

USING MULTIPLE TEXTS TO TEACH CRITICAL READING SKILLS TO LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

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APA Citation: Thomas, K., & Choi, M. (2018). Using multiple texts to teach critical reading skills to linguistically diverse students. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 5(1), 1-12. doi: 10.25134/ieflj.v5i1.1626.

Received: 30-09-2018

Accepted: 29-11-2018

Published: 01-01-2019

Abstract: Mastery of developmental reading courses offers both an opportunity for academic enrichment and a barrier to college completion. We examine what it means to use multiple texts in college developmental reading courses, the benefits of using them, and considerations that instructors may employ in their instructions. A review of the literature indicates Linguistically Diverse students (LDs) often lack the required critical thinking skills needed to tackle the rigor and demand of their college level courses. We conducted a study to tests whether using multiple texts improved LDs critical reading skills. Participants of 30 undergraduate students taking RDL 500 course were analyzed using pre and posttest results. Findings indicated that integrated use of multiple texts is a practical teaching approach for LDs improved their critical reading skills and their navigation of unfamiliar texts. This implies the use of the one size-fits-all approach may not be an effective pedagogical practice by instructors who teach the LD student.

Keywords: *community college; critical literacy; cultural capital; developmental reading; language minority students; linguistically diverse students; multiple texts; sociocultural literacy.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Hussar and Bailey (2013), enrollment numbers for immigrant students in public elementary and secondary schools increased by 7 percent between 1997 and 2011. It is projected that this population of students are expected to increase by another 7 percent by 2022. Placed in numeral context, more than four million of this population are in the process of developing English and are classified as English learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Robinson-Cimpian, Thompson, and Umansky (2016) contended that English learners (ELs) represent more than 10 percent of the United States student population. Moreover, the National Center for English Language Acquisition (2011) found that, more than one out of every four children in the United States are from

immigrant families, and in most cases, they speak a language other than English at home. Furthermore, research found that one in five students in U.S. public schools speak a language other than English at home. Samson and Collins (2012) contend that English language learners or Linguistically Diverse Students (LDs) are one subgroup of students that require special attention, particularly because of their growing numbers and low-performance relative to their non- LDs peers.

García and Weiss (2015) believed Black and Latin/o LDs begin kindergarten with the greatest disadvantages in math and reading, due to the link between their minority status and social class. While the stereotypical labels are not a representation of all LD students, these students grow up to be adults who carry these disadvantages into their

college experience. Bedore and Pena (2008) affirmed in their findings that second language speakers might experience gaps in comparison to their monolingual peers. Correspondingly, second language speakers may have the ability to navigate between different languages at home or work, but many sometimes struggle with English proficiency in academic settings. For the LD student, navigating the academic setting, text-structure and developing their comprehension skills can lead to poor academic performance, if not addressed. These factors are a cause for concern, as these students' academic performance in content area subjects, may have a severe impact on their graduation from high school and college entrance admittance. The US Department of Education, the nationwide dropout rate for foreign-born students in 2007 was 21%, compared to 8% for native-born students.

Although Flores, Batalova and Fix (2012) found that students' graduation from high school had a higher correlation with race and ethnicity than the status of the LD student. Based on the data obtained, it is difficult to isolate race and ethnicity from other factors which affects this group. Research obtained from the U.S Department of Education showed that LDs are more likely to live in lower-income households compared to their monolingual English-speaking peers. The research indicated that, 66% of LDs had a family income of 200% lower than the federal poverty level, in comparison to 37% of monolingual English-speaking students. Besides, 44% of English-speaking students had parents who either had a two-year or four-year postsecondary degree, compared to 22% of LDs. When we consider the above factors as barriers not only to college entrance but also to college graduation, it is possible to observe that the rate college completion is a challenge nationwide for the Linguistically Diverse student population. Bailey and Dynarski (2012) found that students growing up in high-income families have the advantage of completing college within four years. Low-

income peers have the burden of juggling employment, academic responsibilities, and survival, minus the guidance and support of college-educated parents, which places them at a disadvantage. In addition to rising college costs, the college environment can be an intimidating experience for many LDs. Students from limited English-speaking backgrounds often need more developmental education intervention than their native English speakers. If LD students are to master college level materials, supplemental support and use of diverse teaching strategies are needed to make them successful.

Challenges with college reading

Engle and Tinto (2008) found that of the 4.5 million low-income, first-generation learners (many of whom are LDs) enrolled in secondary and postsecondary education today (approximately 24 percent of the undergraduate population), thus, their path to a bachelor's degree will be long, indirect, and uncertain. They further affirmed that first-generation and LDs face many challenges, which make it difficult for them to be successful in college. Moreover, most LDs disproportionately come from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds with limited academic preparation. The more risk factors a student has, the more likely the student will fail in his/her attempt to earn a bachelor's degree. ELLs or LD's typically face multiple challenges in the transition from home to school as most are from culturally diverse backgrounds. It is our belief that the academic experience should reaffirm the social, cultural, and historical experience of all students, but often results in cognitive dissonance for the LD student. Based on our interaction with the LD students and reading, academic language is often decontextualized, abstract, technical, and literary. Due to the nature of how college texts are written and structured, LD learners often struggle with making a connection between textbook language and the literacy skills taught in college classrooms. More often, the college classroom reading expectations are

sometimes not in alignment with the academic needs of the out-of-school literacy of the LD student who is often accustomed to little reading exposure either at home or at work (Hull & Schultz, 2002). According to Samson and Collins (2012), literacy and critical reading development are formidable challenges in an academic setting for native English speakers; they are even more difficult for ELLs. Conversely, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (2005) postulate that most LDs enter the [college] classroom with a wealth of experience, knowledge and linguistic abilities that do have the potential to enrich their learning experience, educators should be aware of and learn to utilize.

According to Bourdieu (1977), capital is not only economic, but it is social and cultural. Society's structuring of differential distribution of cultural and social capital sometime ignores the needs of those they considers marginal. Cultural and social resources are motivating factors that increase an individual's or group chances of success. By implication, the more cultural and social capital one possesses, the more likely are the chances for success. For LD students, their inability to use language, which is required for upward mobility, limits the chance of success. For many, the chance of getting an education requires communicating and reading explicitly, and the challenge of inadequate mastery of the language, limits their chance of success. In addition, legal immigration status among other social ills can become hurdles, which affects their drive to complete college or read to attain success. Developmental reading is an area from which instructors can draw from students' prior knowledge, build literacy capacity and critical thinking skills. For LDs learner, the challenge for the instructor relies on providing multiple opportunities for reading and tailoring instruction that focuses on minimizing reading difficulties of interpreting a second language, but that which simultaneously strengthens reading comprehension. Most U.S colleges offer English language classes for LDs in some capacity, but instruction, which targets the

deficit of the LDs students, remains undeveloped or targeted. Some offer language immersion courses, while others focus more on an area, such as writing or reading. Typically, LDs not only take English language courses upon college admittance, while some are simultaneously enrolled in developmental reading courses. It is imperative instructors across various disciplines take into consideration the reading skills of all students, who may include the LDs, enrolled in their courses. Furthermore, they should seek to provide instruction that will assist the LDs students in building critical reading skills, but also prepare their students for college success. Reading courses are important for LDs, as they are the primary tool for all students' academic achievement. Moreover, reading comprehensively affords the LDs the opportunity to develop skills and strategies they will [use] transfer into other courses (Gee, 2015). The purpose of reading courses at the college level should not be for students to simply decode words in a text, but also make connections to other texts inside and out the college classroom.

In college-level courses, the vast majority of students read expository textbooks with a primary purpose in mind: to memorize and, hopefully, understand enough information to receive a particular grade on a course exam. LaRusso, *et al.* (2016) postulate, *Deep reading comprehension* refers to the process of a students' ability to evaluate texts, integrate information from an array of texts, and use textual evidence to formulate a position. However, readers have exhibit different inference-making patterns, which influence what is remembered from a text, as a function of their purpose for reading (e.g., van den Broek, Lorch, Linderholm, & Gustafson, 2001). Unfortunately, a sizeable number of students do not effectively alter their cognitive processing to meet specific educational goals. At the college-level, reading requires students to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. These higher-order skills are

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necessary since the process of reading is scientific and analytic. Critical reading involves cognitive, psychological, and psychosocial functions. Integrating a variety of reading skills is essential if LD students are to improve their comprehension skills. Hence, college reading instruction should also be a reflective process as most of the texts read at the college level are informational. Information learned requires students to make connection, personal and otherwise. Rather than merely relying on college courses to fill in the missing gaps, we shift our focus on integrating reading strategies, which scaffold the LDs college entrant and assist them in developing critical reading skills academically and beyond.

Most of the texts that LD students encounter in college are written at a level beyond the middle and high school levels. Williamson (2008) contends that these informational texts require the use of higher order reading strategies, and continuous instruction to support LD students entering college. For LD learners, developing critical skills are essential for their success and the informational texts they read while in college. Williamson (2008) further postulated that there is a readability continuum upon which texts become more complex in college compared to high school. If LD students are to become successful readers, they must learn reading strategies that will help them bridge what they encounter in informational texts. LDs enrolled in high school should read more challenging and be exposed to a variety of texts so that they can handle the rigor of college reading. More importantly, colleges should provide adequate and more supportive reading courses for LD students who need to develop critical reading skills. For example, most science texts used by non-science majors are written at a reading level higher than that of the reading level of the average college student. If students are to prepare for college level reading, they need to read beyond their basic language skills. Students skim more, that is, read in a more shallow-manner, when reading for

class preparation than for exam preparation (Lorch, Lorch, & Klusewitz, 1993). Students need to develop and expand their understanding of the meaning of reading critically and synthesizing the information they read.

In the college developmental reading classroom, students' reading levels range from upper elementary school to high school. While the linguistic experiences and levels of students vary, the challenge for developmental reading instructors are to consider the learning needs for all students and to use differentiated reading strategies that include the needs of all students. In the instances when LDs demonstrate a need for support services, instructors should invite LDs to be a part of the reading process, rather than alienating or relying on a singular method of instruction. Instructors can help the LD student recognize that a textbook provides a larger social and educational context, which allows for multiple perspectives. This in turn, allows the LDs student to build a larger knowledge base. From this exposure, the learner can make connections between seemingly isolated texts, and thereby improving academic literacy. College instructors should anticipate that LDs do not widely read, although admittedly, this issue is not limited to just LDs. Yet, the common assumptions held about LDs are that they are recent migrants to the US. One assumption that might hold true for this group is that most may not have had the opportunity to read, or at least, read text in a language other than their native language, which is not English.

At the college level, reading instruction compete with many unforeseen factors. In the developmental reading course, a typical class comprises of students, placed in the course because they received similar placement exam scores, but who may have a vastly different reading background. Some students, although they demonstrate fluency in the spoken dominant language, sometimes lack a strong foundation in basic reading skills; such as identifying the main ideas of a reading selection or locating supporting

details in a passage. One may infer that preparation at the secondary level may be a contributing factor. In addition, other students in the developmental reading class are newly arrived immigrants from English speaking backgrounds who can read at the high school level, but are not proficient in academic reading. Many of these students struggle with reading college-level texts and often have difficulty comprehending long passages in various disciplines. Some newly arrived LD students speak a dominant language at home and sometimes are not fluent in reading or writing English. The task of developmental reading courses is not only in improving students' overall reading abilities, but also developing reading strategies that will assist them in being successful in both academic and professional spheres.

One of the many challenges of teaching reading using multiple texts is following the learning outcomes designed by colleges in developmental reading courses. The instructor is left to find ways to cultivate basic skills in reading, while providing opportunities for students to expand their background knowledge in academic texts. This limitation, posits several issues where the texts used are often at a higher reading level and in language, not familiar to the LD students' native tongue. In addition, when LD students face a barrier in reading at home, due to the sheer amount of unfamiliar vocabulary, they have difficulty in reading comprehension. Another problem that reading instructors face when teaching LD students is that some may not be knowledgeable about how to select texts with which their students can connect. This, in turn, affects limited scope and effective teaching approaches that could enhance or motivate the LD student learning experiences. Another challenge is selecting appropriate texts which meet the LD students' background. Instructors should recognize that texts in of themselves are not stand-alone materials. Using texts that does not relate to students' background, experiences, or culture may create undue

stress during the learning process. This emphasizes that, according to Dahl (2016), English language learners are almost immediately placed in a unique position because the acquisition of literacy and language are developing in two languages. Our aim is to support this dilemma and offer methods that enhance learning.

To help frame our inquiry, the authors drew on several models of cognitive processing theories, such as Smagorinsky' (2001) theoretical model of cognitive processing and integrated the use of multiple texts, and Spiro' (1988) cognitive-flexibility theory. Within the learning environment, knowledge development requires active involvement from the learner as they engage in acquisition. Instead of introducing the learner to a single text with a definite linear structure, we introduce the LD student to multiple texts with various structures, which requires the use of multiple perspectives. Our study assesses the development of critical reading comprehension using multiple short passages. This complex exposure to multiple sources of information eliminates the LD students' ability to use low-level information processing and instead requires higher-order thinking skills.

Sternberg' (1985) Triarchic theory of intelligence states intelligence development occurs with a socio-cultural setting. In this regard, people interact with their surroundings based on their level of familiarity and intelligence. The triarchic theory is threefold: first, internal intelligence involves the individual's ability to process information using their metacognitive abilities. This helps him/her to solve problems in reading and acquiring knowledge. Secondly, external intelligence requires individuals to interact with real world constructs or experiences. This, in turn, allows learners to adapt to their new environment or learning situation, if they cannot adapt, they find ways to either change the environment or learning experience. Finally, experiential intelligence involves the use of one's experiences to address new situations and solve novel

problems. Intelligent learners retrieve data from their environment and apply information learned to new situations and cope with their new surroundings. Based on these cognitive theories, we believe that our students can read critically when given adequate support. This supports Hammond and Gibbons' (2005) theory that instruction "designed-in" in the form of planned pedagogic tasks, or "contingent" in the form of spontaneous teacher-student and peer-peer interactions help students develop confidence. In addition, Brown and Broemmel (2011) agree that ELLs "linguistic" and cultural knowledge in their native language should be taken as a stepping-stone to build the success. As such, as ELL students move through tasks in learning language programs, instructional strategies should vary based on students' ability and reading levels.

Within the above-mentioned framework, we created a contemporary view of reading multiple texts as proposed by Smagorinsky (2001) by using a quasi-experimental approach to study whether using multiple texts help LD students to develop critical reading skills. We also integrated Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) which functioned as support program. This in turn allowed us as instructors to provide a variety of learning opportunities, and for the LD students to recognize their learning potential (Brown & Broemmel, 2011). In addition, when students use their cognitive schemata to comprehend multiple sources of information, they, Rouet (2006) contends cannot ignore the source information. In fact, readers must use higher-order thinking skills to evaluate various sources of information. Fullam (2017) believes that instructional videos can assist students, as it assists in their ability to confront and challenge deficit-based beliefs about their learning. In this medium, technology serves as culturally responsive teaching method because it opens up opportunities for transformative learning to occur in the classroom and shifts to a culturally responsive mindset.

METHOD

This study was a quasi-experimental which used a pre-test and post-test design. On both tests, we provided participants with reading materials at the 8th-12th-grade reading level. Students completed a pre-test at the beginning of the study and the posttest at the end of the semester, which lasted for approximately 16 weeks, infused with three hours of instruction twice a week. Here, we structured and selected instructional materials to which mirrored students' cultural background experiences and allowed them to share these experiences in their native language [not English]. We subsequently paired each student with a student who is more fluent in speaking the dominant language, English. Using practical reading strategies, such as annotation, close reading, and outlining, students worked in groups and discussed the selected readings. We grouped students using "think-pair-share" where students read the passage by themselves, or read in pairs, and at an appropriate point, the students' partner will pose a question about the reading, then the student will think for a moment, and share their ideas.

The participants comprised of 30 students enrolled in RDL 500 in a Community College in New York (CCNY). According to CCNY's report, 65% of its student population is non-native English Language speakers, where LD students account for nearly 90% of the population. Demographically, 80% identified themselves as linguistically diverse, 15% of Asians, 25% African Americans, and 70% as other. The gender distribution consists of 14 males and 16 females. With a few exceptions (5%), the participants were native-born United States citizens who spoke fluent English as their first language and had completed their secondary education in a New York City public school, 95% of the enrolled student population migrated from outside the United States.

For placement purposes, all students admitted to CUNY must take the CUNY Assessment Placement Exam in

Reading. The CUNY Assessment Placement Reading scores are used as indicators to determine students' critical reading proficiency. The test predicts students' reading and comprehension levels and measures whether students are ready to take on the rigor of college. In this regard, the scores exhibit the students' ability to analyze and synthesize complex reading passages;

which is subsequently indicative of their preparation for college-level work. Students are scored categorically as follows; those who scored between 00-56 are placed in RD200; those who scored above 56 are placed in RD 500; and those who scored 70 and above, are exempted from developmental reading courses.

Table 1. *CUNY reading placement scores*

Test	Score	Placement	Course Placement
Reading	00-56	ACR 94	RD200
	57-69	ACR 95	RD500
	70 and above		Exempt from developmental reading courses

Cognizant that students are reading informational texts, additional exposure to reading coerce the students to interact socially with the author and other students in promoting vocabulary and comprehension development. Fisher and Frey (2014) suggest that collaborative learning occurs when learners work with others to apply skills, strategies, and knowledge, and support each other in the process. Our fusion of interactive instructional approach allows for multimedia integration, adaptable to the LD students learning style.

Our use of interactive technology created a space free from instructor's input; this in turn, allows the student to use his/her metacognitive thinking strategies while interacting socially with the text and to solve problems independently. Besides, selected reading materials allow students to ask self-generated questions, relate information gleaned from the reading materials and generate cause-and-effect questions about how ideas relate to another and self. Although digital tools are essential, they are not impartial elements during the learning experience. In this context, the LD student critically assesses the effectiveness of the technology by relying on their innate cognitive abilities to process information across various multimedia platforms. The LD learners also learn to develop a critically awareness as they make new connections between multiple text forms, meanings, and ideologies. Grant, *et al.* (2012) affirmed that

learners learn best when they have opportunities to observe, test their ideas with the knowledge, explore and evaluate ideas with their peers, and apply newly learned skills. These newly acquired [skills] are then transferred to real-world authentic contexts whether they are in or out of a classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a means of assessing students' prior reading skills, students were required to complete a pretest and a posttest on the following areas: main ideas, annotation, outlining, vocabulary, identifying arguments, differentiating facts from opinions, inferences, summary and comprehension. This was to ascertain whether participants were adapting to the instructional style and activities presented. Texts selection compromised at the beginning of the semester. Here, students work in groups so that they can share opinions, solve problems, and work to create a PowerPoint. Instructional materials used are excerpts of reading passages from the New York Times, such as *Brutalized Behind Bars* (2015), *Questions on the Blake Assault* (2015), *The Challenge to Legalizing Drugs*, Richard Wright's, and *American Hunger* (1977). Comprehension strategies were selected from simple to difficult and the assigned tasks indicate how readers processed information, what textual cues they used, how they make sense of what they read, and what retrieval clues used to make

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meaning of information they do not understand, as well as personal connections. Besides, we integrated elements of visualization (mind mapping, graphic organizers) and reflection. These were keys during classroom and reading instructional time and functioned as a means of boosting critical thinking skills, while keeping students engaged. In addition, after each reading activity and classroom discussions, inferential questions were asked.

Moreover, pre-questions are addressed at first knowledge which relate to content.

Using the K-W-L chart, we allowed students to read and focus their inquiry specifically on integrating Blooms Taxonomy order of questions: What (knowledge-based) to Why (inferential-critical thinking). See Table 2 for our reading excerpt questions and Table 3 for the post assessment questions. In Table 4, we used the K-W-L chart for students to monitor their learning. This chart functions as a metacognitive activity, in that it assists the adult ESL learner by supporting the reading and comprehension process.

Table 2. Reading excerpt questions

Reading Excerpts				
Question Type	American Hunger (1977)	Brutalized Behind Bars in New York State (New York Times Article) Sept 30, 2015	The Challenge to Legalize Drugs (author and year unknown)	Questions about James Black Assault Sept, 16, 2015
Knowledge	What does the word "Hunger" means in Wright's autobiography, <i>American Hunger</i> ?	What behaviors do the writer highlights as abuse?	What are some reasons for taking drugs?	What are your rights if you are stopped by the police?
Inferential	Why do you think Wright titled his book <i>American Hunger</i> ?	Explain the arbitration process and cite what steps you would take to address these obvious weaknesses in the system.	Why is there a challenge to legalize drugs and should it be for legal consumption?	Explain the term, "unprovoked aggression"

Table 3. Posttest assessment questions

Assessment Questions	
Pretest:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Write the main idea of the article? 2) List three supporting details the author uses to support the main idea. 3) What is the author's message in the article? 4) What is the proposed solution the author suggests, if any? 5) What prediction can you make about the book's title?
Posttest: Why do you think Wright titled his book <i>American Hunger</i> ?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What stood out for you in this chapter or reading? 2) Why do you think Wright titled his book <i>American Hunger</i>? 3) How does the theme of this book connect to other texts you have read? 4) What background knowledge can you use to make an informed reason about the author's stance on brutality? Explain your reasoning and cite evidence to support your answer. 5) Write a summary of the author's main points and justify why you believe your answer is correct.

Table 4. *K-W-L Chart*

What do I know?	What do I want to Know?	What have I learned?
Student Responses: The author is hungry. Abuse happens to prisoners This an autobiography	Why did the author title the book, American Hunger? People take drugs for many reasons Why is justice fair for all?	I learned "Hunger" has several meanings and it is a double entendre Prisoners have rights and the system in corrupt. Being black in America is dangerous for American Americans and Latinos.

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics for pre-test and posttest*

Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Pretest	30	71.333	2.656	.308	70.334	72.232	65.00	76.00
Posttest	30	83.867	3.758	.377	82.501	85.233	76.00	89.00

As depicted in Table 5, the results indicate that there was a difference between their pretest lower bound and posttest lower bound scores. At the minimum score, the difference between pre and posttest scores improve by 11 point at the end of the semester in reading. When the mean for both the pretest and posttest are compared, the pretest mean data was 71.33, whereas posttest mean was 83.87 with a 95% Confidence Interval for the Mean. LD

students' pretest mean was 71.33, at the end of the semester, their posttest mean improved to 83.86. This difference demonstrates that using multiple texts yield more favorably for LD students. Hence, the analyses conducted on the pre- and post-tests suggests exposing LD students to multiple text which incorporated the explicit and culturally sensitive reading activities were found to be more effective than the use of traditional reading instruction.

Table 6. *Summary of overlap between uses of multiple texts and reading critical reading skills*

Comprehension Strategy	Number	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Std. Error Mean
Locate main ideas	30	71.333	2.656	.308
Inference	30	71.333	2.656	.308
Analyze	30	83.867	3.758	.377
Summarize	30	83.867	3.758	.377

As highlighted in Table 6, most of the students who were exposed to multiple texts can improve their critical reading skills. We found that student's reading and comprehension skills after their exposure to multiple texts improved by 11 points. Most of their performance percentages were as high as 84%. Besides, we also found that certain comprehension strategies helped students in being able to locate the main idea of a reading excerpt, as well as, improvement in their ability to summarize and analyze during reading.

The implication is teachers of the linguistic diverse students can benefit from the present study implementing multiple texts in building critical reading skills. In considering the learning styles and preferences of the LD learner, using various instructional mediums such as print, audio-visual, YouTube, and Computer adaptive technology, functions as an influential component in developing the LDs students' comprehension and critical reading skills. In addition, instructors of reading can use short instructional videos as means of integrating a culturally responsive teaching. Through

this medium, students are able to process information learned, while at the same time, developing the skills of reflecting while transferring their experiential knowledge to their environment. Moreover, reading activities which require students to compare and contrast, read closely, and examine critically how information relate or differ from each other provide the development of meta-cognitive thinking. Research gleaned from Sternberg (1985) supports this theory that students use their internal, external and experiential intelligence to process information. This information processing allows students to cognitively process different sources of information, and in so doing, they develop knowledge and experience which ultimately transforms their thinking about the world around them. Through their interaction, students develop the ability to synthesize information, using various level of intelligence to process information until they arrive at a level of comprehension, satisfactory to them.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that LD students improved in their critical reading after their exposure to multiple texts. Using multiple texts allows the LD student to using higher-order metacognitive skills, which enables them to comprehend learning outcomes. At the minimum score, the difference between pre and posttest scores improve by 11 point at the end of the semester in reading. The findings have certain implications for educators, in that the exposure to various genres and reading materials are excellent in providing various perspectives rather than using a linear readings. Besides, instructing via multiple texts allows the LD learners to use the skills of analysis and evaluation, as they use internal, external and experiential intelligence to process information in written formats. Shannon, Fisher and Frey (2012) agree that reading across multiple texts not only strengthens students' comprehension of each text through context building, but it also develops critical thinking. Yet, although many LDs students may initially

have reading difficulty with reading and understanding texts, we found chunking reading materials into a condensed format allows them to build their reading stamina, while at the same time developing their comprehension skills. The exposure to various materials, infused with graphics and providing opportunities for engagement, also assists the LD students to complete complex tasks, such as processing unfamiliar vocabulary words while decoding unfamiliar grammar and syntax.

Moreover, our assigned group activities, required students to work in pairs with another native speaker of the student's language and translate reading and written activities in both native and non-native language. Students' group activities and classroom presentations promoted active engagement, social interaction, while simultaneously developing information processing encourages engagement and empowers them to build their confidence in reading. Fisher and Frey (2014) contend that through collaborative learning, learners work with at least one other person, use targeted vocabulary and language structures, and use socio-culturally appropriate language which then create deep understanding of the topic. In sum, we found using multiple texts to inform instruction, and activities that accommodate students' various learning styles facilitated and created a better learning experience. In addition, the use of the multiple texts approach can be described as an influential component on LDs comprehension and critical reading skills because when students are asked to compare and contrast, they are required to read closely and examine critically how information relate or differ from each other.

In fact, according to cultural capital theory, educational outcomes or educational attainment are strongly linked to sociocultural origins. We might be bold to infer that the success of the using multiple texts in our classrooms improved our students' critical reading skills since our students were free to use their native language interchangeably with what they

learned in class activities. Adapting the above-mentioned strategies is simply a start to providing support and enables academic success for the many linguistically diverse students with whom we instruct.

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