

MICHEL

DEGRAFF:

So for me, the best part, actually one of the best parts of the course, was having students present parts of the material. And there was one challenge that often-- there was a temptation to just do a summary of what you had read. But the point was not just to give a summary. It was to be able to integrate the readings with the larger-- I call it the germ of ideas. And I use that term based on previous readings that we have done earlier in previous years in this course.

But that's wasn't always easy. Because there's a big difference between doing a summary and then taking the ideas of readings and then incorporating them into your own reading of the course, into personal issues, into communal or critical issues. And for me, I wanted them to be able to do that too. And the motive for that, which was based on a reading by Paulo Freire and Donalddo Macedo was as you read the word, you also have to read the world.

And so, it's not enough to just look at the text as if it's a text. You have to be able to connect the text with issues of actuality, which could be personal, which could be political, which could be international. And at the end, they did get to do that in sometimes the most beautiful, moving ways. And often, after a while, it got very personal. It would bring up personal issues about their upbringing, which they would connect to the linguistic biography. So for me, it was a very rewarding part of the course, to see them being able to make those connections between abstract, complex analysis and what they live on a day-by-day basis.