Institutional & Pedagogical Genre Research

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

A. Five things we know about genre:	B. Five things we know about genre *knowledge*:	C. Two Unsolved Problems for genre knowledge:	D. Three Methodological Problems for Research in Genre:
1. Genre is social action **2. Genres are useful** **3. But genres persist** **4. Genres function relationally within and mediate activity systems** • 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** • 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.	**1. Genre knowledge is dynamic and multifaceted** • 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 *how to learn* genres is valuable **2. The relationship between genre knowledge and performance is complex** • 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** • 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** • 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** • 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	**1. What are the most salient factors (individual, rhetorical, sociohistorical, material, cultural) in genre learning and the transfer of genre knowledge?** • 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?** • *How* 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?	**1. Has our construct of genre (as complex dynamic, cognitive, and social activities) outstripped the construct operationalized in our research methods?** • 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?** • Awareness • Metacognition • Multiplicity • Pliability • Implicit vs. explicit approaches **3. Are we ready to restore some construct of "the individual" to genre?** • 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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