

Teaching Students Metacognitive Strategies to Analyze and Produce Professional Writing

*A Workshop for the
Center for Faculty Development*
Rosemary Henze
Linguistics and Language Development
April 14th, 2010



I. Introduction...

- Welcome and introductions...
- Definitions
 - Genre
 - Genre awareness
 - Genre-based approach (aka socioliterate approach)



Genre

- According to Webster's dictionary, a genre is simply a type or kind of artistic, musical, literary, or other creation that is characterized by a particular style, form, or content.
 - Examples?
 - Subgenres



Genre awareness

- The ability to recognize and analyze genres; students can acquire tools that will help them to figure new genres out, even when nobody is explicitly teaching them.



Genre based approaches (aka socioliterate approaches (Johns, 1999))

- An approach in which the instructor explicitly tries to raise students' awareness of the social purposes of the texts read and produced in the course.
 - Who produces them?
 - Who reads them?
 - For what purposes are they produced and read?
 - How do these social purposes constrain and affect the rhetorical strategies used, as well as the organization, style, flow, and presentation?



Some everyday examples

- These will help students realize that they already have genre awareness in everyday life.
 - Writing an ad for a room-mate (download from I-tunes the TV series Madmen, season 3 episode 4, 27:16-29:04)
 - Giving someone you know a shopping list; what do you have to clarify? What can be assumed?



II. What's the big deal?

Why emphasize genre awareness?

- Professional *discourse communities* expect their members to be familiar with (understand and produce) the genres used in that community.
- This familiarity helps one to become a full member of that community.



What's the big deal, continued

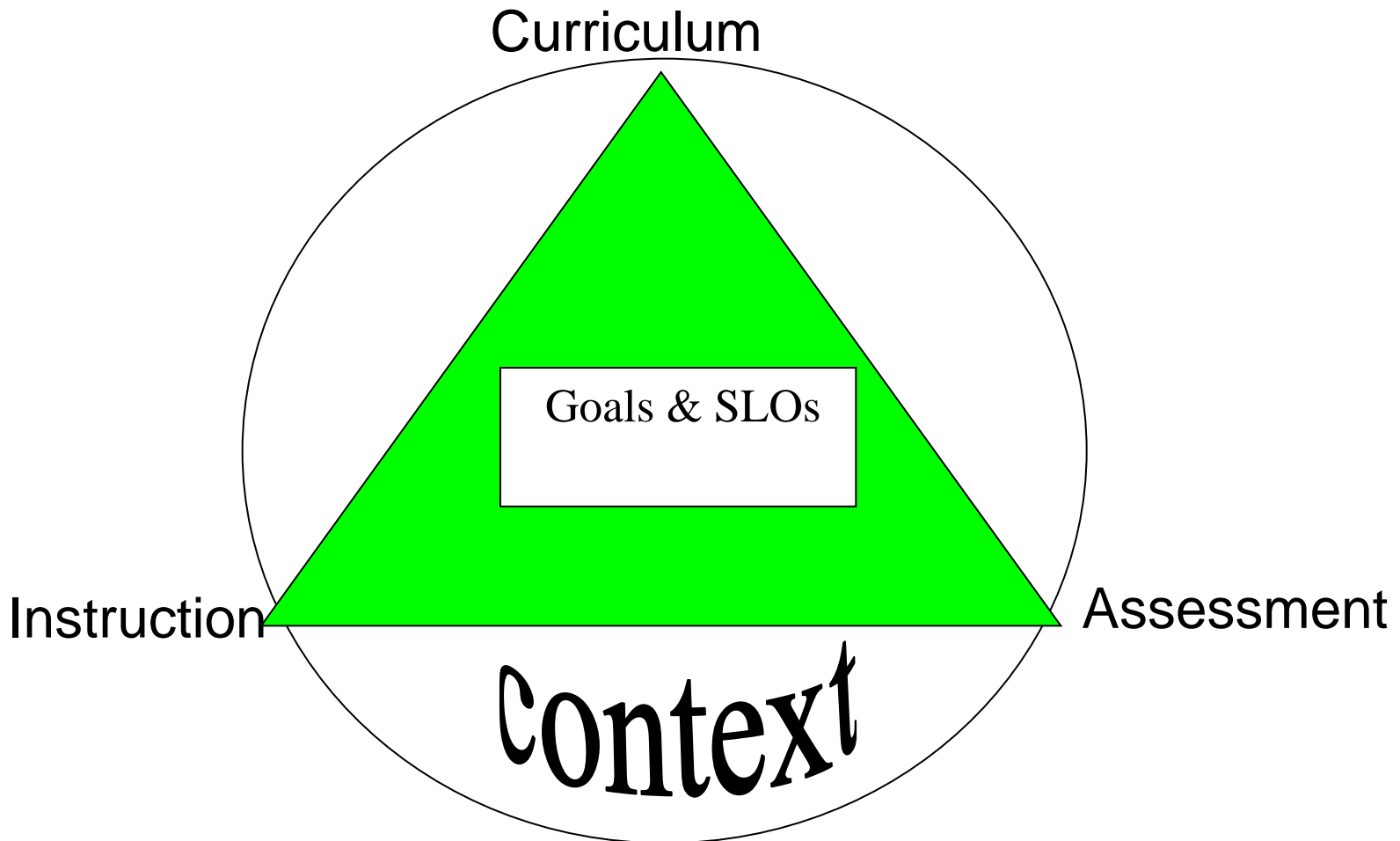
- • Professional genres are not usually taught explicitly; you have to just acquire them by being around -- it's an **implicit** system of cultural learning
- BUT this implicit system privileges those who already have some or all of this cultural knowledge
- And it marginalizes those who don't (i.e., many of our students)!



III. Discussion points

- What genres in your field do you want your students to become familiar with?
- Do you have to be a member of a professional community yourself in order to teach genre awareness?

Core Elements of a Course:





VI. To get started

- **Framework for analyzing genres**
- **Key terms and concepts handout**
- **Example**



VII. Hands on activity

- Working in groups or pairs, think of a written or oral genre that you know well, but other people in this workshop might not know.
 - How would you teach them to produce that genre?
 - What would they have to know to be able to produce it well?



A possible sequence for instruction

1. Provide an engaging illustration to get students talking about genres (without necessarily using the terminology)
2. Provide basic definitions
3. Using the genre framework, model how to apply it to a real example
4. Have students come up with criteria for that genre --obligatory & optional
5. Have students do an assignment in which they analyze the genre of a text in their field



Sources Consulted

- Johns, Ann (Ed.). (2002). *Genre in the classroom: Multiple perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Johns, Ann M. (1999). Opening our doors: Applying socioliterate approaches (SA) to language minority classrooms. In L. Harklau & M. Siegal, (Eds), *Generation 1.5 meets college composition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Swales, J. & Feak, C. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*. Second Edition. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.



The end!

- Thanks for coming!