Genre in first year composition: The missing link to transferability?

Sandra Patricia Halsey

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GENRE IN FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION:
THE MISSING LINK TO TRANSFERABILITY?

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Sandra Patricia Halsey

December 2004
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ABSTRACT

This thesis suggests the incorporation of "Genre Theory" into First Year Composition (FYC) at California State University at San Bernardino (CSUSB) as a means of alleviating the lack of transfer of what is learned in FYC to "other" university writing. In examining the feasibility of that incorporation, it takes into consideration the demands made on the FYC course across universities and specifically at CSUSB. It also explores the diverse understandings of "Genre Theory" and the primary and the difficulty those understandings pose. Finally, it offers practical pedagogical suggestions for "Genre Theory" incorporation into the FYC course with an explanation of how each pedagogical practice may enhance transferability.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would also like to thank the FYC and discipline instructors who were kind enough to give their time to help me build an understanding of the CUSUSB writing atmosphere.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge John Daugherty and Dennis Conrad, faculty members at Barstow Community College, the former for mentoring and supporting my ambition and the later for enlightening me when I stumbled in the writing of this thesis.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

First-Year Composition (FYC) is the site that is commonly understood as the place where students are introduced to "university writing." Just what "university writing" is, however, and how to help students respond to academic writing requirements has been the subject of much scholarly discussion. The significant, yet often unspoken, differences in the structure and content of specific writing assignments found in university courses can create "culture shock" for under-prepared college students. These students experience bewilderment with the differing yet unarticulated expectations and the resulting inability to concentrate on learning subject matter because of two factors: lack of knowledge of the differences between high school and university writing and lack of knowledge of the genres, rhetorical patterns, and citation practices of the various disciplines.

Complicating matters are the varied interpretations FYC instructors place on the role of that course. To some instructors, introducing first year composition students to university writing means making sure students can write
papers that are "grammatically clean" and free of sentence-level errors. Other instructors focus chiefly on helping students understand a writing prompt or situation so that they respond accurately and appropriately. Still others emphasize learning to reproduce models of "good writing." These instructors may select a range of cross-disciplinary "university level" readings to demonstrate a variety of writing techniques, or they may use selections from the literary canon implying that the best writing is found in literature. Finally, some describe themselves as writing coaches, using a variety of process-based pedagogies to encourage students to break old habits and gain new confidence and skills.

Composition instructors struggle to sort through these various approaches in an attempt to devise pedagogies for their classes. Some draw on their own experiences teaching their classes in the same manner that they themselves were taught. Others attempt to address them through a variety of pedagogical possibilities including some of the following discussed in Gary Tate, Amy Ropier, and Kurt Schick's A Guide to Composition Pedagogies:

- Process—stresses the writer's journey (1).
• Expressive—concentrates on developing the writer's voice (19).
• Rhetorical—traditionally associated with persuasion and formulaic means of achieving it—now includes appreciation of the diversity of interpretation of reading and writing (49).
• Collaboration—emphasizes the social construction of knowledge and encourages writers to share ideas, resources, and language (55).
• Cultural studies—Focuses on the influence cultural background has on interpretation of works, and the writing of those works (77).
• Critical—aims to help students "develop the tools that will enable them to challenge culturally practiced inequality" (92).
• Feminist—utilizes pedagogical practices of process theory but recognizes the patriarchal foundations of institutional learning; also raises student consciousness to those who are targeted to benefit most from that foundation (116).
• Community Service—using a combination of community service and readings to encourage "real world writing"
that connects the reading and writing to real issues (132).

Each of these pedagogies provides students with some of the essentials of university writing; however, students still may be bewildered unless their FYC course includes preparation for writing in courses outside of composition or English departments.

A fairly recent element in FYC discussions is the use of genre theory to help students make that connection. Genre is not a new element of writing, but the theories currently shaping composition define it more broadly than the literary categories of drama, poetry, or essay; they expand its meaning to include the social context in which the writing is constructed and received. In "Texts and Contextual Layers: Academic Writing in Content Courses," Betty Samraj explains:

The notion of genre [...] has evolved over the last several years from a consideration of genres characterized by the presence of certain formal features to a view of [...] them] as typical rhetorical engagements with recurring situations.

(163)

Or, as a business major might put it, genre is more than a
category; it also involves the way text is put together and the situation for which it is being written in the first place (Samraj 163). For example, the "research report" is considered a genre. It is a specific type of paper and follows a recognized structural format that is easily duplicated. However, when applying Samraj's definition, genre does not necessarily stop with the frame; it delves into content and the reasoning behind the content. For instance, in order to comply with the discipline's "modus operandi," research projects assigned in English courses often use literary language and explicitly state the writer's position on the subject, while a research report in science requires a minimalist writing style and uses language that minimizes the writer's role, creating at least an illusion of objectivity. Both fall under the categorical genre of "research report," but their contents and structure differ because of their context or disciplinary conventions. Incorporating this new understanding of genre theory in FYC courses may be pivotal in helping students differentiate between undefined generic rhetorical purposes and disciplinary cultures and practices and, thus, see the connections between the writing they do in FYC and the writing they do in their other courses.
Composition courses, however, are not shaped by instructor pedagogy alone; they are subject to influences from the universities, schools, and departments in which they reside through specific directives, goals or guidelines. These directives or guidelines ensure that courses meet institutional goals as well as offer consistency over time and multiple sections. Therefore, all of these factors must be taken into consideration when developing a pedagogy that targets the elimination of the "university writing shock" suffered by students.

This thesis addresses the contribution that genre theory may make to FYC curricula, suggesting some of the ways genre theory might help California State University at San Bernardino instructors meet departmental goals as it develops a FYC course that prepares students to write in English courses as well as across the university’s disciplines.

The California State University at San Bernardino’s (CSUSB) English Department and Writing Program Administrators Course Guidelines help focus this research on the pedagogical practices FYC instructors use to meet those goals, the relationship (or lack thereof) of those pedagogies to disciplinary instructors' expectations of
student writing, and the theoretical possibility of a pedagogy that uses the richer interpretation of genre as the "connector" between writing in FYC and writing in non-English discipline courses.
The first step in developing a successful FYC pedagogy is understanding the external requirements for the course. Those requirements are determined by the goals of the various schools and universities. Some schools, such as CSUSB and the University of Louisville, allow their instructors great leeway in determining the pedagogy and texts for their classes. Other universities, such as the State University of West Georgia and Washington State University, exert a greater influence on the course regulating, for example, the texts used and some, such as Texas Tech and Middle Tennessee State University, creating specific course syllabi. Taking control of the course even further, Texas Tech provides a lesson plan for instructors to follow.

Regardless of how tightly or loosely universities hold the reins, most promote their programs by publishing a set of course goals, many of which include preparing students for their future academic writing requirements. For instance, one of Franklin Pierce College's goals states that upon completion of the writing sequence, students
should be able to "exhibit competence in a variety of writing situations" (1). This goal implies that students must recognize that not all writing situations are the same and that they must be able to assess particular situations and determine the best responses to them. While more narrowly focused, the University of Colorado's goals statement also emphasizes preparing students to write beyond the FYC classroom:

> First-Year Writing trains students to participate in both academic discussions and larger civic debates. The course focuses on introducing students to the tools of analysis and argument so essential to success in college and, later, in professional and civic life. (1)

This school's narrower focus limits the goal to two types of writing, but it projects that writing focus beyond the university walls into the community and other potential writing situations that students may face upon completion of their academic study.

Although this sample cannot be considered representative of all FYC courses, it is an indicator that many universities expect FYC to do more than prepare students for writing in English courses. The Writing
Program Administrators (WPA), a national organization "of college and university faculty with professional responsibilities for (or interests in) directing writing programs" has developed an, "Outcomes Statement," a set of goals, which further indicate that preparation for writing outside the academic English discipline is an important goal for the course (WPA 1). The statement is targeted at "FYC administrators, members of freshman composition, undergraduate writing, WAC/WID/CAC, and writing centers, as well as department chairs, division heads," and an examination of it is, possibly, the closest thing to examining all FYC programs (WPA 1).

Published April 2000, the "Goals" are intended to provide a set of guidelines that FYC program administrators can use or build from when creating their own programs. It is divided into several sections: introduction, rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, reading and writing, processes, and knowledge of conventions. Each section is broken down into one area for FYC and one for "faculty in all programs" (WPA 2). The faculty in all programs section serves two purposes: one, it lets the FYC instructor know what may be expected of students after FYC, and two it lets
non-FYC faculty know what FYC is doing and preparing students for.

Closer examination of the sections reveals the intent of the goals. For instance, the introduction states, "we expect the primary audience for this document to be well-prepared college writing teachers and college writing program administrators" (WPA 1). It could not have been said more plainly; the writers do not expect this to be a general document given to all faculty at an institution. It is intended to be limited to those who can use it to create a program or pedagogy for FYC. The introduction states further that the document is not setting standards, only defining results for the course (WPA 1). Clearly, they intend it to be a guide, leaving the actual proficiency levels up to the institutions. The document then lists the various goals in the sections in a bulleted fashion that is easy to read and understand.

The first section, Rhetorical Knowledge, has seven goals, two of which focus on genres, and three of which focus on audience and situation. The wording of the goals is broad, allowing for a wide interpretation. However, what is specific is the directive to be able to use the "conventions of format and structure" (WPA 2). This goal
implies that students should be aware of and have some knowledge of the differences in the conventions and structure that a variety of situations may call for. However, what those conventions and structure might be depends on the interpretation of the situation. This wide interpretive space allows the goal to be utilized by a variety of programs, including the schools above. What the goal does, then, is simply point schools in the direction of preparing students for future writing in a variety of settings. The wording of the goal verifies that the purpose of the WPA goals statement, as stated in the introduction, is not to establish teaching methods, but simply to give schools and instructors direction for that teaching. The schools impose their particular agendas on the course and influence the manner in which FYC is taught when they add more to those goals through specifics, such as limiting the writing to argument or analysis, or targeting discourse communities.

The one thing that examination of the WPA Goals Statement establishes is that the goal to prepare students for writing they may be required to do after FYC is widely accepted across universities and programs. What remains is the need to identify precisely what preparing students for
writing they may be required to do after FYC is.

Universities, program administrators and instructors all perceive this directive differently. How then, can one course tie all of these perceptions together into one cohesive teaching unit? This chapter explores this question from the focus of CSUSB faculty's attempts to meet it beginning with an examination of CSUSB's FYC goals statement.

On a first reading, CSUSB's goals statement appears to demonstrate how universities can adapt the WPA goals to suit their own agendas. It should be noted, however, that this is not the case here. The CSUSB goals were approved in May of 1998, two years before the WPA goals statement was released. Nevertheless, CSUSB's goals resemble the WPA goals, an indication that this university is at the forefront of the shaping, developing, and implementing of FYC theories and pedagogies. This university's cutting edge position enhances the appropriateness of using this university as a model for this thesis.

CSUSB has a liberal approach to the FYC course, allowing instructors the freedom of selecting their own texts and constructing their own syllabi. Like the WPA goals, CSUSB's are designed to give FYC instructors a
starting point for determining their pedagogies. Thus, new instructors are given the FYC goals upon being hired and are expected to construct courses that follow the guidelines. However, not all instructors receive the guidelines in time to implement them, for sometimes additional courses and part-time instructors are assigned shortly before a term begins (Page 1). It is possible, therefore, that not all of those who are teaching the course are familiar with or have time to incorporate the goals. The CSUSB English department does, however, conduct departmental meetings where teaching issues can be discussed. They also have a rapport between the staff that allows them to seek advice from each other.

The CSUSB goals, "Guidelines for English 101," are provided by the English department, and it is through these goals that the department promotes their agenda for the course. The "Guidelines," like the WPA statement is divided into sections: catalog description, introduction, primary goals, course objectives, and assignments. The catalog description section repeats the CSUSB course catalog, and the introduction, like WPA's introduction, gives the overall purpose of the course, adding the desire for a measure of consistency without dictating pedagogies. The
primary goals section lists several goals similar to those in the WPA statement, including promoting connections between reading and writing, writing the kinds of papers expected in other undergraduate courses, and critical thinking skills. The objectives section provides a more detailed breakdown of the primary goals section, including learning to write in a variety of rhetorical situations and analysis based on purpose, audience, and genre.

The wording of the goals leaves interpretive space and, thus, allows flexibility in the CSUSB FYC program. This interpretive flexibility allows the FYC instructors great latitude in determining how to teach their classes. To determine what those ways might be, nine instructors from CSUSB were asked identical questions and their responses recorded and analyzed.

The primary goals section of the statement states that "the primary aims of English 101 should be to teach students to write effectively, to read critically, and to understand the connections between reading and writing" (1). CSUSB FYC instructors appear to have interpreted this goal to mean teaching critical thinking skills and error free writing. All of them stated that their primary goal is to promote those skills by providing readings, discussions
of those readings, and writing assignments based on those readings.

The second sentence of the "primary goals" section adds more to the requirements:

Writing assignments should be geared toward developing students' abilities to write the kinds of thoughtful and carefully edited papers and essays that are expected in other undergraduate courses. (1)

It is here that ambiguity in the goal's wording allows interpretation that causes divergent teaching practices.

Of the nine CSUSB instructors interviewed, seven seem to have interpreted this goal to be an extension of the statement requiring papers showing "critical thinking and error free prose." These seven also stated that students who have the ability to apply critical thinking and write error free prose are, in their estimation, prepared for that "other" writing. Preparation beyond that (i.e. the specific conventions of syntax, structure, writing style, and, format) belongs to the arena in which the writing is conducted.

The other two instructors in the sample have interpreted the goal to mean that students should be given
an overview and set of expectations of what courses other than composition or English discipline courses may require of them. Two instructors further stated that in addition to promoting critical thinking and error free prose, they want to prepare students for "other" writing by exposing them to various "writing styles" and "approaches" through readings from a variety of disciplines. All of the instructors interviewed promote authorship. They do this by instilling the need to give credit to the sources of information used in student writing by promoting the normal conventions of citation (i.e. MLA). The instructors stated that teaching the mechanical conventions of format and style that "other" university writing requires are best left to the discipline experts given each discipline's complex and specialized writing requirements. A brief view of some disciplines and the stylistic manuals they follow demonstrates the difficulty teaching those specifics would entail (Table 1). Not only do the disciplines have specific requirements as a whole, but they also cross stylistic boundaries. Also, in the case of discipline specific citation, the rules are in a constant state of flux. Therefore, CSUSB instructors "pave the way" for students to understand the concept of citation and to
follow the style manuals of the different disciplines by way of promoting analysis and stylistic awareness.

Table 1. List of Specific Formats of Disciplines

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<th>MLA</th>
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<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>Computer Sciences</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<td>Natural and Applied Sciences</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
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Clearly, the instructors have more than one interpretation of the goal to prepare students for writing they may be required to do in the university. However, none see it as a mandate to teach the specifics of non-English
disciplinary writing. Instead, they view it as a mandate to instill critical thinking skills and a sense of "authorship" through an introduction to style manuals.

Under "Course Objectives," the goals statement also declares that FYC should "enable students to learn to write in a range of rhetorical situations" (Goals 1). This goal, again, is open to interpretation and the instructors interviewed stated that they attempt to address the rhetorical situations goal by combining it with the portion that states that an emphasis is placed on situations that require arguing for a position (Goals 1). By assigning writing that requires students to construct an argument based on a situation, real or imagined, emphasis is placed on the writer not only considering the point they are attempting to make, but also how their audience might respond based on who and where they are. The instructors interviewed felt that advocating this audience awareness also met the goal to "prepare the students for the writing they may be required to do in the university" (1).

The CSUSB goals statement, therefore, while providing a starting point for the FYC instructors interviewed, did not place any pressure on the CSUSB FYC instructors to teach from a specific book, pedagogy, or composition
theory. In fact, it is probably scholars adhering to
different composition theories and strategies that have the
greatest influence on classroom pedagogies.

As instructors move through their education, they are
exposed to various theories and incorporate those theories
into their teaching. Most theories are formulated because
of a previous dominant theory's inability to solve a
current writing problem. They are heralded as the "best
ingredient" for writing and the solution to all writing
problems. Unfortunately, no one theory seems to hold all
the solutions, for as each one is tested, new problems
arise.

For instance, one theory in the composition field is
"process theory," which posits that the following product
is not as important as the journey [italics mine] students
take to achieve that product. Emphasis is put on students
learning the various stages of writing from brainstorming
to final draft. This theory offers a broad understanding of
the art of writing and debunks the idea that "perfect
writing" just flows from the pen of "great writers."

"Process theory" also encourages students who may have
doubts to believe in their ability to write a college
essay. However, it is an incomplete method of preparing
students for that college writing because if used in isolation this theory does not provide the diversity needed to build awareness of the syntax, writing style, essay structure, and citation methods "other" university writing may require. Therefore, teaching writing exclusively from "process theory" does not satisfy the goal to prepare students for "other" university writing. While not all theories are narrow, in fact some are quite comprehensive, it would be a disservice to college students to assume that any single theory will address all university writing needs.

In addition to composition theories, instructors rely on theoretical strategies to promote what they consider "good writing." Strategies, like theories however, can hinder student writing development when used in isolation of all other strategies. For example, some proponents of this approach view good writing from a narrow perspective and advocate exclusive use of the "literary canon" as a model of that good writing. One such proponent is Wayne Booth:

As a stimulus for think and writing, as a source of subject matter, and as a model for style and grammar, imaginative literature is, as the
students say, the best thing with which they can come in contact. (Cited in Tate 106)

This, however, would be a one-sided approach to teaching writing. Literature is, by and large, extremely stylized writing. The language, syntax, and purpose of the writing are quite different from that which students are expected to produce for their academic compositions. Literature can often be effusive, while most student writing is required to be as direct and succinct as possible. In addition, exposure to literature as an exclusive model of "good" writing limits the students' writing palate. Providing models for students to examine is a legitimate practice and has a place in the FYC course, but limiting those models to one type tends to negate all other writing styles. It certainly does not give a true picture of what students may encounter and be expected to emulate in the rest of their university careers and beyond.

In short, adhering to one composition theory or strategy to the exclusion of all others may not satisfy the goal to "prepare the students for the writing they may be required to do in the university" as stated in the Goals Statement (1). The same thing applies to any strategy that promotes a single type of writing as "good writing."
Without an explanation that a particular type of writing is "good" for a specific arena, students may attempt to apply what they have been told is "good writing" to all of their writing assignments, only to be told that the writing style they are using is inappropriate for the task they are undertaking. Rather than preparing students for university writing, this method blocks that preparation, causes them to fall short of expectation, and thereby confuses them. Rather than holding models up as examples of "good writing" a more appropriate use of them would be to use them to demonstrate the ways that writing is situated both in university disciplines, and in the world beyond. The need to avoid using one style of writing as the epitome of what is "good writing" and offer several based on situation, shows that an exclusive adherence to one theoretical strategy is inappropriate when teaching the FYC course.

It would seem that the FYC instructors at CSUSB agree that the goal to prepare students for university writing requires multiple theories and strategies. Seven instructors approach that preparation in a variety of ways, from appealing to students' interests to generate topics for discussion and writing, to concentrating on practice writing that focuses on creating error-free writing. While
all of the instructors adhere loosely to process theory, they do not ignore the product of that process. Nor do any of them use reading models that come exclusively from one arena, choosing instead to provide reading from several. They also stress writing style, syntax, grammar and punctuation as well the structure of the essay itself.

Some instructors make a distinction between preparing students for university writing and preparing them for disciplinary writing. Preparing students for disciplinary writing via teaching disciplinary language, syntax, and the citation formats of that writing falls very low on FYC instructors’ priority lists. Three think that disciplinary language and syntax is the purview of the discipline. They do not attempt to teach any of it, claiming that they are not the experts in that arena, but that the teachers in the disciplines are. These instructors also teach a single citation format, usually MLA, feeling that ensuring that their students understand the means to avoid unintentional plagiarism is the sum total of their responsibility for writing in the disciplines. Four stated that it is not FYC’s responsibility at all.

Preparing students for university writing, however, is higher on their list and includes providing models of
writing from a variety of disciplines, assigning research outside the English discipline, understanding prompts, text based writing, observations as part of research, and building awareness of communities outside the English discipline through critical thinking. Instructors also expose their students to a multiplicity of writing styles and requirements that are determined by the disciplines while not stressing the construction process of the writing. They state that preparation for university writing is more general and primarily consists of developing the skills of critical thinking, analysis, and error free prose. One thing that comes through clearly in the interviews with the FYC instructors at CSUSB is that while all of the instructors attempt to provide a curriculum that allows their students to meet the FYC goals, they each have their own particular theories and interests that influence some of the choices they make. For instance, those who are more interested in teaching literature tend to use the literary canon as reading material. Those who emphasize the social situations, such as feminism or racism, use material that illustrates those issues. The pure compositionist, one who is simply interested in teaching composition with no secondary agenda, was not found; indeed; he or she may be a
figment of imagination. The closest group to fit the pure compositionists is those instructors who promote particular types of writing, like argument, as they teach the class because they believe it is used in every discipline.

One element that is missing from the instructors' interpretations of the goal to prepare students for writing beyond FYC is the need to build awareness of the diverse nature of those requirements in the students. Generally, it is assumed by the instructors that offering a variety of readings that demonstrated the diversity of writing found in the disciplines was enough to build awareness. Unfortunately, this assumption throws that learning into the passive arena. Unfortunately, simple exposure does not ensure awareness. And indeed, it is this lack of awareness of that diversity that creates the lack of transfer bemoaned by instructors within FYC and throughout the university. The addition and use of genre theory in FYC can bridge that gap.
CHAPTER THREE

GENRE

While many believe teaching genre is a new concept, in reality, it has been around for over one hundred years. In the past, it has been most commonly understood as literary forms categorizing areas of writing such as romance, thriller, and science fiction. These classification genres are still used in literature, film, and the media.

What is less commonly recognized is that writing has been taught using genres before by using the less known nineteenth century, "journalistic [genres] such as review [. . .] editorial, [. . .] letters, treatises, essays, biographies, and fiction" (Popken 2). Perhaps the earliest known textbook to be used for this purpose is John S. Hart's 1870 edition of *Rhetoric and Composition: A Textbook for Schools and Colleges* (Popken 2). Popken's examination of Hart's text finds that the book is structured in the reverse order of those produced using current composition theory and that Hart assumes that the developing writer must master "good writing" (i.e., punctuation, diction, sentences, figures, and the "special properties" of sublimity, beauty, wit and humor (his early
chapters)) first, then apply the principles learned to genres (writing categories) (3). Popken disagrees with this assumption, citing Aviva Freedman who argues that "because all genres are contextual, so too is all genre acquisition" (4). She adds that they are learned, "situation-by-situation, one text at a time, one attempt at a time" (4).

Popken states that contrary to what the structure of Hart’s text implies, "principles of good writing" are acquired when content and subject matter drives the writers working their way through experiences with different genres (4). What Popken is advocating is teaching students by using genres to generate thinking about writing. Current composition theorizing agrees with Popken’s assessment, positing that when students have a purpose and situation on which to focus their writing, they tend to learn faster and easier.

Support for the theory comes from Patricia Bizzell. In “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty, What We Need to Know about Writing,” she states that “we cannot look at reality in an unfiltered way—'reality' only makes sense when organized by the interpretive conventions of a discourse community” (381). In writing, filtered reality includes the various disciplines, the school, the teachers,
the students, and the situation for which the writing is being done. That reality is currently in the process of being re-established (re-filtered) through the genre debate. While there is a political stake in the debate, the real fighting occurs in the academic trenches where scholars are attempting to prove or disprove the validity of genre theory being incorporated into FYC pedagogies.

Proponents of using genre in FYC believe that it can be used successfully, and that it may enhance the learning experience for writers. Not everyone, however, agrees with that thinking. Some scholars, in fact, say that using genres in FYC could be detrimental to students. Possible reasoning for this is the varied understanding that FYC instructors and other scholars have of genre theory. One part of the debate resides in the tug-of-war between what Anis Bawarshi, in "The Genre Function," calls author-function and genre-function. Bawarshi uses Foucault’s definition of author-function to explain that it is not:

...ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes [. . . ; it is] not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a
certain status. (338)

As such, author-function is not applicable to everyday speech and creates a hierarchy of writing. Bawarshi adds that what we need is a concept that works for all discourses, privileged or not, and claims that genre is it.

Bawarshi calls this concept the genre-function and says that "within each genre, discourse is 'received in a certain mode' and 'must receive a certain status,' including even discourse endowed with an author-function" (338). According to Bawarshi genre function includes, "all discourses and all writers' modes of existence, circulation, and functioning within a society" (338). By defining genre in this way, Bawarshi is attempting to eliminate the hierarchy that exists between "author" texts and "writer" texts, according what are now considered marginalized texts (student, nonliterary) the same status as authored (literary) works. Under this definition, all works fall under the genre-function. Therefore, genre cannot be avoided. This definition only works, however if the traditional definition of genre as "familiar communicative tools individuals use to achieve their communicative goals," is extended to include the "sociotheoretical function of genres" (339). Herein lays
the debate.

Genre, says Bawarshi, is seen by some (Hirsch, Rosmarin, Bhatia, and Swales) as regulative, as "a communicative or interpretive tool, a conduit for achieving or identifying an already existing communicative purpose [...] or as an artificial, restrictive 'law' (Blanchot, Derrida, and Croce) that interferes with or tries to trap communicative activity" (340). In this view, genres are a rigid box that writing must be contorted to fit into.

Bawarshi disagrees and uses Miller and Devitt to explain that genre does not "simply regulate a preexisting social activity (340):

Instead, it constitutes the activity by making it possible through its ideological and rhetorical conventions [...] by providing individuals with the conventions for enacting it." (340)

We, says Bawarshi, are socially influenced creatures, and thus, will look for something familiar from which to work, and will adapt our work from that familiar territory. Based on this interpretation, it appears that genre provides the groundwork from which we then build, adapting the work to fit the needs of the situation. Rather than confining our work then, genre provides a stepping stone from which we
are able to leap to new territory. This stepping stone feature of genre, however, may be a reason for the problems in defining it.

In "An Introduction to Genre Theory," Daniel Chandler concludes that it is nearly impossible to find a definition of genre that all scholars can agree to, citing Bordwell's comment that "no set of necessary and sufficient conditions can mark off genres from other sorts of groupings in ways that all experts [. . .] would find acceptable" (4). Chandler adds that defining genres is a "theoretical minefield" having the problematic areas of "extension (the breadth or narrowness of labels), normativism (having the preconceived ideas of criteria for genre membership), monolithic definitions (as if an item belonged to only one genre), and biologism (a kind of essentialism in which genres are seen as evolving through a standardized life cycle)" (4). The problem area of normativism can be seen in Irvin Peckham's diagram depicting the "dichotomies governing the genre debate" from "The Yin and Yang of Genres."

A quick glance at this chart (Table 2) provides the answer to the reason some "process" advocates do not agree with teaching genre. Peckham's pro genre grouping seems to
be advocating a return to the product oriented pedagogy of the process theory era. Peckham claims that the separation

Table 2. "The Yin and Yang of Genres"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centripetal/Yang/Male</th>
<th>Centrifugal/Yin/Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro Genre</td>
<td>No Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Subjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Genres of Writing: Mapping the Territories of Discourse.


stems from the objective/subjective view scholars take of writing, stating that the objectivists prefer tradition and the stability of forms, while the subjectivists prefer
change and movement, and embrace differences in content. Genres, according to Peckham, are primarily the form the writing is presented in. But, he explains, genres are more than categories like the research paper. They are "a constellation of features that make a group of completed utterances—located within recurring rhetorical situations—seem similar" (Peckham 1). Peckham and Samraj seem to agree on the recurrence and situation factors. Peckham, however, takes the definition a step further, explaining that genres can be found within genres. Or rather, says Peckham, the reverse. He explains that a genre can be abstracted from a

![Figure 1. Genres Radiating from Specific to General Abstraction Level](image)

specific rhetorical situation to a more abstract rhetorical
situation, creating a new, more abstract genre (figure 1). When abstracted from the "science research paper," or the "English research paper," the "research paper" falls into this more abstract category. The new abstract genre can, in turn, be abstracted to the "essay," creating a new genre again. Peckham explains: a category at one level is an abstraction of (in the sense of taking out) similar features from categories at lower levels of abstraction. Thus, one arrives at a category that is more general and broader than categories that lie below it. Looking at genres metaphorically, they can be compared to the scientific view of the universe—ever-expanding as they become broader. Using the discipline research paper for a specific class as an example, the teacher's specific requirements for the paper become the focus of the writer's attempt to write. Expanding that a bit, we find similarities in what several teachers teaching a specific disciplinary course require. The next expansion remains within the discipline, but in a variety of courses and with a wider group of teachers. The final expansion includes similarities found across disciplines. The number of genre expansions depends on the genre itself. For instance, the research report is also part of the genre of "essays."
Genre also extends beyond scholarly and non-scholarly groupings to journals, magazines, conferences, and so on. Genres are expanded to fit the "situations" for which they are constructed (figure 2). The more abstract they become, the more general is the situation for which they are used. It is the abstraction level that determines the knowledge required to use a particular genre.

![Diagram showing the influences of partial essay genres depicted within the University and English Discipline Abstraction Level](image)

*Figure 2. Influences of Partial Essay Genres Depicted within the University and English Discipline Abstraction Level*
Based on Peckham's definition of genre, an examination of the university abstraction level (which is where FYC resides) finds that genres at this level must be broad enough for students who will be entering all disciplines to be able to work with them. This means that if elements from the disciplinary abstraction level are "pulled out" to create the university abstraction level, those elements need to be common to all or most of the disciplines in the university, but not so broad that they are common to all writing beyond the university. Using the "research report" as an example again, at the university level of abstraction the report need not contain features that would be considered specific to any particular discipline. It must, however, contain features that are common to the broader abstraction level of the research report—the essay. What this implies is that not only are the rhetorical situations an element of genre, the category, i.e. "research report," is as well (figure 3). Therefore, the "research report" genre may appear in all abstraction levels, but its structure and content as it is used in the more specific levels may not be the same as it is in the university abstraction level.

Samraj concurs with this overlapping and intertwining,
referring to it as "the relationship of the text to the context in which it is produced" (164). Samraj uses "context" in place of "situation," and rather than viewing the distinction between "contexts" as abstractions, she continues to use the term "context." When discussing the layers, rather than saying some elements are "pulled out" of a layer, she refers to them as sharing values.


**Figure 3. Influences of Partial Essay Genres Depicted within the University and Business Discipline Abstraction Level**

Samraj examines writing from two disciplines in the
same school and finds overlap between the disciplines and courses. She states that influences on writing come from several layers, giving the example, “the role assigned to students in the context of the task is partly a result of the task being embedded within a course in a discipline and academic context” (169). Because of this, she says, “it is not easy to separate their influences over a text” (169). She follows her examples with discussion of the courses and their position in the university, finding that their structure is influenced by the school in which they reside (167). She points to difficulties in placing textual features:

Analysis also indicates that textual features cannot always be traced back to one layer of the context, as these levels or layers of context are themselves connected to one another. (see figs. 4, 5) (172)

Genres, then, are influenced by both the textual features of the abstraction level above them and the more refined level below them in the genre chain. This, again, may add to the difficulty in defining them.

It appears that determining a FYC pedagogy that includes genre requires that the FYC abstraction level be
identified. This statement would be true if all scholars agreed with Peckham and Samraj’s definitions, but they do not, and it is here that Chandler’s other problem areas of “extension, monolithic definitions, and biologism” come into play (4). Chandler agrees with Peckham’s explanation of genres as having multiple levels. However, he adds that what one person might call a genre, another might call a “sub-genre,” or “super-genre” indicating how one of the differences in the interpretation of “what genre is” occurs (3). Peckham and Samraj see genres as concrete forms with definitive “layouts” that are determined by the task, while Chandler agrees with Feur’s definition of them as “ultimately an abstract conception rather than something that exists empirically in the world” (3). Chandler points out that one difficulty in defining genres is that some seem to be “aligned with one categorical genre in content and another in form” (5). He adds that subject matter is the weakest criteria for determining genre, citing Stam’s point that it “fails to take into account how the subject is treated” (qtd. in Chandler 5). The primary difficulty, according to Chandler, is that genres are a conglomeration of several characteristics that make it difficult to pigeon-hole. He agrees with Neale’s statement that,
"features which are characteristic of a genre are not normally unique to it; it is their relative prominence, combinations and functions which are distinctive" (qtd. in Chandler 6). One can assume, based on Chandler's assertion, that a feature, argument for instance, might cross genres from paper to paper, but how that argument is used determines what genre it is in. It also seems clear from Chandler's explanation that one of the reasons that genre is so difficult to pin down is that not all features will appear in a genre every time. It is as if there is a global "menu" of features to pick from, and writers may choose to use any combination of those features from that menu to construct their papers. It is because of this that papers in a given genre can look and read differently. Chandler adds that it is the differences that make the writing interesting.

It is also hard to give genres an exact definition because while traditionally they were regarded as fixed forms, that view has changed to one of them as dynamic. "Genre isn't [...] simply "given" by the culture: rather, it is in a constant process of negotiation and change" resulting in the fixed boundaries of the past beginning to be permeated by the requirements of the task (Chandler 9).
Because of these permutations, the conventions that establish the genre change, and in essence, a new genre is created. Chandler states that at this point the old genres are "discontinued." Technically, they still exist, but the new genre becomes the genre "in demand," and, thus, gains dominance (temporarily) in the field. The difficulty of defining genres becomes exasperated by the difficulty of identifying their current boundary. Chandler also uses Andrew Tudor's conclusion that each of these new genres or sub-genres becomes more specialized than the last. In essence, they become the new "discipline specific" genre from which, according to Peckham, the more generalized genre can be abstracted. The primary difference, then, between Peckham, Samraj's and Chandler's understandings of genre is the manner in which new genres are created.

In "Learning to Write in a Genre: What Student Writers Take from Model Texts," Davida H. Charney and Richard A. Carlson agree with the previous assessments that new genres are created when a particular form of writing for a specific purpose is used frequently for similar situations. They add that what students need to know in order to write successfully in a genre is "familiarity with its conventions of content, structure and style," as well as an
"understand[ing] of the assumptions underlying these conventions" (89). They continue, saying that writers must have the ability to adapt the conventions to fit the "task at hand" (89). When the situation recurs and writers use the same adaptations on a recurring basis, the adaptations become the norm, and a new genre, or sub-genre is created. For this reason, genres cannot be classified permanently. Charney and Carlson point out that those changing definitions are cumulative, with each new genre not replacing the old, but rather, building on it to create a new, added one. What seems to be occurring based on Charney and Carlson's definition is not as Peckham suggests, genres being created by abstraction from a narrow genre to a more general one, but the reverse. Genres begin as abstract concepts with general boundaries, then as disciplines, conventions, and situations place their demands on the writing, they are adapted to suit the needs of the writing. Each adaptation is a refining of the genre to better fit the situation and discipline for which it is being used. Thus, as the genres become imbedded in the disciplines, they require more and more specific refining. One does not "pull out," as Peckham stated, similarities from genres to arrive at a more general form of the genre; one begins with
the general form and refines it, overlapping conventions and bringing in elements from other genres until it has been adapted enough to suit the new arena in which it resides.

Some scholars, however, would not agree with the above assessment, stating that those refinements are textual adaptations and not elements of genre. Brian Paltridge, for example, examines texts in genres in, “Genre, Text Type, and the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Classroom,” stating that while many view text type and genre as one and the same, they are, in fact, different. Paltridge identifies genres as including “university calendars, documented essays, research reports, lectures, and tutorials,” then moves on to the texts of those genres describing them as including “problem-solution, exposition, or argument” (74).

Text-type, according to Paltridge, crosses genres, with different genres having texts that can be similar in text type. These similarities are determined by purpose and audience. As an example, he cites Biber’s 1989 article that points out that, “newspaper articles ‘can range from extremely narrative and colloquial in linguistic form to extremely informal and elaborated in form,’” then uses
articles written for popular magazines and newspaper articles as further examples (73). Paltridge combines Bloor’s definition of text type as including narration, description, and argument, with Bazerman’s view of it as “semantic organization such as narration, description, report, and accompanying linguistic and staged textual features” of more than one sentence to present his own definition of text (77). He adds that both genres and text types are “situation influenced,” and therefore are tied to each other by the situation for which they are being used. What becomes clear from Paltridge’s assessment is that it is the situation that crosses disciplinary borders taking genre and text type with it.

David Bleich agrees that situation is the controlling element in determining language use. In “The Materiality of Language and the Pedagogy of Exchange,” he presents the concept that language gets its meaning from situation stating that this concept is “the materiality of language,” a “Kuhnian paradigm that converts language from a transparent medium to a palpable aspect of social relations” (119). Materiality, says Bleich, also makes the “genre idea more versatile in teaching” (119). He adds that “the genre idea, as currently discussed, is a consequence
or aspect of this paradigm" (119). What Bleich is pointing out is that language gets its meaning from the manner in which it is used, and that manner is determined by the situation the user is in. Bleich then applies Wittgenstein's "form of life" concept. "Form of life" of language, according to Wittgenstein, comes about when language is used in a particular "social circle" (i.e. a community puts a unique stamp of meaning on the language it uses to communicate). Changes in the situations the community faces require adaptations of the language; this, in turn, creates new meanings. This procedure sounds very much like the forming of new genres, and in fact the process is similar. It is similar because assimilation, revision, and then application, is the method we (humans) use to learn, adapt and progress.

The University of Missouri has an "Information Process Theory of Learning" page that uses the work of Atkinson, & Shiffrin, Kintsch Klatsky, Loftus & Loftus, George Miller (1956); Newell, Shaw and Simon(1955-60); Gagne' and Dick Anderson (1984); and Rothkopf (1970). These scholars' works have been synthesized into a fact sheet that discusses the "ways" in which students learn. One of the points these scholars make is that students actively process, store, and
retrieve information from: episodic—“recall of events, which is in detail and sequence” and semantic—“intentional learning, which involves encoding, storage and retrieval of information” memory (1). This method of learning coincides with Bleich’s and Bawarshi’s contention that language is controlled by situation. Atkinson et. al. explain that there are three stages of information processing: “Input of sensory registry, short-term memory, and long-term memory” (3). They then explain that sensory is primarily sight and sound and is processed within three to five seconds and goes to short term memory (STM) for processing. Information that is processed in STM will last approximately “fifteen to twenty seconds without rehearsal, longer with practice” and has an approximate seven item limit. Where the theories begin to coincide is in the attempt of students to retain the new input. Atkinson et. al. explain that one method of increasing memory retention is through “chunking.” In chunking, several items can be put into group then recalled as a single unit of memory. Seven chunks, plus or minus two can then be recalled from STM (5). Items can then be stored in long term memory (LTM) and recalled indefinitely (5). Concepts are stored in the LTM in descending order according to importance based on “meaningful association”
In the LTM, students are able to make connections between items ("animal-dog-collie"), creating a link. Some links are closer than others, and the farther apart they are, the longer it takes the LTM to recall the information. Attached to the LTM is schema theory which posits that "new knowledge is interpreted within the context of existing schema [and] from the beginning within context supplied by existing knowledge" (9). The schema theory Atkinson et. al. describe as the means by which students learn, validates Bawarshi’s point that genre cannot be avoided. It is human nature to take existing knowledge, apply new information to that knowledge, and then adapt the existing knowledge to include the new information. The process through which students learn is the same process Bleich describes in his discussion of materiality and language. Atkinson et. al’s. explanation of the processing of new “input” is the same process that Peckham and Charney and Carlson apply in their discussion of genres as being refined and altered according to new information.

It appears, then, that genre is a portion of the learning process repackaged and relabeled and presented in a more complicated frame. If this is true, then Bawarshi’s assertion that it is impossible to avoid genre is certainly
true. What must be explored is how FYC instructors’ teaching can use genre in a manner that may enhance student transfer of what has been learned in FYC to other classes.
CSUSB faculty have created pedagogies designed to address the goals listed in the CSUSB goals statement and reflect current FYC scholarship. Most of their pedagogies are excellent and worthy of being emulated in classrooms elsewhere. While students receive excellent tutelage in writing at university level, unfortunately, one area not specifically addressed in most classrooms and a primary complaint of the interviewed English and non-English discipline professors at CSUSB is the lack of transfer of what is learned in FYC to other university classes. It is a common problem across universities and is discussed in Ross Winterowd's "Transferable and Local Writing Skills." Winterowd's focus is on upper level writing; however, some of the points discussed are applicable to FYC as well.

Winterowd discusses the need to understand the difference in writing from venue to venue as the need to make, "useful, even essential, "sortings out" that, when they are made, seem embarrassingly obvious" (1). He declares that regardless of the type of composition class, these "sortings out" are necessary in order to understand
what they can do. Winterowd splits the categories into two sections, transferable and local skills:

Local skills have to do with a given genre and involve such matters as special form (i.e. the scientific report), footnoting, vocabularies, special styles, and even the "tones" that particular fields demand. Transferable skills are the "basics" of writing, syntactic fluency, control of diction, sense of audience, organizational ability, and mechanics such as punctuation and spelling (2).

Winterowd stresses that in the center of the spectrum the differences between the skills becomes blurred, but that composition teachers must retain awareness of those distinctions. He also likens the learning of writing to the learning of language, connecting them through Stephen D. Krashen's theory of language learning that there are "two kinds of language Learning (note the capital L): acquisition and learning (note the lower case l)" (2).

Krashen states that the majority of language knowledge is acquired:

It is learned in generally the same way that a child learns his or her native language: by
hearing it, by attempting to use it, and by receiving feedback concerning the semantic intention, not the form of the utterance. The child "swims" in a sea of language and mentally absorbs it because he or she is destined biologically to talk; the child makes attempts to communicate in an unfinished version of this language; the parent responds not to the imperfections of form, but to the child's apparent intention. (qtd. in Winterowd 2)

Winterowd explains that this type of knowledge is tacit—knowledge we are unaware of: "for example, anyone and everyone can make a promise, but almost no one can state the set of constitutive rules for promising, even though these rules are explicitly formable" (2). On the other hand, Winterowd states, there are some language skills that can be learned by learning rules and paradigms. He makes a point of adding that, "we can learn only a very small part of what we need to use a language fluently. The vast part of our knowledge is acquired" (4). Winterowd believes that Krashen's learning acquisition theory applies to writing as well as language "Learning" (5). He states that if he and his colleagues are correct, "then teachers of composition
need to review their programs and methods I light of the theory" (5). He also stresses that almost all transferable skills, such as prewriting, writing and reformulation are acquired skills acquired through models, "hence the importance of the proper kinds of reading," and through 'teacher intervention in the writing process and feedback" (5). He states that in the effective composition classroom, students both learn and acquire skills (6). Winterowd breaks the learning/acquiring arena into two camps, "a writing workshop, where acquisition takes place, and a laboratory, where editing skills are learned" (6). Upon achieving a certain status (one that puts them beyond the learned skills), students, according to Winterowd, would benefit from further writing experience in an advanced composition course that would concentrate on the acquired skills. He states that "the acquired skills are at the heart of writing ability, and there is no upper limit to their refinement, just as there is no upper limit to the development of skills in any of the other arts" (8). He advocates classes that would allow students to refine their writing in specific arenas, such as funding proposals, research writing, social sciences, business, and reports. He then introduces his main point that writing across the
curriculum programs address this need. He states that "clearly a sociologist can define the skills of sociological writing better than, say, a humanist" (10). He then advocates that the writing be taught by that sociological specialist, saying that, "social scientists can learn how to teach writing classes in which students can sharpen their acquired skills.

Winterowd outlines a program that includes the teaching of writing by disciplinary professors because they are familiar with the acquired skills required for their discipline. The courses he describes are not, strictly speaking, discipline courses, but courses that refine writing skills required by that discipline. He adds that a laboratory would need to be attached to those courses where students could learn the disciplinary forms required. Winterowd emphasizes that the "key to all of this is an understanding of how people learn to write. Until we pay attention to that, we will flounder and be more or less unproductive in our efforts" (10). He adds that if attention is focused exclusively on the "teaching of writing, the designing of curricula, and so on," we are courting disaster (11).

It would appear that Winterowd is advocating two
composition class levels, the first, a beginning class, incorporating the learned skills and taught by writing instructors. The second, a more advanced level class, which would incorporate the acquired skills, be taught from a discipline specific perspective, and preferably, taught by discipline specialists rather than composition specialists.

Much of what Winterowd presents is valid. The skills he defines as learned are indeed skills that are gained by learning rules and practicing. It is also true that advanced discipline specific writing practices may best be left to upper level discipline writing courses, or if those are not available, to the instructors in those disciplines. Many of the skills he perceives as acquired may, however, be victim of a "Catch-22" syndrome and may actually be skills that can be learned. Because they are perceived as acquired, teachers may make no effort to teach them, and because they are not taught, students are forced to acquire them any way they can. That way is usually through the models teachers bring to their classes for study. Unfortunately, those models are usually studied only for content, and the writing methods, style, principles of organization and language are left to be acquired. The problem with leaving students to acquire these skills
through models alone is that they may not understand the discipline specific nature of much of the models’ writing, or the writing “license” experienced writer’s take with the “rules” of writing. They may make the assumption that what they acquire from those readings will apply to all writing, or they may not acquire them at all. These points need to be actively addressed in the classroom, and the FYC classroom is the logical and proper place for that learning to begin.

It is not enough for teachers to know how learning occurs and how writing requirements accumulate as the courses become more and more refined. For true transferability to occur, students must become aware of how they are gaining writing skills and how writing requirements accumulate as they progress in their disciplines. With awareness comes the ability to use that awareness to facilitate new learning. The primary argument given by FYC instructors at CSUSB against instruction that specifically rather than tacitly promotes awareness is that they do not have the time to do it in a ten-week course. However, incorporating Atkinson’ et. al’s., “How Students Learn” and genre theory into already established elements of FYC classroom pedagogies may make this possible.
First, students need to be made aware of how they learn. If, as Atkinson et al. say, it is human nature to apply past learning to new learning challenges, students must be encouraged to consciously acknowledge that process. Much of the time, when asked to explain how they came to stated conclusions in their papers, they are unable to do so. That process is unconscious, and they are unaware of how their education, living conditions, and culture influence their understanding and learning process. In FYC, students can be encouraged to examine their learning process through self-examination journals, class discussions, peer workshops, and lecture. The best awareness building occurs when all are present in the classroom.

The simplest and most time effective way to build awareness is to apply the understanding that we are socially influenced creatures and add self-analysis to class discussions and any journal writing that is required. In discussions, instructors could point out the different opinions and interpretations of readings and invite the students to speculate about why the assignments are understood differently. They could then have students compare those findings to their own reasoning. After
discussions, instructors could ask students to write down their findings through directed journal writing. When students write in their journals without direction, they tend to be very cursory, providing only a shallow view of their thought processes. If, on the other hand, they are directed to write about specific areas of the discussion, such as comparing their reasoning to others reasoning, and required to write at least one to two full pages, they will need to put some thought into the process. It is just as important that students learn that not everyone around them thinks or understands things in the same way as they do as it is for them to understand their own thinking process.

Once students are aware of the various approaches to understanding, they may be better prepared to construct a systematic means of approaching their assignments. The awareness that others may not see or understand works in the same way also opens their minds to alternative approaches and thinking and allows them to take that "other" thinking into consideration when writing. Thus, they become better prepared to handle those differences.

Once students grasp the concept that understanding of works comes from several angles and thinking processes,
they can then begin to build awareness of the differences in writing in the university. It is here that genre comes into play. If instructors apply Samraj's definition of genre theory, texts created by using elements from the levels above and below to the current writing situation and incorporate the study of writing elements into their pedagogy, students would learn of the possible reasons for text construction and writing style. This learning can be facilitated in several ways. First, the groundwork should be laid by establishing that writing occurs in a myriad of situations. Students often do not realize how often they write, or the differences in style, purpose and audience for that writing. Class discussion should incorporate a question and answer session that discusses possible settings and purposes of writing. One way to ensure participation is to put the class into several groups and challenge them to make a list of the various types of writing they do such as letters, grocery lists, e-mail, notes to parents and friends, and academic note-taking. Samraj's interpretation of genre comes into play next. Students should be encouraged to focus on one example of common writing, i.e. the letter, and discuss the similarities and differences between one to a friend versus
one to a parent or grandparent. Beginning with the similarities, students should see that both have greetings and closings; both have a body; both may discuss the same events. Once the similarities have been accounted for, discussion should then follow about the differences in the letter and the reasons for the differences. For example, in the greeting portion, language formality might come into play. The one to a relative might be "dear Mom," whereas one to a friend might be "Hi Sally." The reasons for this difference should be discussed. Is the first influenced by upbringing? Is the second influenced by verbal greetings?

After students become aware that they are already producing writing that is targeted to specific audiences for specific purposes in their everyday writing, the transfer of that awareness to academic writing situations can occur.

The final stage of the awareness process is a discussion about using and adapting previous writing to a new situation. Students should be encouraged to discuss how they would use what they have learned about letter writing and apply it to writing a letter to a company to inquire about a product or a similar project. What components from the previous writing were adapted? What components were rejected? What is the reasoning behind the use and
rejection? Once the initial awareness discussion has been completed, it should be built upon by generalizing that learning to other writing, specifically academic writing. This can be accomplished by applying the same diagnostic approach to readings that was used in the awareness building. A good initial exercise is to provide students with two readings on the same topic, and beyond the common task of "what is this essay attempting to accomplish" assignment, encourage them to determine the similarities and differences in the essays and in their target audiences.

Carrying the awareness campaign further, this task can then be followed up with an assignment to compare and contrast new readings to previously assigned ones. Having students compare the known elements in new to previously read works promotes awareness that in dissimilar topics, some characteristics of writing may carry over to the new arena while others may not. In addition, new elements may be added that were not previously seen. These elements need to be specifically pointed out and discussed in the classroom to ensure awareness of them.

The benefit of this approach is that though it requires a minimal time investment, it elicits the blending
of the study of content with how that content is shaped and results in a more rounded writing lesson. In addition, creating this awareness of genre and difference in simple ways provides a non-threatening venue for exploration into what may be expected of student writing when they enter the disciplinary arena. Discussion and models could provide examples of some of those expected disciplinary crossovers. For example, argument appears in most, or according to some, in all disciplines. Carol Haviland, co-editor of and contributor to *Weaving Knowledge Together: Writing Centers and Collaboration*, suggests that models of from diverse courses could be used for demonstration to show "how argument in FYC may appear in chemistry as lab data supporting a conclusion about a compound, in psychology as case evaluation data supporting a recommendation for a child's placement, or in marketing in the reasoning behind a choice of advertising strategies" (1). Students could be asked to identify the argument and note the ways both the argument and the evidence differ by rhetorical purpose and disciplinary location. This exercise would provide them with the opportunity to use interpretive skills to determine the content and critical thinking skills to determine what elements recognized from previously read
texts or used in their own writing are transferable to other arenas.

While this approach does not teach the specific elements students may be required to use in their disciplines, it prepares them to accept and adapt to those elements when they encounter them in the disciplines. In essence, students learn that in order to create the kind of texts that may be acceptable in the disciplinary arena for which they may be writing, they must create their own "global menu" of elements from which they can select text, organization, style, language, syntax, voice, documentation, and other communication tools appropriate to the situation. They will then be able to access that menu as needed.

Other interpretations of genre theory are equally adaptable to FYC instruction. For example, in the past, many instructors thought that the best models to teach writing in the FYC classroom were works from the literary canon. While that practice is waning, the models currently being used tend to be from published works chosen not for their demonstration of writing skills, but for their content, because the current focus is on content rather than product. If, however, genre is interpreted from
Bawarshi's author/genre function point of view, the readings brought into the classroom can come from any source, both known and unknown authors, even fellow students. All of them are potentially equal in value, for the study of writing depending on the lesson being presented.

While it is likely that published works may remain the primary source of reading material in the FYC classroom, they are, after all the most readily accessible, Bawarshi's interpretation applies to the current practice of peer critique. In fact, when combined with Samraz's interpretation and Atkinson et. al.'s learning theory, these critiques provide a learning opportunity like no other. First, they provide a ready source of student papers activating Bawarshi's theory. Second they utilize Samraz's theory and provide an opportunity for analysis beyond content and a "does it fit the assignment" analysis. Students can be directed to discuss the syntax, paper organization, and topic handling with respect to the projected audience and discipline. Finally, they activate Atkinson's et. al.'s learning theory in several ways from chunking to repetition.

The additions of peer critiques are important because
while most FYC papers will have the same syntax and organization, as Samraj and Bizzell state, we are socially influenced creatures; students privilege other students' comments over their own understanding based on the advising students' status in the group. When two students disagree during a peer critique, they justify their thinking to each other. This explaining, arguing and justifying of a concept or procedure to another assists in the development of a consciousness of that concept or procedure and becomes part of the LTM encouraging its transfer to future courses.

There is an additional benefit to adding genre theory to FYC. Because it appears in discussion of all aspects of the writing including content, syntax, organization, purpose, and possible discipline, it helps students develop the habit of examining works from all angles. That, in turn, enhances their learning curve and better prepares them for the type of writing they may find in their other courses. The expansion of reading analysis and peer critiques to include structural and syntactical elements requires a minimal extension of the time allotted for discussion, while the potential learning curve for students is increased immeasurably.

Two other genre theory interpretations that are
applicable to FYC are Peckham's (genres as forms that are abstracted from specialized forms) and Samraj's (genres as generalized forms from which more specialized forms are created). The common ground between the two theories is the belief that genres overlap, with elements of one crossing over to another. Even though some elements that Peckham and Samraj would place in the genre category do not fit into Paltridge's definition of them as specific forms rather than textual differences, in the FYC class, these overlapping elements can be pointed out and discussed along with the other points. Students can be directed to compare and contrast previous readings with current ones and note the similarities and differences that they find. They can then be encouraged to speculate about why they occur and what contribution they offer to the particular purpose of the work. Lastly, they can be encouraged to determine if the similarities they find are universal to all writing they have encountered or written and if there are differences because of the purpose and/or discipline the work is written for.

Approaching texts from this standpoint allows students the opportunity to recognize that the more general elements of writing cross borders and that the more specific
elements tend to be less universal. To assist in this recognition, students can be encouraged to categorize the elements they find in a journal. By charting them, they may have visual evidence of the elements that cross boundaries and the elements that do not, making recognition easier.

All of these additions to an already burdened FYC curriculum may seem, to some CSUSB instructors, to be too difficult to achieve in the ten weeks allotted to the course. They are not. Most are simply a matter of adding a few questions that may promote discovery into the class discussions, an added question on a peer critique focus sheet, or a chart in a student journal. A beginning of the class writing assignment that focuses on how the readings of the day before match or are dissimilar to previous readings may also work to enhance the "writing is not all the same" engram in students' brains.

The point of bringing genre into the FYC classroom is not to teach all of the "ways of writing." That, indeed, would be a logistical impossibility. The point is to open students' minds to the variety of writing that permeates higher education. Once students have been introduced to the concept that writing can, and does, look and sound different in a variety of settings and situations, they are
better prepared to explore those settings and situations and determine how their writing should look and sound.

In addition, Winterowd is correct when he states, "The key to all of this is an understanding of how people learn to write" as understood from Atkinson et. Al.'s "Information Process Theory of Learning" (8). To this end, incorporation of genre theory into FYC peer critiques, readings, and student writing supports Atkinson et. al. in several ways. It promotes the recall of writing techniques activating the STM first, by comparing and contrasting current readings and writing assignments to past ones. Through progressive and sequential assignments and discussion of those assignments, students are required to think about the lessons learned from the previous reading and writing assignment and then determine which, if any, apply to the new assignment, activating schema theory. When techniques learned in earlier assignments are used in new assignments, the likelihood of that learning being stored in the LTM rises, increasing transfer of that knowledge to other courses and disciplines. Thus, the active use of genre theory in FYC can help alleviate some of the transfer of skills problems encountered by discipline area instructors.
Second, incorporating genre provides students the opportunity to take a more active role in their own learning, which has long been understood to be a valuable method of learning. In fact, the current practice of peer critiques has begun the process. If discussion of the writing techniques used in the readings is added to group discussions, the free exchange of ideas and knowledge is encouraged. If, as they discover them, students are then encouraged to analyze what they have learned by creating a journal that organizes the writing techniques, that encouragement is enhanced, and what they have learned is more likely to move from the STM to the LTM and then transfer to other courses.

Atkinson et. al. state that learning is often accomplished through repetition. The peer critiques enhanced by incorporating genre theory provide an opportunity for that repetition. Peer critiques that include genre theory also provide an opportunity for students to examine the elements they see in fellow students' writing and to determine whether those elements fit the situation surrounding the writing. This thinking process is then deposited into their LTM. Then, by utilizing Popken and Bizzell's understanding of genre as
"filtered" through purpose and situation they soon learn that all writing is influenced by the situation from which and for which it is created.

The third element of active learning is the journal. A journal provides an opportunity for students to use active recall in combination with analysis. They can write down what they have discovered and what they are struggling with. If they are encouraged to review their journals at the end of the class and write a final entry that discusses what they have learned and what still confuses them, they may have that in the fore of their consciousness as they continue their education.

The application of genre theory in FYC will not teach students discipline specific writing. It will, however, prepare them to see that there are similarities and differences in writing styles, syntax, and documentation both within disciplines and across them. It may also provide them with a means of determining which of the writing skills they have learned will apply to their new writing situations. This laying of the groundwork for future learning of specific writing requirements can help students adapt to new writing requirements easier and remain more fully focused on course content. Thus, genre
enhanced FYC courses can increase transfer of "Learned" skills, enhance the potential learning curve and decrease student stress. Including genre theory does not measurably add to the work load of FYC instructors because it is not taught as a separate study and if fully incorporated, students' awareness of the various "ways to write" both in the academic arena and in the world beyond will surely be enhanced.
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