that the term "BIPOC" should disappear because it is neither precise enough nor broad enough. I felt shocked when I heard that American people did crimes against Asian Americans during the COVID pandemic. That is stupid. It makes no difference to me whether this topic is discussed in Chinese or English. As they said in the podcast, there does not exist a perfect way to distinguish people. For me, if the speaker does not mean to discriminate against others, I don't care what phrase he/she uses.

A I found out that the public education described in the three articles follows the fact that the urban schools are having less money and teaching less while the suburban schools get more money

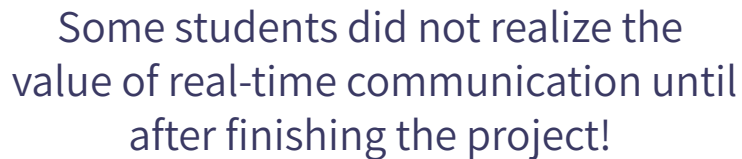
Splitting up
sections led to an
exchange of
“mini-essays”

Dividing up Work

Insights from our students' metacognitive reflections (written after completing the project)

Embracing the collaborative nature:

We were able to write the parts we were going to say directly **by communicating in real time**. Sometimes, if there was too much for one person to say, we would consider splitting a paragraph into many smaller sentences that we could both share. At the same time, we also **discussed in class** the materials to be used and more oral expressions.



Some students did not realize the value of real-time communication until after finishing the project!

A Yes, it has already become a hot pot on the Internet. Actually, we can clearly see the relationship from the ‘Basement of Society’ — Education.

B For the creation of our podcast, I read some articles for preparation, which related to our topic.

A We're really on the same page then, I read an article about this topic as well.

B Really? I read the article “The US Student Population Is More Diverse” , which is written by Carrillo and Salhotra.

A Oh, it doesn't seem coincidental enough to read the same article...

B Haha, they state their discovery that because the school district secession is actually divided by the race and the different economic backgrounds determine the different educational level of each district.

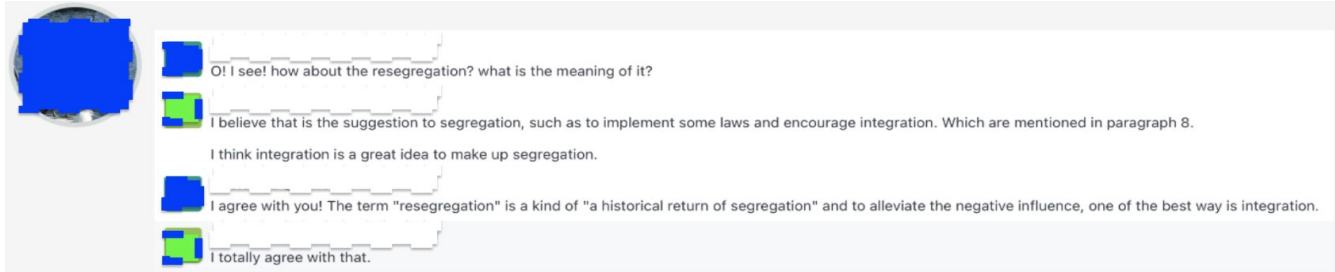
A Sounds reasonable...

B And the race will directly lead to education segregation among children. What's more, this will lead to social stratification more seriously in the future.

A Although it's not the same article as what you read, I find it fundamentally the same thing.

**Real-time
conversations
helped embrace
the podcast genre**

Teaching New Forms of Critical Thinking For our Students (Dialectic vs. Dialogic)



This is an example of a dialogic conversation in our live chat. I think it is a dialogic conversation because it doesn't have two opposite opinions aggressive against each other. Our understandings of "resegregation" are slightly different but we found the commonness inside them and made an agreement in the end. I will probably just directly put it in our podcast after double checking the grammar errors. I will put it in the very beginning of the podcast when we introduce some important and basic terms that we are going to talk about in detail in the context.

Teaching Collaborative Writing in a New Genre for Most Students: Podcasting



Hahahah, I see!



This project seems very challenging we got lots of things to do, but after listening to the podcast, I am actually looking forward to doing the project.



Yes, me too!!They used 6 lines to talk about the sponsors. And then in the body content, it seems like they quota a lot of other's talking directly as examples!



Collaborative Podcast Writing Project

Future Goal #1

Curriculum Assessment for the new program SLO on Global Competencies:

SLO: Students will be able to identify some connections between an individual's personal decision-making and certain local and global issues.

Course Goal: Development of international and multilingual students' global competencies, including progress toward increasing global self-awareness, perspective taking, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, understanding global systems and applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts

Our Assessment Goal: How does getting students to write about this course paper via their graded self-reflection paper + their reflections of engaging in a "silent chat" showcase their growth with our Global Competencies SLO?

Collaborative Podcast Writing Project

Future Goal #2

More Pedagogical Scaffolding with Genre Awareness

1. More explicit instruction about *who owns collaborative writing*
2. Explicit instruction about the value of the “silent dialectical/dialogic chat activity” in *modeling the genre of podcast writing and it’s truly conversational/collaborative nature*
3. Highlighting the genre’s use of/transparency of *source-based evidence within a podcast* to make it more formal or academic in nature

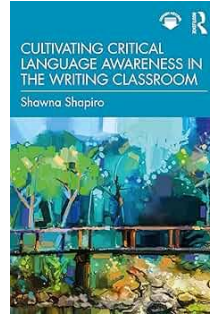
Q&A

We want to hear your reactions,
comments, takeaways, or questions!



Thank you!

Influencing Literature



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Uniting CLA with WAW via SLA: Learning about written language as a model for college writing courses

1. Shapiro, S. (2022). *Cultivating critical language awareness in the writing classroom*. Routledge.
2. Park, Webb, Tanghe, Charles (Pedagogical book in contract with Multilingual Matters 2025/2026)- Radical Inclusivity: CLA in the Language and Writing Classroom (TESOL International Presentation in March with detailed activities/lessons)
3. Di Gennaro, K., Choong, K.-W. P., & Brewer, M. (2023). Uniting CLA with WAW via SLA: Learning about written language as a model for college writing courses. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 60, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.100967>
4. Sengeh, D. (2023). *Radical inclusion: Seven steps to help you create a more just workplace, home, and world*. Flatiron Books.

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