Beyond Fiction and Nonfiction: Teaching Genre Better

Presentation for Professors of Reading Teacher Educators

Nell K. Duke

University of Michigan

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Fiction vs. Nonfiction

Informational vs. Literary

Beyond Dichotomies. . .

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What Falls Under "Informational Text" in the CCSS Grades K to 5*

"Biographies" and "autobiographies"

"Books about history, social studies, science, and the arts" (informative/explanatory text)

"Technical texts, including directions, forms, and information displayed in graphs, charts, or maps"

"Digital sources on a range of topics"

* This is somewhat different than what falls under "informational text" in the NAEP 2009 Framework.

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CCSS Distribution of Text Types for Writing (from NAEP)

Grade	To Persuade	To Explain	To Convey Experience
4	30%	35%	35%
8	35%	35%	30%
12	40%	40%	20%

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Why All This Fuss About Text Type?

Reading and writing is, to a large degree, genre specific (Duke & Roberts, 2010).

Different types of text require the teacher to:

- establish different purposes for students' reading and writing
- look for and teach different text features
- look for and teach different strategies
- draw on different research-tested instructional approaches (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)

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Teacher educators may need to boost attention to genre in their courses, going way beyond fiction and nonfiction.

Teacher educators may need to address:

Content knowledge: about the purposes and features of different genres; strategies people use to read different genres

Pedagogical content knowledge: how to teach genre

- How to establish compelling communicative purposes
- How to teach genre features
- How to teach genre-sensitive strategies

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Genres	Primary Purpose
Narrative genres	To share and interpret experiences
Dramatic genres	To show characters live through conflicts and interactions
Persuasive genres	To influence the target audience's ideas or behaviors
Informative/ explanatory genres	To convey information about the natural or social world to people who want or need to know that information
Procedural genres	To teach people how to do something they don't know how to do and want or need to do

Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012

Establishing compelling, communicatively meaningful environments

Theory and research suggest that students learn to read and write a genre best when:

- they read and write that genre for the same <u>purposes</u> people read and write the genre outside of a schooling context
- they read and write <u>text</u> the same as, or very much like, text found outside a schooling context
- they write for <u>audiences</u>

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Some support from theory and research

Theory: Genres come from and are defined by specific rhetorical situations (Miller, 1984). We teach genre best when we create those situations in our classrooms.

Research: Second and third graders in classrooms in which informational text and procedural text reading involved more real-world texts for real-world purposes showed higher growth on several measures (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). Contexts like these may also have benefits for motivation and engagement (e.g., Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007).

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Cohen and Riel (1989)

- Grade 7
- Teacher versus international peers
- Compositions for peers stronger in overall and in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics

Crowhurst and Piche (1979)

- Grades 6 and 10
- Teacher versus best friend
- Compositions for best friend had more effective argumentative language

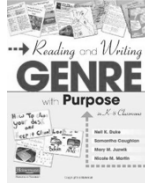SCHOOL OF EDUCATION · UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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Looking for and teaching different text features

- There is some evidence supporting explicitly teaching specific genre features.
- There is also some research suggesting the need to be cautious about when and how we do this.

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Here I discussed some examples of teaching text features of specific genres, within compelling communicative environments, from this book:

Teaching Genre-Sensitive Strategies

- There is a great deal of research supporting the value of explicitly teaching reading and writing strategies.
- There are research-tested approaches to teaching reading and writing of specific genres.

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Pedagogical content knowledge: how to teach genre

- How to establishing compelling communicative purposes
- How to teach genre features
- How to teach genre-sensitive strategies Nell Duke