To Teach Reading and Writing Well: "Genre Awareness" in Basic Writing

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To Teach Reading and Writing Well: "Genre Awareness" in Basic Writing

(TITLE)

BY

Tara Peck

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that a “genre awareness” approach should be implemented into basic writing instruction because it enables students to unpack ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres that basic writing students read and write. Because basic writing students often have little to no prior knowledge reading and writing in academic genres, instructors should teach basic writing students how to broaden their understanding of reading and writing to include readers, writer, context, and text; even more, instructors should teach basic writing students to see the connection between the larger scene and situations in which genres arise. My argument’s foundation stems from a discussion about basic writing scholarship and research in regards to teaching genre and reading and writing and my own findings from my research study. I end this thesis by providing suggestions for basic writing instructors to use when implementing a “genre awareness” approach in their basic writing courses.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis began as an attempt to answer questions that formed concurrently in three different contexts: as I taught “genre awareness” and the reading-writing connection in first-year composition, as I observed basic writing instructors conference with their students in the adjunct office we shared, and as I completed a graduate independent study about teaching developmental reading.

In fall 2015, I watched my first-year composition students struggle and grow as writers who were beginning to understand writing as a communicative act between writer and reader, one which involves creating and gathering meaning from writer, audience, context, and even more, the text itself. This relationship was often an object of discussion in class, and a few of my students soon caught onto the notion well enough that they mouthed the term “audience” with me when I said it. To encourage my students to think more critically about how reader, writer, context, and text work together, I assigned a genre analysis near the end of the semester, which I took from Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres, a first-year composition textbook written by rhetorical genre scholars Amy Devitt, Mary Jo Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi. The genre analysis required that they analyze an everyday genre that they were interested in by delving into questions about the scene, situation, patterns, and pattern variations of the genre in order to understand what those patterns revealed about the genre’s users’ ideologies and beliefs. In effect, the genre analysis taught students the methodology for unlocking hidden ideologies of texts that influenced them beforehand without knowing it—from 1960s tractor manuals to resumes, from rap lyrics to international soccer league
websites. Their initial difficulties of understanding rhetorical genre and moving to the level of analysis expected of them stemmed from feelings of frustration to pride. I cannot say that this activity entirely altered my students’ thinking about reading and writing, but it was influential to them, and I believe it gave them another tool to use when creating and understanding meaning in texts. For example, one of my students mentioned he learned that the rap lyrics he analyzed contained oppressive ideas about women; another student said the heavy metal lyrics he analyzed held political undertones; and, another mentioned that the 1960s tractor manuals he analyzed were written with the expectation that the farmers who used them were busy in the fields and had little time to read them thoroughly. While this assignment was certainly difficult, with guidance, they were able to successfully fulfill the requirements. Hearing the pride in some of my students’ voices when they told me what they learned from the assignment helped me realize how beneficial this activity was in facilitating critical thinking and independence when approaching texts.

While I was instructing my first-year composition students, I was also interacting with adjunct faculty who taught basic writing. Because our office had limited space, I often overheard conversations between the instructors and their students, and the instructors and I also discussed different pedagogical methods they used for teaching basic writing. Much of what I observed and heard was skills based to help the students improve their writing at the sentence and paragraph level, which made sense since basic writing students need focused attention in those areas. Yet, I came to wonder if another strategy could also benefit basic writing
students—namely, teaching “genre awareness,” a term coined by Amy Devitt, which she outlines in *Writing Genres* as “a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms” (192). Could “genre awareness” be taught in basic writing to enhance students’ creation and understanding of meaning when they write and read in an academic setting? Even more, could “genre awareness” provide basic writing students with the dexterity to move in and out of familiar and unfamiliar writing spaces and encourage them to meaningfully act in these spaces?

Similar to first-year composition, the basic writing classroom is a place where students also grapple with meaning making—where they learn about the world through reading and writing and reflect about themselves as students and participants in larger communities. But basic writing students have a larger hurdle to jump when learning academic writing because they sometimes have little to no prior experience with academic discourse and must confront the frustrations of expanding their knowledge, treading into unknown territory. They receive evaluations on their ability to write and read, especially in their ability to write coherent sentences and organized, unified paragraphs using “correct” Standard English grammar, but they’re also confronting another difficulty—genre. Genres hold power over readers and writers; they often constrain and limit students and expose their errors, and often students do not even realize that their errors stem from a lack of understanding about genre. However, explicit teaching of rhetorical genre can liberate students and expose them to new ways of thinking. “Genre awareness” enables students to understand why, how, and when to employ certain
strategies when reading and writing, and teaching "genre awareness" in an academic setting equips students with knowledge of how to analyze academic and everyday genres that they will encounter throughout their academic career and beyond. Certainly, this is a concept all writers and readers should have exposure to.

Still, I questioned if "genre awareness" would be too difficult of a concept to teach in basic writing when students primarily learn about basic writing skills. Even though I firmly believed students in basic writing should be exposed to concepts taught in first-year composition (and the WPA Outcomes Statement—a document that lists national learning objectives for first-year composition—includes "genre" as a learning objective for first-year composition), the small amount of scholarship and research associated with genre in basic writing made me pause. Nonetheless, during my developmental reading course, I came across Nicole Voge’s ideas about teaching contexts in developmental reading: what he calls, "top-down processes of meaning making in which readers use whole text and contextual aspects of the reading situation to comprehend or analyze a text" (82). He argues that "writing, rhetorical purposes, text structures and genre are all socially determined, and all influence the criteria by which competence of reading is judged" (83). After reading Voge’s argument that these ideas should be taught at the developmental level in reading courses, I decided to extend his argument to a basic writing class where instructors link the reading-writing connection to Devitt’s concept of "genre awareness" to encourage students to begin thinking about the hidden ideologies and beliefs inherent in the texts they read and write in an academic setting and beyond—because in order for instructors to teach writing well, writing should be
taught as a reciprocal communicative act between writer and reader, a communicative act always influenced by genre.

In the following chapters, I discuss basic writing scholarship and research, explain emerging patterns from my own research, and argue that basic writing instructors should use a "genre awareness" approach in their basic writing courses. More specifically, in Chapter 1, I open this thesis by presenting prior scholarship and research about basic writing, genre, and the reading-writing connection. Then, in Chapter 2, I explain my research methodology and discuss emerging patterns from my research findings about the following research questions: what do developmental educators currently teach in regards to the reading-writing connection and genre, and how do they implement that instruction in their basic writing, developmental reading, and developmental integrated reading and writing courses? Finally, in Chapter 3, I conclude this thesis by arguing for teaching "genre awareness" in basic writing, and I provide suggestions to guide instructors in their ability to effectively implement a "genre awareness" approach into their basic writing courses.
Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advances in Understandings in Rhetorical Genre: Bakhtin and Miller

An entire historical overview of the development of rhetorical genre from antiquity to today is not needed for this thesis (see Writing Genres by Devitt and Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy by Bawarshi and Reiff for excellent overviews of this topic), yet it is necessary to discuss two foundational genre scholars who helped shape current rhetorical understandings of genre: M.M. Bakhtin and Carolyn Miller.

Bakhtin influenced the study of genre by arguing that the term “genre” encompasses not only literary genres, since genre studies primarily focused on literary genres at the time, but also everyday language and the conventional formats of utterances in speech. By arguing that speech genres should seriously be studied, Bakhtin moves understandings of genre into the realm of the everyday, where “these utterances reflect the very specific conditions and goals of each such area through their content (thematic) and linguistic style [...] but above all, through their compositional structure” (60). Even more, Bakhtin separates these speech genres into two separate categories: primary and secondary (62). Primary genres take place in “unmediated speech communion,” meaning they form without other influences, and secondary genres “absorb and digest” primary genres. Examples of secondary genres include “novels, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so on” (62). Separating genres into primary and secondary genres advanced rhetorical understandings of genre by giving the terminology in which to
study how one genre informs and influences another in everyday situations. By articulating these two major ideas, Bakhtin brought them into importance for genre studies and expanded ideas about what the term “genre” actually encompasses and what types of meaning those speech genres hold; he showed that genres inherently hold meaning, and to study genre means to study the meaning making of communication entrenched in our everyday lives.

Carolyn Miller also moved the conversation from literary genres to everyday genres. Even more, in her foundational article, “Genre as Social Action,” she defines genre in terms of recurring, ever-changing situations in which certain groups act together; genre, she explains, “refers to a conventional category of discourse based in large-scale typification of rhetorical action; as action, it acquires meaning from situation and from the social context in which that situation arose” (163). This notion that genre evolves and receives new meaning from the context in which its arises moves the study of genre from genre as a classification system based on specific forms to genre based on users—their needs, the context in which they write and read, and the ideologies and beliefs that come from a group of people acting in similar ways in response to a situation. Although genres still contain conventions, and it is easiest to know them by those forms, the importance of Miller’s work shows that generic conventions develop because of the users and the rhetorical situation. Instead of conventions defining genre, users and context define genre.

**Genre Pedagogies: Conventions, Rhetorical Genre, and “Genre Awareness”**

A variety of pedagogical approaches exist for implementing genre instruction in the writing classroom. Bawarshi and Reiff, two rhetorical genre scholars, list
three main approaches to genre instruction and explain that these approaches to
instruction differ according to the theoretical approach that instructors follow: the
Sydney School provides models of the genres, “explicates the features of those
genres,” and then asks students to write in those genres; the Brazilian model asks
students to write in genres “based on writers’ previous knowledge and experience,”
moves into rhetorical analysis of those genres, then asks students to write in those
genres; and, the New Rhetoric, or Rhetorical Genre Studies, teaches students first “to
critically consider genres and their rhetorical and social purposes and ideologies”
before performing “a more specific analysis of lexico-grammatical elements within
the text” (176–177). These approaches differ by the emphasis each places on
conventions versus rhetorical purposes, and they also differ in their methods of
asking students to write in or about genres.

This thesis focuses on The New Rhetoric, or rhetorical genre studies, which
brings in conversations about the rhetorical situations of genres instead of merely
teaching form. Just as importantly, rhetorical genre studies (RGS) teaches students
to think critically about the creation of genres and the importance of genre users; it
encourages instructors to teach “why” genres consist of certain features. Instead of
simply focusing on whether a student writes correctly in a generic form, rhetorical
genre studies asks students to understand larger concepts in order to choose how to
read and write within a certain genre. As Bawarshi and Reiff state, “the challenge for
RGS” is “how, that is, we can teach genres in ways that maintain their complexity
and their status as more than just typified rhetorical features” (189). In essence, it
provides students with a larger repertoire of knowledge and skills to draw from in
various writing situations by encouraging students to widen their understanding of
generic forms and to transfer that knowledge to other writing situations.

Rhetorical genre studies also places a heavy emphasis on teaching students
"critical awareness" (Bawarshi and Reiff 197) of genres because difficulties can
occur when students learn to write in various generic forms. While teaching genre
to students encourages them to look beyond surface-level forms, it has the potential
to cage students into thinking that they cannot question forms when they read and
write; it can potentially make students feel constrained and teach them to only work
within the ideological frames set for them. In reaction to this, Rhetorical Genre
Studies approaches also argue that instructors need to be “critical in their uses of
genre and to teach this critical awareness to students. To recognize genres as
socially situated and culturally embedded is to recognize that genres carry with
them the beliefs, values and ideologies of particular communities and
cultures”(197). Teaching genre rhetorically encourages students to think beyond
face-value learning into a deeper understanding of the implications of reading and
writing in genres based on inherent ideologies and beliefs.

More specifically, though, this thesis argues for Amy Devitt’s innovative
approach to teaching rhetorical genre—“genre awareness”—which she defines as “a
critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic
forms” (Writing Genres 192) where explicit teaching of the “purposes of those forms
and their potential ideological effects” overrides explicit teaching of generic forms
(195). “Genre awareness” brings genre theory into practice by teaching students
strategies for analyzing and critiquing genres. Whereas some approaches teach
students to analyze genres simply for their form in order for students to reproduce texts in that exact form (as seen by the Sydney School), a “genre awareness” approach explicitly teaches students how to approach texts, but it does not instruct students in exactly what to include. In this way, students gain an understanding of genre wherein they analyze generic conventions rhetorically in order to break them, as Devitt explains: “The goals of teaching genre awareness are for students to understand the intricate connections between contexts and forms, to perceive potential ideological effects of genres, and to discern both constraints and choices that genres make possible” (198). Through “genre awareness” pedagogy, students learn that genres can both liberate and constrain, and when interacting with texts, they can make deliberate moves as readers and writers to decode and construct meaning.

A “genre awareness” approach focuses on explicit instruction in unpacking the rhetorical situation and ideologies inherent in genres because students automatically engage with hidden ideologies and beliefs in genres when they interact with texts. Instead of teaching generic forms for each genre students encounter—and in doing so, creating a dependent relationship between student and teacher where the students rely on the teachers to explicate how to write in new genres—instructors explicitly teach strategies for approaching texts rhetorically. Otherwise, students’ abilities to navigate new scenes and situations in which genres are used is limited, as Devitt argues:

By the time one has learned to perform a genre, one is already inducted into its ideology. If teachers are to help minimize the
Thus, teaching “genre awareness” as Devitt outlines helps minimize the negative ideological effects of those genres by allowing students to analyze the conventions that arise from rhetorical situations and purposes. By knowing how the rhetorical situation and users influence genres, students can see how their own cultural and generic understandings align or clash with those they are reading and writing, and with this awareness, they can decide whether they want to follow or push away from those ideologies. Essentially, they learn how to meaningfully act within the scenes and situations in which they encounter genres.

Furthermore, students can minimize ideological effects every time they read and write because “genre awareness” teaches explicit strategies where students can use their prior analytical skills in new situations. Indeed, anytime students work with language, they can use their knowledge from a “genre awareness” approach, as Devitt states: “Students learn strategies for learning that might apply in any context in which they encounter genres—in other words, in any context in which they encounter language” (198). A “genre awareness” approach teaches students strategies to analyze language in any scene and situation they encounter, which works well when transferring knowledge from one reading and writing scene to the next. She explains, “If each writing problem were to require a completely new
assessment of how to respond, writing would be slowed considerably, but once a
writer recognizes a recurring situation, a situation that others have responded to in
the past, the writer’s response to that situation can be guided by past responses”
(15). Instead of approaching each text anew, students can utilize their prior
experience working with genres to tackle new texts in the future, and they can use
their analytical skills gained from their last genre analysis to approach new ones
independently, relying on the teacher only when necessary.

Even though everyday scenes, situations, and genres are critically important
for rhetorical genre studies and a “genre awareness approach” advocates for explicit
instruction in strategies for transferring knowledge to any reading and writing
situation, instructors need to teach students how to critically approach genres that
they use in the academy, since students encounter these genres every time they
complete work for their classes. A “genre awareness” approach recognizes the
powerful influence of academic scenes that students read and write in, one among
them being the very classroom in which they learn how to perform a genre analysis.
By recognizing that academic genres limit or enable students to succeed in college,
this approach urges instructors to analyze various academic genres, especially those
that instructors include in their specific classrooms because effective genre
instruction relies on teachers’ abilities to understand their own ideologies and
beliefs inherent in the genres they assign and to explicitly teach these in their
classes. Devitt states, “The first and most important genre pedagogy, then, is the
teacher’s genre awareness: the teacher being conscious of the genre decisions he or
she makes and what those decisions will teach students” (“Teaching Critical Genre
Awareness” 343). When instructors are aware of the choices they make in their classrooms and share that knowledge with their students, they open up a space for learning about ideologies and beliefs that students may not have been conscious of before. Because these ideologies and beliefs inculcate learning every day, students need to be aware of that influence. Thus, in addition to encouraging analysis of everyday genres, a “genre awareness” approach also urges instructors and students to engage in dialogue and analysis of academic genres (e.g., syllabi, assignment sheets, lesson plans, peer review sheets) in order to teach a critical awareness of how to act within various scenes and situations they encounter in the academy.

**Teaching the Reading-Writing Connection**

Teaching reading in writing courses has gained traction in recent years, and the reasoning behind teaching reading in writing courses is evident: they are two sides of the same coin. Reading and writing are both about dialogue, meaning making, and communication. Cyclical by nature, they inform each other. As developmental reading instructors David Rothman and Jilani Warsi note, “Reading is about input; writing is about output” (Pearson English). Students gather ideas from reading that they in turn write down, which are then read by an audience. Teaching reading and writing together has many benefits. It shows how both function as parts of a conversation and opens up discussions about the social nature of writing: “exposing learners to both sides of the literacy process provides an understanding of the social and communicative nature of literacy” (El-Hindi 11). Reading and writing are also tools for discovery: “Writing, because of its heuristic, generative, and recursive nature, allows students to write their way into reading and to
discover that reading shares much in common with writing, that reading, too, is an act of composing" (Zamel 463). Reading and writing also act as methods of meaning making: “Both practices of reading and writing involve the construction—or composition—of meaning” (Carillo 5).

Even more, Sugie Goen and Helen Gillotte-Tropp—implementers of the integrated reading and writing program at San Francisco State University—note that reading enables students to write well and vis-à-vis: “Mounting evidence that students’ performance on the reading portion of the test disproportionately accounts for their placement in basic writing classes, suggesting that students’ difficulty constructing meaning from texts may be a significant source of their difficulty constructing meaning in texts” (91). Teaching reading and writing together exposes students to the communicative nature of language. Instead of viewing reading and writing as separate entities, students can learn that reading and writing work together in the process of decoding and creating meaning for communication. Explicit instruction about the connection between reading and writing widens students’ understandings about what it means to read and write; in the classroom, this is very important because students often believe that if they can understand the readings’ content and then regurgitate that information in writing, they “got it.” In order for students to understand how context, writer, reader, and text all work together, students need to broaden their understandings to the larger social implications of reading and writing texts. In order to do so, students need to understand that they bring their own cultural and social meanings to their reading
and writing that may align with or differ from the ideologies of the genres they read and write.

**Contextualizing Basic Writing: Marginalized and Stigmatized**

Attempts to define basic writing since the 1960s to today have resulted in the realization that it lacks a concrete definition. From one institution to the next, basic writing programs and basic writing students differ drastically. For example, in her book, *Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing as Yale and Harvard*, Kelly Ritter describes her experience teaching three very distinct basic writing classes, where her students fit along a wide spectrum, from basic writers who she could see “easily enrolling in the standard first-year writing course, if not Honors or accelerated English” at a “less socially stratified university” to second-language learners, to basic writers who “probably more closely resembled what most teachers, students, and the general public picture when conjuring an image of basic writing” (2-3). The underlying message of her book shows just how location-dependent basic writing is because, for example, basic writing programs at Yale and Harvard vary drastically from basic writing at a two-year community college in a rural town.

Even with basic writing’s contextually dependent nature, basic writing scholars have tried to pinpoint places of convergence about what basic writing is and does. In order to do so, some scholars have tried to define basic writing by what it is not, as Otte and Mlynarczyk, authors of *Basic Writing*, explain: “The key to understanding basic writers lies not in what they are but in what they have not yet become” (57). For instance, basic writers have not yet become skilled enough to enter first-year composition, and thus their identity becomes linked to what they
have not achieved. This idea of creating an identity based on “norts” exposes a group of students whose identities in the university are stigmatized and marginalized. Before Shaughnessy coined the term “basic writing” in the 1970s, Yale created a group in the 1920s named “Yales’ Awkward Squad” with the intent to provide additional, remedial instruction to students who did not meet the standards of freshman composition (Ritter 7). Although Shaughnessy’s work in the 1970s is often known as the beginning of institutionalized basic writing programs, basic writing was around for many years before then, often on the outskirts of formal, college-level education.

Significantly, the coining of the term “basic writing” by Shaughnessy in the 1970s came during open admissions when students were placed in basic writing because they were “so far behind the others in their formal education that they appeared to have little chance of catching up” (Shaughnessy 2). According to Shaughnessy, this group of students were “true outsiders” (2), and their identities were linked to their inability to write “correctly” in the university—in essence, their identities were linked to error. As Otte and Mlynarczyk explain, one instructor defined basic writing as “that kind of student writing which disturbs, threatens, or causes despair in traditional English faculty members” (55). By this definition, even though basic writing students differ dramatically, they all, in some form, do not fit traditional academic standards.

Notably, while basic writing students are often marginalized for their perceived errors, they are also mainly taught by contingent faculty, which is “part of the ongoing structural reality that marginalized students are served by marginalized
faculty and programs” (Otte and Mlynarczyk 61). In 2007, only 25% of basic writing courses and 20% of developmental reading courses at community colleges were taught by full-time faculty (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, and Davis 3). Kezar and Maxey, authors of an online magazine for the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, explain that the working conditions for non-tenure track faculty may negatively affect student education: “Institutions have often not considered how their faculty policies and practices—and the working conditions encountered by adjuncts, particularly those working part time—may carry deeply troubling implications for student learning, equal-employment opportunities and nondiscrimination, and risk management.” Kezar and Maxey continue by providing the following as some of the poor working conditions that marginalize contingent faculty: “poor hiring and recruitment practices, limited job security, inequitable salaries and access to benefits, lack of orientation, professional developmental, and formal evaluation, no involvement in curriculum planning and faculty meetings, and lack of office space, clerical support, and instructional materials.” When only 25% of basic writing courses are taught by full-time faculty members, these working conditions directly affect marginalized students in basic writing, often limiting their ability to succeed because contingent faculty often do not have access to the resources needed for effective instruction.

The inability of basic writing scholars to come to a consensus about a concrete definition and mission for basic writing has played into its marginalized status, which still persists today. As Otte and Mlynarczyk note,
The stigmata of remediation, structurally integrated into basic writing from the start, persisted as issues of funding, staffing, and status. The struggle to achieve selfhood and respectability as a field included redefining the curriculum for the sake of the students improving their access and progress. But it never managed to redefine the way basic writing was marginalized. (42-43)

Since its formal creation at CUNY in the 1970s until now, basic writing has dealt with staff and budget cuts and attacks from critics that often come from a misunderstanding of what exactly basic writing is and does. While this thesis does not focus on current legislative mandates to accelerate basic writing programs in an attempt to increase graduation rates and decrease costs (for excellent overviews of this topic, see Lalicker’s article, “A Basic Introduction to Basic Writing Program Structures: A Baseline and Five Alternatives,” and also Otte and Mlynarczyk’s book Basic Writing), it is important to note that even today, basic writing struggles in the margins of academia. In effect, basic writing programs, students, and instructors all exist within a marginalized and stigmatized identity, which is essential for understanding my rationale in Chapter 3 for teaching “genre awareness” in basic writing.

**Moving Forward: Transitioning from BW Scholarship to My Research**

In this thesis, I propose that a “genre awareness” approach, which until now has been advocated for instruction at the first-year composition level and in more advanced courses, can greatly benefit student learning in basic writing. In this chapter specifically, I juxtaposed genre scholarship used for first-year composition
with the contextualized, marginalized, and stigmatized reality of basic writing. In the middle, I discussed the reading-writing connection as a means to bridge genre theory to basic writing because basic writing students’ difficulties in constructing meaning contextually and holistically when analyzing genres hinder their ability to write.

As I will discuss in Chapter 2, to better understand how instructors teach genre and the reading-writing connection, I conducted a research study that examines what developmental instructors teach in regards to genre and the reading-writing connection as well as how they implement that instruction, all while fully knowing that the responses in Chapter 2 reveal only a snippet of the actual reality of basic writing instruction, since the instructors who responded to my surveys most likely have the motivation, interest, and resources to invest time and energy into responding to a survey. Nonetheless, Chapter 2 provides a lens into the way that genre and reading-writing instruction are currently implemented in basic writing—rich research currently lacking in basic writing pedagogy—and provides an essential foundation for my argument in Chapter 3.
Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EMERGENT SURVEY PATTERNS

Methodology

As stated in Chapter 1, much has been discussed in terms of the reading-writing connection, but the connection between reading and writing to practical methods of teaching “genre awareness” in basic writing has not been discussed; furthermore, genre itself has received little attention in basic writing scholarship and research, which added to my need for a study in which I research current teaching of these concepts. To fill this gap, I created a research study that gathered information from college instructors currently teaching basic writing, developmental reading, or developmental integrated reading and writing in order to learn about current developmental instructors’ understandings about teaching genre and the reading-writing connection at the developmental level. Although the focus of this thesis is basic writing, I hoped to gain a broader understanding of the teaching of genre at the developmental level by surveying instructors who teach all three courses. My research for this study revolves around two main questions: what do developmental reading and writing instructors currently teach about genre and the reading-writing connection in their courses and how do they implement that instruction?

To collect information for this study, I sent surveys to two listservs: the WPA-L and the CBW-L. The WPA-L is the listserv for the Council of Writing Program Administrators, a “national association of college and university faculty with professional interests in directing writing programs.” Any professional interested in
this listserv can join, but the majority of comments in the discussion threads discuss writing pedagogy and administration. Participants range from graduate students seeking employment to well-known researchers in Composition and Rhetoric who have published scholarly articles and books in the field. Threads about reading, writing, and genre often appear, and the instructors who respond to these threads teach a variety of courses—e.g., first-year composition, basic writing, developmental reading, integrated reading-writing, English as a Second Language, advanced composition. The CBW-L is the listserv for the Council on Basic Writing, "an organization that advocates for students in Basic Writing and supports the professional endeavors of teachers, scholars, administrators, and students involved with Basic Writing." The CBW offers resources for instructors to improve the learning environment and instruction of basic writing. Participants in this listserv have a vested interest in basic writing, and while they may teach other courses as well, they make a concentrated effort to study basic writing pedagogy itself.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the patterns discussed in this chapter emerged from the survey research with instructors who voluntarily subscribed to the WPA-L and CBW-L, which means that the data provides information from instructors who most likely try to stay up to date on the latest research and discussions about composition pedagogy. Thus, while the patterns reveal very interesting trends, it is important to remember that the data favors instructors who likely have the motivation, interest, and resources to learn more about this subject.
On January 6, 2016, I sent an email message (outlined in Appendix D) to both listservs, requesting participants to respond by taking an online survey. I then sent a reminder to the WPA-L on January 19th, and my director, Dr. Terri Fredrick, sent another reminder to the WPA-L listserv on January 28th. In total, I received 24 survey responses from the two listservs: 20 from basic writing instructors, 2 from developmental reading instructors, and 2 from developmental integrated reading-writing instructors.

As shown in Table 1, all twenty-four respondents stated they currently teach or have recently taught the course that matches with their completed survey. Additionally, some of the instructors explain they teach courses from other surveys. For example, all twenty of the instructors who completed the basic writing survey state that they teach basic writing. Out of those twenty, one also teaches developmental reading and two also teach developmental integrated reading and writing. Numbers for instructors who note that they teach developmental reading and developmental reading and writing are also shown below in Table 1. (Tables in this chapter should be read from top to bottom. For example, to see the number of instructors who teach basic writing, find the section “Teaches BW,” then follow the information downward. The information adds together vertically.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Courses Taught</th>
<th>Teaches BW</th>
<th>Teaches DR</th>
<th>Teaches D-IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches DR in Addition to Survey Course</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches D-IRW in Addition to Survey Course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches BW in Addition to Survey Course</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Additional Course</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The surveys posed open-ended questions about participants' teaching of the reading-writing connection (questions 3–4) and genre (questions 5–8). The following is a list of these questions. (The complete surveys with responses are available in Appendices A, B, and C):

- Question 3: How do you teach/include reading in your basic writing course?
- Question 4: Do you explicitly teach the connection between reading and writing in your basic writing course? Please explain.
- Question 5: How do you teach genre in your basic writing course? Please explain.
- Question 6: What assignments specifically related to genre do you assign in your basic writing course?
- Question 7: How are the genre-related assignments sequenced?
- Question 8: Please provide additional comments about your understanding of the term genre and its relevance to your basic writing course.

Including two topics—genre and the reading-writing connection—in the same survey one right after another allowed me to see if they linked the two concepts together. The questions were sequenced in this order because I wanted to place the greatest emphasis on genre while still allowing instructors to participate in the topic that I thought they'd be more familiar with because of the existing scholarship on the topic: reading and writing. My goal was to see if they would connect both of these essential concepts together on their own; instead of explicitly stating the
importance of connecting these two topics, I wanted to see if others already understood it.

After the survey closed, I started coding the results to find emerging patterns. I created tag words that matched the main genre and reading-writing concepts discussed in scholarship as well as others that emerged from the survey itself. After I coded the results, another graduate assistant from my cohort, Jon Brown, who also completed a graduate course about Genre Theory and Pedagogy, coded the results using the tag words I identified, and together we discussed the results that now appear in Tables 1–9 in Appendix E. The following section discusses the emerging patterns most useful to this thesis. (To view all of the survey responses, see Appendices A, B, and C.)

Before analyzing each emerging pattern, I want to reiterate that these patterns appeared in a small survey; as such, the information is only a snippet of actual basic writing instruction. While instructors who did not complete the survey may have different opinions about basic writing instruction, these specific patterns are important because they represent the thinking of instructors who, by nature of their participation on the WPA-L and CBW-L, are more likely knowledgeable in composition and rhetoric pedagogy and who may be more up to date in pedagogical practices and theories than those instructors who do not participate in such listservs. The information collected in this survey may not include responses from contingent instructors who are marginalized in various ways in their instruction. Because many developmental courses are taught by instructors who receive
minimal training in basic writing pedagogy, awareness of these concepts is likely more limited than they appear in the survey.

The following is an analysis of the emerging patterns about teaching reading and writing in developmental courses, leading to an analysis of a continuum of approaches to teaching genre, which begins with no genre and continues to teaching a "genre awareness" approach. These patterns, while existing on various places on the spectrum, work together as building blocks towards laying the foundation for my argument in Chapter 3.

**Pattern 1: Reading and Writing: Included/Taught, Skills, and Rhetoric**

The first significant pattern that emerged from this study is that instructors do, in fact, include both reading and writing in their developmental courses, even if their approaches vary in their pedagogical methodologies. Indeed, twenty-three of the twenty-four respondents state that they teach and/or include reading and writing in their courses, as seen in Table 2. (For this pattern, I included responses that categorized into "Teaches/Includes Reading or Writing," "Teaches Reading or Writing Skills," and "Teaches Rhetorical Reading or Writing").

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: How Reading &amp; Writing Taught/Included</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>BR</th>
<th>D-IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't Teach/Include Reading or Writing/ Unclear/ Skipped</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches/Includes Reading or Writing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Reading or Writing Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Rhetorical Reading or Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I categorized responses into "Teaches/Includes" when instructors discuss reading and writing without mentioning teaching skills or rhetorical features. For example, the following response from a basic writing instructor shows an inclusion of reading
in basic writing without a skills-based or rhetorical approach: “We have students read essays and their own writing as well as others in the course through the peer review process.” Another example of a developmental reading instructor’s inclusion of writing without discussion of skills or rhetoric is the following: “As if it were a writing-across-the-curriculum course, with writing more in support of learning course materials, but with some direct instruction in writing.” This is an important distinction to make because, while almost all of the instructors realize that their courses should include reading and writing, their pedagogical methods differ significantly, with one being that they simply include them without explicit instruction of how to approach reading or writing.

As seen in Table 2, when instructors clearly teach reading and writing, their approaches seem to divide into two main groups: explicitly teaching reading and writing skills or teaching rhetorical reading and writing. I categorized responses into explicitly teaching skills for reading and writing when definitively stated: for example, one respondent explains, “I assign reading assignments, discuss specific reading strategies, and practice using those reading strategies with students.” I categorized responses as teaching rhetorical reading and writing when they teach reading and writing skills as well as rhetorical concepts, such as, “focus of course is responding to the ‘conversation’ which requires intensive ‘listening’ (aka, reading).”

Although only seven out of the twenty basic writing respondents note that they teach reading strategies or rhetorical reading, as seen in Table 2, when asked if they explicitly teach the reading-writing connection in their basic writing course,
twelve out of twenty basic writing instructors state that they explicitly teach the connection, as seen in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Explicitly Teach Reading-Writing Connection</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>DR</th>
<th>IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't Explicit Teach Connection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly Teaches Reading/Writing Skills Only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Connection: Reading Improves Writing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Connection: Rhetorical Reading and Writing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Connection: Both Reading Improves Writing and Rhetorical Reading and Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I categorized responses into teaching the connection as reading and writing improves performance when they discussed direct benefits between reading and writing: for instance, one respondent explains, “I mention throughout the class that good writers are good readers.” I categorized responses into teaching the connection by explaining how reading and writing are communicative acts when they include rhetorical features, such as, “yes—using Bazerman’s ‘conversation metaphor’ as the foundation, we focus on writing as contributing to conversations begun in prior readings.”

Responses show that teaching the reading-writing connection occurs less often than simply teaching or including reading and writing in these developmental courses (since 24 respondents said they teach/include reading, and only 15 respondents said they teach the reading-writing connection). This means that, although teachers seem to realize that reading and writing work together (either by truly understanding this concept or somehow intuitively combining them), they do not always take that next step of explaining their significance to students. Perhaps
they assume that students already understand that reading and writing are connected.

This first emerging pattern works well when compared to the teaching of genre in these developmental courses because, similar to the teaching of reading and writing as skills versus rhetoric, the teaching of genre also divides along distinct form versus rhetoric lines.

**Pattern 2: Genre at the Developmental Level**

The most significant pattern that emerged from my study is the instructors’ beliefs that genre is important to teach in basic writing, developmental reading, and developmental integrated reading and writing, as seen in Table 4. Sixteen out of twenty-four respondents state that they teach genre at the developmental level, a higher level than I anticipated. In Pattern 3, I discuss their differing approaches, but for this pattern, it is important to simply note that genre itself is viewed as an important concept to teach at the developmental level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: How Instructors Teach Genre</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>DR</th>
<th>IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Genre/Unclear/Skipped</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Modes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Conventions Only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Rhetorical Genre</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Awareness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One respondent argued, “Genres are the best way to teach basic writing being that they give nascent writers who have never seen or written any of the genres we assign patterns to begin with.” Another noted, “Genre is highly relevant. It’s related to the basic rhetorical concepts of subject, purpose, and audience.” Yet another
explained, "I see the need for teaching genre at this level as a way of demystifying writing." A developmental reading instructor noted, "Students can understand what they read better by identifying genre and can communicate better as writers and be more likely to transfer practice in both reading and writing if they know to consider genre as indicative to purpose." And, along the same lines of my argument that I will raise in Chapter 3, another instructor argues,

I have taught basic writing at many institutions across the US, each with a different name and a different course description. The more BW is integrated with and NOT SEPARATED FROM traditional first-year composition courses, the more successful BW will be in allowing students to succeed. In other words, if genre proves relevant for first-year writing courses, then genre also ought to be integrated into BW courses. (Emphasis added)

All of these instructors show the relevance of teaching genre at the developmental level, and the study confirms that many instructors already teach genre in their developmental courses.

However, while many instructors teach genre, this study shows that instructors differ in their approaches. Because I received so few developmental reading and developmental integrated reading and writing surveys, I do not include them in the following discussions about pedagogical approaches although the answers do provide illuminating support to the basic writing responses.
Pattern 3: Pedagogical Approaches—Genre Conventions versus Rhetorical Genre

As discussed in Chapter 1, two main approaches to teaching genre include teaching genre conventions and teaching genre rhetorically. This study shows that instructors are almost equally divided about these approaches. The first approach lends itself to teaching patterns that students mimic in order to produce writing in a given genre; the second teaches patterns with the goal of asking students to learn about rhetorical concepts associated with the patterns. For example, an instructor who teaches genre conventions only might teach a resume as the main components—objective, education, work experience, volunteer work—without explaining why those components are included in a resume and how students can change the form according to audience, whereas an instructor who teaches rhetorical genre would teach the form with a goal of teaching students the social and rhetorical nature of genres.

As seen in Table 4, instructors’ responses seem to reveal an even divide among basic writing instructors between teaching genre conventions and teaching rhetorical genre. Responses from developmental reading and developmental reading and writing instructors are too few to reveal patterns among respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: How Instructors Teach Genre</th>
<th>EW</th>
<th>DR</th>
<th>IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Genre/Unclear/Skipped</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Modes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Conventions Only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Rhetorical Genre</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Awareness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I categorized instructors into teaching genre conventions if they explain that they teach a variety of genres and discuss patterns associated with those genres without discussion about rhetorical concepts. It is possible that these instructors may teach rhetorical concepts, but their survey answers only show that they claim to teach genre conventions. For instance, one instructor notes, “I have students write in different genres.” Another explains, “I assign texts about genre [and] have students practice reading and writing in different genres.” The goals of these instructors seems to include exposure to a variety of writing forms basic writing students will likely encounter and realization that patterns exist in different writing situations.

Instructors who teach rhetorical genre also have similar learning goals to those who teach genre conventions, but they extend their approach to teaching why those patterns occur and they explain that their purpose in teaching genre is for transfer. I placed responses into this category when they discuss rhetorical concepts, such as, “genre arising from audience and expectation” and “genres are forms of communication that groups use to fulfill their purposes.” Instructors’ goals are apparent in their responses. They want their students to realize that writing is a form of communication and that their writing matters. For instance, one instructor explains, “I am often frustrated by the false genres that students have been taught to write in school. In my basic writing class, I try to get students thinking about how readers respond to their writing.” Instructors also desire for students to become more skilled critical thinkers, as seen in this response: “[Genre] also helps students to start to take apart why some texts/ideas are more trustworthy than others and why understanding where a source comes from and who says it should influence the
extent to which we trust something because it is printed on a page, and they need to learn that they should be skeptical and curious about what they are reading.” Rather than only teaching genre as textual conventions, these instructors teach genre as user-based patterns of communication created rhetorically.

Significantly, this study shows that some instructors believe their basic writing course is a space where genre can be taught as a way to encourage critical thinking; at least half of the instructors believe that teaching rhetorical genre in basic writing is important.

**Pattern 4: Ideals versus Reality**

As seen in Pattern 3, teachers almost equally divided into two main pedagogical approaches: genre conventions and rhetorical genre. If they do not fit within these two approaches, I categorized them as teaching modes or not teaching genre. Nonetheless, their answers to the questions about their assignments revealed another pattern where instructors’ assignments often do not align with their pedagogical philosophies of genre—perhaps this shows when reality and ideals diverge.

The majority of responses to question #6—asking participants what assignments specifically related to genre they assign—reveal that most basic writing instructors assign writing and activities that teach genre conventions, not rhetorical genre, as seen in Tables 5 and 7.
I categorized their responses to this question according to whether or not they discuss their assignments in terms of rhetorical purposes. Some answers were vague: for example stating, “All of them.” Instead of reading into their answer and thinking that they teach rhetorical genre, I categorized these answers into genre conventions. Most responses simply listed their assignments, such as, “Personal statement, review, research-based argument.” These were also put into the category of genre convention because they lacked connection to rhetorical purposes. Others were more obvious, as seen with this statement: “We discuss different ways of organizing a paper.”

The fact that the instructors’ claims about genre and their actual assignments differ can be explained in two ways: instructors may hope to teach rhetorical genre but it may be difficult to realistically do so or the question’s simplicity may have caused instructors to simply write the assignment without mentioning the method.
in which they teach those assignments. Moreover, teachers may assign tasks that require students to mimic genre conventions, but class discussions may provide space for students to learn about the rhetorical purposes inherent in those genres.

**Pattern 5: Academic versus Everyday Genres**

While Patterns 3 and 4 discuss the number of instructors who advocate for teaching genre at the developmental level and show how those approaches divide between teaching conventions and teaching genre rhetorically, another pattern emerged about the actual type of genres that instructors teach—that is, whether they teach a variety of academic and everyday genres or if they solely teach academic genres in their basic writing courses.

As seen in Table 6, basic writing instructors divide almost evenly between teaching a variety of genres and academic genres in their responses to Question #6 about the assignments specifically related to genre that they assign. I categorized responses into “Teaches Variety of Genres” when instructors list everyday and academic genres in their responses or when they include words such as “different genres.” While the instructors who discuss “different genres” could certainly mean different academic genres, I concluded that the response meant academic and everyday genres. For example, I categorized the following response into teaching a variety of genres: “I have students write a narrative, a faq sheet, an amazon review, a research paper, a complaint letter, and write blog posts.” On the other hand, responses were categorized into teaching academic genres when they simply stated “all genres.” An example of a response categorized into teaching academic genres is the following: “All of the assignments.” I also categorized responses into teaching
academic genres only when the genres listed were only essays, such as, "We write a narrative, a cultural analysis, and a persuasive essay." Table 6 shows that eight out of twenty basic writing instructors claim to teach a variety of genres and nine out of twenty respondents state that they teach academic genres—an almost even split.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Assignments Specifically Related to Genre</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>DR</th>
<th>IRW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Genre/ Unclear/ Skipped</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Variety of Genres</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Academic Genres Only</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This emerging pattern is interesting because a "genre awareness" approach encourages analysis of everyday and academic genres. But, as stated in Chapter 1, analyzing different academic genres alone can be incredibly fruitful for instruction in basic writing, and it is important for students to understand the ideologies and beliefs existing within academic scenes.

**Pattern 6: "Genre Awareness" in Basic Writing**

In Pattern 3, I included responses that I categorized into a "genre awareness" approach; in this section, I discuss that category in more detail because "genre awareness" goes beyond teaching genre conventions or rhetorical genre; it moves into a strategic tool that students acquire to make meaning of scenes, situations, and genres. Even more, it encourages students to critically analyze genres to unpack users' (potentially) hidden ideologies and beliefs inherent in those texts. I categorized responses into "genre awareness" if they mention teaching rhetorical purposes as a tool for current and future writing tasks, especially if that tool is analysis of a text in order for students to produce their own writing. For example,
one instructor, when responding about assignments they assign in basic writing, states, “Students analyze and produce different genres, and talk about rhetorical decisions in the production of different genres.” This statement moves beyond teaching genre rhetorically to a “genre awareness” tool because the instructor requires that students perform a rhetorical analysis of a genre in order to produce that genre—a method in which students can learn to apply to various writing situations.

Responses in this study can be categorized into a “genre awareness approach” very sparingly. Only responses to Questions #6 and #8 include statements that I categorized into “genre awareness.” As seen in Table 5, for Question #6, only one basic writing instructor out of twenty claims to teach assignments with a “genre awareness” approach; for Question #8, only three out of twenty basic writing responses align with “genre awareness,” as seen in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Assignments Specifically Related to Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Genre/ Unclear/ Skipped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Conventions Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Rhetorical Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Additional Comments about Understanding of Term and Its Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Teach Genre/ Unclear/ Skipped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genres Conventions Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Rhetorical Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches Genre Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the responses that show a "genre awareness" approach mention teaching genre rhetorically in order for students to better understand how to encounter future writing situations, and one even specifically mentions, "I use Amy Devitt." These responses show that, while most instructors do not implement a "genre awareness" approach, a few instructors believe that "genre awareness" can and should be taught at the developmental level, a foundational idea for my argument in Chapter 3.

**Why These Patterns Matter for "Genre Awareness" in Basic Writing**

The emerging patterns from this research study add to basic writing scholarship and research already published for basic writing pedagogy because it shows how developmental instructors currently teach the reading-writing connection in relation to genre in their courses. Furthermore, these survey responses show that pedagogical approaches to teaching genre and the reading-writing connection differ. While almost all of the instructors teach or include reading and writing in their developmental courses and the majority of instructors also teach genre, approaches divide between skills and conventions-based instruction and instruction about rhetorical features. Furthermore, instruction about everyday versus academic genres seems to divide almost evenly among respondents.

The foundation of this thesis relies on the idea that reading and writing are communicative acts where meaning making is created through the relationship between readers, writer, context, and text. When reading, writing, and genre instruction includes only teaching skills and forms without rhetorical purposes, this
foundational idea of language as communication is lost. One respondent’s answer illuminates this idea well:

I think the most important issue at this level is that students even start to imagine that others would care about reading what they have written and that the purpose of their writing is communicating something that they care about themselves. These notions are somewhat independent of genre, but genres are tools for finding ways to reach audiences and meet their needs.

Even more, however, when reading, writing, and genre instruction are limited to skills and form, the ability of students to decode ideologies and beliefs that affect their capacity to read and write in various scenes and situations is limited. As I have already stated in Chapter 1 and will expand upon in Chapter 3, I argue that, to teach reading and writing well, a “genre awareness” approach should be implemented in basic writing instruction in order to expose students to the powerful ideologies and beliefs that have the potential to constrain or liberate them while writing and reading. In essence, students need instruction about the social nature of reading and writing, the act of communication and meaning making brought together at the point of contact where users’ ideologies and beliefs inherent in texts collide with or mesh with the students’. This instruction relies heavily on teaching students strategies of how to approach both academic and everyday genres.

In Chapter 3, I combine basic writing scholarship and research with my own findings to argue for the implementation of a “genre awareness” approach in basic
writing. Additionally, I provide suggestions and instructional materials to aid in effectively implementing a "genre awareness" approach in basic writing.
Chapter 3

“GENRE AWARENESS” IN BASIC WRITING: RATIONALE AND SUGGESTIONS

Could It Work?: “Genre Awareness” in Basic Writing

As I mentioned in the Introduction, this thesis began as an exploration to see if ideas from three concurrent experiences could combine into one instructional method in basic writing. As I taught genre analysis in my first-year composition class, observed adjunct faculty in our shared office at Parkland Community College, and completed a graduate independent study about developmental reading, I wondered if “genre awareness” could enhance instruction in basic writing courses. As this thesis evolved, it became apparent that a “genre awareness” approach not only could work in basic writing but would work—and it would greatly benefit basic writing students when they read and write in present and future writing situations. However, as seen in Chapter 2, pedagogical approaches to teaching genre in basic writing are divided, and very few instructors teach “genre awareness” in basic writing. In this chapter, I argue that to teach reading and writing well, basic writing instructors must teach their students to have an awareness that reading and writing are communicative acts where writers, readers, context, and text all affect meaning. A “genre awareness” approach teaches this concept and also provides strategies for analyzing ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres, which I contend is essential to basic writing pedagogy because of its marginalized, stigmatized, and highly contextualized position.
Politics in the Academy: “Critical Consciousness” and Identity Based on Error

As I explained in Chapter 1, Devitt defines “genre awareness” as “a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms” (192). The term “critical consciousness,” coined by Paulo Freire, is known as “the ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society” ("Developing Critical Consciousness"). Although Devitt does not directly connect her use of this term to Freire’s pedagogy, an underlying theme of her approach consists of explicitly teaching strategies to students that allow them to unpack ideologies and beliefs inherent in texts—with the goal of teaching them how to meaningfully act within the scenes and situations in which they encounter genres because she argues that genres hold powerful influences over students that constrain or free students, depending on their knowledge of genres. Indeed, Devitt argues, “Genres will impact students as they read, write, and move about their worlds. Teaching critical genre awareness will help students perceive that impact and make deliberate generic choices” (337). A “genre awareness” approach advocates for teaching students how to act within the constraints placed on them by generic forms that result from social and cultural beliefs.

Devitt’s goal in teaching students to unpack ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres can be applied directly to the basic writing classroom in which students learn about these concepts, as well as any situation in which they encounter language. The ability to understand genre as inherently social and ideological directly links to the basic writing classroom because, as Ira Shor shows in his
chapter about Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy, the classroom is never free of politics (26). Instructors may or may not realize the political nature of their classrooms, but the assignments, genres, instructional methods, and acceptable dialects instructors choose to include or exclude, reward or punish within their classrooms are all political; they relate to the ideologies and beliefs of particular groups of people— instructors who teach in the academy in its various scenes and situations.

As such, a “genre awareness” approach encourages instructors to teach students how to analyze the genres used within their own classrooms in addition to other academic and everyday genres. This approach is essential for basic writing students because they often begin the basic writing course with little to no prior knowledge of academic genres; and without explicit instruction that exposes them to the political reality of the classroom, students often have difficulties understanding why their writing does not align with academic standards. As composition scholar Robert Schwegler notes, “In leaving the political dimensions of reading and teaching unacknowledged, we do not banish them; instead, we conceal them, often moving them beyond both recognition and control so that they can undermine teaching and learning” (203). While teaching “genre awareness” does not require that instructors delve into deep discussions about oppression and politics in the classroom setting (unless they desire to), it does ask students to individually consider the moves made within the setting that they read and write, exposing ideologies that may align with or confront their already perceived understandings of the academy and beyond.
Basic writing students' identities stem from what they are "not" because of their stigmatized and marginalized positions in the academy, as I explained in Chapter 1. Without a critical awareness of the limitations and freedom that students may deal with when approaching various genres because of both the ideologies and beliefs that they bring to their reading and writing as well as the ideologies and beliefs inherent in the genres themselves, basic writing students' identities become even more entrenched in the concept that who they are intrinsically is not good enough for academic learning. By having an identity of "not," their identity stems from the dichotomy of "correct" and "wrong" inherent in the definition of error.

"Correctness" depends on a person's ability to engage in the social etiquette of a particular group. For example, a person who attends an interview at a law firm in shorts, a tattered T-shirt, and flip-flops would be considered to be breaking etiquette codes set by a group of people who maintain the belief that a person's ability to work well is shown in the manner that they take care of themselves. "Correctness" in genre etiquette occurs when certain groups of people act in accordance with the preferred form of communication, which includes but is not limited to form, design, rhetoric, vocabulary, and grammar that relate to the rhetorical purposes and ideologies of genre users. As Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi note, "The language people use can reveal who they are, who they are trying to be, who they are communicating with, and what they are trying to achieve" (51). When basic writing students' prior understandings of language clash with those of the academy, their identity becomes tied to the dichotomy between right and wrong, correctness and error.
The problem with identifying basic writing students with their errors is that teachers approach instruction through the pedagogical lens of “deficit theory, skills, and service,” where basic writing instruction is driven by the idea that students lack skills, and, therefore, their weaknesses need to be remedied. This instructional approach “presume[s] ignorance and inability in students” (Fox 66), and it implies that only one correct way of writing—that is, Standard English in academic prose—exists. For this reason, basic writing is often thought of as a “fix-it station” (Otte and Mlynarczyk 43) where the primary goal for instructors is to teach students how to write grammatical, error-free papers. This instructional method constrains students and boxes them into trying to write “correctly” without the knowledge that they can choose to act in various situations—that “correct” use of language in one setting does not automatically equate to “correctness” in another setting. Because a “genre awareness” approach encourages students to be aware of how rhetorical purposes, ideologies, and beliefs affect meaning in genres, it resists the deficit model. Rather than defining students by their errors, it moves the conversation to the various purposes and ideologies that come to play in new settings; thus, one “correct” way of writing in every circumstance does not exist because writing depends on the scene and situation in which it is used. “Correctness,” then, depends on the etiquettes of the genre and students’ abilities to navigate within those prescribed etiquettes.

Instead of teaching that one way of writing exists, a “genre awareness” approach teaches students rhetorical dexterity where they can adapt their reading and writing to the various scenes and situations they encounter. In doing so,
students are taught that they can choose how to act within those scenes and situations. According to Fox, another theory that informs basic writing pedagogy is the initiation theory, which looks at social and political aspects that play a role in basic writing students’ abilities and attempts to “initiate” students into the academy. The third method is cultural conflict, which “convince[s] students that this community is theirs, that it will not work against their identity and their interests” (74-75). Teaching “genre awareness” in basic writing draws from both the initiation and cultural conflict theories because it asks students to analyze texts rhetorically in order to uncover hidden ideologies and beliefs of users and to understand genres enough to either write in them or break free of them. In order to break free of those forms, however, students must know why their actions will aid or impede them within certain scenes, situations, and genres.

My argument, then, is that a “genre awareness” approach teaches basic writing students an essential concept—that successful reading and writing within various scenes, situations, and genres requires that students understand that their ideologies and beliefs may align or clash with ideologies and beliefs of participants in various settings, and that their ability or inability to read or write effectively in those settings may largely be due to their level of knowledge about those ideologies and beliefs. A “genre awareness” approach advocates for teaching students how to move in and out of these spaces, not by stating exactly what they need to say, read, or write each time they encounter a new setting, but by giving them tools to figure it out. Teaching “genre awareness” encourages students to make thoughtful choices when reading and writing; it enables them to act. Instead of being passive learners,
students become active participants in their learning in the classroom in order to move that knowledge into other reading and writing settings. All of this, though, first relies on the instructors’ awareness of the political nature of their own classrooms and the intrinsic ideological makeup of genres—and, of course, it relies on deliberate decisions to explicitly teach students how to unpack these concepts when reading and writing.

“Genre Awareness” in FYC to BW: Broadening Perceptions

Unlike first-year composition, basic writing lacks a nationwide document outlining learning objectives. However, in its very nature, basic writing’s identity stems from its connection with first-year composition because basic writing students are those who do not meet the requirements for college-level writing courses. One of basic writing’s main goals, then, is to prepare students for academic writing—to teach them to write at the level of first-year composition. With this goal in mind, it makes sense to expose students to first-year composition’s learning objectives in basic writing so they will have prior knowledge to help them more easily transfer to first-year composition.

Rhetorical genre and critical reading are foundational learning objectives for first-year composition, as shown by their inclusion in the Writing Program Administration’s Outcomes Statement—a best practices document distributed nationwide to first-year composition instructors. Two sections called “Rhetorical Knowledge” and “Knowledge of Conventions” recommend that students “gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers’ and writers’ practices and purposes”
(1) and advise that instructors teach genre conventions through a variety of texts (3). In addition, the section called “Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing” states that students need to learn how to integrate sources (2), which requires students to understand how to evaluate and read sources before they use them in their writing. These sections explain that reading and writing require more than simply understanding content and regurgitating that content; rather, students need to critically evaluate how rhetorical situations and purposes affect meaning.

Teaching rhetorical genre and critical reading in basic writing requires that students learn to broaden their prior understandings of what it means to read and write. To read and write well, basic writing students need to be aware of the social dimension of language—that when they read and write, they construct meaning based on their own ideologies and beliefs and the ideologies and beliefs inherent in the scenes, situations, and genres. John Frow, a literary genre scholar, argues,

That is why genre matters: it is central to human meaning-making and to the social struggle over meanings. No speaking or writing or any other symbolically organised action takes place other than through the shaping of generic codes, where ‘shaping’ means both ‘shaping by’ and ‘shaping of’ (10)

Without this knowledge, basic writing students’ abilities to read and write become limited. Min-Zhan Lu, a basic writing scholar who adds to Shaughnessy’s groundbreaking ideas, notes that to think of meaning as solely being constructed through the act of putting thoughts on paper misses an essential point. She explains, “such a view of the relationship between words and meaning overlooks the
possibility that different ways of using words—different discourses—might exercise different constraints on how one ‘crafts’ the meaning ‘one has in mind’” (29). In order to read and write effectively, basic writing students need to have an awareness of the social dimension of language. Adler-Kassner and Estrem discuss this idea further: students “must consciously reflect on what idea systems they are bringing into play, how these idea systems shape their writing, what roles they are asking readers of their texts to perform and why they are asking them to perform those roles” (68). By stating that readers and writers bring their own experiences and understandings to texts, Adler-Kassner and Estrem show how the students’ own ideologies and beliefs correspond and change the constructed meaning of texts when reading and writing.

Teaching students to rhetorically read and write in this manner aligns with Devitt’s statement that “genre awareness might also be applied to reading as well as writing” (198), and pairs well with Nic Voge’s argument that “reading is as much a social activity—with cultural dimensions—as it is a psychological process, and is, consequently, heavily influenced by social norms and conventions and prevailing cultural practices” (83). A “genre awareness” approach teaches students how to observe and analyze scenes, situations, and genres in order for basic writing students to learn to read these social dimensions and examine inherent ideologies and beliefs.

A “genre awareness” approach urges basic writing students to re-examine their previous notions about what it means to read by encouraging students to observe and analyze scenes and situations; instead of reading words on a page, they
learn how to read a physical space. Because basic writing students so often think of reading as simply understanding the words on the page, genre awareness can benefit them by enabling them to understand the social reality of reading. As Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi argue, “Reading is not just deciphering words on a page—the typical definition of the activity—but also, in a larger sense, observing and making sense of a scene by examining its language, both oral and written” (48). Through a “genre awareness” approach, students learn how to read people’s activities and behaviors within a scene. They, in a way, uncover the “script” of a scene; they use the language of a scene to examine how people interact, think, and communicate within it. They, in short, read a scene through its patterns of writing, and in so doing, they learn a vital strategy that can be applied in future reading and writing spaces.

Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi define a scene as “a place in which communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives” (7). Additionally, they define a situation as “various rhetorical interactions happening within a scene, involving participants, subjects, settings, and purposes” (12). For example, a coffee shop could be a scene, and that scene could be comprised of various situations, including the dialogue between customer and employee when the customer purchases coffee, a conversation between two friends who were separated for a long time and are meeting once again, and the polite apologies from one person to another when they accidentally cut in line. Within the scene of the coffee shop, all of these situations include language particular to the purpose and settings in which it is used.
In order for basic writing students to understand how ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres can affect their abilities to read and write, they first need to broaden their concepts of what it actually means to read and write because, to unpack these beliefs, they need to be aware that genres arise out of scenes. These scenes can provide vital information when students learn about the social construction of meaning that happens between writer, readers, text, and context. As Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi state, “This process of negotiation, of repositioning ourselves from one scene to the next and at times within multiple scenes at once, is not the result of guesswork; it is not a random process. Rather, it involves a complex active process of reading” (49). In this way, reading involves more than decoding words; it requires that students deliberately study the ways meaning is constructed in our everyday lives.

Teaching “genre awareness,” then, means that instructors expose their students to a new threshold concept where students transform their former understandings of reading and writing. Meyer and Land, two researchers who actively publish about threshold concepts, define the term “threshold concept” as “akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress” (1). Basic writing students often have a product-oriented mindset; when they read and write, they try to “get it right” by figuring out what the text says and what they are expected to write without recognizing that a complicated relationship exists between readers, writer, text, and context that affects all of their work. Students believe that if they
read the content enough, they can memorize the answers; they believe that if they can write in the exact generic form, they know how to write. Because reading and writing are social activities that depend on text, context, reader, and writer, simple fill-in-the-blank approaches to reading and writing limit students' abilities to succeed.

My argument that basic writing students need to rethink their prior understandings of what it means to read and write can prove troublesome for them when they also need to learn basic skills. According to Meyer and Land, one consequence of a threshold concept is that "this transformation may be sudden or it may be protracted over a considerable period of time, with the transition to understanding proving troublesome" (1). While threshold concepts may prove challenging to students, they are essential; teaching students that reading and writing are communicative acts based on beliefs inherent in genres is vital to their success when they are transitioning into academia because, as Devitt notes, "If teachers are to help minimize the potential ideological effects of genres, they must help students perceive the ideology while they are encountering the genre" (196).

Basic writing students need exposure to strategies that will enable them to read and write successfully in the academy and beyond, and a "genre awareness" approach can help them do so.

**Implementation of “Genre Awareness” in Basic Writing**

I have three main goals for advocating for "genre awareness" instruction in basic writing: first, students learn to broaden their understanding of reading and writing from words on the page to various scenes and situations; second, they gain
knowledge about the social dimensions of genres that affect their abilities to read and write; and third, they learn a strategy for unpacking the ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres that enables them to meaningfully act. Nonetheless, “genre awareness” can be a difficult concept to grasp, so I advise that instructors carefully scaffold their instruction and provide plenty of time to teach “genre awareness” in class when students have access to their instructors when they have questions.

Drawing from my belief that basic writing instruction should provide students with exposure to first-year composition’s learning objectives, I have formed my suggestions based on materials provided in Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi’s first-year composition textbook, *Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres*. In doing so, I have selected only those assignments (out of the plethora that they provide for first-year composition) that I believe can effectively be taught at the developmental level, and for every assignment, I advise that instructors allot significant portions of time in class for students to complete these activities and assignments with guidance from instructors. The sequencing that I propose draws from *Scenes of Writing*; basic writing students begin by completing in-class activities about observing and reading scenes, then move onto a writing assignment that asks them to write about scenes that they participate in, and then complete final in-class group activities where they analyze language and implement their learning by performing a genre analysis. While this sequencing can be an effective method of implementing a “genre awareness” approach, this is not the only way; it is important for basic writing instructors to adapt their instructional methods to the needs of their own students.
The first activity that I recommend for basic writing students to complete, taken from *Scenes of Writing*, is an in-class activity that asks the students to read an everyday scene in which they already participate (see “In-Class Activity A” in Appendix G). The purpose of this activity is to introduce them to reading a scene that they feel comfortable in, one that they perhaps have not intentionally thought deeply about but influences them daily. This activity can be assigned in groups or individually and should be included in a larger discussion about the definition of reading and writing and a need for students to expand their ideas from words only to larger scenes and situations.

After instruction about their need to broaden their concepts of reading and writing to everyday scenes and situations, instructors can then introduce the idea that basic writing students should also learn how to navigate within the academy, specifically the writing course. Also found in Appendix G, “In-Class Activity B,” which is also taken from *Scenes of Writing*, encourages students to think about the scene and situations of the writing course in order to introduce them to thinking about how that specific classroom’s scene is created by the interactions within it. This activity moves instruction from the larger world that they feel more comfortable with to the academy and opens up instruction about the political dimensions of the classroom that I discussed earlier.

After implementing these two in-class activities, instructors can then assign a larger writing assignment. The writing assignment that I selected for implementation at the developmental level is a self-reflective essay assignment from *Scenes of Writing*. This assignment (found in Appendix G as "Writing Project") asks
students to examine their experiences within a writing scene. In order to write this essay, students reflect on ways in which they have felt included or excluded, comfortable or uncomfortable in that scene and to devise reasons for why they might have felt that way. This allows students to grapple with ideas about clashing ideologies and beliefs, levels of knowledge about genre, and/or their understandings about reading and writing.

The purposes of these two in-class activities and the writing project are to initiate basic writing students into thinking about reading scenes. After students learn how to read scenes, they can move onto analysis. The following three in-class activities, taken from Scenes of Writing, encourage students to start analyzing language, with the intention of asking them to perform a genre analysis on their own if instructors believe their students are capable of doing so. The first activity (found in Appendix G titled “In-Class Activity C”) asks students to think about language that they use in a group in which they participate and to delve into questions about how that language is specific to that group. The next activity (found in Appendix G titled “In-Class Activity C”) asks students to think about a time when they had to write in a new text and to examine how they were able to navigate that piece of writing.

The third activity, which can lead into a genre analysis writing assignment if instructors believe their students are capable of doing so, is an in-class genre analysis group activity. In Appendix F, I have provided a lesson plan for basic writing instructors to use when implementing a genre analysis activity in their class. The lesson plan is adapted from my own experience implementing a genre analysis in first-year composition, and it also draws heavily from Scenes of Writing. This third
activity is the culmination of "genre awareness" instruction throughout the basic writing course. While Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff continue in *Scenes of Writing* with a genre critique, which asks first-year composition students to challenge genres and to discover why certain genres may not work in certain situations, I believe the instruction I have outlined up through a genre analysis is sufficient for basic writing students to understand the three main learning goals outlined in this thesis.

**A Conclusion and Invitation**

By providing basic writing scholarship and research already discussed in the field as well as my own research findings, I have argued for the implementation of "genre awareness" into basic writing. My idea formed in three concurrent spaces as a possibility for basic writing, and as I studied and wrote this thesis, I realized that this topic could greatly benefit basic writing instruction. Because basic writing lacks sufficient scholarship and research about genre, this thesis stands to fill in that gap. It also bridges reading and writing to rhetorical genre, and in so doing, I argue that reading and writing instruction needs to be taught as a communicative act between writer, readers, context, and text; it also needs to include the social and rhetorical dimensions that inform the construction of meaning when reading and writing.

My aim in writing this thesis is to provide a rationale and helpful suggestions for implementation of "genre awareness" in basic writing. I realize that basic writing is highly contextual, and to provide suggestions for one instructor does not mean that those suggestions will work for another basic writing instructor. It is my hope that basic writing instructors will begin to think about how rhetorical genre instruction can aid in reading and writing instruction at the developmental level.
because it exposes ideologies and beliefs that affect their own basic writing students at their institutions. Since my research study was limited in scope, I call on others to also research instructional methods about genre and reading and writing at the developmental level. In so doing, I have confidence that basic writing will greatly benefit from a collaboration among basic writing researchers and instructors.
Works Cited


Appendix A: Basic Writing Survey Results

Survey Questions for Basic Writing Instructors:

Question 1: Do you teach basic writing (otherwise known as pre-college or developmental writing)? [20/20 respondents replied]

1. Yes
2. yes
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes.
7. Yes
8. yes
9. Yes
10. Yes
11. Yes Engl 100
12. I teach BW within in a 1-credit stretch model, attached to a 3-credit first-year writing course.
13. Yes
14. yes
15. yes
16. Yes
17. yes
18. yes
19. Stretch (ENG 101 stretched over 2 semesters, 3 graduation/transfer credit hours per semester)
20. Yes

Question 2: Do you also teach developmental integrated reading and writing or developmental reading? If so, which one? [20/20 respondents replied]

1. No
2. no
3. Yes, developmental integrated reading and writing
4. No
5. No
6. I taught these, but in a course called Basic Writing
7. No, but I am about to.
8. developmental reading, into which some writing is integrated, but writing is also a separate course.
9. No
10. No
11. No
12. Our courses integrate reading and writing at all levels; no separate course.
13. No
14. no
15. no
16. NO
17. No
18. no
19. no
20. No

Question 3: How do you teach/include reading in your basic writing course?
[20/20 respondents replied]

1. RS -- In-class reading strategies practice, out of class reading assignments
2. RT-- We have students read essays and their own writing as well as others in the course through the peer review process
3. RT -- I print readings for my class, assign pages from a text; we do pair reading whole class reading, and individual reading of text. la
4. RS -- I assign reading assignments, discuss specific reading strategies, and practice using those reading strategies with students.
5. NT -- Reading is directly connected to writing, so it happens, but I do not explicitly teach reading
6. RS-- I assign readings and have students do assignments like reading mark-ups and summaries and to talk about reading strategies in class.
7. RT -- I use close readings of the passages/essays our text uses as writing prompts.
8. RS -- I have students read about writing from a textbook (They Say, I Say or Writing Spaces in most recent terms) and a handout. I have students practice summarizing. I teach basic library and internet research skills and students find, summarize, and evaluate sources in an annotated bibliography, then integrate those into a research paper. I guide students in the reading in the textbook with reading questions and we discuss how to apply that reading in class, and practice applying it.
9. RT -- Incorporate reader and study arguments
10. RT -- Introductory material about reading rhetorically, readings that model the type of writing they will do
11. RS-- I teach various reading strategies: annotating, summarizing, freewriting, analyzing and synthesizing the content of readings.
12. RT -- Essays from the main course text (or online supplements) Rise B.

13. RT -- Students read about research and writing techniques
14. RT -- students read models of writing
15. RW-D -- focus of course is responding to the “conversation” which requires intensive “listening” (aka, reading); require annotations on all readings; discuss reading strategies
16. RT -- The reading assignments offer both models of writing and ideas to help inspire the thinking.
17. RT -- I have students read a the college wide common read book. They also choose a book from the library and write an Amazon review over it.
18. RT -- Students read each other’s drafts, and we read one book, Mindset by Carol Dweck, and sometimes a few other short articles. The readings always relate directly to what they are writing about.
19. RW-D -- Through critical rhetorical analysis of texts
20. RT -- We use a textbook that has short readings included, but primarily I focus on writing.

Question 4: Do you explicitly teach the connection between reading and writing in your basic writing course? Please explain. [20/20 respondents replied]

1. RW-D -- Yes. I scaffold discussion questions around technique, rhetorical effect, et.c
2. RIW -- I ask student how many of you love to read...when no one raises their hands I always explain that good readers have a better chance at being good writers. That it doesn’t always work out that way, but the more you read (chances are) the more your writing will improve.
3. RIW -- Yes, I explain the phonetic relationships between difficult words. I also discuss perspectives in writing, ie. First person, second person, third person. We also address reading and writing purposes, ie reading for fun, scanning for information, writing for friends and writing for academic purposes.
4. DNT -- I am not sure what this question means.
5. DNT -- Not really
6. RS -- I teach rhetorical reading, meaning that I tell students that they need to write on their reading to interact and comprehend it and also to prepare themselves for writing about it.
7. RIW-- I mention throughout the class that good writers are good readers.
8. RW-D -- We discuss how readers benefit from strong writing, and how this plays out in the work writers must do. We examine what we read for how it works for us as readers, so that we can mimic or avoid the things that work or don't work for us as readers. We practice following some of those models explicitly in in-class activities.
9. DNT -- No
10. RIW -- Sort of? Encourage students to think as writers when they read and readers when they write.
11. RIW -- Yes. They are the same processes in that in both reading and writing we construct meaning.
12. RIW -- Yes. Reading Critically, Writing Well offers a highly integrated approach from reading to writing in each chapter. In addition, we did online postings week by week on The Odyssey of KP2, created a reader's journal from the postings, and wrote researched, documented essays based on the book. By the way, all of my comments in this survey apply equally to first-year writing; with the stretch model, basic writing simply supports first-year writing assignments by allowing more time, response, and discussion.
13. RS -- Yes. In the first unit of the semester, students relate their writing to the writing of the authors.
14. DNT -- no, but I'm thinking that I should
15. RW-D -- yes—using Bazerman's "conversation metaphor" as the foundation, we focus on writing as contributing to conversations begun in prior readings
16. DNT -- Yes, it is in fact one of the SLO's for the course.
17. DNT -- No
18. RIW & RW-D-- Yes. I emphasize the responsibility that writers have to convey other writers' ideas accurately, and I also frequently point out how writers can get inspiration from each other and learn writing techniques from reading and discussing each other's writing.
19. RW- D -- Yes. We discuss integrated processes of reading and writing, and do written critical rhetorical analyses of texts which students relate to their individual writing projects
20. RIW -- We discuss the connection, yes, and I frequently encourage students to read.

Question 5: How do you teach genre in your basic writing course? Please explain. [20/20 respondents replied]

1. GC -- I do a short presentation each week introducing conventions of specific college genres (emails to professors, online discussion board posts, etc)
2. GC -- I teach it through pop-culture. They understand genre in terms of tv shows and music—we analyze songs and then we make the jump to different kinds of writing
3. RG -- I usually only focus on a few genres and provide examples of the genres. We discuss the purpose of genre and reader expectations.
4. GC -- I assign texts about genre, have students practice reading and writing in different genres, and
5. NG -- Genre comes up in terms of transfer, but we don't study explicit genres in developmental writing
6. RG -- I talk about genre as arising from audience and expectation. Students compare readings from different genres and then notice textual features that differ in different kinds of writing. We also talk about why those differ
7. NG -- I don’t think I do.
8. GC -- I identify the genres at play and assign reading about the genre and/or in the genre—sometimes about the genre and in the genre, like blogs about how to blog. We attend to genre characteristics as we workshop student drafts. This most recent term, I explicitly taught and students practiced graded writing in genres including email, blog, flyer, letter, annotated bibliography, and academic research paper. Students also wrote reflections and created digital stories, and we looked at models of those and discussed them as genres, as well.
9. GC -- Yes—we read a nonfiction work that fits different genres, and we discuss how the author uses this in his argument
10. M -- I teach audience expectations more than genre. We cover narrative, analysis, and argument.
11. RG -- I have written a textbook for my 100 class that focuses on genres and how the patterns in genres help help readers to read and writers to write those genres.
12. GC -- The chapters in Reading Critically, Writing Well each deal with different genres—we worked with several of them.
13. RG -- Explore how various discourse communities (DC) own and use specific genres.
14. M -- students are assigned to write narratives, classifications, arguments, etc.
15. NG -- it is one of our 5-6 core concepts students learn
16. RG -- Modeling for writing/rhetorical genre. I do not teach literary genre; the SLO fits a different course.
17. GC -- I have students write in different genres.
18. RG -- In every assignment, I try to help students imagine readers’ expectations and questions based on the type of writing they are doing. For example, they design and conduct a self-experiment and write a report, and I work with them on the basis of that genre. We also do some short writings based on practical scenarios like being asked to give a speech to students at your former high school.
19. RG -- Rhetorically driven via audience, purpose, context
20. M -- I teach modes of the essay: e.g. narrative, comparison-contrast, argument, etc.

Question 6: What assignments specifically related to genre do you assign in your basic writing course? [19/20 respondents replied]

1. GC/ VG -- aren’t all assignments related to genre?
2. GC/ AG -- We do a song analysis to help them understand the concept of genre.
3. GC/ AG -- I have read samples of literacy narratives and write their own. We discuss different ways of organizing the paper.
4. GA / VG -- Student analyze and produce different genres, and talk about rhetorical decisions in the production of different genres.
5. NG / NG -- none
6. GC / AG -- I have one assignment in which students read an academic article and a magazine or newspaper article on the same topic and then compare them.
7. NG/ NG-- [SKIPPED]
8. GC / VG -- This past semester, we read about genre in general, plus completed genre assignments as outlined in my answer to question 5.
9. NG / NG -- Discussion
10. GC / VG -- They have to write a cover letter at the end of the semester for their portfolio.
11. GC / AG -- All of them
12. GC / AG -- Essays based on reading and writing assignments within the genre in question.
13. RG / VG -- Within the context of Activity Theory have students study a real world DC and it documents and write an ethnography paper on how the DC get work done through literacies (genres)
14. GC / AG -- each of the assignments focuses on a particular genre and the differences that are necessary; however, all these genre are academic. We do not cover other genre or media, such as blogs or letters to the editor.
15. GC / VG -- every writing assignment has a choice of genre & students have to choose and explain why they choose which genre they will write in
16. GC / VG -- Personal statement, review, research-based argument
17. GC / VG -- I have students write a narrative, a faq sheet, an amazon review, a research paper, a complaint letter, and write blog posts.
18. GC / AG --All assignments are related to genre! It is impossible to write anything without reference to some genre for defining purpose, selecting and organizing material, etc.
19. GC/ AG -- All of the assignments
20. AG -- We write a narrative, a cultural analysis, and a persuasive essay.

**Question 7: How are the genre-related assignments sequenced?** [19/20 respondents replied]
1. GC/ MG -- Personal narrative, review essay, annotated bibliography
2. NG/ 1 -- we have one assignment.
3. GC / 1 -- We brainstorm what we know about the writing first. We then look at examples and elaborate on the description of the genre. We analyze a couple more short examples then I ask them to begin the writing process for their own literacy narrative.
4. NG/ NG --
5. NG/ NG -- n/a
6. NG/ NG -- I don’t necessarily have a standard sequence I use, and I don’t any formal writing that deals with genre explicitly.
7. NG/ NG -- [SKIPPED]
8. GC / MG -- I change sequencing regularly, but this past fall we did an email and then a blog (introducing themselves to me and their classmates) as part of the first unit in the first week of the term, then a summary, then an annotated bibliography, then a research paper, then a flyer for an on-campus group, then a digital story, then a letter, then a reflective portfolio. In this way, we went back and forth between more traditionally academic and more professional genres for variety and to discuss the similarities/differences. Some genres integrated visuals/design elements; others did not.
9. NG/ 1 -- There is only one, really.
10. M/ 1 -- Narrative, analysis, argument. They may use narrative and analysis in their argument—not mutually exclusive.
11. NG / NG -- From easier to more difficult
12. M/ 1 -- Observation, reflection, evaluation (argument)
13. RG / MG -- Find DC, Explore their Genres, determine how they get work done through genres
14. M / NG -- exemplification, narration, description, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, definition, argument
15. NG / NG -- not sequenced
16. GC / MG -- personal statement, a choice of something in that statement to research and then write a review of that film or article or book, and then an argument essay based on additional research
17. GC/ MG -- They go from shorter to longer. They also move from more familiar genres to less familiar.
18. M/ NG -- Overall, my assignments are sequenced according to how difficult the level of analysis is. I currently have three unites in the course. My first unit is based on literacy auto-ethnography. The second unit is based on the Mindset book and the students’ self-experiments. The third unit demands more analytical thinking and persuasive writing.
19. RG/ NG -- Scaffolded according to Vygotsky’s “Zone of Proximal Development”
20. NG/NG -- I'm not sure what you mean by sequenced. The three major essays are separate papers, but the last one is completed in three parts.

**Question 8: Please provide additional comments about your understanding of the term genre and its relevance to your basic writing course. [18/20 respondents replied]**

1. GA -- I use Amy Devitt
2. NG -- none
3. GC -- I am still developing my understanding of less formal genres like blogging and commenting on social networking sites.
4. NG --
5. NG [SKIPPED]
6. GA -- I see the need for teaching genre at this level as a way of demystifying writing. In other words, students can come to understand that writers in the real world make choices that are influenced by the context in which they are writing. It also helps students to start to take apart why some texts/ideas are more trustworthy than others and why understanding where a source comes from and who says it should influence the extent to which we trust the information contained within it. Many basic writers (though not all) will tend to trust something because it is printed on a page, and they need to learn that they should be skeptical and curious about what they are reading.
7. NG -- [SKIPPED]
8. GA -- Genre are kinds of writing that serve a particular purpose and that have set expectations. Writers can deviate from some of those expectations, but should be aware that they are doing so and aware of any potential consequences of this deviation. If students can understand genre, they can be better at asking questions about future, novel, writing situations—that they need to understand the Audience, Purpose and Genre in order to maximize their chances of success in a given communication situation.
9. GC -- Genre is the type of work, and the conventions associated with this type that meet the needs of the audience.
10. NG -- I try not to teach genres as much as strategies for developing their papers. I feel that students are more likely to transfer what they learn about writing if they see these tools for development as choices each assignment instead of “now we’re on this sort of assignment.”
11. GC -- Genres are the best way to teach basic writing being that they give nascent writers who have never seen or written any of the genres we assign patterns to begin with.
12. RG -- Genre is highly relevant. It’s related to the basic rhetorical concepts of subject, purpose, and audience.
13. RG -- Genres are forms of communication that groups use to fulfill their purposes.
14. RG -- Genre is the academic term for “types” and includes attention to the purpose and the audience within an academic setting.

15. GC -- we focus on academic genres (inquiry, persuasion, letter, blog, and reflection); these are taught as just a few of the academic genres they will encounter

16. M -- Rhetorical genre: narrative, compare contrast, argument, etc. This one allpies to the developmental writing course. Literary genre: fiction, poetry, etc. This one applies to a literature-oriented, writing intensive course.

17. RG -- I use the word genre to mean different contexts and frames for writing. For example, mystery is a genre, and it has it’s own set of conventions. An amazon review is a genre, and there are specific rules and audience expectations that control what a writer should include.

18. RG -- I am often frustrated by the false genres that students have been taught to write in school. In my basic writing classs, I try to get students thinking about how readers respond to their writing. They have little understanding of how genre shapes readers’ expectations. I think the most important issue at this level is that students even start to imagine that others would care about reading what they have written and that the purpose of their writing is communicating something they care about themselves. These notions are somewhat independent of genre, but genres are tools for finding ways to reach audiences and meet their needs.

19. NG -- I have taught basic writing at many institutions across the US, each with a different name and a different course description. The more BW is integrated with and NOT SEPARATED FROM traditional first-year composition courses, the more successful BW will be in allowing students to succeed. In other words, if genre proves relevant for first-year writing courses, then genre also ought to be integrated into BW courses.

20. GC -- I would understand genre to be writing task. A college essay is a genre; a memoir is a genre. Within genres, we have subgenres such as the difference between a college essay in biology or in English.
Appendix B: Developmental Reading Survey Results

Survey Questions for Developmental Reading Instructors:

Question 1: Do you teach developmental reading? [2/2 respondents replied]
   1. I did about seven years ago.
   2. yes

Question 2: Do you also teach developmental integrated reading and writing or basic writing? If so, which one? [2/2 respondents replied]
   1. No.
   2. yes, especially basic writing. Our developmental reading class integrates some writing, but all students take both a class focusing more on reading and one focusing more on writing.

Question 3: How do you teach/include writing in your developmental reading course? [2/2 respondents replied]
   1. WS -- A lot of it was note-taking skills, identifying main ideas, that sort of thing. So a lot of annotating, and some summary-response.
   2. WT -- as if it were a writing-across-the-curriculum course, with writing more in support of learning course materials, but with some direct instruction in writing

Question 4: Do you explicitly teach the connection between reading and writing in your developmental reading course? Please explain. [2/2 respondents replied]
   1. WIR -- Yes, see above, writing as mimesis but also reflection.
   2. WIR -- Yes—we discuss how writing is a way of thinking about and more deeply understanding the readings and how it is a way of communicating, taking action based on our readings

Question 5: How do you teach genre in your developmental reading course? Please explain. [2/2 respondents replied]
   1. NG -- There wasn't much talk about genre as a theory or concept, but there was implicit instruction, like in how to read textbooks. At the time, I had no idea about rhetorical genre studies. I was just teaching the textbook and building in some of my own exercises based on what made sense to me at that time. I was an adjunct with an MFA background and very little preparation as a reading-writing instructor, so I was basically winging it at the time.
   2. RG -- Students write response papers, an annotated bibliography, discussion board posts, a more traditional academic essay, and essay exams, plus a brief
proposal and progress reports on a final project, reflections, and more as determined in relationship to a class project. When I introduce each form of writing, I explicitly note the genre to which it belongs and address the expectations readers may have due to the genre. Plus, we discuss the genres in which we are reading, and how knowing the genre affects how we read.

**Question 6: What assignments specifically related to genre do you assign in your developmental reading course? (2/2 respondents replied)**

1. NG/NG -- Again, how to read and annotate textbooks to succeed in a range of courses.
2. GC/VG -- Listed in response to question 5.

**Question 7: How are the genre-related assignments sequenced? [2/2 respondents replied]**

1. NG/NG -- If I remember correctly, the upper-level developmental reading course was all about comprehension and note-taking for college, and the lower-level course was sort of identifying main ideas and supporting details in random paragraphs sort of thing, very basic skills oriented, and nothing about genre.
2. GC/1 -- there is less sequencing of writing by genre in my developmental reading course than in developmental writing, although we complete discussion posts and reading responses before essay exams or essays, and we complete mini-research assignments (finding and summarizing one source) in advance of the annotated bibliography.

**Question 8: Please provide additional comments about your understanding of the term genre and its relevance to your developmental reading course. [2/2 respondents replied]**

1. NG --Well I would consider one of my areas of scholarship rhetorical genre studies, but that's six years of doctoral study, and again, I was teaching the developmental reading course before I had any graduate study in rhet/comp, I had a very superficial understanding of genre outside of my creative writing background. If the textbook for the upper-level course hadn't been designed to lead students through reading comprehension and note-taking activities in a few different disciplines, I don't think I would have thought much about it, and I don't think I really did. Certainly, we talked about how reading a textbook for a class is different from reading a book or magazine for pleasure, but we definitely didn't get into the differences between textbooks in different disciplines, and we didn't use rhetorical genre studies as a framework in any sort of explicit sense.
2. GA -- Students can understand what they read better by identifying genre and can communicate better as writers and be more likely to transfer
practice in both reading and writing if they know to consider genre as
indicative of purpose and as encompassing expectations of varying levels of
rigidity about form, content, style, and more.
Appendix C: Survey Results

Survey Questions for Developmental Integrated Reading and Writing Instructors

Question 1: Do you teach developmental integrated reading and writing (IRW)? [2/2 respondents replied]

1. Yes
2. Yes

Question 2: Do you also teach developmental reading or basic writing separately? If so, which one? [1/2 respondents replied]

1. Yes
2. [SKIPPED]

Question 3: How do you teach the reading-writing connection in your developmental IRW course? [2/2 respondents replied]

1. RW-D -- Using imitation. Students read and break down basic essays into their component parts using highlighters and color coded system. Essentially, they code. We talk about the rhetorical choices the author made and how that relates to their writing.
2. RT-- By using combined assignments; weaving together discussion of common readings and writing assignments

Question 4: Do you explicitly teach the connection between reading and writing in your developmental IRW course? Please explain. [2/2 respondents replied]

1. RIW -- Yes. This really relates to the comment I made above. But, to elaborate, students read texts in the genre they are being asked to write in and they are asked to draw connections between what the writer did and what they did in reflection after the fact.
2. DNT -- Yes. It’s in part about helping students understand and be comfortable with chaos in ideas.

Question 5: How do you teach genre in your developmental IRW course? Please explain. [2/2 respondents replied]

1. RG -- We discuss genre in terms of discourse conventions. Instead of jumping right into academic research, we begin with genres the students are familiar with. For example, we look at an argument made in a Hip Hop song and analyze the author’s rhetorical choices and discuss this in terms of the genre. Then, we look at a similar argument content wise made in news writing, etc.
2. NG -- I don’t, explicitly. We try to work on the “academic” argument etc. but in pretty basic ways. We sometimes analyze the readings from the perspective of genre.

Question 6: What assignments specifically related to genre do you assign in your developmental IRW course? [1/2 respondents replied]

1. GC/ VG -- All of them. Students create a portfolio consisting of 4 different genres along with a reflective letter.
2. NG/ NG -- [SKIPPED]

Question 7: How are the genre-related assignments sequenced? [1/2 respondents replied]

1. GC / MG -- We begin with a digital literacy narrative based on Hip Hop and vernacular Englishes. Then, we proceed to a community interview where students interview classmates, dormmates, family members and friends about their experiences with language. They write up an interview report. Then, we move on to a social media analysis. Students analyze a Twitter discussion centered around a hashtag and write about how Twitter operates as a genre. This is an analysis paper. Finally, student do a summary and rhetorical on a newspaper article of their choice, though we use Ta Nehisi Coates’ writing in the Atlantic as our exploration of this genre. So, reflecting on this, students begin writing in the same genre they are exploring. Then, they move on to more academic genres, but the entire curriculum is centered around exploring genres.
2. NG/ NG -- [SKIPPED]

Question 8: Please provide additional comments about your understanding of the term genre and its relevance to your developmental IRW course. [1/2 respondents replied]

1. GA -- We all write in genres. Students write in genres already when they enter their class. Netflix. Their music. They live in a world of genres. We try to find a way to bridge their personal experiences, their rhetorical strategies, their understanding of genre, with academic rhetorical situations and genres.
2. NG -- [SKIPPED]
Appendix D: Email Messages Sent to Listservs

Hello:

I'm writing my master's thesis on teaching the reading-writing connection and rhetorical genre in developmenta1 integrated reading and writing courses. The purpose of this survey is to study how/if these topics are taught in basic writing, developmental integrated reading and writing, and developmental reading. If you teach one of the courses below, please consider participating in the quick survey associated with your course (provided below) by January 20, 2016. Completion of this survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Click on the link specified for the developmental course you teach. Please complete only one survey per course (i.e.-one for basic writing, one for developmental IRW, or one for developmental reading):

**Basic Writing:** https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5HZVR6R  
**Developmental Integrated Reading:**  
**Writing:** https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/89JMYXV  
**Developmental Reading:** https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KDSX9C9

Participant and institutional names from this study (if provided) will be kept entirely confidential. By completing this survey, you give consent to participate in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have questions about the survey, please contact me at tapeck2@eiu.edu.

Tara Peck  
Eastern Illinois University Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Student

Colleagues,

I'm writing on behalf of my master's student, who is conducting surveys through WPA-L and CBW-L for her thesis. Unfortunately, she has received only 16 responses to date.

If you have taught college-level basic writing, developmental reading, and/or an integrated reading-writing course please consider taking one of the 15–20-minute surveys below. The new deadline for the surveys is Friday, February 5.

Thank you.

Terri
Appendix E: Tables 1-9

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### Table 7: Sequencing of Genre-Related Assignments

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### Table 8: Number of Genres in Assignment Sequencing

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### Table 9: Additional Comments about Understanding of Term and Its Relevance

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Appendix F
Genre Analysis Activity: Lesson Plan

Overview and Purpose
Genres often constrain students' reading and writing abilities when they are unaware of the ideologies and beliefs inherent in those genres. A genre analysis teaches students how to examine ideologies and beliefs that they might not have realized before. The purpose of this lesson is to teach students how to perform a genre analysis based on the guidelines outlined by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi in *Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres*.

Learning Objectives
Because the purpose of this lesson is to teach students how to perform a genre analysis in order to understand the ideologies and beliefs inherent in genres, students will leave with an understanding of one analytical strategy to employ when encountering genres. In order to do this, they will follow the guidelines for a genre analysis provided by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi and present their findings to the class. The following is a list of learning objectives that students will demonstrate by the end of class:

- Students will use their knowledge of scenes and situations to understand genres
- Students will gain hands-on experience performing a genre analysis
- Students will learn how genres are affected by the rhetorical situation and users
- Students will use their analysis to unpack ideologies and beliefs inherent in a genre

Materials
Three Different Kids Cereal Boxes
Three Different Kitchen Appliance Instruction Manuals
Three Different Mexican Restaurant Menus

Setting, Components, and Activities

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<tr>
<td>Lecture: Genres</td>
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(minutes)
Assign Homework (8:00-8:05)
I will assign their homework, which is to read and annotate Student Genre Analysis Examples. To students that after they read the examples, they should answer the questions on the SWGR+Moves Sheet. Completing the SWGR+Moves sheet is optional, but strongly recommended. Topic proposals are also due by next class. Next class, students will share their topics with the class, and I will help narrow topics.

Lecture: Genres (8:05-8:15)
Ask students to take out their genre analysis assignment sheet, then tell them this: as we’ve discussed a little already, genres are most widely recognized by their genre conventions or formats. For example, the cover letter follows a distinct format, which we discussed last class. The brochure, as you saw, followed a format. Nonetheless, while genres are best KNOWN by their conventions, they are CREATED in certain rhetorical situations by users. The genre conventions form from scenes and situations that also have ideologies or beliefs included. So, in this genre analysis, you are to identify the scene, situation, and genre conventions in order to make a claim about the beliefs. The following is the general pattern you will follow when performing your genre analysis (write on board):

STEPS: STUDY SCENE & SITUATION → STUDY GENRE CONVENTIONS (OR PATTERNS) → MAKE A CLAIM ABOUT THE PATTERNS. WHAT DO THEY REVEAL?

After describing how genres form, tell students to begin thinking about genres they already know. Ask them to list those genres on the board.

Genre Analysis Activity (8:15-8:35)
Group students into three groups so that they can rely on one another while performing the analysis. Pass out the genres. Explain the following to students: the purpose of this activity is for you to gain experience analyzing a genre in order to make a claim about what the patterns reveal. Answer the questions in order, then after analyzing the genre, make the claim, which is #5. Before you begin your analysis, read through the attached sheet carefully to understand the questions you should be answering.

Tell the groups to pick a spokesperson who will tell the class what their group found about what the answers to the questions revealed.

Group Presentations of Ideologies and Beliefs (8:35-8:50)
Ask each spokesperson from their groups to briefly explain their findings. Help them move to the level of analysis required in order to figure out the ideologies and beliefs inherent in the genres, if they need assistance.

Possible Resistance/ Problems and Back-up Plans
Analysis can be difficult for students at this level. Before asking them to perform the analysis, provide time in class to discuss what an analysis is and what it can teach them.

Students may have difficulty moving to the level of analysis needed for this activity. Walk around the room and answer questions.

**Assessment and Evaluation**
Learning will be assessed while walking around the room and listening to their presentations. Evaluate attendance and in-class participation.
Guidelines for Analyzing Genres

1. Collect Samples of Genres
If you are studying a genre that is fairly public, such as the wedding announcement, you can just look at samples from various newspapers. If you are studying a less public genre, such as the Patient Medical History Form, you might have to visit different doctors’ offices to collect samples. If you are unsure where to find samples, ask a user of that genre for assistance. Try to gather samples from more than one place (for example, wedding announcements from different newspapers, and medical history forms from different doctors’ offices) so that you get a more accurate picture of the complexity of the genre. The more samples of the genre you collect, the more you will be able to notice patterns within the genre.

2. Study the Scene in which the Genre is Used
Study the scene of your genre. If the genre is a relatively public one, you might be able to observe the genre being used in its scene. If not, you may need to interview people who use the genre or read published descriptions of the genre (some appear in writing textbooks or in professional journals).

3. Study the Situation of the Genre
Seek the answers to the questions such as the ones below:

- Setting: Where does the genre appear? Where are texts of this genre typically located? What medium or context?
  - Subject: What topics is this genre involved with? In what subject areas does this genre arise?
- Participants: Who uses the genre?
  - Writers: Who writes the texts in this genre? Are multiple writers possible? How do we know who the writers are? What roles do they perform? What characteristics must writers of this genre possess? Under what circumstances do writers write this genre (e.g.- in teams, on a computer, in a rush)?
  - Readers: Who reads the texts in this genre? Is there more than one type of reader for this genre? What roles do they perform? Under what circumstances do readers read the genre (e.g.- at their leisure, on the run, in waiting rooms)?
- Exigencies: When is the genre used? For what occasions? Why is the genre used? Why do writers write this genre and why do readers read it? What purposes does the genre fulfill for the people who use it?

4. Identify and Describe Patterns (and/or Variations) in the Genre’s Features
What recurrent features do the samples share? For example:
- Content: What content is typically included? What is excluded? How is the content treated? What sorts of examples are used? What counts as evidence (personal testimony, facts, etc.)?
- Rhetorical appeals: What rhetorical appeals are used? What appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos appear?
• Structure: How are texts in the genre structured? What are their parts, and how are they organized?
• Format: In what format are texts of this genre presented? What layout or appearance is common? How long is a typical text in this genre?
• Sentences: What types of sentences do texts in this genre typically use? How long are they? Are they simple or complex, passive or active? Are the sentences varied? Do they share a certain style?
• Diction: What diction is most common? What types of words are most frequent? Is a type of jargon used? Is slang used? How would you describe the writer’s voice?

5. Analyze What These Patterns Reveal about the Situation and Scene
What do these rhetorical patterns reveal about the genre, its situation, and the scene in which it is used? Why are these patterns significant? What can you learn about the actions being performed through the genre by observing its language patterns? What arguments can you make about these patterns? As you consider these questions, focus on the following:
• What do participants have to know or believe to understand or appreciate the genre?
• Who is invited into the genre, and who is excluded?
• What roles for writers and readers does it encourage and discourage?
• What values, beliefs, goals, and assumptions are revealed through the genre’s patterns?
• How is the subject of the genre treated? What content is considered most important? What content (topics or details) is ignored?
• What actions does the genre help make possible? What actions does the genre make difficult?
• What attitude toward readers is implied in the genre? What attitude toward the world is implied in it?
Appendix G
Supplemental Instructional Materials
Adapted from Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiffs Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres

In-Class Activity A: Make a list of all the different scenes that you participate in every day. Compare your lists in small groups, and select one scene to analyze or read. Describe the various clues to how participants are expected to behave and interact within the scene your group selected. You might consider these kinds of clues:

- How the place or setting of your scene is structured
- Who is participating and how they present themselves
- What style of communicating is common
- What people are communicating about
- How people are timing their contributions
- Any other elements especially important to the particular scene you are analyzing

In-Class Activity B: Working in groups, use our key terms—scene, situation, and genre—to describe your own writing course scene. What makes your writing course a scene (a place where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives)? Describe a particular situation or rhetorical interaction within your writing course, and define the subject, the setting, the purpose, and the roles of the participants. What genres are used to interact within this repeated situation? Generate a list of your answers, and compare it with the findings of other groups.

Writing Project: Write a self-reflective essay in which you examine your experiences with writing in a scene you have participated in. You might describe your transition from outsider to insider in this scene, the struggles and rewards of participating in this scene, and your adaptation to language and writing in this scene. You might also reflect on how this scene has shaped and perhaps continues to shape who you are as a writer, including what you have learned about writing as a result of participating in this scene. Use the following questions to guide your reflections:

- How did you feel about the scene in which you wrote? Were you comfortable or uncomfortable interacting within it? How? Why?
- Did the objectives of that scene suit you well? Were you able to achieve those shared objectives? Did you struggle with those objectives?
- What subjects did you write about? Were these subjects easy for you? Why or why not?
- For what reasons did you write? Did you have multiple purposes? Were you able to achieve those purposes?
- In what ways did your participation in the scene shape the way you wrote within it?
• In what ways did your participation in the scene shape the way you write outside of the scene?

**In-Class Activity C:** Think of some group to which you belong: Perhaps a volunteer organization, an online discussion group, a fraternity or sorority, a club or team, or even a group of friends. What words do members of your group share that are not used the same way by other groups? Look at those words to see if you can discover reasons your group has chosen them. Do the reasons have something to do with the values, beliefs, and objectives of the group? What do the words mean to your group? Write a paragraph reporting your thoughts about the words and your group.

**In-Class Activity D:** Can you remember a time when you learned how to write a new kind of text or piece of writing? If so, describe how you figured out what you needed to do. Could you learn about a new text the same way now? If not, why not? If so, how? If you can’t remember such a time, think about a new writing task that you have encountered recently. How does it seem the same as what you’ve written before? How does it seem different?

**In-Class Activity E: Genre Analysis Activity (see Appendix F).**