

Lauren Winton
Dr. Derek Mueller
Writing 596
Lesson Plan
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Introduction

The purpose of this genre transformation lesson plan and assignment is to help students think of genre as a communication act that occurs in response to a particular situation. The lesson also helps students understand genre conventions, and how conventions differ depending on the social action of the genre. I introduced this lesson plan and assignment during the third week of Genres in the Wild unit for Writing 120.

Lesson Plans

Every lesson begins with an agenda for the class period, and then a couple of minutes dedicated to questions about the previous night's homework, or class-related concerns.

I then started the lesson with the following fast write:

- How do the genres you use vary depending on who you're communicating with? How do you establish ethos through your genre choices? Would you use a text message to communicate with your professor, for example? Why or why not?

Students had an opportunity to share their thoughts from the fast write and then we engaged in a class discussion about genre and genre conventions. I introduced the activity we would work on for the rest of the class.

Materials for the assignment: *Understanding Rhetoric*, Pen/paper, and Notecards.

The students sat in four groups of six. Each group was then given a notecard with page numbers for *Understanding Rhetoric* on one side, and a genre on the other. Note card prompts included the following:

1. Pages 25-33, PowerPoint (X2)
2. Pages 35-47, Academic Email (X2)
3. Pages 1-13, Poem (X2)

For this assignment, two groups completed the same transformation of page information in the same genre in order to compare results and discuss rhetorical choices.

I provided the following directions:

1. Review your group's assigned pages in *Understanding Rhetoric*. Look at the genre assigned to your group.
2. Think about the salient topics the authors cover in this section. Discuss the main topics with your group.
3. Now, re-create the information you've read in the **genre** provided.
4. For example, if your genre was a business memo, create a business memo that conveys the same information as the comic.

Each group shared their results with the class and we discussed their rhetorical choices. The students then wrote a reflection on the activity, answering the following questions:

- Why do you think the authors chose the genre of a comic to write *Understanding Rhetoric*?
- What are the advantages of using a comic?
- Did your genre work in the same way as the comic? Why or why not?
- Were there things about your genre that were more effective?

Discussion

The activity went well, and many students wrote in their Project Two cover letter that this lesson gave them a better understanding of genre when they were writing their Genres in the Wild assignment. Based on the work students completed before and after this genre lesson, I could tell that students had a better grasp of what genre is and how genres function rhetorically. For next year, I would like to leave additional time at the end for students to share their reflection of the activity with each other, and then have a class discussion to relate the activity to the course outcomes.

Works Cited

Dirk, Kerry. "Navigating Genres." *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, 2010, <http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/dirk--navigating-genres.pdf>.

Gee, James P. *Social Linguistics and Literacies*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2008.

Miller, Carolyn R. "Genre as Social Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 70, May 1984, pp. 151 – 167.