

Call for Proposals, Edited Collection

Writing for and about the Classroom: Pedagogical Documents as Rhetorical Genres

Edited by Stephen Neaderhiser (sneader1@kent.edu)

Genre plays a fundamental role in the act of teaching. Even before students begin engaging with the various genres that will reflect their own learning in a classroom setting, they are presented with genres of the classroom itself, such as the syllabus, course description, or grading rubric. As Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) note, these pedagogical genres allow teachers to give shape to a classroom, “transforming the physical space of a classroom into a socially bounded, ideological space” (p. 80). However, it is not uncommon for pedagogical genres—those genres taken up by teachers to facilitate, enable, and reflect the act of teaching itself—to be treated as primarily functional documents of the classroom, rather than the complex rhetorical genres that they are, both in the classroom and outside of it.

This collection is motivated by John Swales’s (1996) call for the analytical study of occluded academic genres: those genres within academia that are typically less visible than traditional public (or published) academic genres like journal articles, monographs, or conference presentations, but are still “seriously invested with demonstrated scholarship and seriously concerned with representing their authors in a favourable professional light” (p. 46). While Swales’s call has led to scholarship on occluded academic genres, the focus has been almost exclusively on genres linked to an academic’s identity as a researcher and scholar, such as manuscript submission letters, conference abstracts, and grant proposals. What has been lacking in scholarship is how that same analysis can be applied to the genres that support an academic’s identity as a *teacher*. Just as a manuscript submission letter might promote an academic’s scholarly reputation and contribution, a syllabus constructs an academic’s pedagogical authority and expertise in the classroom. Moreover, genres related to an academic’s teaching are often read outside of the classroom as well, and therefore necessitate a rhetorical awareness extending to “non-student” audiences: a university curriculum board may review a course proposal and description before a class is even created, a hiring committee may ask for a teaching statement or “examples of teaching excellence” to gauge an individual’s teaching ability, and reappointment/tenure reviews may require samples of assignments and peer teaching observations to assess a teacher’s continued faculty status.

Writing for and about the Classroom seeks to emphasize how and why pedagogical genres warrant serious scholarly study and analysis as rhetorical genres, rather than being seen exclusively as pragmatic documents produced and used by individual teachers in isolation. While some scholars have explored the rhetorical nature of certain genres associated with teaching, such as the syllabus (Baecker, 1998; Fink, 2012), assignment prompt (Clark, 2005), end comments (Smith, 1997), or teaching statement (Neaderhiser, 2016), there is much more that can be done to expand the attention paid to the rhetorical analysis of pedagogical genres.

To that end, this collection invites chapter submissions on a wide variety of pedagogical genres, preferably focused on one of the three following areas of inquiry:

- 1) Investigations of classroom-based genres, such as syllabi or assignment prompts, in order to consider how those documents’ rhetorical construction shapes student expectations and classroom dynamics.
- 2) Explorations of how classroom-based genres can be understood as having an operative role in *other* academic contexts beyond the classroom, such as faculty reviews, departmental policies, or curricular assessments.
- 3) Analyses of academic genres *not* meant primarily for a student audience but that still support or facilitate an academic’s professional identity as a teacher, such as peer teaching observations, student evaluation questionnaires, or statements of teaching philosophy.

Ideally, contributions to the collection will cover a range of research methodologies, including case studies, empirical analysis, narrative or reflective accounts, or other approaches. Possible pedagogical genres include (but are not limited to):

Classroom Genres

- Syllabi
- Assignment prompts
- Grading rubrics
- Study aids, review sheets
- Genre modeling/teaching samples
- Class-specific workbooks
- Lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations
- End notes, margin comments

Extended Pedagogical Genres

- Learning outcomes
- Departmental guidelines/handbooks
- Course proposals, class descriptions
- CMS/Individual faculty teaching web pages
- Personal teaching narratives
- Teaching observation letters/reports
- Statements of teaching philosophy
- Teaching development funding/grant proposals

The vision for *Writing for and about the Classroom* is to provide a resource beneficial not only for the field of Writing Studies but also for the broader audience of teachers from all disciplines, by offering a view of pedagogical genres that moves beyond giving formulaic “how-to” advice and instead recognizes the writing teachers do as playing a rhetorical role in their own professional identities as academics.

Proposal Guidelines

Please submit a chapter proposal of 500 words, including a working manuscript title and abstract, as an email attachment (Word or RTF) to Stephen Neaderhiser (sneader1@kent.edu) by **April 15, 2018**. Final chapter lengths should be **5,000-7,000 words**. Please feel free to email with any general questions or inquiries, as well.

Timeline

Proposals submitted to sneader1@kent.edu by **April 15, 2018**

Acceptance notifications sent by **May 15, 2018**

Chapter manuscripts to be submitted by **October 1, 2018**

References

- Baecker, D. L. (1998). Uncovering the Rhetoric of the Syllabus: The Case of the Missing *I*. *College Teaching*, 46(2), 58–62.
- Bawarshi, A. S., & Reiff, M. J. (2010). *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy*. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press.
- Clark, I. (2005). A Genre Approach to Writing Assignments. *Composition Forum*, 14(2). Retrieved from <http://compositionforum.com/issue/14.2/clark-genre-writing.php>
- Fink, S. B. (2012). The Many Purposes of Course Syllabi: Which Are Essential and Useful? *Syllabus*, 1(1), 1–12.
- Neaderhiser, S. (2016). Conceiving of a Teacherly Identity: Metaphors of Composition in Teaching Statements. *Pedagogy*, 16(3), 413–443.
- Smith, S. (1997). The Genre of the End Comment: Conventions in Teacher Responses to Student Writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 48(2), 249–268.
- Swales, J. M. (1996). Occluded Genres in the Academy: The Case of the Submission Letter. In E. Ventola & A. Mauranen (Eds.), *Academic Writing: Intercultural and Textual Issues* (pp. 45–58). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.