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ENGL596-Mueller

Lesson Plan-Doc Gallery

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In an attempt to encourage students to dig deeper into aspects of genre theory and genre awareness, they will be offered the opportunity to earn some extra credit points by attempting to compose in the genre they chose to write about for the Genres in the Wild project. This activity is being assigned mid-semester to a group of ENGL120 students 1) to help solidify some aspects of genre conventions for them, 2) to provide them with some hands-on experience in genre theory and awareness, 3) to offer them another opportunity to reflect on their work and writing processes, 4) to further solidify the notion that the personal knowledge and literacies they bring into the classroom are valued, and 5) to give them a chance to increase their grades.

A number of genre theory proponents (Dirk 259; Devitt 203) say that attempting to write in unfamiliar genres is an exercise in understanding writing processes, as they relate to genre conventions and their functions. Additionally, these notions involve most, if not all, of the core threshold concepts of ENGL120 as a course, as they encompass aspects of genre conventions, rhetorical knowledge, writing as a process, reflective practice, and, depending on the student’s choice in genre and document design, may include multimodal composition as well. At the same time, it’s this kind of deeper level awareness of genres and their conventions that Devitt is suggesting helps students “maintain a critical stance and their own agency in the face of disciplinary discourses, academic writing, and other realms of literacy” (337).

Additionally, allowing students to choose a genre to write about for the Genres in the Wild project increased the chances that they were invested in their writing topic, while also giving them agency over their own writing. As Thomas says, research has shown that instructors should foster students’ ownership and accountability in their writing, while also offering them choices in their writing (41). Moreover, Gorzelsky argues this kind of pedagogical approach moves toward co-constructing knowledge “and valuing students’ agency as interpreters of texts and ideas” in the classroom (65). As the students were allowed to choose their topics, many of them chose a genre involving a text they had some personal knowledge of. By connecting their personal knowledge to this academic assignment, students were more likely to become aware that their personal knowledge, opinions, and experiences have a place in the classroom and are valued in this environment. And as Esposito says, it’s important to find ways to connect students’ “academic lives, which sometimes seemed detached and irrelevant, to their lives outside school” (72).

Works cited

Devitt, Amy J. *Writing Genres*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2004. Print.

Dirk, Kerry. "Navigating Genres." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1*.

Writing Spaces, 2010. Web. 25 June 2013.

Esposito, Lauren. "Where to Begin? Using Place-Based Writing to Connect Students with Their Local Communities." *English Journal* 101.4 (2012): 70-76. Print.

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Thomas, P. L. “The Struggle Itself: Teaching Writing as We Know We Should.” *English*

*Journal* (2000): 39-44. Print.

**Extra credit description:** To earn a possible 5 extra-credit points for the semester, you can attempt to compose a text in the genre you chose to analyze in your Genres in the Wild essay. You must address the expectations listed on the rubric below to the best of your ability, and remember to consider the context, scenario, and audience you have created in your text. Additionally, you would need to write a 250-word reflection piece describing some of the genre conventions you used in your text, what it was like writing in this genre, and things you found easy and/or struggled with.

**Expectations & formatting:** The page length your individual genres call for will vary greatly, but I expect at least 1 full-page worth of work from you. At the same time, a possible 5 extra-credit points is a lot on a 100 point scale for the entire semester, so I will be looking at these with a critical eye. And make no mistake—writing in an unfamiliar genre for the first time can be a challenge, so don’t think this will necessarily be easy.

Additionally, I won’t be requiring some of the usual assignment conventions such as double-spaced, Times New Roman font, etc. because these conventions may not be appropriate for your particular genre. So you need to use your best judgment and determine how your genre should *look* and what it should *sound* like.

**Genres in the Wild: Extra Credit Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Genre Attempt** | EX (4 pts.) | AC (3 pts.) | NI (2 pts.) | NA (1 pt.) | DA (0 pt.) |
| Audience/Goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| Level of Detail |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tone/Jargon |  |  |  |  |  |
| Development/Care |  |  |  |  |  |
| Organization/ Physical Structure |  |  |  |  |  |

EX: *Exceptional*—The writer has applied the criterion with distinction.

AC: *Acceptable/Meets Expectations*—The writer has applied the criterion to an acceptable degree.

NI: *Needs improvement*—The writer has attempted to apply the criterion in the project.

NA: *Narrowly applied*—The writer applied some aspects of the criterion in the project.

DA: *Didn't apply*—The writer did not apply the criterion in the project.

**Audience/Goals:** Did you effectively address an expected audience for your genre? Were you actively working toward the intended goals your genre is meant to accomplish, by making good use of the conventions that enable it to meet these goals?

**Level of Detail:** Did you provide enough context and detail in your text, so your audience can understand your intended message within the genre?

**Tone/Jargon:** Was your tone appropriate for the genre and audience, and did you use jargon that is potentially expected in your genre?

**Development/care:** Are your ideas well organized, giving your text a logical flow? Did you include a thoughtful reflection paper? Is your text free of grammar, spelling, and syntax errors?

**Organization/Physical Structure:** Does your text conform to the *general* expected layout and organization of your chosen genre?