

Institutional & Pedagogical Genre Research

There's a lot more to writing than genre. But there is no writing without genre.

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| <p>A. Five things we <u>know</u> about genre:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genre is social action 2. Genres are useful 3. But genres persist 4. Genres function relationally within and mediate activity systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genres exist in sets, systems, and ecologies and have to be understood and learned relationally Genre acquisition is an important part of disciplinary and institutional socialization Genres must be learned within their contexts of use, in relation to object/motives 5. Genres are phenomenological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genres shape our encounters; they are tools of cognition and sites of invention which involve constraint and choice. Genres are powerful exigencies for knowledge transfer. Most writers conform to genres willingly. Unreflective use of genres can trap writers. | <p>B. Five things we <u>know</u> about genre <i>knowledge</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genre knowledge is dynamic and multifaceted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre knowledge involves formal, rhetorical, process, and subject-matter knowledge Genres also mobilize cultural, affective, and dispositional resources; knowing a genre is more than just knowing conventions Learning <i>how to learn</i> genres is valuable 2. The relationship between genre knowledge and performance is complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genre knowledge doesn't necessarily translate to successful performance Genre knowledge develops through participation in community Genre knowledge and performance are interactive There is a distinction between knowing and understanding genres 3. Teaching genre requires more than teaching conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhetorical knowledge of genre is facilitated by having task investment. Macro-genres that over-arch contexts can be used to help writers acquire new genres. Genre knowledge can develop through a community of supportive peers 4. Writers draw on prior knowledge when encountering new genres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior genre knowledge can cue students' writing performances in new situations and can both limit and enable effective adaptation Prior genre knowledge may extend beyond knowledge of a particular genre to a range of strategies 5. Teaching for transfer can improve transfer of genre knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transferring genre knowledge to new situations is necessary but not sufficient. Transfer involves the transformation or recontextualization of knowledge. Instructors' tacit genre knowledge and expectations can enable and limit students' transfer of genre knowledge | <p>C. Two Unsolved Problems for genre knowledge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the most salient factors (individual, rhetorical, sociohistorical, material, cultural) in genre learning and the transfer of genre knowledge? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are genre learning, knowledge, and performance culturally mediated? What roles do material conditions play in the teaching and learning of genres? What is the role of affective factors in transferring genre knowledge? Is there a developmental continuum for genre-acquisition? What rhetorical strategies can be used across genres and domains? 2. Pedagogically, what questions remain regarding genre learning, performance, and teaching for genre knowledge transfer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How</i> do students use/adapt/transform prior genre knowledge when encountering new genres? Does the best method of teaching/acquiring the conventions of a new genre vary by genre and institutional context? How can uptake become part of the teaching of genre? Can/should it be taught explicitly? | <p>D. Three Methodological Problems for Research in Genre:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has our construct of genre (as complex dynamic, cognitive, and social activities) outstripped the construct operationalized in our research methods? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the complexity of the phenomenon, how do we isolate a salient cognitive, social, or cultural variable in how writers draw on and take up prior genre knowledge? How can prior genre knowledge be ascertained, in addition to somewhat unreliable self-reporting? How (methodologically) can we account for materiality and the networked nature of genres? Does the best method for identifying obsolete and/or unproductively inertial genres vary by institution? Or is there a best-practice for deliberate genre reform? 2. To what extent does the teaching of genre awareness facilitate genre acquisition and production? How are we to construct contemporary genre-pedagogy goals so as to measure them validly? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness Metacognition Multiplicity Pliability Implicit vs. explicit approaches 3. Are we ready to restore some construct of "the individual" to genre? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to describe her/his role? When and how does s/he (feel able to) adapt and refashion or repurpose genres? |
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