Responding to Genre-Based Writing Instruction: An Interpretive Study of L2 Writers’ Experiences in Two Graduate Level ESP/EAP Writing Courses

Dissertation

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Abstract

Genre theory has greatly influenced ESP/EAP writing instruction, but little is known about the perspectives of the students and how they learn in genre-based writing classrooms. This study investigated the learning of four first year international students enrolled in a two-course sequence of ESP/EAP writing to see how learners respond to genre-based writing instruction. The participants were selected according to their level of study (M.A., PhD) and their disciplines (Science, Education). I was the teacher of both courses. In the classroom, the students were first introduced to a typical version of a genre that was introduced in the textbook; then, in groups, they analyzed how this genre was realized in their own disciplines. The students were then required to write three drafts of this genre individually, using contents from their own disciplines. They met with me for a one-on-one tutorial after submitting the first draft and received a letter grade for the third draft. Written feedback was given for all three drafts. Observation notes from the classroom, audio-recordings of the tutorials, and drafts of the students were analyzed using the interpretive participant observational framework proposed by Erickson (1986). The findings demonstrate that each student needed to travel what I call the interpretive distance, the distance between the model version of the genre to the actual application of it into their own disciplines. By completing each assignment and traveling the interpretive distance repeatedly during the two quarters, each student was able to identify specific roadblocks that inhibited themselves from navigating the interpretive journey independently. These roadblocks were different combinations of (1) an understanding of genre, (2) language proficiency, and (3) knowledge of their disciplinary field. The four cases are illustrative of the interpretive distance because for each
participant, one aspect of genre writing was invisible to them, and their drafts vividly reflected this. The three possible roadblocks in traveling the interpretive distance that I identify in this study are all aspects of genre that require an unspecified amount of time to master. Thus, it is unrealistic for genre-based writing instruction to promise that the student will master how to write a specific academic genre by the end of the course, or in this case, sequence of courses. Rather, the most important role of genre based instruction is to equip the student with an awareness of what to look out for when traveling the interpretive journey. This study contributes to the existing discussion of how ESP/EAP can address the specific needs of the learners by providing a description of what it looks like to teach “specifically,” and, at the same time, equip the students with academic literacy (of which genre knowledge is a big part).
Dedication

To my husband, Dr. Yongwan Chun.
Acknowledgements

“Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day.”

- Winnie the Pooh

And here we are. Here we are.

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Vita

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Second language (L2) writing instruction presents numerous learning opportunities as well as challenges for both students and teachers. This study was motivated by the daily struggles I, like many English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing instructors of international graduate students, face amidst the expectation “to collect empirical needs assessment data, to create or adapt materials to meet the specific needs identified, and to cope with often unfamiliar language matter and even language use” (Belcher, 2004, p.166). All issues and contentions related to language teaching come clashing together in the classroom, and always, the challenge of teasing out a comfortable equilibrium is ultimately up to the teacher. However, whether this painstaking effort actually leads to desired outcomes is another story altogether.

I was first assigned to teach a graduate level writing class (XXX) in the summer of 2005. My husband, a student who went through all three of the writing courses offered by the University, was less than thrilled for me. Then a fourth-year PhD student, he told me that his writing practices had been shaped by interactions with peers in his own department, and more importantly, by interactions with his own advisor; in contrast, he could barely remember what he had learned in his writing classes: “It is so demoralizing when you are in a classroom studying English grammar when your domestic counterparts are learning new things, the very things that
you have come abroad to learn.’’ To him, the courses had merely been a rite of passage for an incoming international student. He told me to be prepared to deal with the reluctance of graduate students\(^1\), as opposed to the enthusiasm to learn, or eagerness to obtain a good grade, common among undergraduate students.

Since I am an international graduate student myself, many friends and peers were more than happy to share their experiences with me as well. Although few were as negative as my husband, I was puzzled to learn that graduate students were not as enthusiastic about what they learned compared to the undergraduate students that I had been teaching for 2 years. This was puzzling, because the agony of writing my own first academic paper in English, accompanied by the desire to learn how to meet this challenge, was still fresh in my mind. My first quarter in the United States was so difficult that I had seriously considered taking English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classes, even though I had qualified out of them. I assumed that others facing such a challenge would likewise be eager to seek assistance.

I soon realized that, in various ways, the students I spoke with had articulated to me their own understanding of the dilemma inherent in first year EAP instruction for graduate students: what to teach, specifically. They understood that there were many registers of English, and that although they may never be “perfect” in some areas, they were eventually going to have to become competent in at least one discourse community-their own research field. They also sensed that in a classroom of international graduate students from various disciplines, they probably weren’t going to learn all they needed to gain command of their own community’s writing conventions. At the same time, I knew from conversations with my writing teacher colleagues that they, too, encountered the challenging question of what to teach in genre-oriented courses serving students from a variety of disciplines. The struggle that I faced, then, was one common

\(^1\) Both undergraduate and graduate courses assign letter grades at the end of the quarter. However, the grade given to the graduate students are not calculated into their overall GPA. The least they need to do is get a C- or higher to pass the course requirements.
among EAP writing instructors: to find a way to initiate students meaningfully into the writing practices of their own disciplines.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The second language (L2) writing field has clearly shown that attempting to teach the subject-matter of students’ own academic disciplines is neither realistic nor helpful (Belcher, 2006). A more reasonable goal would be to help students learn how to learn by showing them how to analyze their own discourse communities (Dudley-Evans, 1997). This entails leading students to know “what to look for”. An analogy of the practice of “bowing” in Eastern Asian countries might be useful here. In many Eastern Asian countries, people bow to greet one another. When an outsider of these countries visits and observes these practices, they seem easy enough. Yet, actually bowing in the correct way might be difficult, as there are several features that constitute a correct bow. Whether or not to have eye contact, how low the head bows, who you are bowing to, for what purpose, and even the positioning of the hands (whether the right hand goes on top of the left hand, or vice versa) are all things that need to be analyzed. The results of this analysis will differ from country to country; a Thai bow will differ very much from a Korean bow. There is no way for an outsider to approximate these practices unless they learn how to look for features that are meaningful.

An important goal of ESP writing instruction, then, is to help learners gain autonomy in analyzing the texts in their own field so as to prepare them to transfer this knowledge to their own writing. This goal is reflected in the preface of the seminal textbook on EAP writing instruction by Swales & Feak (1994), who state that

the general approach [of the book] is analytical and rhetorical: users are asked to apply their analytical skills to the discourses of their chosen disciplines and to explore how effective academic writing is achieved. (p.2)
This goal has been largely shaped by genre theory, an approach that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) specialists have incorporated so deeply into their practices and theories that ESP itself is often considered a branch of genre studies (Belcher, 2006; Hyon, 1996). The field has also embraced the insights of two other schools of genre theory, the Sydney School and the New Rhetoric school (Belcher, 2006; A. Johns, 2003).

One helpful definition of genre, from the well-known genre specialist Ken Hyland (2007), is as follows:

*Genre* refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using language. It is based on the idea that members of a community usually have little difficulty in recognizing similarities in the texts they use frequently and are able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand, and perhaps write them relatively easily. This is, in part, because writing is a practice based on expectations: the reader’s chances or interpreting the writer’s purpose are increased if the writer takes the trouble to anticipate what the reader might be expecting based on previous texts they have read of the same kind. (p.149)

Building on the ideas articulated by Hyland, the concept of genre is particularly useful in ESP/EAP writing instruction because it allows the teacher to utilize writing “models” that students can both analyze and imitate. It should be noted that many writing researchers and teachers have been cautious about the use of models because “[they] control or inhibit students’ identity as writers, misrepresent the process of writing, and don’t easily transfer to other writing tasks” (Macbeth, 2007, p.3). This is because often, models are taught as, or understood as, a prescriptive template to faithfully abide by. However, the foundational notion of genre theory is that these models, or genres, are not “definitive rules” (Macbeth, 2007) of what “good writing” should be (Hyland, 2007). Rather, they are post facto generalizations of the syntax and rhetoric that is needed to carry out recurring communicative events in a given discourse community (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). Thus, an important part of genre-based writing instruction is to help learners understand the nature of these genres and to promote the ability to appropriate them effectively. Specifically, this involves an understanding of the “communicative purposes,
performed social (inter)actions within rhetorical contexts, and formal properties (structure, style, and content)” (Cheng, 2006, p.77) of the genre, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge to new rhetorical contexts (Cheng, 2007).

However, providing the students with this model, or prototype of the genre, is not the answer to all pedagogical challenges. In order for the student to utilize genre knowledge for authentic communicative purposes, he/she needs to be able to recognize how these prototypical features take different forms. To use the analogy that Swales (1990) provided, a prototype of a *bird* in North American culture would be a *robin*. At the beginning stage of instruction, it might be sufficient to introduce this prototype and explain why this is considered to be a prototype of *bird*. However, learners eventually do need to be able to identify penguins, chickens, and ostriches as birds as well. Thus, “because the goal of instruction is to help learners apply new knowledge to later tasks, transferability is a key issue for teachers” (Tardy, 2006, p.91).

For this reason, a major vein of genre research is dedicated to the description of genres (Cheng, 2006; Macbeth, 2007) as a starting point in the development of genre knowledge and control. The key is to achieve a balance between arriving at a prototypical representation of genre behavior within a discourse community and not over-generalizing actual instances of genre use. Another vein of genre research that is especially important to ESP practitioners is to “translate [these] analyses of discipline-based genre exemplars into various pedagogical materials” (Cheng, 2006, p.77). However, curiously missing are studies on actual classroom applications of genre theory (Cheng, 2006; Johns, 2002a, 2002b; Tardy, 2006), and what learning looks like in genre-based writing classrooms. Considering that ESP is inherently pragmatic (Belcher, 2004, 2006), it is notable that only a few studies look at genre-learning from the learners’ perspective (Cheng, 2007, 2008a, 2008b). Cheng (2006) noted that few researchers have approached classrooms with a “learner-focused, context-sensitive” (p.78) view. There is, then, a missing piece in the study of genre from a classroom learner’s perspective. While genre analysts have achieved considerable
success in analyzing the defining characteristics of genres, there is a lack of research that investigates how students respond to genre-based L2 writing instruction.

The present study aims to provide this “missing piece” in the literature. Using a naturalistic approach to research, it examined international graduate students’ difficulties and successes as they strive for disciplinary competence. Drawing from Swales (1990) and Bhatia’s (1993; 2004) view, genre is now considered more to be a way of doing, a how rather than a what (Johns et al., 2006). This study investigated how genre-based writing practices unfold in graduate level writing courses. Specifically, what EAP writing students do in reaction to genre-based writing instruction was investigated during the course of two quarters (6 months). The participants took the first course of the ESL writing sequence, XXX, in the first quarter, and then the second course, YYY, in the second.

1.2. Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

Question 1: How do international graduate students learn to “see” and apply genres in an EAP writing class intended for students of all disciplines?

Question 2: What does it mean for a student to “learn genre” in these first-year academic writing courses?

1.3. Research Perspectives

In order to describe what the students do in response to actual instruction and the learning opportunities that were created by it, I take on the dual role of teacher and researcher. The teacher has a more “thorough understanding of the practical tasks and actual organizations of the setting
that contextualize the teaching and learning” (Macbeth, 2004, p.73) that goes on in the classroom. Thus, the present study takes on the form of “teacher research,” which is defined as a “systematic, intentional inquiry by [the teacher]” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.5).

Because the teacher has “daily access, extensive expertise, and a clear stake in improving classroom practice”, s/he is able to provide “unique perspectives on teaching and learning” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.5) that can contribute to various spheres of knowledge bases, which Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) have classified as local knowledge and public knowledge. Locally, teacher research generates knowledge that offers an insider’s view on how teachers and students co-construct teaching and learning opportunities in the classroom. It also provides a contextualized account of how teaching and learning take place in a specific setting or program. Here, the teacher is not only the “consumer” or “applier” of knowledge, but also a contributor; consequently, the findings of teacher research can lead to changes in teaching practices or even reform in programs and institutions. Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) assert that teacher research is equally important in expanding public knowledge, the knowledge for the larger community of educators because of their unique positioning in the teaching context. This new knowledge, they say, is needed to redefine notions of teaching and learning, and thus “alter the locus of the knowledge base” (p. 44).

Because the strengths of teacher research arise from the teacher’s professional involvement and systematic subjectivity, it follows that the framework of these studies is predominantly interpretive (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p.13), as is the present study. In a classroom, this means “discovering how the choices and actions of all the members constitute an enacted curriculum- a learning environment” (Erickson, 1986, p.129). The term “interpretive” is used to refer to a research perspective that differs from the traditional positivist approach to knowledge. Theorists have also used “post-positivist”, “interpretive”, or “naturalistic” to refer to this alternative. More on this framework will be discussed in Chapter Three.
1.4. Significance of the Study

The present study contributes to the overall understanding of genre theory and genre-based writing instruction. In ESP/EAP, genre theory is seen as a useful way to make academic practices assessable and teachable to ESL students (Johns, 2002c; Paltridge, 2001; Swales, 1990). However, as Cheng (2006) pointed out, the field seems to lack a close examination of how learners actually learn in the ESP/EAP genre based writing classroom. Cheng speculates that this may be because there has not yet been an attempt to fully describe the complexities of the learner and learning process while taking into account the “unique conceptual framework and pedagogies of ESP genre-based writing classrooms” (p. 76). The present study took on a naturalist or interpretive framework in order to describe the learning experience of the learners after establishing a thorough understanding of genre-based instruction.

More specifically, this study will contribute to the knowledge base of graduate-level ESP/EAP writing specialists. In this study, I was the instructor of the courses as well as the investigator; this combination of roles enabled me to have a unique insider’s point-of-view of what was occurring in response to instruction. This, in turn, should add to the richness of the data gathered and thus expand our understanding of genre instruction as it actually plays out in classroom settings. As Stake (2000) puts it, “we come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their experience” (p. 442). I hope that the present study will, by my positioning as an insider, contribute to the teaching community and provide an “experiential and contextual account” (p. 442) that can assist in the construction of further knowledge about genre-based EAP writing instruction.
1.5. Definition of Key Terms

**ESP/EAP**

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) aims to link what students learn in the classroom to language as it is actually used in real-life settings, as in the case of hotel workers in non-English speaking countries learning “hotel English” so as to communicate in functional ways with guests. It is also considered to be a branch of genre studies. ESP can then be divided into two different domains: EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes).

Normally, in an academic setting at the graduate level, the boundary between EOP and EAP is not clear cut, as it is expected that students will graduate and become professional academic writers. However, in the context of this study, the focus is on EAP courses, that is, courses which strive to improve students’ ability to use English for academic purposes, in this case, writing skills.

The classes in the present proposed study are intended for first year students. While long-term academic writing purposes (such as writing dissertations and journal articles) are kept in mind, they might not be immediate needs for the students at present. Thus, satisfying immediate “academic” needs – being able to complete academic writing assignments during the first couple of years of graduate study - is the primary motivation for these courses. For this reason, the term ESP/EAP is used throughout the study to refer to the application of genre theory for academic purposes. More on this term will be discussed in the literature review.

**Genre-based writing instruction**

Genre-based writing instruction is defined as writing instruction that is motivated by genre theory. Because the courses are intended for students from various disciplines, and these students are new-comers to the socio-cognitive practices of their own fields, it is unrealistic and contrary to the notion of genre to expect complete mastery of a certain genre, say, an academic
essay, at the end of the course. Rather, the goal of genre-based writing instruction is to guide students toward a “conscious manipulation of language and choice” (Hyland, 2007, p.151) by empowering them to recognize what needs to be done to communicate effectively in writing within the context of their chosen disciplinary community.

**Interpretive Distance**

The prototypical genres or models that are utilized in writing instruction are derived from a post-hoc analysis of successful writing in the discourse community, which is, in this case, academic disciplines. While the genre is recognizable as the “prototype”, there is seldom a piece of writing that exactly fits the prototype. Thus, genre descriptions cannot be used as definitive criteria to determine good/successful writing; rather, they are utilized as convenient places to start in terms of instruction. After receiving instruction/information on the target genre, the student needs to “interpret” this knowledge and apply it to fit the context in which the writing itself is situated.

In this study, this distance between the “model” or “textbook genre” to the actual application of it in the actual writing assignment will be termed **interpretive distance**. Traveling this distance is a necessary journey that any novice writer needs to take, one that is influenced by a multitude of contextual factors that are entangled in unique combinations. For a first year graduate student, some of many factors could be first language, English proficiency, extent of participation in the field, and nature of the text that he/she is working with, and “task representation” (Basham, Ray, & Whalley, 1993). This distance cannot be thought of as “input-output”, or “pretest-posttest” because (1) the starting point for each individual is different, and (2) there is no way to define the “end of the road”, although one could sense that this would mean some extent of participation in the target discourse community. While instructors cannot tap all of the factors that help or hinder a student’s crossing of this distance, the struggles are often
visible in the context of assignments and in our discussions with students. This study will highlight the variety of struggles, but it will not take up factors that explain why some students may have a longer interpretive distance to cross than another.

“Reacting” to instruction

The focus of the present study is not the success or failure, or even the “effectiveness,” of genre-based writing instruction. Rather, it attempted to describe how students “react” to genre-based instruction. The conceptual framework is based on Erickson’s (1986) notion of interpretive participant observational research in classroom settings. According to Erickson (1986), what students do in a classroom is a reflection of how they meaningfully interpret the learning environment. This can be seen in how students write-up their drafts of papers, how they talk about their drafts, and what they do in class. Identifying and analyzing these activities will reveal how students “take in” and “react to” genre-based writing instruction.

Viewing learners’ reaction this way can, in turn, reveal a perspective of the learning environment that is not readily visible. For example, Junko Mori (2002) looked closely at what her students did in response to instruction that emphasized authentic interaction with a native speaker. Using Conversation Analysis (CA), she analyzed what students did in response to instruction, rather than attempt to assess the appropriateness of student responses to the purpose of instruction. As a result, she found that the small-group conversation amongst non-native speakers of Japanese that occurred in preparation for a meeting with a native speaker yielded much more “authentic” language use than the actual meeting with the native speaker. Thus, her study yields insight into the cost-effectiveness of recruiting a “native-speaker” visitor in foreign language classes. It shows that instead of assuming that the physical presence of a native-speaker in the classroom will ensure authentic conversation, it is more important to create a classroom environment in which meaningful conversation can take place.
By viewing what learners do in a classroom as legitimate reaction to their perceptions of instruction, we gain an understanding of the learning environment from the learners’ point of view. In this study, the areas of difficulty, or when the students struggled with meeting the requirements, were especially informative. By closely analyzing their responses, I was able to see what it is that we are asking them to do in the classroom, and how I would be able to instruct them to learn genre more effectively.

1.6. Assumptions Guiding the Study

The assumptions that guided the conceptualization of the study, as well as the modes of data collection and data analysis, are as follows:

1. The participants participated in class, attended tutorials, and wrote drafts to the best of their ability.

2. The participants had sufficient English proficiency to understand classroom instruction and the requirements of each assignment.

3. What students do in reaction to instruction is always a relevant response to instruction (Erickson, 1986; Macbeth, 2004). In other words, participant work will always be examined in relation to the context of instruction.

4. In order to react to instruction, students need to interpret the learning environment and the assignment. Student work is a public view of the interpretive work they have done.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The two major concepts that frame this study are ESP/EAP and genre.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) can be defined as a type of English pedagogy that “attempts to give learners access to the language they want and need to accomplish their own academic and occupational goals” (Belcher, 2004, p.166). Within ESP, there is a distinction between EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). Flowerdew and Peacock (2001b) note that more often than not, the distinction between the two branches is not clear-cut, as students undergo academic study to eventually engage in professional occupations. Still, EAP seems to be more dominant in ESP research, compared to EOP (Belcher, 2006; Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991). Flowerdew & Peacock (2001b) speculate that this might be the case simply because EAP practitioners work in academic institutions, where research is more encouraged than in EOP settings. Because the current setting is an academic institution, the term EAP seems more appropriate than EOP. However, to include discussions on ESP in general in this review, the term ESP/EAP will be used throughout.

In the current context, students come from various backgrounds, and will eventually study in various disciplines of study. Thus, the biggest challenge for the teacher is to find a middle ground among all the crisscrossed interests and provide a meaningful learning experience
for everyone. The first part of this section will survey the spectrum of decisions that the practitioner needs to make.

Currently, the most influential theoretical approach that guides these decisions seems to be genre analysis. In fact, Belcher (2004) observes that the lines between ESP and genre studies are becoming increasingly blurred: “Both investigate the discourse of specific speech communities, with attention to the types of written and oral texts …used and valued in those contexts” (p.166). Thus, the second part of this section will overview recent developments in genre studies and discuss how they have influence classroom writing instruction in ESP/EAP contexts.

2.1. Issues in ESP/EAP Writing Instruction

The original motivation for ESP/EAP was providing an effective curriculum and instruction rather than to contribute to theory and analysis (Belcher, 2006; Hyland, 2006). However, the field has acknowledged some issues and controversies that need to be considered. In his resourceful book on the theory and practice of EAP instruction, Hyland (2006) discusses four:

(1) [the issue of “specificity”], or the distinction between what has been called English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). (p.9)

(2) How we should understand EAP’s role in the academy, …, its status as an academic subject, …, its relation to the disciplines, and …the assumptions which underlie instruction. (p.16)

(3) The consequences of the dominance that English has assumed in higher education and research throughout the world. (p.24)

(4) The issue of whether EAP is a pragmatic exercise, working to help students to fit unquestioningly into subordinate roles in their disciplines and courses, or whether is has a responsibility to help students understand the power relations of those contexts. (p.30)
The third issue, although unquestionably important, is beyond the scope of the present investigation, and thus will not be discussed in this review. The first, second, and forth issue will be labeled “specificity”, “the role of ESP/EAP courses”, and “pragmatism vs. critical pragmatism”, respectively.

**Specificity**

The first issue to be discussed is that of specificity. Considering that there are so many different disciplines of study in a university, where language usage and methods of inquiry vary so widely, what type of register do we choose to teach? What type of reading/writing task do we assign? Overall, the decision whether to choose a general approach or a specific approach depends largely on the characteristics of the students rather than on the personal preference of the ESP/EAP practitioner (Belcher, 2006). While it makes sense to take a more general approach to undergraduate level courses, this does not hold true to graduate tracks, at least in this setting.

In this research setting, it is understood that an undergraduate student will eventually move on to English 101 (pseudonym), a freshman writing course. According to the website of the English department:

> First-year writing courses emphasize that writing is a primary element of active, creative learning in literate cultures. These introductory writing courses employ methods of rhetorical and cultural analysis to provide students with the tools to think and write analytically about print and non-print texts. The courses build on students’ ability to practice critical analysis across a variety of texts that range from public speeches and critical essays to paintings, photographs, and films; to identify cultural, rhetorical and representational trends within these sources; and to generate texts that engage their own perceptions as well as the perspectives of scholars and cultural critics. (O.S.U. Department of English, n.d.)

It is reasonable to conclude that ESL writing courses will prepare students for these courses by helping them learn to utilize their L2 (English) for rhetorical purposes, and
introducing them to the notion of “analytical” writing. While there is a difference in that English is their first language, learning to write language purposefully and analytically may be a foreign skill to domestic students as well. Thus, the role of ESL writing instruction becomes more straightforward: to help students write across the curriculum in their second language (as opposed to their first language). Because the students are understood to be in the freshmen level and to have not started their studies in specific disciplines yet, the goal could be set to, say, achieve high-school level literacy before moving on to more discipline specific studies. As a result, assigning the same reading material and writing assignments is not uncommon and quite acceptable, as what students will be required to write in the near future is not yet bound by a specific discipline (Zhu, 2004). In fact, Johns (2003) finds that in deciding on literacy curricula for undergraduate students, ESP/EAP becomes “remarkably fuzzy and controversial” because these students are “not yet considered initiates into disciplinary communities and professions” (p.207). In other words, Spack’s (1988) call for “teaching general academic writing” (p.30) can be answered quite comfortably in this context (e.g. Johns 1997). In this case, the job of the EAP writing teacher is to “look beyond EAP writing classrooms to the writing demands our students will face after they leave our classes and to consider how we might help to prepare them for these demands” (Leki & Carson, 1994, p.98).

Several researches have provided insight into what this “general academic writing” consists of. Based on the results of student surveys they administered to freshmen level ESL students, Leki and Carson (1994) recommend that ESL writing courses provide various writing assignments whose intellectual demands match that of content courses; promote language processing skills, including vocabulary skills and time management; foster flexible attitudes towards writing assignments, enabling students to ask questions about the given assignment; and teach task management strategies such as finding, selecting, and synthesizing sources. Johns (1997) finds that the following features are common in all academic texts and should be taught to
students of academic writing:

1. Academic texts must be explicit in both argumentation and vocabulary use.
2. Topic and arguments should be pre-revealed in the introduction or as the genre requires.
3. Writers should provide “maps” or “signposts” for the readers throughout the texts, telling them where they have been and where they are going.
4. The language of texts should create a distance between the writer and topic to give the appearance of objectivity.
5. Writers should maintain a “rubber-gloved” quality of voice and register; “I” should be used sparingly and only in certain sections serving particular functions.
6. Writers should hedge, taking a guarded stance, especially when presenting their research work.
7. Texts should display an understanding of social and authority relationships, such as the roles of readers and writers.
8. Texts should acknowledge the complex and important influence of intertextuality, the exploitation of texts and data to promote argumentation and discussion.
9. Texts should comply with the genre requirements of a community of classroom. (pp.58-64)

This, however, cannot be said about first year graduate courses. The students have already completed an initiation into a certain field, and now have arrived at a higher institution in a foreign country to become participants in it. Spack (1988) asserts that the English composition course “is and should be a humanities course: a place where students are provided with the enrichment of reading and writing that provoke thought and foster their intellectual and ethical development” (p.46). While this sounds beautiful, it should be remembered that students are placed in ESL writing courses because of their language proficiency, while their more proficient counterparts are not. More often than not, students are forced to take core courses a year later than their cohort due to time conflicts or a heavy course load. Thus, to meet students’ immediate needs to operate effectively in their own disciplines (Johns, 1988), it seems ethical to try to “go as far as we can”(Hyland, 2002) in terms of specificity in this context and help them overcome the present disadvantage that they have.
Hyland (2002; 2006) argues that ESP/EAP courses need to be as specific as possible, going as far to say that this specificity is at the core of the professionalism of ESP/EAP instructors.

The first reason for this is that content specialists, who would, in this case, be the advisors and instructors in the department of study, do not have the expertise to teach disciplinary literacy skills. Hyland (2002; 2006) also dismisses claims that students need to master core forms before learning more complex features of the target language because so far, research has shown that this is not true. In fact, he says that students “acquire features of language as they need them, rather than in the order that teachers present them” (2006, p.11). Hyland also finds that the notion of “common core” literacy skills problematic because in this case, the role of the ESP/EAP practitioner becomes teaching value-free, technical skills usable in any situation, plummeting the status of the practitioner “to the bottom of the academic ladder”; “EAP then becomes a Band-aid measure to fix up deficiencies [of student literacy skills]” (p.12), something that can be taught by a relatively unskilled staff-member. In contrast, he asserts that a truly ESP/EAP view “recognizes the complexities of engaging in the specific literacies of the disciplines and the specialized professional competencies of those who understand and teach those literacies” (p.12).

These specialized professional competencies differ from discipline to discipline; thus, it is impossible to come up with a closed list of “common core” language items or language practices, especially when any interpretation of a language form depends on the context (Hyland 2002; 2006).

Zhu (2004) also recommends discipline specific EAP instruction, mainly because she found that many content specialists hold this “common core” notion of academic literacy, something that Lea and Street (2000) refer to as a “study skills view”. The faculty members in engineering and business, two fields that many ESL students study in, hold the view that there exists a set of general writing skills that can be transferred to different contexts, and consider
these skills to serve as the foundation for discipline specific communication. Because this view may “prevent content area faculty from effectively teaching disciplinary discourse”, and cause them to see ESL students’ difficulty with academic writing “in terms of lack of general rhetorical and language skills” (p.43), Zhu finds that ESL students who do encounter difficulty in academic writing will not find sufficient assistance in their own departments.

The question then, is how much, or what, does the practitioner need to know to effectively assist the students. Flowerdew & Peacock’s (2001a) description of the EAP teacher’s job runs as follows:

Teachers should be willing to adjust teaching activities and materials to the students’ needs, to familiarize themselves with the language of the students’ special subject and to take an interest in and to acquire knowledge of the students’ world. EAP teachers should understand that the students’ knowledge of their specialist world is likely to be considerably greater than their own, have flexibility and skill in needs analysis, be able to design specialist courses, to design new materials or adapt existing ones, and to work with students of very different linguistic abilities within one classroom. In addition, in some EAP situations, teachers must be able to co-operate with subject teachers. (p.181)

Belcher (2006) is also aware of the tall order of EAP practitioners; since language teachers are usually humanities majors, she observes that “many language teachers may find the technical content areas of such ESP learners as chemical engineers or air traffic controllers unfamiliar, uninteresting, and even intimidating” (p.139). Moreover, she points out, many researchers have asserted that the best that an outsider can do is “approximate what community insiders know and do” (p.140), which can actually cause more harm than good. While this is enough for some practitioners to opt for a more general approach, Hyland (2002; 2006) contends that in order to meet student needs effectively and ensure a professional role of the ESP/EAP practitioner, the field must take on this challenge. In fact, several compensatory strategies such as “team-teaching with content area specialists, taking a sustained (one-subject area per term) content-based approach with lower grade materials, and linking language and subject area classes” (Belcher, 2006) have been devised.
Recent discussions on this matter suggest that the teacher doesn’t necessarily have to have all the answers to the practices in a specific discipline. Their role is seen as a person who can assist students in finding their own way into the target discourse community. Ferguson (1997) asserts that it is sufficient to understand the values, epistemological bases and characteristics of preferred genres of a specific field. Many other researchers (Dudley-Evans, 1997; Swales & Lindemann, 2002; Zhu, 2004) agree that it is unnecessary for the EAP practitioner to have extensive content knowledge, although they do agree that the practitioner should prepare students for discipline specific practices. For many content specialists, what they do in their field and how they go about it has already become an unmarked practice. Thus, they are not prepared to explicitly explain the steps in which a novice student can become part of the discourse community.

Thus, although an ESP/EAP class can seem unapologetically prescriptive at times (Flowerdew, 2002), an effective ESP/EAP practitioner should have an understanding of the “social, cognitive, and linguistic demands of academic target situations” and “[provide] focused instruction informed by an understanding of texts and the constraints of academic contexts” (Hyland, 2006, p.2). S/he should be able to enhance “students’ awareness not only of the discursive features found in texts, but also the levels of contexts that have a bearing on text structure” (Samraj, 2001, p.174).

The Role of ESP/EAP writing courses

To conceptualize the role of ESP/EAP writing courses, Lea and Street’s (2000) three models of student writing – study skills, academic socialization, and academic literacies- seem particularly helpful. Each model “encapsulates those above it”, so that the last model, “academic literacies”, “incorporates both of the other models into a more encompassing understanding of the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations and identities” (p.33).
A study skills model views writing as a “technical and instrumental skill”; thus, the role of the teacher becomes filling in the deficit of skills: namely, teaching atomized skills such as surface language, grammar and spelling (Lea and Street, 2000), as well as “mechanical aspects of study such as referencing, using libraries, dissertation formatting etc.”, and more broadly, “abilities, techniques, and strategies which are used for …study purposes” (Hyland, 2006, p.17). The main idea of this approach is that rather than acquiring isolated instances of linguistic form, it is much more beneficial to acquire strategies that will enable the student to learn on her/his own (e.g. Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This view helps “clarify the relationship between teaching and target behaviors as well as itemizing the skills contributing to those behaviors” (Hyland, 2006, p.18); however, as seen in the previous section, practices differ between academic disciplines, and more often than not it is important to have an understanding of the target discourse communities and the target genres in which the students will be writing.

An approach that takes discipline specific practices into consideration is the academic socialization model. Here, the role of the writing teacher is to help the acculturation process of the students into academic discourse (Lea & Street, 2000, p.33). This view incorporates the understanding that language use is largely linked with the user and the context. There are two things to be noted about this view; the first is that it “draws attention to the homogeneity of disciplinary groups and practices” (Hyland, 2006, p.20). The second is that this view seems to see that “the codes and conventions of academia ...as given” (Lea & Street, 2000, p.33). Whether this assessment is justifiable or not is another issue of ESP/EAP that will be visited later on in the next subsection, “pragmatism vs. critical pragmatism”.

An academic literacies view, on the other hand, is fully aware of the meaning making practices and power relationships in academia. Because it sees student writing as a meaning making and contesting process, an academic literacies view deals with issues “at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialization” (Lea & Street, 2000, p.35). This
view acknowledges that “the complexity and prestige of certain professional academic literacies work to exclude many individuals, preventing their access to academic success or membership of academic communities” (Hyland, 2006, p.22). Consequently, this position asserts that the process of academic socialization involves “representing yourself in a way valued by your discipline” (Hyland, 2006, p.22).

At a glance, it seems that genre-based writing instruction that stems from ESP research is mainly understood to have an academic socialization model in mind, whereas the academic literacies view is a contribution from a different strand of research: New Literacies (Hyon, 1996). However, in the field of ESP/EAP, there does exist a discussion about how “critical” teaching practices need to be, which is the third issue that will be dealt with in this review.

**Pragmatism vs. Critical Pragmatism**

The last issue, while closely related to the role of ESP/EAP classes, also has to do with the “ethics” of EAP (Hyland, 2006). Some researchers have observed that in the process of teaching ESP/EAP, there is a possibility that teachers are reinforcing conformity in thought and expression (Benesch, 1993, 1994; Pennycook, 1994).

Allison (1996) first points out that these charges are unfair, because the essence of ESP/EAP lies in sensitivity to the context of EAP curricular issues, as opposed to the long-practiced “reductive view that ‘language teaching’ is and should be limited to ‘establishing the fundamental sentence patterns of the language’” (p.89). He also points out that ESP practitioners are aware of their ideological stance, which is to “help people develop their academic communicative competence” (p.89). As Swales (1990) had noted in his book, this is an informed, temporary decision that is made to meet the pedagogical purpose at hand, “to develop an understanding of what academic communication is like and how it operates” (Allison, 1996, p.90). Allison also clarifies that an overemphasis on the “nuts and bolts” (Santos, 1992, p.9) is what
ESP practitioners are working against, for they, too, recognize that success in academia lies largely in developing one’s own academic voice, and not in parroting what has been said before.

In response to Allison (1996), Pennycook (1997) does not deny that resorting to context-sensitive teaching practices is helpful for students. However, he asserts that although critical perspectives are not readily visible in specific teaching and learning practices, it is something that the practitioner should always have in mind when making pedagogical decisions. This is because underlying a “discourse of pragmatism” (p.254), there are false assumptions of the nature of language and literacy. These include (1) an understanding that writing in academia is a neutral activity (2) an understanding that language is a vessel to contain thoughts, and not a “construction of how we understand the world” (p.258), and (3) the belief that the culture of the university is also a neutral activity, free from socio-political relationships.

According to Pennycook (1997), the ESP/EAP practitioner should be able to provide “a crucial opportunity to help students to develop forms of linguistic, social, and cultural criticism that would be of much greater benefit to them for understanding and questioning how language works both within and outside educational institutions” (p.263). His claim resonates with the academic literacies model that Lea and Street (2000) advocate. It also has much to do with the specificity issue, as it feeds into the discussion of what the role of the EAP/ESP practitioner is. As Hyland (2006) notes, a critical understanding of academic practices leads to a more thorough explanation of the teaching content, and thus enables the field of EAP establish itself as a credible field, rather than a service provider to other academic departments.

In her study of the application of genre pedagogy on teaching the “research proposal”, Cadman (2002) found that the power relations between students and faculty members “form the context for learning and assessment” of this genre and thus, an understanding of these relations are imperative to the success of genre-based instruction.
Cadman concludes by making suggestions for practice; the first is to ask these questions on “issues of power, authority, and ownership of knowledge” (p.99) not only to students, but also to content specialists. This way, the practitioner facilitates the development of the “research voice” of the students, and at the same time initiates them into “a dialogue with a pre-established research community” (p.100). The second is to establish a pluralist classroom culture that is respectful of the “student as a full human person”, as it is this kind of unthreatening atmosphere that promotes exploration “through which dominant paradigms of research and research writing are recursively contested” (p.100).

2.2. Genre Analysis

The most influential work on genre applications to ESP/EAP is *Genre Analysis* by John Swales (1990). Introducing a helpful way to approach the teaching of academic and research English, he makes use of three concepts: discourse community, genre, and language learning task. This section will start by an overview of these three concepts, and then compare this version of genre theory with genre theories that have developed from different traditions, namely, the “Australian School” and “New Rhetoric”. While they all have different starting points of emphasis, the common thread of thought is that in order to teach writing in an academic context, one must be aware of the complexities of texts, contexts, writers, and the purposes of these writers. A comparison of these three schools of thought is helpful in understanding the nature of genre. The section will end by surveying reports on classroom applications of genre theory, and find some key characteristics of genre-based writing instruction.

2.2.1. Discourse Community, Genre, and Language Learning Task

ESP/EAP instruction is largely influenced by the work of John Swales (Cheng, 2006; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002b). In order to understand what genre and genre-based instruction is, it is
important to understand three key concepts: discourse community, genre, and language learning task (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990).

**Discourse Community**

The key motivation for the construct, discourse community is social constructivism, according to Hyland (2006), who states: “Social constructivism tells us that the intellectual climate in which academics live and work determine the problems they investigate, the methods they employ, the results they see and the ways they write them up” (Hyland, 2006, p.40). That is, the idea of discourse community derives from the realization that the appropriateness or effectiveness of writing can only be determined within the context in which it is situated.

Swales (1990) identifies six defining characteristics of a discourse community:

1. A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. A discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.
3. A discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
4. A discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
5. In addition to owing genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis.
6. A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise. (pp. 24-27)

These characteristics, however, are consequential to the existence of a discourse community, and cannot be used as criteria to define one (Swales, 1990). Thus, locating a specific discourse community or drawing the boundaries around one is quite problematic. As Hyland (2006) aptly puts it, the construct is “useful but vague” (p.41). It is also prone to criticism, in that it doesn’t seem to be a “static and deterministic notion which overemphasizes conformity to shared values and practices and ignores diversity and conflict” (p.41). This issue has been discussed in a previous section on pragmatism and critical pragmatism.

Swales (1990) is also highly aware of the possible criticism against this construct, but nevertheless draws on it in order to “[assess] educational processes and [review] what needs to be
done to assist non-native speakers and others to fully engage in them” (p.32). That is, he sees it as a useful concept to highlight how “the discourses we teach our students are embedded in social and cultural contexts” (Hyland, 2006, p.42).

**Genre**

Various researchers have attempted to define genre in a concise way. Some suggestions might be, “ways in which people ‘get things done’ through their use of language in particular contexts” (Paltridge, in Johns et al. 2006), “socially recognized ways of using language” (Hyland, ibid.), and a “culturally typical structure that embodies a socially-appropriate strategy for responding to various situations” (Coe, ibid.). Bhatia (2004) finds the most important thread of all these approaches to be the acknowledgement of “conventions” of language use that aim to “give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constrains on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources” (p.23).

Swales’ (1990) definition of genre is:

…a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale of the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content, and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar with be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. The genre names inherited and produced by discourse communities and imported by others constitute valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation. (p.58)

To clarify this lengthy definition, Bhatia (1993) elaborates on some aspects. First of all, it is the communicative purpose that “shapes the genre and gives it its internal
structure” (p.13). This is important to remember, as more often than not, genre-based instruction is distorted into a transmission of prescriptive rules (Adam & Artemeva, 2002; Dudley-Evans, 1995; Swales, 1990).

Second, it is a “highly structured and conventionalized communicative event” (Bhatia, 1993, p.14). A characteristic of a successful member of the discourse community, or in this case, the academic community, is that he/she is aware of both the communicative goals of their community, and also how genres are structured in order to fulfill these goals.

Third, genres “display constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form, and functional value” (Bhatia, 1993, p.14). That is, while there is room for the individual author to utilize language anyway he/she likes, there are “certain standard practices within the boundaries of a particular genre” (p.14), for example, the use of certain lexicogrammatical resources, i.e., the use of terminology and field-specific jargon, attaching certain kinds of meanings with specific genres, or “the positioning of certain rhetorical elements or even special meanings realized through certain expressions” (p.14). Thus, an interesting job of the genre theorist is to determine what is considered “standard”, and what kind of a break-away from such standards becomes “odd”.

Fourth, “these constraints are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)” (Bhatia, 1993, p.15). That is, experienced members of the discourse community will be more creative in the use of genre, and will violate the conventions to some extent to achieve special rhetorical effects, as they have a better understanding of how genres operate. For an inexperienced member, such as a first year student in academia, a lack of understanding of this nature may lead to difficulty in comprehending reading research, as well as writing it up effectively. It is also important to remember that unless the specific field is related to language and rhetoric, a genre-theorist is a non-member of the discourse community as well. This is why
Keeping all of this in mind, the primary concern in utilizing genre-theory in teaching ESP/EAP academic writing can be summarized as follows:

To characterize typical or conventional features of any genre-specific text in an attempt to identify pedagogically utilizable form-function correlations; and

To explain such a characterization in the context of the sociocultural as well as the cognitive constraints operating in the relevant area of specialization. (Bhatia, 1993, p.16)

In order to do this, Swales (1990) suggested what is called, “move analysis,” an analysis of the rhetorical moves of a genre. In this book, he looked at academic genres, and thus introduced acronyms that are now commonly used in a genre classroom. The overall organization of Research articles (RA) was introduced as IMRD: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion; the overall structure of the introduction could then be seen as CARS (Creating a Research Space), by employing the following moves:

**Move 1 Establishing territory**

Step 1 Claiming centrality
And/or
Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)
And/or
Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research

**Move 2 Establishing a niche**

Step 1A Counter-claiming
Or
Step 1B Indicating a gap
Or
Step 1C Question-raising
Or
Step 1 D Continuing a tradition

**Move 3 Occupying a niche**

Step 1A Outlining purposes
Or
Step 1B Announcing present research
Step 2 Announcing principal findings
Step 3 Indicating RA structure  (p.141)

Instruction of a genre can begin by first identifying these moves, then teaching the purpose and function of each move, and for second language students, focusing on how these moves would be realized by providing skeletal structures and examples. Again, this is the beginning stage of genre instruction, and not the end goal.

Language Learning Task

The third concept, language-learning task, has most direct relevance to actual pedagogical practices. Swales (1990)’s defines task in these terms:

One of a set of differentiated, sequenceable goal-directed activities drawing upon a range of cognitive and communicative procedures relatable to the acquisition of pre-genre and genre skills appropriate to a foreseen or emerging sociorhetorical situation. (p.76)

That is, genre-based instruction is realized by “differentiated” and “sequenced” activities that are motivated by an analysis of the given socio-rhetorical situation. By characterizing a standard form of a genre and explaining the relationship between the purpose, content, and form within a genre, and ESP/EAP writing teacher is able to make this more explicit to the learner. A language learning task that is motivated by genre theory is “likely to focus student attention on rhetorical action and on the organizational and linguistic means of its accomplishment”(Swales, 1990, p.82).

Keeping conscious about this focus is essential in genre-based instruction. The most common misstep is to provide decontextualized examples of genres, and teach isolated features within that example prescriptively. In virtually all of the studies on classroom applications of genre theory warn against the teaching of “formulaic parroting” (Swales, 1990, p.16). Johns (1997) reminds us that teachers need to emphasize that genres exist in and for particular discourse communities. It is also important for teachers to keep in mind that “they are teaching tendencies rather than fixed patterns of forms”, and “guard against leading students to the view that genres have tightly prescribed boundaries and that a text must be a member of either one genre category
of another” (Paltridge, 2001, p.5). As useful and theoretically sound as genre-instruction seems to be, misapplying it to the classroom can result in instruction that resembles the most primitive yet prevalent methodologies in language teaching—grammar translation.

Nevertheless, the benefits of genre-based instruction seem to outweigh its potential downside. First and foremost, students are expected to acquire what Bhatia (as cited in Paltridge, 2001) calls, “generic competence”, a competence that encompasses but is more than linguistic competence, i.e., the mastery of the language code, and communicative competence, i.e., the ability to make oneself understood utilizing textual, contextual, and pragmatic knowledge. Generic competence is “the ability to understand what happens in real-world interactions and to use this understanding to participate in real-world communicative practices” (p.7).

In order to do so, one must have an understanding of the social and cultural contexts of the genre, and be aware of “how these impact the language choices made within them” (Paltridge, 2001, p.7). Genre-based instruction initiates such understanding by making the norms and values of a discourse community more explicit.

2.2.2. Genre “Camps”

In her oft-cited article, Hyon (1996) identifies three traditions in genre based research and pedagogy: ESP, New Rhetoric, and Australian systemic functional research. According to her analysis, ESP pays particular attention to “detailing the formal characteristics of genres while focusing less on the specialized functions of texts and their surroundings of social contexts” (p.695). By paying close attention to the structure and grammatical features of genres, ESP utilizes this concept as a “tool for analyzing and teaching the spoken and written language required of nonnative speakers in academic and professional settings” (p.695). In contrast, Hyon finds that New Rhetoric Studies focus “more on the situational contexts in which genres occur than on their forms and have placed special emphases on the social purposes, or actions, that
these genres fulfill within these situations” (p.696). By “offering thick descriptions of academic and professional contexts surrounding genres and the actions texts perform within these situations” (p.696), New Rhetoric studies have helped “University students and novice professionals understand the social functions or actions of genres and the contexts in which these genres are used” (p.698).

According to Hyon, the Australian school developed independently from ESP and New rhetoric, not only geographically (as can be seen in the name), but also in terms of theoretical roots. Namely, the whole movement can be traced to systemic functional linguistics, developed by Michael Halliday. This tradition is interested in “the relationship between language and its functions in social settings” as is ESP, but focuses “on primary and secondary school genres and nonprofessional workplace texts rather than on university and professional writing” as does ESP and New Rhetoric (p. 696). Another similarity with ESP is that “emphasis has…been placed on teaching students the formal, staged qualities of genres so that they can recognize these features in the texts that they read and use them in the texts that they write” (p.701).

Due to this similarity, Flowerdew (2002) proposes two groupings instead of three. He sees ESP and the Australian school as linguistic approaches, whereas New Rhetoric is seen as a nonlinguistic approach because it is “less interested in lexico-grammar and rhetorical structure and more focused on situational context-the purposes and functions of genres and the attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors of the members of the discourse communities within which genres are situated” (p.91). Yet, Coe (2002) disagrees with this representation of New Rhetoric. Coming from a New Rhetoric perspective, he too, agrees that the lexico-grammatical features of texts should be studied, yet “paralleled by analysis of the rhetorical situation and its broader contexts” (p.198) because genre is “the functional relationship between a type of text and type of situation” (p.197) and not a specific text type nor situation.
Recently, it has been acknowledged that although the starting point of analysis may differ (with the text or context), genre theorists of all traditions make an effort to “encompass in theory and practice the complexities of texts, contexts, writers and their purposes, and all that is beyond a text that influences writers and audiences” (Johns et al., 2006, p.247). It follows that irrespective of theoretical orientation, genre theorists and educators are aware of the complexities of genres and see the role of the EAP/ESP teacher as “[promoting] student exploration of a variety of genres written in and for a variety of audiences and contexts, thus enabling students to develop as readers and writer who can examine, initiate, and respond to the many rhetorical situations they will confront in school, work, and in their social and cultural lives” (p.248).

Thus, while it is helpful to examine the different theoretical traditions to fully understand the complexity of genre, how they play out in the composition classroom seems to be very similar. That is why such distinction will not be necessary in the next subsection, a survey of classroom applications of genre theory.

Hyland (2004) has summarized the key assumptions of genre-based perspectives as follows:

1. Genres develop as a result of the recurrent ways people get things done in their social groups.
2. Because these groups are relatively stable, the genres produced in and by institutions achieve a certain stability over time, helping to give coherence and meaning to social experience.
3. Genres have specifiable linguistic characteristics that are not fully determined by the context or the genre but are not fully under the control of individual writers either.
4. Texts are not simply produced by individuals expressing inner meanings but are influenced by communities or cultures— in terms of both products and processes— and so change in response to changing needs.
5. An understanding of genre embraces both form and content, including a sense of what is appropriate to a particular purpose and context;
6. The language of texts should always be taught together with the functions texts usually perform for writers in specific contexts.
7. Genres have social origins, and so different genres carry different degrees of power and status.
8. Knowledge of text characteristics and of their social power should form part of any writing curriculum. (p. 21-22)
2.3. Classroom Applications of Genre Theory

Johns (2002a) has observed that more often than not, the pedagogical applications of genre theory are “sidestepped or downplayed” (p.237) in research. She speculates that this might be related to the inherent role of the classroom teacher: “to simplify and make generalizations” so that “students can learn some concrete facts about texts” (p.237). She is also aware that once genres are removed from authentic situations and placed into literacy classrooms, they become mere “artifacts for study” rather than tools for “social action” (p.239). Tardy (2006) suggests that this might “be due to difficulties of access or research design” (p.88).

In a typical genre-based classroom, the teacher will have analyzed the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features of a prototypical genre and have made this the focus of instruction. It is not uncommon to see an overt focus on form, as ESL writers simply have not had access to academic writing; thus, “conventionalized text types or modes” and serve as a foundation to build up independent genre analysis skills (Johns, 2002a). In other words, the selected prototypical genre is utilized as a starting point to build up genre skills, rather than seen as a closed set of prescriptive rules.

Jacoby, Leech and Holten (1995) describe a course on writing the “scientific report” intended for undergraduate science majors. They address the complexity of the genre by breaking it down to four subsections. To help students make “intelligent and rhetorically informed choices about their use of lexicon and grammar” (p.364), they asked students to analyze 8 different authentic samples of each subsection. By analyzing these samples themselves, students are expected to “understand and express their own nuanced meanings” (p. 363) in scientific research reports.

Flowerdew (2002) reports a similar approach to teaching two genres to beginning engineering students in a Middle Eastern University. A needs analysis had identified two genres as most urgent to the students: examination/quiz responses and laboratory reports. Flowerdew
first constructed a prototypical, unmarked example of these genres by analyzing their schematic and lexico-grammatical structure. Then, students were required to compare these texts with 2 authentic varieties "in order to sensitize them to the notion of generic variation" (p. 102).

In Johns (2002a), the focus of the course is to help students thoroughly understand that genre conventions are "constantly revised" (p. 238). In this course intended for first year undergraduate students in a North American University, students write two papers, both of which being research reports. However, "to introduce students to some of the variety with research processes and products" (p. 245), one is based on interview data, while the other requires research on the Web and in the library. She emphasizes that we "[destabilize, enrich, and expand]" (p. 246) the rather simple notions of academic genres that students have already acquired by helping them apply social constructionist views to what they already know.

Pang (2002) illustrates a first year undergraduate course for English translation majors in a Hong Kong University. Here, the genre selected to be the focus of instruction is the film review. Pang explains that because this is a genre that students rarely have experience in writing, the effects of instruction can be readily seen. Moreover, he adds, a film review can include several text types such as "summary of the plot, description in the orientation stage of the narrative, factual exposition in the background of production and in the discussion of the discussion or the director or actor(s), persuasion in the evaluation and coda of the narrative, and evaluation of the film"; all of which can transfer to future academic writing tasks. Particular attention was given to enhancing textual awareness and contextual awareness. In analyzing text and context, various examples were given.

Dudley-Evans (2002), on the other hand, illustrates a case where rhetorical structure of the target genre, "the 2000- to 3000 word assignment" is more difficult to establish. He explains that this genre "does not lend itself to a straightforward moves analysis" (p. 229) because there is no uniformity in what is expected of the student writers. Thus, he decides to address the reasoning
that leads to choices of form: demonstrating appropriate stance and using sources according to the practices of the discipline. He emphasizes that it is important to be aware of the expectations of the department in this case, or instruction becomes “[comfortably isolated] from the actual discipline” (p. 235).

The aforementioned studies do not view genre as a formula of language chunks and rhetorical moves. They do, however, acknowledge that there exists a “typical” version of a genre, and start out by helping learners understand how form and function interact within this version. The focus of instruction is not internalizing the model and reproducing it in future situations; rather, learners are to “familiarize themselves with the idea of choice, of making choices based on informed judgments of the wider sociocultural context, and identifying the interpersonal, ideational/experiential, and textual variables in the immediate situation of communication, as much as tapping their own grammatical, lexical, and syntactic resources in making and negotiating meaning” (Pang, 2002, p.158).

It is also important that these genre skills transfer to other writing tasks across the curriculum and to future discipline specific communication. To cultivate this flexibility, Johns (1995) introduces an undergraduate writing course in which students are asked to write versions of 4 different genres. Two are what she calls classroom genres (CGs), genres that are not utilized in specific disciplines, but required of undergraduates to earn credit or grades. The other two are named authentic genres (AGs), genres that “serve real communicative purposes among professionals in the discipline” (p. 283).

By making them writing in a variety of genres, students are prepared to

1. Ask the appropriate questions of content faculty, for example, about the organization of unfamiliar genres, about citation and referencing style, and about academic language.
2. Understand the limited purposes of CGs and the expectations of faculty in undergraduate classes.
3. Understand more about the nature of authentic genres and the purposes they serve within communities.
4. Be flexible - not to cling to one referencing style, one summary style, or one text
organization. Instead, students need to be open to styles and texts of all kinds.

5. To begin to analyze the importance of audience in writing, to understand that audiences have different expectations depending on their individual personalities and their roles within a community. (p. 289)

To sixth grade students in Hong Kong, So (2005) explicitly taught the text-function relationship and generic conventions newspaper editorials (a non-school genre) and argumentative essays (a school genre). Attention was also given to the overlaps and distinctions between these two genres. Consequently, the students seemed to have acquired the ability to deal with new genres in new situations.

Interestingly, there do not seem to be many reports on genre-based teaching in graduate courses, with the exception of Swales and Lindemann (2002) and the work by Cheng (2007; 2008a; 2008b).

Unlike the studies mentioned above, Swales and Lindemann (2002) study doesn’t describe an entire EAP/ESP course. Rather, it introduces a single activity in an advanced academic writing course for graduate students. Students from various disciplines are asked to arrange nine different articles for a literature review. Because they are disciplined in different fields, there are various suggestions motivated by various ways of reasoning. As a result, “they can be helped to become more observant readers of the discoursal conventions of their fields and thereby deepen their rhetorical perspectives on their own disciplines” (p. 118).

Cheng’s work (2007; 2008a; 2008b) on graduate students constitutes the only existing studies in the ESP/EAP literature that describes how these students write while taking a genre-based writing course. These studies are interesting and valuable in that they provide descriptions of learners’ reading and writing processes in a genre-based writing classroom, which, as stated in the previous chapter, has been grossly under-represented in the ESP/EAP literature (Cheng, 2006; Johns, 2002b; Tardy, 2006).
Cheng (2007) describes three article introductions written by a graduate student in Electrical Engineering that essentially carry the same content, but are geared towards three different types of audiences. All three versions were written as an assignment in an ESP/EAP writing course that the author was teaching. Cheng uses the student’s writing samples, the student’s own annotations of his writing, the students’ literary narrative (a written recall of his genre analysis process), and interview transcripts to investigate how the student utilized “certain generic features in a discipline-specific writing task” (p. 290). The student, Fengchen (pseudonym), wrote all three versions successfully, and in his literacy narratives and interviews, seemed to show that he could talk about his writing process using the genre framework that he learned in the classroom. Upon entering the course, Fengchen already had extensive “academic and professional” experience in the field, and had published an academic article in his native language, Chinese. Further, although he was never a first author, he had taken part in research projects that were published in English. Thus, while it is clear that the course may have influenced his ability to talk about his writing within the genre framework, it is very unclear how it influenced the writing of the assignments. The writing of the three different introductions had called for a good understanding of the audience and the purpose of the genre. Fengchen may have already had this understanding before entering the course.

In Cheng (2008a), the author continues to explore Fengchen’s experiences with genre-based writing instruction; genre analysis (GA) tasks, literacy narrative (on how he went about the GA tasks and his personal reflections of them), and text based interviews were analyzed in this paper. This data was collected during the same course described above, and the findings showed that Fengchen was very successful in these assignments. It is notable that Fengchen’s actual writing assignments were not part of the data. Thus, in this study we see Fengchen’s proficiency in talking about genre and genre analysis, rather than his actual ability to use genre in his own writing and reading. Thus, the study contributes to the literature through its student-centered approach.
focus and its exploration of how a student thinks about genre, but the actual genre-writing experience was not captured fully.

Cheng (2008b) focuses on the writing process of a business student, Ling (pseudonym). Cheng analyzed Ling’s genre analysis tasks, writing samples, text-based interviews (conversation about the genre analysis text), and literacy narratives, all of which she completed in the ESP/EAP writing course that he was teaching. Unlike the study above (Cheng, 2008a), this study does include the student drafts as part of the data. Thus, this time, we are able to say that Ling, a second year student, was successful in all four tasks, and revealed that she was able to use genre knowledge to read and write texts in her field. However, like Cheng (2007), it is unclear whether she already had an implicit understanding of genre before the course started. It is well known in the literature that the most adept academic writers may not have the ability to discuss the specific decision making processes of their writing, because these complex decisions are made instantly and subconsciously (Lea & Street, 2000; Zhu, 2004). This could have been the case for Ling.

Thus, for all the value contained in this study, it is difficult to fully assess the actual impact of genre-based instruction.

Cheng’s work has advanced our understanding of students’ encounters with genre-based writing instruction. At the same time, it has demonstrated the difficulties involved in conducting such research.

First, Cheng’s work has shown that it is difficult to establish any cause-effect relationship between instruction and the successful completion of the assignments, because his participants were second-year graduate students who already had experienced some successful participation in their academic field and thus may have established some form of genre knowledge prior to taking his genre-based writing course. In other words, while they may not have been able to fully articulate the genre knowledge they possessed before taking the course, it is possible that they had some degree of implicit genre knowledge upon entering the course, and this may have been the
key contributor to their success in all of the assignments, as opposed to Cheng’s instructional efforts. Thus, other than the fact that the data was collected during an academic course in a University, it is difficult to say to what extent that these studies yield insight into the effects of classroom genre-based writing instruction.

Second, these studies reveal how difficult it is to actually “measure” genre knowledge, which is in a way related to the first problem. Had there been an explicit way to quantify the students’ genre knowledge before and after the courses, the studies could have found a way to claim such a relationship. However, no tool exists for this form of measurement. Thus, the only way to have a sense of the students’ genre knowledge was to rely on how well they articulated it (i.e., GA tasks, interviews, literacy narratives). However, there is a limitation to the face value of self-reports (Kvale, 1996). The articulation of genre knowledge and the actual application of it are not always the same tasks. The best that we can say, in terms of the effects of classroom instruction, is that by the end of the courses, the students were able to conduct and articulate genre analysis using the meta-language of a genre framework.

Cheng’s (2007; 2008a; 2008b) studies were motivated by the need to view the perspective of the learner in the genre-based writing classroom (Cheng, 2006). This missing piece was needed not only to complement the existing knowledge in ESP/EAP literature (a theoretical level), but also to initiate a dialogue amongst ESP/EAP practitioners on how to provide instruction that is truly “specific” (pun intended) to the learners’ needs (a professional level). However, due to the inherently complex nature of the classroom, it is extremely difficult to conceptualize a framework that would be sensitive to (1) the context of the classroom, (2) the relationship between instruction and the students’ response to it, and (3) the notion of genre-based writing instruction. For this reason, much attention was given to the research methodology of this study. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.
To summarize, as Cheng’s important work has shown, conducting comprehensive classroom-based research about genre-based instruction remains an elusive task. As a fellow teacher/researcher, I sympathize with the difficulties of designing such research for the classroom setting. However, Cheng’s work, because it has played a pioneering role in foregrounding the importance of investigating genre-based instruction from learners’ perspectives, was particularly influential in the design of the study described here. This point is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER THREE

Methods

This chapter will discuss the overall research design. First, I will explain my use of naturalistic case study to explore my research interests. Then, I will briefly introduce the setting. I will then discuss the data collection and analysis process.

The research questions that guided this study were

*How do international graduate students learn to “see” and apply genres in an EAP writing class intended for students of all disciplines?*

*What does it mean for a student to “learn genre” in these first-year academic writing courses?*

Genre-based writing instruction aims to make tacit academic practices visible for the students in the initial stages of learning. The ultimate goal of genre-based writing instruction is that students ultimately gain the ability to take a generalized account of a genre and apply it to a specific writing context. Following a “model” or “generic” version of a writing assignment is not as simple as it first seems to be. This is because the realization of a genre is influenced by registers and disciplines (Bhatia, 2004). In order to see how students engaged in this complex task, I analyzed their drafts and utilized tutorials as demonstrations of their decision making process.
3.1. The Case Study

This study is a naturalistic case study. A case study is defined as an empirical inquiry that:

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context;
- when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
- multiple sources of evidence are used. (Yin, 1989, p. 23)

The case is a “bounded system” (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 2000) that can be identified as a single entity or phenomenon. Anything from a single human being, a group, a classroom, to a whole curriculum can be considered to be a “case” in that each of these entities has a sense self, and are constituted of purposefully working parts (Stake, 2000). At the same time, the case is embedded in various levels of context, so much so that sometimes the boundaries between the case (or entity) and context are blurred. However, the researcher does not attempt to rigidly define the case because this might lead to oversimplification in understanding it, or isolate it from its natural setting (VanLier, 2005).

The present study is a “case study” because there is an identifiable case, a sequence of two first year EAP writing courses taught by a single teacher, and because data was collected and interpreted within an interpretive framework. Often, case studies are perceived as capsules of details about a particular participant and her/his progression through experiences. Here, however, students’ work and discussion about their work will be presented as a case of some type of struggle or interpretation; for example, a case of mismatch between genre model and disciplinary practice.

While most researchers now treat case study as a specific form of qualitative research design (Creswell, 1998; Hinkel, 2005; Merriam, 1988; VanLier, 2005), the term case study was once used to refer to a write-up of any study that has been conducted in the post-positivist
framework; in other words, it was used synonymously with qualitative research (e.g. Hamel, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Hamel (1993) used the term “case study” to refer to an approach to sociological research that is contrastive with “statistical methods”. Here, he identifies two common criticisms against the case study:

1. its lack of representativeness …, and
2. its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to this study. (p.23)

The first criticism has to do with the issue of generalizabilty or reliability, a term that is critical in assessing the so-called “statistical” studies. The second has to do with the issue of trustworthiness or validity. At the heart of this issue lies the matter of dealing with investigator bias.

Initially, responses to these criticisms consisted of concepts to replace or compensate for those of positivist traditions. For example, to replace generalization, VanLier (2005) uses the term, particularization, “a form of generalization that proceeds not from an individual case to a population, but from lower-level constructs to higher level ones” (p.198). He posits that “insights from a case study can inform, be adapted to, and provide comparative information to a wide variety of other cases, so long as one is careful to take contextual differences into account” (p.198). By providing a careful description of the case, the researcher aims to provide the reader a “vicarious cognitive experience” (Johnson, 1992; Stake, 2000). This, according to Stake(2000), can be the equivalent to actual experience or an extension of experience, and “[feed] into the most fundamental processes of awareness and understanding” (p.442).

To answer for the need to establish trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered alternative concepts for the four most important criteria used to evaluate positivist research – internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. They are credibility, transferability,
dependability, and confirmability, respectively. To account for each of these criteria, they suggested methodological procedures to ensure “balance and fairness” of the researcher. Their suggestions can be summarized as in the following table:

Table 1. Establishing Trustworthiness in Two Research Traditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truth value</th>
<th>positivist</th>
<th>naturalist</th>
<th>Establishing Trustworthiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Activities increasing the probability that credible findings will be produced. (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Negative case analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Referential adequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Member checks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the advent of qualitative research, this attempt is understandable. In their *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) call this moment a “legitimation crisis”. Among the sources of this crisis, there are:

- The *linguistic turn* which, in principle, could include scientific texts within the category of social construction
- *Feminist critiques* which seek to identify the sexist bias of certain claims to ‘objectivity’
- The *postmodern turn* in which ethnographies are read as ‘tales from the field’ which unthinkably construct the ‘other’

(as cited in Silverman, 2006, p.272)
It seems that at present, qualitative research methods are a way to answer different types of research questions that could not be answered in the positivist paradigm. As a result, the dichotomy of qualitative vs. quantitative research is not needed to explain the legitimacy of either paradigm. Silverman (2006) offers a single parameter to evaluate all research: whether appropriate methods are used to answer the research question and whether the data is handled rigorously, critically, and objectively.

Silverman (2006) first rejects the view that reliability is not an issue in qualitative research. He warns that if this is the case, any subjective description can pass as legitimate research. In other words, even in qualitative research, and of course in quantitative research, a different researcher should be able to replicate the findings. In the case of qualitative research, this can be achieved by what Seale (as cited in Silverman, 2006) calls low-inference descriptors. This involves:

- Recording observations in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, for example, rather than researchers’ reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said, which would allow researchers’ personal perspectives to influence the reporting. (p.283)

Silverman (2006) also goes on to explain how issues of validity can be answered for in qualitative research. Basically, this is the need for researchers to have a “warrant for their inferences” (p.290). While Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested data triangulation and member checks as a technique to ensure validity, Silverman (2006) questions their usefulness because he understands that each data collection method derives from a different theoretical perspective. “One should not adopt a naively ‘optimistic’ view that the aggregation of data from different sources will unproblematically add up to produce a more complex picture” (Hammersly & Atkinson, as cited in Silverman, 2006, p. 292). This doesn’t mean that data triangulation should be avoided altogether. Rather, it means that this strategy should be used as a means to arrive at a
richer, deeper, and complex description of the phenomenon, rather than as a tool to ensure that this is the “truth” (Denzin & Lincoln, as cited in Silverman, 2006).

The same reservation applies to member checks, which Silverman (2006) refers to as respondent validation. According to him, by showing tentative results to the respondents and observing their reaction, the researcher may end up with more leads to understanding the phenomenon. However, member checks are not to be used as a means to validate the data. This is because whether respondents concur with the findings has less to do with the validity of the inference, more with (1) how intelligible the write-up is to them, (2) whether they have interest in the topic, and (3) whether the findings are compatible with their self-perceptions (Bloor, 1978; Adams, 1984 as cited in Silverman, 2006). Instead he suggests the following:

- Analytic induction
- Constant comparative method
- Deviant case analysis
- Comprehensive data treatment; and
- Using appropriate data tabulations.

According to Johnson (1992), a good case study:

1. identifies important variables, issues or themes,
2. discovers how these pattern and interrelate in the bounded system,
3. explains how these interrelationships influence the phenomena under study, and
4. offers fresh new insights. (p.90)

This study has strived to consider all four of these elements.

3.2. The setting

After being admitted to the University, international graduate students with insufficient test scores are placed into a three-course EAP writing sequence: WWW, XXX, and YYY. Upon arrival, they are given a “diagnostic exam” to determine which of the three courses they are to be placed in. WWW is the most elementary level of the three courses; YYY, the most advanced. Graduate students rarely place in WWW; usually they are placed in either XXX or YYY.
According to the description of courses provided by the department, XXX “is designed to help graduate students develop advanced skills in academic writing. By the end of the course, students are expected to write polished essays that incorporate organizational patterns most frequently found in academic prose”. YYY “is designed to help the graduate student develop the skills necessary to write about and present research findings. Students learn to evaluate and synthesize information from various online and print sources, employ appropriate genre conventions, and organize present ideas, both electronically and in print, in a coherent and scholarly manner.”

Each section has no more than 20 students. During the two quarters I collected data, I taught two sections of 20 students, a total of 40 each quarter. The students write multiple drafts (2-3 drafts) for 3-4 assignments per course. It is required by the department that the instructor meets with each student at least 3 times for a one-on-one tutorial. In the classes that I taught, I scheduled the tutorials after the students had submitted their first drafts of an assignment. While the students may have submitted a second or third draft of a previous assignment at the same time, the discussion in the tutorial normally focused on the first draft of the most recent assignment.

The primary characteristics of the context can be summarized into the following table:

Table 2. Characteristics of the Instructional Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Features</th>
<th>XXX and YYY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple drafts (2-3 drafts per assignment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Tutorial per assignment (after the first draft)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of instruction for each assignment</td>
<td>3-4 weeks, with overlap between two or more assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>Academic Writing for Graduate Students: A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English (2nd edition), by John Swales and Christine Feak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Up Research: Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English, by Robert Weissberg and Suzanne Buker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(see section 3.2.2. )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1. The Students

The students who place in XXX and YYY come from all regions of the world, but it would be safe to say that the majority are from Eastern Asian countries such as China, Taiwan, and Korea. Most of the students have been successful students in their own countries and have come to the University for a higher degree. They have learned English as a foreign language; thus they seem to fit Reid’s (2006) definition of “eye” learners. Unlike “ear” learners who have learned English through listening to and mimicking oral language, “eye” learners have encountered English mainly through written language; thus, their familiarity with reading and writing may far exceed that of listening and speaking.

Another notable aspect of these students is that even within their knowledge of English, their proficiency varies depending on the register they are using. For example, during the first class period, I always ask students to introduce themselves and talk a little about their research interests. It is always amazing to see how fluent they are when they talk about concepts in their own field; yet, when asked about local weather, they are at a loss for words. This seems to support positions that dismiss the notion of the “common core,” that language learners leniently progress from a “general” core of simple, everyday language to more difficult, specialized language (e.g., Hyland, 2002).

In general, it seems logical to assume that (1) students are at an intermediate-high level in terms of reading and writing, and (2) they have a considerable foundation at the content level. However, the reality is far more complex. Students start their M.A. or PhD. programs at various levels. Some are very aware of what specific area they want to pursue, and write say, a dissertation and have already read much on the topic in English; others, especially M.A. students, only have a vague idea of what they want to do, and have relied heavily on materials translated into their own language for study. While some students may be ready to analyze rhetorical
conventions and apply them to their own writing, others may still need some brushing up on basic sentence structure and vocabulary, or even simple reading strategies.

3.2.2. The Writing Assignments

The main text book for both XXX and YYY is *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (2nd edition) (Swales & Feak, 1994). The assignments for XXX are based on the first four chapters; for YYY, on the latter four. Assignments for the courses are chosen by the course coordinator, not by the individual instructor. While the nature of the assignment is given, the actual topics and readings for writing are chosen by the students. They are encouraged to start looking for reading material in their own research areas, which is another introductory role these courses seem to have.

The four major assignments for XXX are as follows: (1) Summary, (2) Extended definition essay, (3) Problem-solution essay, and (4) Data commentary essay.

The three major assignments for YYY are as follows: (1) the annotated bibliography, (2) the critical review, and (3) the “long paper”.

The assignments, key objectives of the assignments, the required length, and duration of instruction regarding the assignments are represented in the following tables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Key Objectives</th>
<th>Required Length (in double-spaced, 12 font pages)</th>
<th>Duration of Instruction (weeks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Assignment Summary</td>
<td>To “display” understanding of some material (Swales &amp; Feak, 1994, p.147)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To write a good assignment summary that has the following attributes; 1. focus on the relevant aspects of the source text 2. represent the source material accurately 3. is written in the writers’ own words to avoid engaging in plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Definition Essay</td>
<td>To demonstrate knowledge of a discipline-specific concept in the students’ field</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The essay is intended to be descriptive and expository, so that the student appears informed and organized (p.83)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To write an essay that; 1. begins with a general definition and then becomes more specific as additional details are provided (p.67) 2. focuses on certain aspects of the concept such as components, types, applications, history, examples, and operating principles or causes and effects.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solution Essay</td>
<td>To “write a problem-solution [essay] that includes both a process description and a definition, or write a review of the current state of the knowledge in [the student’s] field, raising a question about the current state of knowledge and offering a possible or part answer”(p.111)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The essay is intended to be argumentative and evaluative so that the student appears questioning and perceptive (p.83)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Commentary Essay</td>
<td>To “write a data commentary from the [student’s] own field of study based on the data [s/he selected]” (p.146)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 (excluding tables and graphs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special attention is to be given to the order in which the data is discussed, and the strength of claims that the student makes based on the data.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td>Required Length (in double-spaced, 12 font pages)</td>
<td>Duration of Instruction (weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Annotated Bibliography | To write an annotated bibliography of 5 separate sources that would be used in the writing of the final “long” paper  
Each entry would include a brief summarization of the source, followed by a brief commentary on the significance of the source to the field and to their own project | 3-4                                              | 3                              |
| Critical Review     | To write a critical review of two sources that were introduced in the “annotated bibliography”  
To demonstrate the following:  
1. that the student read and understood the sources;  
2. that the student can read analytically, and integrate what they have read with other readings they have done, especially by making comparisons  
3. that the student is aware of the scholarly expectations in their chosen field | 4-5                                              | 4                              |
| “Long” paper        | To write an academic genre of the students’ choice  
Some common choices were research papers, research proposal, and an extended literature review.  
During the final week, the student was to present her/his paper to the class through a 5-7 minute oral presentation | 7-10 (excluding tables and graphs)               | 4                              |
As can be seen, the total number of weeks of instruction exceeds the total number of weeks in each quarter (10 weeks). This is due to the overlap of the assignments. Students would often work on a final draft of a previous assignment while they were on a first or second draft of another.

The assignments in XXX deal with specific text types and focus on sentence-level, discourse-level features that are associated with them, while the YYY assignments are more genre-specific. There seems to be a gradual transition from more common features of academic writing to more discipline specific conventions. Accordingly, classroom activities reflect this trend. In XXX, there are many activities regarding general academic style and sentence level grammar, where students can perform in peer-groups regardless of their disciplinary areas. In YYY, emphasis is on understanding how certain genres are realized, so often students individually conduct “mini-studies in their own fields” (Swales & Lindemann, 2002, p.118) and report back to the class. As Swales & Lindemann (2002, p.119) have found, exposure to different responses to a shared class “actually turns out to be a source of enlightenment rather than confusion.”

3.2.3. Classroom Instruction

Hyland (2004) utilizes Feez’s (1998) representation of the teaching-learning cycle to illustrate how learners are supported towards a better understanding of the target genres. The stages of the cycle are as follows:

- **Setting the context** – revealing genre purposes and the settings in which a genre is commonly used
- **Modeling** – analyzing the genre to reveal its stages and key features
- **Joint construction** – guided, teacher-supported practice in the genre
- **Independent construction** – independent writing monitored by the teacher
- **Comparing** – relating what has been learned to other genres and contexts (Hyland, 2004, p.128)
Both courses were text-focused: “genres are selected and sequenced according to those found in a relevant real-life context or according to increasing levels of abstraction or difficulty” (Hyland, 2004, p.90). For a given writing assignment, students were first given a detailed assignment sheet and some authentic examples of the target genre. Through group discussion and whole-class discussion, contextual aspects of the genre, such as purpose and audience, were discussed. Students were also asked to compare how such contextual aspects are similar with or different from the assignment at hand (setting the context, comparing). They could also analyze the sample genres and identify common features or moves. Then, explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction followed, as students needed linguistic resources to draw from in order to communicate appropriately for the given purpose and context (Hyland, 2004) (modeling). To practice what they have learned, students were then asked to do simple writing tasks either in groups or individually (joint construction). All of this in-class work was expected to be reflected in the out-of-class writing assignments. Each assignment was required to be written via three drafts; students received written feedback for all of the drafts and met with the teacher for a tutorial after the first draft (independent construction).

At the beginning of each quarter, I assigned the students into groups of 2 or 3, according to the similarity of their disciplines. For example, if there were 3 Statistics students in a class, regardless of their level of study (M.A. or PhD), these three students would form one group. Another group may have one Biology participant and two Molecular Biology students or one physical education student and two TESOL students. Within the first week of instruction, each student was to bring hard copies of disciplinary writing in their field. In the XXX course, I asked each student to bring three data-based research articles in their field. In the YYY course, I asked each student to bring one annotated bibliography, one book review, and one data-based research article in their field. These “authentic” examples of academic genres were kept in a folder and were brought to class after looking at more “generic” examples provided in the textbook or other
handouts. During class, the groups were asked to analyze the language and rhetoric of the articles in their field, but it was not uncommon that the students would stay in their groups after class to discuss the content of what they had just read.

### 3.3. The Participants

This section will discuss how the participants were recruited, and then introduce the four participants in terms of their knowledge of their discipline and general English proficiency.

#### 3.3.1. Purposive Sampling

Generally, a case study consists of reports of four or five cases (Merriam, 1988). The selection of each case should be theoretically grounded (Silverman, 2006). In other words, the various aspects of the population should be considered, and case selection should be based upon this consideration.

In the present study, I qualitatively analyzed the learning process of 4 students. The topics of XXX and YYY were to be selected by the students within their own major areas. Thus, the degree of familiarity of their field and the nature of their field influence how they realize the genres in writing. The make-up of the students can be expressed in the following table.

Table 5. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science (MCDB, biology, chemical engineering, material science ….)</td>
<td>1 (Computer Science)</td>
<td>1 (MCDB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities, Arts &amp; Social Sciences (art, music, education, anthropology ….)</td>
<td>2 (Drama Education, TESOL)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first parameter that I considered was academic level, whether the student is a Masters student or a PhD student. My impression of first quarter students is that PhD students generally are more acquainted with their field compared to Master students. For example, I have found that some, it not most, Master students are not able to identify major journals in their field or to name major scholars whose works are largely influential. Especially for the first couple of quarters, their course-related readings are mostly textbooks. When encountering a journal article, they often don’t have the foundation to appreciate what is reported yet. This relative unfamiliarity with the target discourse community results in distinctive ways of going about the assignments.

The next parameter I took into consideration was the major area of the student. Again, based on my experience, I find it reasonable to divide students into two categories according to their major area: the sciences; and humanities, arts, and social sciences. These two groups have different ways of “doing genre” in their field, which influences how students react to instruction.

The term “sciences” refers to such fields as MCDB (Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology), mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, and neuroscience. In these fields, it is typical to set a hypothesis and test it through lab experiments. Hence, a typical genre in these fields is the experimental research report, which essentially consists of five parts: abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion (Weissberg & Buker, 1990). Students of these disciplines generally have a more confident attitude towards writing, as they feel that they can “plug in” formulas to complete the writing task. Most PhD students of these fields are members of labs and are actively writing research reports, sometimes as often as once a week.

The terms “humanities, art, and social sciences” refers to fields such as music, art, drama, art education, TESOL, history, and anthropology. In contrast with the sciences, these fields hardly ever conduct lab experiments, and genres in these fields often contain qualitative data and extensive discussion. Not only are these genres more challenging to write, but also more challenging to read. More often than not, students will misrepresent a source text because they
didn’t clearly understand what it is. However, during the academic year that this study was conducted, I could not find a participant that was a PhD student in humanities. There was one such student— a PhD student in history, but she did not meet with the class or submit her assignments on a regular basis. Thus, the two humanities students who participated in this study were both M.A. students— one in Drama Education and the other in TESOL. Given the rarity of PhD students in humanities in these courses, I considered this to be a fair sampling of the population.

3.3.2. The Participants

The four participants of this study will be referred to with pseudonyms that I gave them. This section will give a brief introduction of them. The four participants represent four different combinations of disciplinary knowledge and language proficiency. The language proficiency noted for each student is based on my own observations, in relation to the context they were in— two consecutive courses of ESP/EAP writing instruction. This can be summarized in the following table:
Table 6. Disciplinary Knowledge and Language Proficiency of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Disciplinary knowledge</th>
<th>Language proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel (M.A. Computer Science)</td>
<td>Had professional experience but little knowledge regarding research of the field. Did not plan to pursue studies past MA degree.</td>
<td>Spoken: hesitant to speak beyond formulaic phrases. Written: wrote as little as possible. The sentences that she did write were grammatical but simple in terms of sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boram (PhD, MCDB)</td>
<td>Graduate research associate for clinical laboratory research; Deeply immersed in research practices</td>
<td>Quite low in both spoken and written areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie (M.A. TESOL)</td>
<td>Changed careers from hospitality management. Completely new to the field</td>
<td>Spoken: seemed weak at the beginning of the first quarter, but by the end of the second quarter, had no trouble communicating in the classroom. Written: seemed to have a good command of written English. Grammar was seldom a big problem with her drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn (M.A. Drama Education)</td>
<td>Some professional experience /knowledge, and eager to gain knowledge regarding research practices in her field.</td>
<td>Spoken: Appeared to be competent in spoken English from the beginning of the first quarter. Written: seemed to have a good command of written English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Angel (M.A. Computer Science)

Angel was a first year Master’s degree student in computer science. She had majored in computer science as an undergraduate in her native country, Taiwan, and had worked several years as a computer programmer before coming to the United States to pursue a Master’s degree. In the needs analysis surveys administered at the beginning of both quarters, she revealed that she wished to go back to working in the industry rather than enter a PhD program. Her studies in the M.A. program seemed to be focused on professional practice rather than research, in that her main requirements were to read and memorize information, and take quizzes and tests about it.

It was very difficult to communicate easily in English with Angel, as she tended to speak the bare minimum. While she seemed interested and engaged in class and in tutorials, she seldom volunteered to speak unless asked to. The few utterances that she made in tutorials were grammatical and appropriate, but very short. Her utterances seemed to be made of formulaic expressions.

Boram (PhD, MCDB)

Boram was a first year PhD student in Molecular and Cellular Developmental Biology (MCDB). She had been accepted as a Research Assistant for her current advisor, whose research was closely aligned with the research work she had done as an M.A. student in Korea. Thus, she was already an active participant in on-going research, and was very enthusiastic about her work.

Despite her field knowledge, however, she was severely hindered by limited English proficiency. Within the first few weeks of the first quarter, she was informed by her Spoken English teacher2 that is was likely that she would have to repeat her Spoken course the following

2 O.S.U. offered Spoken EAP classes for International Graduate Students. While the writing classes were intended for all students who didn’t meet the TOEFL requirements, the Spoken program was only intended for International Students who planned to become T.A.s in their departments. In fact, unless they met the requirements to pass the Spoken courses, they could not be appointed to Teaching Positions.
quarter. Further, her current advisor, a fellow Korean and a celebrated scholar in her field, constantly pressured her about her inability to communicate in the lab and in the classroom. This discouraging situation soon began to affect her grades.

**Carrie (M.A. Drama Education)**

Carrie was a first year Masters student in TESOL. Her undergraduate degree was in hospitality management, and she had worked for a major hotel chain in her native country, Korea, before marrying and coming to the United States with her husband. She became interested in the field after a short stint teaching at the local Korean heritage school. Thus, unlike the previous two students, she had little foundational knowledge about her chosen field of study.

Carrie was notable in her confidence and her willingness to communicate. While she did seem to have limited spoken proficiency at the beginning of the first quarter, she didn’t appear to be discouraged or apologetic about it, as most international students from Asian countries tend to be. I repeatedly witnessed her encouraging her friends in the class to speak up, saying there was nothing wrong with appearing to be a non-native speaker when they are in fact non-native speakers. By the end of the two quarters, she still had a strong Korean accent, but didn’t seem to have trouble functioning in English.

**Dawn (M.A. Drama Education)**

Dawn was an MA student in Drama Education. Her B.A. was in English education from a Taiwanese University, and she had taken a leave of absence from her job as a middle school English teacher in Taiwan. Having been a literacy teacher herself, she seemed to be much aware of the writing process. Most notably, before actually starting to write an assignment, she spent a considerable amount of effort choosing topics and selecting reading material that fit the nature of the assignment, which often led to frustration on her part, but also yielded insightful perspectives
for me. The terms of her job required that she return to Taiwan and work as a teacher after graduation, but she was seriously contemplating pursuing a PhD degree in the future.

Dawn had an outgoing personality and seemed to be adjusting to student life in the U.S. rapidly and successfully. Before and after class, she was surrounded by her Taiwanese classmates, and after often stayed after class to talk to me.

3.4. Data Collection

This section will introduce the modes of data that were collected for this study.

3.4.1. Participant Observation

Overview

Observation provides an in-depth “here-and-now” experience for the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.273). In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher actively takes on a “membership” role in the communities that they study (Angrosino & Perez, 2000). By becoming one of the actors in the community, researchers are able to experience the phenomenon without altering it too much from its natural state. It follows that the line between the observer’s perspective and the “insider” perspective is blurred; in fact, this contributes to the unique insights that naturalistic inquiry may yield. As Angrosion and Perez (2000) put it, “[social] interaction is always a tentative process that involves the continuous testing by all participants of the conceptions that they have of the roles of others”(p.683). Participants test their conceptions according to two criteria, internal – norms of their own group- and external – “presumably universal standards”, in other words, what they think are universal norms. By gaining an insider’s perspective, the researcher is able to obtain both. Hence, in current studies of human behavior, researchers are said to take on the position of the “participant observer”.

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In the current study, there was no need to seek this position because I already had an assigned role: the teacher. As discussed in Chapter One, teacher research is beneficial in many ways and can yield valuable insights into the given context. In naturalistic case study research, it is assumed that people take action based on how they interpret the actions of others. Here, the term “action” is used to refer to the “physical behavior plus the meaning interpretations held by the actor and those with whom the actor is engaged in interaction” (Erickson, 1986, p.126) as opposed to “behavior”, the overtly observable physical act.

**Participant Observation of Classes**

For each class, I prepared a lesson plan of what I was going to do during the period. The lesson plan started out with housekeeping items such as reminding students to submit the third draft or collecting contact information. Then, I laid out what activities were to be done and how much time each activity would require. Of course, every class went differently. If there was a change in order or a change in time allocation, I would immediately jot that down during the class. This is a practice that I have been following throughout my teaching career. I was first trained to do this when I was a student teacher. Then, after the class, I would write down after-the-class observations.

Participant observation of classes requires a system to keep track of instruction for data analysis and reporting purposes. A record of what was done in class helped me understand to what extent classroom instruction played a part in the shaping of a draft.

**Participant Observation of Tutorials**

Participant observation of tutorials was needed to understand what *decision making processes* took place when the student wrote her/his draft.

The ESL Composition program required that I conduct at least 3 one-on-one tutorials
with the students. The purpose of these tutorials is to provide oral feedback on drafts and answer any questions that the student may have. Naturally, the talk evolves around how the student understood the assignment, what decisions he/she made to complete the assignment, and whether this approximates what I, the teacher intended for the assignment. In other words, although the word “genre” may not be uttered, the entire topic of the conversation is genre. Then, there is negotiation on how to “make the draft better”. Sometimes, information will flow from the teacher to the student. For example, I might give them suggestions on vocabulary usage or syntax. Other times, my expectations of the assignment will adjust to the needs of the student or the new-found understanding of the decision-making process of the student. Each tutorial would last for approximately 20 minutes.

After the tutorial, the student would re-write the paper. For this draft, I required them to include what I conveniently called a “cover letter”. In this short letter, the students addressed the feedback that was given, including what we talked about in the tutorial, and then discussed how they revised the paper.

At the beginning of the quarter, I asked permission to audio-record tutorials. I would turn on the recorder before I entered the tutorial room, and turn it off after the student left. I could also talk into it right after the tutorial to record immediate observations. These tutorial sessions were transcribed afterwards. Particular attention was given to how students described their writing process, how difficult or easy they found the writing process to be and why, and what questions they brought to the tutorial. This information was recorded in a research log for further analysis.

3.4.3. Document Analysis

Overview

In the present study, document analysis was very important, as the writing courses progressed through a series of writing assignments. Students were required to write at least three
drafts of a single assignment. (2 drafts for the summary assignment of XXX) These drafts were reflections of how students understood the assignments and how they believed the assignments should be completed. Thus, they were an important source of data in understanding how the students made sense of genre based writing instruction. At the beginning of the quarter, I asked permission to copy all documents. After the completed of this dissertation, all documents will be destroyed.

**Writing assignments**

XXX had four major assignments, and YYY had three. For each assignment, three drafts were required (with the exception of the summary assignment in XXX). Feedback was given for all three drafts, but a letter grade was given only on the third. Feedback on the first draft was the most extensive, and tutorials were scheduled mainly to deal with this stage of the assignment. For the second draft, feedback was focused on sentence level errors. Writing research has shown that marking every single error is not only impossible, but ineffective. Thus, again, only prevalent errors were addressed. All-in-all, over the course of two quarters, the students submitted at least 21 out-of-class drafts.

**3.5. Data Analysis**

**Teacher/Researcher**

It is important to emphasize the difference between reading student work in the course of a busy quarter and reading it carefully and methodically later as a researcher. In a sense, they are similar, in that they require a thoughtful analysis of what is happening. As a teacher, these analyses needed to be done rather quickly, in order to move on with the next curricular activity such as giving feedback or moving on to the next assignment. When responding to student work as a teacher, I often find myself utilizing checklists or rubrics in order to assess whether the
student successfully achieved a desired goal or not. This in turn is helpful for the student, as they can see concrete points to which I responded to and they can improve on.

The data analysis process began after the data collection had ended, mostly for practical reasons. I taught a full course load, two sections of 20 students each in the data collection period. Thus, it was impossible to find the time to sit down and approach the data as a researcher. When looking at student work as a researcher, a rubric of whether the student was successful at something or not was not a priority. Everything a student did – the success and failures - in the class was considered to be a legitimate response to instruction (see Chapter One). The data was analyzed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of what was happening in the classrooms, and what it meant to learn genre in a classroom intended for students from various disciplines.

Each piece of material was seen through the eyes of the research questions;

How do international graduate students learn to “see” and apply genres in an EAP writing class intended for students of all disciplines?

What does it mean for a student to “learn genre” in these first-year academic writing courses?

In order to answer these questions, I needed arrive at what I had started out to find: a description of what was going on.

The key component for making sense of the messy and massive amount of data was my position as an insider, the teacher that knows the courses, the curriculum, the genre-approach to writing instruction, the assignments, and the students. Qualitative analysis uses the researcher as the instrument to make sense of the data. The instrument used in this study is me. The result of analysis is my interpretation of what happened. My interpretation as a researcher is what it is: one of many possible interpretations of the events. (Sparkes, 1989). As can be seen in the works of Gallas (1994; 1995; 1998), the insider position of a teacher can allow for valuable insights into classroom phenomenon and yield principled, rigorous research that contributes greatly to
educational practices and theory. A second reader (i.e., a fellow teacher), or a so-called “member check” by a participant would not have “reduce[d] or enhance[d] its credibility or trustworthiness” (Sparkes, 1989, p.143).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed in recursive stages (Erickson & Schultz, 1981). The first stage was to go over the entire body of data of the two courses – observation notes of classes and tutorials, audio-recording of tutorials, field notes, and the drafts of the students who had given me consent to use their work in research. 21 students had given me consent. Each student had written about 85 pages of out-of-class assignments, and their tutorial recordings added to up 2 hours. This totaled to about 1785 pages of student drafts and 42 hours worth of tutorial recordings, in addition to observational notes.

During this stage, which was time-consuming and sometimes overwhelming, I assembled a log of the materials in a simple college bound notebook. When looking at a student draft, I would write the name of the student and the assignment at the top of the page, jot down some of the general contents, and then take notes of some noticeable aspects of the draft. It could be the good organization, the depth of the discussion that was being made, or other perhaps a persistent grammatical error that could be seen throughout. When looking at classroom observations, I would write down the date and time of the class, underline or highlight any important points that I see in the actual observation notes, and then come back and jot down a summary or some memos about these points. Going over the tutorial recordings was most time consuming and arduous. At this stage, I did not transcribe each tutorial. Rather, I first listened through them in their entirety, and then listened to them for the second time to take note of certain aspects that jumped out to me in the notebook. For each “piece” of data, I allocated one page, even though most of the page remained empty. This was so that I could come back to the data in later stages of analysis and add
on to what I already have. While going through the data, I kept in the forefront the question, “what does learning look like in these courses”? This helped me decide what constituted “notable” aspects to record in my notebook.

The next (second) step was to go through the entire notebook and finding parts of the data that indicated a “problem” or “difficulty” for the student. This could be located in a draft, a tutorial recording, or a classroom observation. Then, I further investigated how these issues developed or were resolved as the courses progressed by making connections between the various sources of data. For example, for one chemical biology student, his first 20-minute tutorial session was extended to over 45 minutes because he refused to accept my suggestions to revise obvious grammatical errors. His original sentence was simply ungrammatical, but he asserted that the several possibilities that I was providing did not reflect what he intended to say. From there, I looked over the transcripts of our subsequent tutorials and his drafts to see if this problem was “fixed”, or if it recurred, and if it did, if it changed in nature. While I had initially anticipated seeing clear evidence of “improvement,” linear movement from one level of writing to the next, this was not evident. Assignments across the two courses were very different, beginning as generalized text-types and becoming more disciplinary-based. As assignment demands steadily increased, they challenged students in new ways. At this stage, I found that it was difficult to conclude that there was linear improvement of writing proficiency as students moved through the courses. I did find however, that each student had a certain theme to their experience in the two courses. I also found that the first drafts were the most interesting and instructive for analysis, as they reflected the students’ perception of what needed to be done for the assignment, as well as his/her best attempts to do so.

This second step took much longer and was much messier than the initial logging of the data that was done in stage one. I had jotted down 2, 3, and sometime 7 points of interest when initially logging the data. Each of these points needed to be investigated to see if they were
threading together a single issue. For example, in the first stage of data analysis, I had noted the following points about a student draft in my notebook:

(Student I)

(1) first draft was extremely short (wonder if it was because there was a personal reason to get the draft “over and done with”); the second and third draft are long enough to meet the requirements of the assignment
(2) has trouble with prepositions

(from my research notebook)

In this case, I needed to follow-up on the two points. To follow up on point (1), I went over the every draft that the student wrote over the two courses to see if there was a sign that the student consistently struggled in the first draft, and then compared the occurrence with the academic calendar, observational notes, and then tutorial recordings to find any indication of it elsewhere in the data. Upon revisiting these various sources of data, new bullet points would yet again arise. This was the same for point (2).

During this step, I jotted down flow charts on a separate section of my research notebook to record the connection, if there was one, between the various data sources. At times, these flow charts would stop short at a dead end; some were longer than others. Again, this was an arduous process that required patience; I was trying to make sense out of what seemed like a cacophony of data.

The third stage was to find students who particularly struggled in the courses, while at the same time, taking the two parameters, level of study and discipline, into consideration. Their cases would be more illustrative in that they would provide vivid examples of how each student had a persistent theme. This time, I went through the log of materials that I had produced in the first stage, and identified the students who seemed to have had the most prominent themes of
learning during the courses. This narrowed the number of potential participants to 10 students; 3 were M.A. students in education, 3 were PhD students in the hard sciences (biology, material science, etc.), 1 was an M.A. student in science (computer science), 2 were M.A. students in statistics, and 1 was a PhD student in City and Regional Planning.

The third stage was to analyze the cases of the ten potential participants that were chosen in the second stage. In addition to the research log that compiled the analyses of the first two stages, the original sources of data - student drafts, audio-recordings, and observational notes were visited once again. This time, I transcribed the tutorial conversations. Transcription of the tutorials was yet another time-consuming process. I found that it took over 8 hours to transcribe 10 minutes worth of tutorial recordings. However, this was necessary in order to catch not only the content of what the student was saying to me, but the non-verbal cues, such as pauses and intonation, to fully understand that was being communicated in these sessions.

It was in this stage that factors that influence the students’ experience emerged, and I was able to decide on the four participants of the study. They were knowledge or access to disciplinary content (which seemed to be influenced by the students’ level of study), general English proficiency, and an understanding of genre itself. The latter factor, understanding of the nature of genre, seemed to be affected by the interpretive distance between the examples provided in the textbook and the degree of flexing of this genre that needed to be done in order to write in the students’ own discipline. The students’ discipline, whether they were a science student or a humanities student, seemed to influence this. Thus, it was in this stage that selection of the four participants was finalized. I wanted the cases to paint a vivid picture of the various aspects of the interpretive journey. Angel (pseudonym, M.A. student of computer science) was selected first because she was the only M.A. student in the sciences, and incidentally, had a clear theme to her experience in her courses. It had to do with understanding the nature of genre, mostly due to the nature of her discipline. Of the three PhD students in science, Boram (pseudonym, PhD student in
M.C.D.B.) stood out because of the visible discrepancy between her disciplinary knowledge and her English language proficiency. The selection of the two science students enabled me to eliminate one M.A. student in education from the participant list, as her theme was mostly about language proficiency and disciplinary knowledge. Another education student, Carrie (pseudonym, M.A. student in TESOL) appeared to be a better candidate because in her case, while she did struggle with disciplinary knowledge, her command of English was fairly strong, and would be a better contrast to Boram. Dawn (pseudonym, M.A. student in Drama Education)’s case was selected because her case was a good contrast to the other three students.

The stages of analysis were recursive in that they emerged as a natural process of “listening” to the data. They were not pre-determined stages. Often, a point of interest would lead me to go back to the data that I had already looked at, and offer a new way of considering the problem or difficulty the student had been experiencing. In fact, the data was visited and re-visited numerous times. Sometimes, a point of interest would lead me to others; sometimes, it would be a dead end. Because there was no coding and counting involved, because I did not enter the analysis with any preconceived notion, the data analysis process was, at times, frightening, particularly as I juggled the roles of teacher and researcher. While in an ideal world those two roles would be completely separate during the analysis of data, in a study like this, where my own classrooms where the research sites and it was my own students whose work was being analyzed, the two roles inevitably overlapped. To what extent I analyzed data as a teacher responding to her students, students she cared about deeply, and to what extent I analyzed the data as a researcher standing apart from the classrooms and students, was never easy to determine. I started the day with the data in front of me, not knowing whether I would find something interesting or relevant, and not knowing which of these two roles would dominate. As such, the data analysis process was a particularly challenging part of this study. However, this kind of difficulty is probably inherent in research where the researcher studies her/his own classroom. At the same time, it
creates opportunities for more meaningful analysis because of the insider knowledge such a teacher/researcher possesses. This study benefited from that insider knowledge as the data were analyzed.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the interpretive journeys of four graduate students with different disciplinary affiliations and engagement with academic writing in English. The emphasis in this chapter is on presenting the study’s findings. Chapter Five—Discussion and Conclusion—puts the findings into deeper and broader perspective by analyzing them via the study’s research questions. Because the four participants’ experiences varied so much from assignment to assignment—some were relatively easy and others were challenging—the amount of coverage of each assignment also varies within and across the cases. The emphasis in the presentation of findings is on those assignments where the participants’ experiences related most directly to the study’s research questions.

It is important to bear in mind from the start of the chapter that the students received the same kind of classroom instruction; however, they were then required to write the given assignments on their own, on topics from their own disciplines. That is, they were expected to draw from source texts within their own academic discipline and attempt to work with the genre conventions of that discipline. Thus, an important, ongoing task for them in the two courses was to adapt the more generic genre-based knowledge supplied in the two courses to their own
academic fields. This was the essence of their responses to genre-based writing instruction. This chapter explores the nature of those responses.

I found that the most important experience that learners took away from these courses was NOT how to write a summary, annotated bibliography, critical review, and so on. Their final drafts after 3-4 weeks of instruction (which was the average amount of time that was spent for each assignment) were often still far from compatible with what a more experienced writer in the field would produce. Rather, the essence of the curricula was the repeated journey back and forth from the generic version of the genre that was presented in the classroom to the actual application of these genre features to their own discipline-specific writing.

When students turn from straightforward exemplars presented in the textbook and confront the writing practices of their own disciplines, the view becomes considerably murkier. First, students need to understand the content of what they are reading, but learning to do this is the premise of their being enrolled in a graduate degree program. Second, students need to be able to recognize the broad and varied writing preferences that constitute the genre of their discipline. Third, they need to understand the link between content and genre: in other words, how it makes sense in their field to present information this way. It is likely that the genre traditions of their disciplines are rooted in appropriateness, accessibility, and reader expectations. Students’ journeys toward gaining this knowledge and skill, as pointed out earlier, is compounded by various individual factors such as first language, English proficiency, extent of participation in the field, nature of the particular text that he/she has chosen, and the student’s expectations and assumptions about the task.

4.2. Instruction

There is no single consensus of what classroom genre-based writing instruction looks like, other than Hyland’s (2004) and Paltridge’s (2001) suggestions in their books on genre-based
writing instruction and genre-based language instruction, respectively. This is yet another
difficulty of investigating the genre-based classroom. Inevitably, we will rely to some extent on
the teacher’s accounts of how they employed a genre-based approach (Belcher, 2004). The main
textbook of these courses, Swales & Feak’s (1994) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, and
the supplementary textbook, Weissburg & Buker’s (1990), *Writing Up Research*, which are the
most influential, representative textbooks that are currently offered by the field of ESP/EAP, both
provided teaching materials from which one can see how to go about genre-based instruction, but
these books will yield genre-based instruction only when used as such. As can be seen in the
classroom studies that are reviewed in Chapter 3, the goal of genre-based writing instruction is to
use the generic version of the genre, or the template, as a tangible starting point, or what Macken-
Horarick (2002) famously called, “something to shoot for”. The key word is “starting point”, in
that we are using these models to help students form a framework to draw on when they
encounter writing tasks inside and outside the classroom. The various models and suggestions
used in the teaching materials, although they were selected to represent the most “common”
rhetorical structures and language uses of the given genre, were not to be considered as “content”
to be memorized and reproduced verbatim elsewhere.

In this section, I would like to give a more detailed description on how I went about
genre-based writing instruction, using the teaching-learning cycle that was suggested by Hyland
(2004) as a template. As a reminder, they are:

- Setting the context
- Modeling
- Joint Construction
- Independent Construction
- Comparing (p.128)
The basic structure of the instructional cycle was identical for both courses. Because students came from various disciplines, it was my decision as a teacher to utilize “comparing” as an important part of classroom instruction. This stage was used repeatedly and frequently.

**Setting the context/Modeling/Comparing**

Within each course, a learning cycle could be defined by the assignments that the students were required to write. As introduced in the previous chapter, there was some overlap in these cycles, so that at times, students were working on a first draft of a recent assignment and a second draft of the previous assignment at the same time.

Instruction started off with a handout that stated the specific requirements of an assignment. For example, the handout for the extended definition essay for XXX contained the following information. The specific dates are blocked out.

**EDU T&L XXX**

**EXTENDED DEFINITION ESSAY**

First draft due 00/00 Sat.
Second draft due 00/00 Sat.
Third/Final draft due 00/00 Sat.

Tutorials: WEEK 0 (00/00 – 00/00) (we will talk about the first draft)

Assignment #1: Guidelines for writing the Definition essay

Write an extended definition of a term which is important in your field of study. The term that you choose should warrant an extended definition, such as a highly complex concept, process, or recent innovation. For example, a business major might choose to define the term *just-in-time* (JIT), a method for lowering inventory costs. Common terms (e.g. *microscope*, *gene*) or general fields of study (e.g. *microbiology*) are not acceptable.

Depending on the term you choose to define, you will need to employ several of the following definition strategies:
In addition, your paper should:

- be approximately 600 words (2-2½ double spaced pages)
- Be documented properly
- in addition to defining, also explain why the concept/term is an important one

Examples of definition essay topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six sigma</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central dogma</td>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
<td>Agriculture economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost effectiveness</td>
<td>Workforce education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuit</td>
<td>EE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuelcell vehicle</td>
<td>Mechanical engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interval</td>
<td>Music composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPR (non photorealistic rendering)</td>
<td>Computer science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression model</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary design</td>
<td>Art/Industrial design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2P (peer to peer)</td>
<td>Computer science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>EE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the end goal in mind, the students then looked at various examples and templates that were provided in the textbook, as well as some student writing samples from previous quarters.

The “genre-based” aspect of this stage is that I tried, as did the authors of the textbooks, to present a wide array of examples. That is, for example, when introducing the summary assignment, I selected a total of 5 different samples, with various contents, lengths, editing styles, and registers.

First, as a class, we discussed what kind of purpose the genre would serve, and if so, what would be the most important information to include. This would be the “setting the context” stage of instruction. Then, I asked the students (1) what the similarities and differences between the various examples were, (2) what influenced these similarities and differences, and (2) why they would be seen as the same genre. We looked at the rhetorical moves that constituted the genre, and went over common language expressions that may help realize the function of the move more effectively. This was the modeling part of the instruction, and would take no more than two class periods (4 instructional hours).

Group work followed. I asked the students to move into their groups that they were assigned to at the beginning of the quarter. In preparation for class, I looked over the folders that contained the discipline-specific examples of academic writing to see examples of the genre that we were currently studying and highlighted those parts. I also prepared a worksheet for each group which was normally copied on a transparency. For example, in the YYY course, the group work sheet for looking at book reviews was as follows:
GROUP WORK

Members:

Pick out one book review and examine it.
If there are 4 people in your group, do it with a partner. If there are 3 people in your group, you can do it all together.

Title of book review: ________________________________________________________

1. Underline the thesis statement. Then write “thesis statement” in the margins. The thesis statement will be the main idea of the whole book review.

2. Choose two paragraphs from the body and underline the “claim” that he/she makes about the book. Then, put a parenthesis around the supporting comments that he/she gives.

3. Underline all the descriptive words that you can find. Then, write 5 of them on this below.
   Ex) interesting, successful, rich, clearly, in-depth, ........

4. How did the author conclude the review? Simply copy the key sentence or summarize/paraphrase if needed.
   Ex) This is a book international educators would like to keep as an empirical guidebook.

As a group, the students wrote their answers on the transparency with a marker, which were later projected to the entire class to see and discuss. This was an opportunity for students to see how differently or similarly each field realized a genre, and to be reminded how directly these
aspects were influenced by various contextual considerations such as nature of the journal, audience, purpose, positioning of the author, content, and most importantly, discipline. I emphasized that it was “dangerous” to use the textbook suggestions as is, and that they needed to be genre-analysts of their own disciplines. This would be the “comparing” part of instruction, and took no more than 1 class period (2 instructional hours).

Joint Construction/ Comparing

Next, in their groups or with a partner in their group, students would do simple language exercises practicing a certain grammatical form that came up, writing exercises that required no more than two paragraphs of writing, or perhaps a short genre analysis exercise using a writing sample from their own field. This could be done in a normal classroom or in the computer lab. Again, after they finished a task, such as writing a paragraph or filling out a worksheet, their responses would be projected to the entire class to see. Not only did this allow for more “comparing” but I also found that students picked up certain language points or rhetorical moves from other disciplines through this exercise. For example, an expression that is used frequently in statistics is the adverb “exponentially” as in “exponentially increased”. I could find this expression in the drafts of TESOL students or engineering students. This stage would normally take one class period (two instructional hours).

Independent Construction/ Comparing

The following stage was for students to write up their draft independently. Before submitting their first draft, the students submitted an outline of their paper. This was to see if they were preparing the draft in a good pace and also to see early on if they understood the purpose of the assignment and how to write it up. After submitting their first draft, they received written feedback, and then met with me one-on-one for a tutorial. They would then have two more
opportunities to receive written feedback. A letter grade was given only to the third and final draft.

The “comparing” occurred in this stage as well. A common discovery the students made at this stage was that their student writing need not be as dense as the journal articles they have been reading in their groups. Journal articles are for a specialized audience and due to limitations of space, the writing is quite condensed. For example, in a biology journal, there are very few discourse markers. An introduction to an article can be as short as one paragraph. Student writing written for coursework, however, serve the function of “displaying understanding”. Thus, it is important that the student writer clearly establishes thought-relationships and that she/he sufficiently substantiate the claims that are being made.

4.3. Cases

4.3.1. Angel (M.A. Computer Science)

Overview

Angel seemed to have a solid foundation of professional knowledge in her field in that she had studied the field as an undergraduate student and later worked as a computer systems engineer. She seemed to have developed the strategy of saying and writing as little as possible in English. Angel’s experiences in courses XXX and YYY can be summarized in the following table:
### Table 7. (Angel: M.A. Computer Science) Experience in XXX and YYY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XXX</th>
<th>Assignment (topic)</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment Summary (summarization of a review article on security issues in P2P communication systems)</td>
<td>Found the assignment to be as easy as a “paraphrase-and-weave” exercise, mostly due to the proximity of the interpretive distance between the example and the actual writing assignment</td>
<td>Constantly praised for “good organization”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extended definition (P2P Communication)</td>
<td>While parsimonious in language use, did succeed in writing an acceptable definition paper using a set rhetorical structure</td>
<td>Reluctant to use large amount of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-Solution (Reliable Data Transfer)</td>
<td>While parsimonious in language use, did succeed in writing an acceptable problem-solution paper using a set rhetorical structure</td>
<td>In the essay assignments, faithfully adhered to a rhetorical structure that repeatedly proved to be effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis (A Comparison of data on Voice over PSTN and VoIP)</td>
<td>While parsimonious in language use, did succeed in writing an acceptable data-analysis paper using a set rhetorical structure</td>
<td>At the end of the course, gave the impression to be a “successful” XXX student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (5 sources regarding her long paper topic)</td>
<td>While she “mimicked” an example paragraph, failed to capture the purpose of the assignment</td>
<td>Extensive revision required after the first draft. Understanding of the assignment needed to be cleared up in the tutorial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Review (A critical comparison of two articles on WLAN and Wimax)</td>
<td>Form-wise, completed a 5-paragraph essay, but failed to capture the purpose of the assignment</td>
<td>Reluctant to use large amount of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Long paper”: Extended Literature review (An extended literature review on WLAN and Wimax)</td>
<td>Put the entire critical review into the “body” of the paper, and began the paper with extended definitions of the key terms. Again, she had found an economical way to “complete the assignment” but did not critically discuss literature, as a true literature review should.</td>
<td>Was repeatedly surprised that her first drafts did not meet the requirements of the assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After course XXX had ended, my impression of Angel was that she was a fairly successful academic writer. Throughout the quarter, I found her drafts to be, most notably, well organized, and consistently praised her for it. In hindsight, she appeared to regard the XXX course as a practical content course, which would provide pragmatic and readily available “tricks” to apply to her own writing. In fact, due to the close match between the XXX textbook examples and her field’s research, this was not surprising. However, she struggled considerably in the following course, YYY. The difficulty she experienced reveals that she had missed the most important aspect of genre-based writing instruction— the experience of traveling the interpretive distance—while she was in XXX, which would enable her to travel this distance independently after the course was over.

For the other participants in the study, content knowledge was generally the largest obstacle in extracting appropriate material from sources and writing about them. Angel’s case is interesting in that in for her, the biggest obstacle was not content knowledge, but her expectations of the task. She saw the textbook examples as templates and was determined to produce something that resembled them. As Macbeth (2010) points out, models can illustrate structure and components, but they are silent about the judgments that went into producing them. Often students perceive a writing task to involve only structure and sentence types when they encounter an example. This seemed to be the case for Angel. Her initial understanding of the examples (i.e., generic versions of the genres) was only reinforced when it enabled her to successfully write assignments for XXX. However, when the assignments in YYY required her to bring forth more decisions, opinions, and syntheses of information, she could not see it. It seemed to be difficult for her to break from her expectations and strategies from her earlier success. In tutorials in YYY, she was puzzled to find that following the examples so closely did not, in fact, produce a desired result. In our tutorial discussions, she was able to answer questions about her sources and offer opinions and commentary about them. Still, whether this was a deliberate strategy to hide her
limited proficiency or not, her reluctance to use language was apparent. This opened the possibility that the examples might have been so attractive because they relieved her from walking into uncomfortable territory, in which she would have had to actually use a large amount of language and run the risk of being “exposed.” Instead, she could draw from the examples and not have to generate language on her own.

**Genre Learning in Course XXX**

**The Summary Assignment**

Like most of the science students in the course, Angel found the first assignment in the XXX course, the summary, to be quite straightforward and was thus able to complete her first draft easily. The source text that she had chosen to summarize fit nicely with the instructions given in the classroom. She had chosen an article entitled, “Managing P2P security: Considering the potential benefits and trade-offs of the file sharing systems,” which had been published in a professional (rather than research) journal intended for computer engineers working in the field. I had recommended that students find a data-based article to use for the summary assignment, but Angel did not do this. When asked before starting the assignment to provide a short rationale for her choice, Angel wrote that she “can’t understand [research] journal articles,” and that she instead chose a reading assignment from a Computer Science class she was taking. Because this was her first quarter in a Master’s program, it is understandable that she had not yet had contact with research in her field. She was at a stage in her studies where the majority of her reading assignments dealt with professional practice rather than conducting research.

Like the first sample summary that we had reviewed in class, her article was factual and had three clear-cut sections. Her article had five subheadings, the first being the introduction and the last being the conclusion. The contents of the three body sections are introduced clearly in what could be the “thesis” sentence of the article, which was located in the last part of the
introduction:

A closer look at P2P helps to understand why it is the subject of security and privacy concerns and what can be done to alleviate the risks. (Bailes & Templeton, 2004, p.95)

The first section of the source dealt with “a closer look at P2P”, the second, “the security and privacy concerns” it generates, and the third, “what can be done to alleviate the risks.” Each subsection began with a clear topic sentence, which was obviously the most important information, even to me, an outsider to the content. Thus, her job as a summary writer was to take each topic sentence, paraphrase it, and then weave all of them together into a coherent summary, just as the textbook had recommended.

The first sentence of Angel’s summary was a paraphrase of the first sentence identified above:

The two authors discuss how the risks of security and privacy accompany the benefits of Peer-to-peer (P2P) architecture and its applications, and what can be done to mitigate the risks.

In our tutorial I reminded her that the information in the original source should be specified in the summary, so in her next draft she wrote this:

In this article, the two authors, Bailes and Templeton discuss how the risks of security and privacy accompany the benefits of peer-to-peer (P2P) architectures and its applications, and what can be done to mitigate the risks.

For each section of the article, Angel allocated 2-3 sentences in the summary. The first draft of her summary displayed problems with connectors and some surface-level grammar errors, so my written feedback and tutorial comments were mostly about language issues. For revision, she simply had to go back and correct the language errors.
The Course XXX Essays

The overall theme that Angel chose for her XXX assignments was computer-based communication systems. During the quarter, in the midst of the 40 students that I was teaching at the time, her writing stood out as being clearly organized, and throughout the assignments, and this was my most frequent written response for them.

In the case of Angel, eventually a theme emerged. I consistently praised her organization, and treated individually any of the local errors that arose. Thus, by the end of XXX, my notes show that I considered her strong in academic writing. In retrospect, while closely examining her writing for this study, it became clear that she had employed a specific strategy for completing the XXX assignments.

Regardless of the assignment, her drafts seemed to have a fixed “form,” or rhetorical structure. Her XXX assignments can be characterized into the following table. All three of her papers have three distinctive parts, and the third part is then broken down into 2-3 smaller points. The name of the assignment, the topic that Angel chose for the assignment, as well as the structure of the paper, can be formulated into the following table:
Table 8. (Angel, M.A. Computer Science) Topics and Rhetorical Structures of XXX assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended definition</td>
<td>The definition of P2P communication</td>
<td>(1) formal definition of P2P, contrast with the client server model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) A brief history of the emergence of P2P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Three different “approaches” of P2P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.1.) centralized directory architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2.) query flooding architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.3.) heterogeneity architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solution</td>
<td>Reliable data transfer</td>
<td>(1) the problem with poor data transmission between networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) identifies two types of data transfer: loss-tolerant and loss sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) describes three approaches that may help reliable data transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.1.) “stop-and-wait”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2.) “Go-back-N”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.3.) “Selective Repeat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>A comparison of data on Voice over PSTN and VoIP</td>
<td>(1) extended definition of Voice over PSTN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) extended definition of VoIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) comparison of the two systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.1.) comparison of various qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2.) comparison of security concerns and system characteristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that the thematic structure of the papers did successfully meet the requirements of each assignment. The **definition paper** required her to write a well-organized definition of a concept in her field. She chose “P2P communication” and allocated three sections to explain the concept. The first section contained a formal, one sentence definition of the term, and then went on to contrast the term with an older but familiar communication model, the client server model. The second section described how the shortcomings of the client server model motivated the development of P2P communication. In the third section, she presents three different “approaches” (this is the term that she used for the paper) or modes of realization of P2P.
The contents of each section are clearly defined and work together to create a coherent paper.

The **problem-solution** **paper** required her to identify a much-discussed issue or a pressing problem in her field, and then provide some possible solutions. The problem that she chose to discuss was “reliable data transfer”: the issue of ensuring that when information travels from computer to computer, or system to system, the data is not lost or damaged in any way. This paper, again, has three clearly identified sections. The first section identifies the problem by stating it and then describing why this is a problem for network users. In the next section, she presents two different types or ways to transfer data: loss-tolerant and loss-sensitive. “Loss tolerant applications, mostly are multimedia applications, do not concern about data loss, and lost data only slightly affect quality,” she writes. “On the other hand, for loss sensitive applications such as file transfer, email, instant messages, and website access, every packet is critical, and any data loss my result in incomplete message.” The third section goes on to describe how to achieve reliable data transfer in loss-sensitive systems. Here she introduces three “approaches.” Again, this is the word that she uses to introduce three different solutions to data loss: “stop-and-wait”, “go-back-N”, and “selective repeat.”

The **data analysis** **paper** assignment required her to present an interpretation or analysis of data. For this paper, she is comparing and contrasting factual data about two information systems: Voice over PSTN and VoIP. Here, again, the paper is organized into three clearly defined subsections. The first section is an extended definition of Voice over PSTN, and the second section is an extended definition of VoIP. In the third section she presents a table on the characteristics of each system, and then compares and contrasts them point-by-point.
A more skeletal representation of the structure of her drafts would be as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Body
   2.1. First component
   2.2. Second component
   2.3. Third component
      2.3.1. First category of Third component
      2.3.2. Second category of Third component
3. Conclusion

Irrespective of the requirements of the assignment, Angel managed to organize her content into the structure above and was consistently praised for her “clear organization”. As was the case with her summary assignment, the content of her field seemed to enable her to make the contents of her paper to fit this structure relatively easily. Her work illustrates how content knowledge can facilitate the rhetorical demands of her genre. In fact, it seems that her understanding of what she was reading in her discipline enabled her to easily apply genre conventions. These strengths gave the overall impression that she was a good academic writer despite her grammatical weaknesses.

**Genre Learning in Course YYY**

**Annotated Bibliography**

When she continued on to the next course, however, she floundered. This was evident in the first assignment in YYY, the annotated bibliography, which involved selecting five sources from her discipline. These five sources were to be the foundation of another assignment, a long paper, due at the end of the quarter. The annotated bibliography assignment required commentary on the significance of the source to the field and its relevance to the long paper assignment. Each annotation was to begin with key bibliographical information about the source, which was to be presented as it would appear in the bibliography section of a journal article.
Below is the first entry of Angel’s annotated bibliography. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes.

[1] These two authors briefly introduce the features and two standards of 3G cellular systems.

[2] First, they show that 3G systems can provide high speed capability of data communication which dramatically exceeds that 2G systems can provide. Depends on where the cellular phone is and how it moves, data may be transferred in various speeds.

[3] Further, they emphasize the two major standards: UMTS and CDMA 2000, and their predecessors in 2G systems as well.

[4] This section of 3G systems is only a small part of the entire book; however the essentials of 3G are absolutely presented by these two authors.

The draft supported her typical reluctance to provide much detail about the source. As in the XXX course, I again felt that she was saying/writing as little as possible to avoid language usage. While the content is difficult to understand, there are only four sentences in this entire entry. The last sentence, the commentary about the source, is especially difficult to follow. For her second of the five sources in her annotated bibliography, she wrote: (the numbers in brackets were added for presentational purposes)

[1] The authors propose an analysis regarding the SIP mechanism in IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) of UMTS, and focus on two aspects: bottleneck and delay.

[2] In the beginning, a full view of how UMTS networks evolve from GSM 2G systems to different releases of UMTS today is mentioned.

[3] Moreover, the authors in detail describe the steps to create, adjust, or terminate a SIP session in IMS of UMTS networks. This part provides complete instructions about how SIP be implemented in the 3G infrastructure.

[4] Finally, and also the most important, the author intend to stress on the analysis of the bottleneck and delay issues.

[5] However, relative to the background subsection, the analysis part is much shorter, thus this article could be regarded as an introduction of SIP and IMS in UMTS rather than an analysis report.
Here, as in the first entry, she is parsimonious with content. Yet, form-wise, the key words fit together nicely. They can be represented in the following manner:

Table 9. First Two Entries of Annotated Bibliography

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) | [1] main idea of the source: **feature** of 3G cellular systems  
**Two standards** of 3G cellular systems  
[2] a brief summarization of the **feature** of 3G cellular systems  
[3] introduction of the **two standards**: UMTS and CDMA 2000  
[4] commentary regarding the length and topic of the source |
| (2) | [1] main idea of the source: **SIP** mechanism in IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) of **UMTS**  
**Bottleneck** and **delay**  
[2] descriptive summary of first part regarding the history of **UMTS**  
[3] descriptive summary of the following part, which was “complete instruction about how **SIP** should be implemented in the 3G infrastructure”  
[4] descriptive summary of the following part, which was about **bottleneck** and **delay**  
[5] commentary regarding the length and topic of the source |

Her first entry was reminiscent of a textbook example of a model paragraph in class used to demonstrate the typical “clarity” that can be found in academic writing. The following example paragraph was introduced in class in a handout to show a “generic” example of a paragraph written in the academic style:

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for **two important characteristics**. First of all, gold has a lustrous **beauty** that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 years ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its **usefulness to industry and science**. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. The most recent use of gold is in astronauts’ suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its **beauty**, but also for its **utility**.  
(Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p.3)
Like the model paragraph, her first entry has a first sentence that contains the two key words of the entire paragraph, and these two words are repeated in the subsequent supporting sentences. The structure of her entry seems to follow the example paragraph as though she were following a formula, but overall, it is difficult to see how this particular source would be useful for her final project or how it was significant for her topic. Her reluctance to speak/write was evident in the subsequent 3 entries as well.

For all five entries, after Angel stated the main idea of the source, she employs a “one-sentence-per-section” formula. The two or three sentences that constitute the summarization of the source all start with similar sets of discourse markers: first, then (or second), and finally (or final). Despite this clear “physical” marking of the entries using discourse markers, it is difficult to see how these 3 or 4 sentences lead to the final commentary, which seems to be fixated on the physical length or structure of the source, sometimes in relation to the entire book that it appeared in. I could see her logic; in class we had examined Unit Six of the Swales & Feak (1994) textbook, which uses book reviews to demonstrate critique writing. One example book review contains descriptions of the physical layout of the book, as shown below:

The body of the book is broken down into four sections, each containing two or three chapters. Each chapter ends with a chapter summary, and a number of them contain helpful case studies that pertain to topics covered in each chapter. (p.185)

What I found lacking in the first draft of Angel’s annotated bibliography was an overall understanding of the purpose or function of the genre. The details that she had chosen to include in her bibliography should have been selected in accordance with what she thought was significant about the source. Through examples from the textbook and through their own trials and errors with the assignment, my intention for instruction was to have students see, or experience for themselves, how the genre process works. In the XXX course, Angel had had little or no trouble with the assignment summary; her draft had been a tidy summarization of her
source. The short interpretive distance of the classroom model to her task may have obscured how much or how little she understood of the genre. For her it may have been simply a fill-in-the-blank exercise. When she used this strategy for her annotated bibliography in YYY, however, it failed her. Her first draft had the appearance of an annotated bibliography; it had a clear first sentence that stated the main idea of the source, three to four sentences that were summarizations of sections of the source, and a final comment that “looked like” a commentary in that form-wise, it was identical to parts of book reviews that she had seen in class. The content, however, was minimal, and she neglected to give instructive commentary on its significance.

In our tutorial, she was quite startled to learn that she needed to re-evaluate her understanding of the assignment altogether in order to revise her paper. For each source, I asked her, “How is this significant to your study?” and jotted down her answer. It was her job to include this information in the subsequent draft. She did seem to have a good idea of why these sources were needed in her final project, but had failed to see that this needed to be included in her draft in order for it to be successful. This entailed breaking away from a template and actually responding meaningfully to the purpose of the assignment.

**Critical Review**

While Angel was able to revise her annotated bibliography with an extensive one-on-one tutorial session with me, this experience did not transfer into the following assignment. In fact, this problem intensified in the writing of the critical review. For this assignment she was required to synthesize and critique two of the articles from her annotated bibliography, in particular, a pair that shared topic, problem, or concern but differed in methods, results, or conclusions. The paper was to be between 700-1200 words in length and include citations in disciplinary-specific documentation style. She was to include her assessment (positive or negative) of the articles. The assignment instructions furnished this outline for the task:
Angel chose for her critical review a comparison of two articles on “WLAN” and “Wimax”, types of wireless networks. Her first draft, which had the unmistakable features of a standard 5-paragraph essay\(^3\), included the following key sentences:

**Thesis (at the end of the first paragraph):**

WLAN and Wimax are both the wireless networks: Wimax could provide much broader spectrum for wireless access than WLAN. These two wireless networks are generally expected to be applied as an important component in UMTS networks, thus Marquez et al (2005) present a study for how IMS of UMTS interworks with WLAN, and similarly, Xu et al (2007) present an analysis of the interworking between 3GPP and Wimax.

---

\(^3\) The thesis statement was located at the end of the first paragraph, the introduction. Each body paragraph started with a topic sentence, and the rest of the body paragraph substantiated the claim that was being made in the topic sentence. The fifth and final paragraph started with a re-statement of the thesis statement.
First evaluative comparison (first sentence of first body paragraph): Both Marquez et al (2005) and Xu et al (2007) mention that their focus is the most important aspect, the session negotiation level, rather than the whole of the interconnection between 3GPP and the wireless networks.

Second evaluative comparison (first sentence of second body paragraph): Marquez et al (2005) and Xu et al (2007)’s articles have almost the same structure.

Third evaluative comparison (First sentence of third body paragraph): In terms of various interconnection levels, Table 1 combines two interconnection scenarios, which are presented separately by Marquez et al (2005) and Xu et al (2007), and shows the six interconnection levels and their corresponding service and operational capabilities. The two scenarios both contain the first five levels; however only Xu et al (2007) describe the last one.

Final word (in the conclusion): Both of these two articles represent the interworking with wireless networks based on IMS, and moreover indicate that there are more similarities than distinctness to connect 3GPP and WLAN versus 3GPP and Wimax.

The positioning of the key sentences was unquestionably “correct”. They were placed at the beginning of each paragraph, and although I had little content knowledge of this topic, it was easy to see that these sentences contained the idea that controlled the content of the entire paragraph.

Yet, the content of the entire essay is quite odd. Her thesis states that WLAN and Wimax are important wireless networks. “Thus”, she writes, Marquez et.al. (2005) present a study on A, and Xu et.al.(2007) present a study on B. There is no evident cause-and-effect relationship that the discourse marker “thus” promises.

In her body paragraphs, she goes on to identify and elaborate on two similarities of the articles, and one difference between them. The first similarity is that they both emphasize “session negotiation level” over the entire “interconnection” between the systems. The next similarity is that they are almost the “same structure,” as seen below:

First, the authors separately introduce IMS architecture for 3GPP, SIP signaling and WLAN/Wimax separately. Further, they demonstrate the interworking between 3GPP networks and WLAN/Wimax, and also classify several levels for the interconnection. Finally, the authors analyze the problems and provide conclusions and solutions. Xu et al (2007) may intend to construct their article based on already existent researches of interconnection between 3GPP and other wireless networks, thus causing their article like a extension of Marquez et al (2005)’s article. (Angel, first draft of critical review)
This section closely resembles her annotated bibliography, in that she has once again divided the articles into three sections, provided a descriptive summary of each section, and then finishes with a concluding sentence.

The difference between the two articles, she says, is the amount of information they cover. Out of the six possible interconnection levels, Marquez et. al. (2005) covers all of them, along with their “corresponding service” and “operational capabilities,” while Xu et.al. (2007) limit their discussion to the sixth level. The three points that Angel chose, (1) the main points of emphasis of the two articles, (2) their rhetorical structure, and (3) the scope of information they cover, do not seem to reflect the purpose of a critical review, which, according to the textbook, includes integration of sources, exposure to scholarly expectations, and the habit of analysis while reading texts. Thus, like the annotated bibliography, Angel needed to re-plan the draft altogether in order to revise.

Discussion of Findings for Angel

My proposition is that the reason why Angel was “successful” in the XXX course was not necessarily because she was a stronger academic writer than her counterparts, but because the contents of her discipline happened to fit well with the required rhetorical structure of the assignments and the information provided in the course textbooks, and thus “content” did not prevent her from recognizing how a model of a genre could be applied to her own discipline. In fact, there was literally little or no interpretation involved. When preparing to dissect a frog, students are given a picture or an illustration of the intestines of a frog, so they have an idea of what to expect when they actually cut the animal open. There is little to no interpretation involved in locating a liver of a lung in a picture of a frog to the actual specimen. This was the nature of the assignments in XXX for Angel.
However, this is at odds with the purpose of genre-based writing instruction. When first introducing a genre to a class, a common practice is for teachers to make sure to present the students with various examples of the genre in order to demonstrate how factors such as audience, purpose, and the intention of the author influence form (e.g., Cheng, 2007, 2008b; Johns, 1995). They demonstrate how an interpretive distance exists and emphasize that it is the individual writer’s job to analyze the various genre features in order to arrive at an acceptable version of the genre that accommodates those features found in their own disciplinary community. Because the interpretive distance was not evident for Angel in the XXX course, it may be that she missed out on this learning experience. The ease with which she was able to imitate the genre examples presented in class prevented her from engaging the deeper issues involved in genre-based writing.

In the YYY course, in which Angel was required to write in more detail of her discipline, she repeatedly “missed the mark”. Even after having to re-write her annotated bibliography with my assistance in the tutorial, she showed the same lack of understanding of genre in the following assignment, the critical review. Having been accustomed to viewing genre instruction as a bag of “tricks”, it was extremely difficult for her to re-adjust this view in one or two assignments.

All in all, the expectations of the task, and the rhetorical judgments that are involved in utilizing a “model” (i.e., genre awareness), were invisible to her. Students like Angel are not uncommon in ESP/EAP writing classes, or any foreign or second language class, at least in my experience. In some cases, their inability to travel the interpretive distance can be left undetected, as was the case in XXX. However, in her difficulty in YYY, we see that as a “minimalist” Angel’s effort seems to be that she was making reasonable judgments based on what is currently visible to her, but that he visibility was limited.
4.3.2. Boram (PhD, MCDB)

Overview

Boram was a first year PhD Student in MCDB (Molecular Cellular Developmental Biology), and was deeply immersed in research practices from the moment she began her doctoral program. However, her English proficiency seemed to be severely limited compared to her fellow classmates in the courses. Her experience in XXX and YYY can be summarized in the following table:
Table 10. (Boram: PhD, MCDB) Experience in XXX and YYY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XXX</th>
<th>Assignment (Topic)</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment Summary (summarized a research article in her field)</td>
<td>Found the assignment to be as easy as a “paraphrase-and-weave” exercise, mostly due to the proximity of the interpretive distance between the example and the actual writing assignment</td>
<td>Her interest and knowledge of research in her field was obvious by the planning of her drafts and the way she described her drafts in the tutorials, but simply did not have the English proficiency to execute her plans. Building overall English proficiency was an extremely difficult thing to do in the course of two quarters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extended definition (definition of Reverse Transcriptase)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-Solution (Reducing or eliminating the problem of Superbacteria)</td>
<td>In the planning stages, showed good understanding of the purpose of the genre, and extensive understanding of her field. However, due to her limited English proficiency, had immense difficulty in expressing this clearly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis (Two active states of Bud 1 and the localization of Bud 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (Studies on relationships of three cells: Bud 1, Cdc21, and Cdc24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Review (A critical review of two studies published by her lab; one was in 2002, and the other was a follow-up, published in 2003)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Long paper”: Extended Literature review (A research proposal on yet another way to extend the research agenda of the lab that she was currently working in)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YYY

No entries.
The overall theme of Boram’s interpretive journey was her lack of English proficiency, or lack of eyes to see the grammar of the target language. Boram had significant background in her field as well as participation in research projects. This enabled her to read academic articles in her discipline with high comprehension, which in turn influenced her genre awareness. She had the ability to grasp the purpose of each genre and make good decisions regarding their content and organization. However, she fell short in execution. She simply did not have sufficient foundational proficiency in the English language. While Angel’s lack of disciplinary background hindered her sense of the genre and language use within it, Boram’s case shows that significant background knowledge cannot compensate for low proficiency in English. Interestingly, as a survival strategy, Angel was reduced to studying the textbook examples carefully in order to imitate them. In some sense she could see the grammar, just not the meaning it was meant to serve. It could be that Boram’s knowledge of her field distracted her from these language aspects because she was so immersed in content; when she read, she was so meaning-driven that the sentence-level grammar serving the meaning was invisible to her. Boram’s case reminds us of the ESL aspect of ESP/EAP writing instruction. In this case, she and I shared a first language, and I was able to tap into her understanding of the genre and content through conversations in Korean. Had it not been for this information, it would have been difficult to see that she indeed had genre awareness and the ability to strategically make rhetorical choices accordingly.

**Genre Learning in Course XXX**

**The Summary Assignment**

Like Angel, Boram found the first assignment, the summary, quite straightforward because the textbook example offered a nice match with her article from an academic journal in her field. She said she chose the article because it was “related to the research in [her] lab,” The structure of the article was identical to the experimental research articles presented in Weissberg
& Beker’s (1990) *Writing Up Research* (also required for this course) in terms of introduction, methods, findings, and conclusion sections. Her first draft was as follows, with the numbering in each section added by me for presentation purposes:

[1] Aerobic organisms respond to both stress and normal physiological stimuli by producing reactive oxygen species (ROS). ROS affects apoptosis, which is a signal of programmed cell death. However, little is known about ROS. [2] In this article, “The *Saccharomyces* HtrA-like protein Nma111p is nuclear serine protease that mediates yeast apoptosis”, the authors discovered one protein in yeast that is a mediator of yeast apoptosis, which they named Nma111. [3] The article showed that the Nma111 has a similar domain with HtrA which is known to human’s mediator of apoptosis. The author observed that Nma111 mutant yeast strain survived more than wild type cell at higher temperature or induction apoptosis by H2O2. In stressful conditions, yeast cells that were over expressed with Nma111p’s over expression died more frequently than wild type cells.

Although the content may not be accessible to those outside her field, the rhetorical structure is quite visible. Part [1] describes the background of the study, [2], the main idea, or, the key finding of the study, and [3], an elaboration of the findings. Because she knew and understood the basic components of an experimental research article, Boram had no trouble in identifying the most important ideas of the source text and from which parts of the text to extract these. Writing a summary of the source was merely a task of taking these elements and weaving them together. Thus, she had essentially mastered the task in the first draft.

Boram’s first draft of the summary assignment drew my attention because in my experience it is rare for a student to disregard the “first sentence” formula from Swales & Feak (2004) that was discussed in class, with the source and main idea linked by an appropriate reporting verb, for example:

Bernstein (2004) states/claims/argues/maintains _____(Main idea)”

(p. 162)
In the XXX classroom, this “first sentence” was introduced as a convenient way to start a summary. Boram was the only student who preceded her formulaic first-sentence with a short introductory sentence (see her sentences [1] and [2] above).

In our tutorial where we discussed her first draft of the summary assignment, Boram told me that before introducing the contents of the summary, she felt the need to explain the articles’ significance. Despite the fact that the hypothetical audience for the assignment was her advisor, she wrote the introduction for the real audience, me. She used her own judgment to determine that this information would fit best in the beginning of the summary rather than at the end. Although her English proficiency was limited, she understood that writing the main idea in the first sentence of a summary was a common and helpful way to start, but not a rule set in stone, as she explains below:

선생님이 말씀하신 first sentence 는 그러니까 좋다는 거지, 꼭 그래야 한다는 건 아니었잖아요, 그죠?
[“When you talked about the “first sentence”, you were saying that it would be good to do so, but not that you have to do so, right?”] 

I was impressed by her ability to take the real contextual circumstances into consideration and arrive at a conscious choice to discount what most students typically misinterpret as a requirement. Her significant grounding in her field permitted her to make a sensible judgment about how the genre could serve her purpose. This is in fact the essence of genre instruction -- to offer possibilities and guidelines, not laws or rigid prescriptions. That genre must be adjusted to fit specific purposes and context is the most difficult part of the instructional curriculum in courses like XXX and YYY. This instruction for most students requires trial and error, usually beginning with the formula and moving through variations as contexts change with assignments. Students usually establish the boundaries of such formulas by discovering when it is too rigid and when it has been flexed too far (Macbeth, 2010).
Grammatically, the summary assignment was as simple as selecting the key sentences of the study, paraphrasing them, and then weaving them together as a coherent summary. In the fifth week of instruction, however, when we began writing papers of 3-5 pages, her English proficiency became an issue.

**The Course XXX Essays**

The topics that Boram (PhD, MCDB) chose and how she intended to organize them into essays are represented in the following table. Each bracketed number represents a body paragraph (marked by an indent) in her paper. The contents in the table below come from three sources: (1) the preparation handouts that she was required to submit before handing in her first drafts, (2) her actual draft, and (3) what she explained to me about her drafts in our tutorials.

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4 Before handing in their first drafts, students were required to hand in a mini “proposal” that stated the main idea of their paper and its planned outline. While it was not a “contract” that the students had to follow, this aided them in preparing to write the draft, and served as a tool for me to monitor their progress on the assignment before they turned in the first draft. It also turned out to be a useful document in understanding the first drafts. As the students were writing about contents in their own discipline, it was often difficult for me to follow their argument due to my lack of knowledge of the field.
Table 11. (Boram) Topics and Rhetorical Structures of XXX Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Extended       | Reverse Transcriptase (RT)                 | [1] background information on the significance of RT  
[2] a one-sentence, formal definition of RT  
[3] Two characteristics of RT that makes it unusual (and thus worthwhile studying) among DNA polymerases  
[5] The significance of RT research: the fact that many diseases such as AIDS, Human T cell lymphotrophic virus (HTLV), and Hepatitis B are related with RT mutation  
Also names some significant studies in this area  
[6] a brief overview of the type of research that has already been done, and a recommendation of what type of research needs to be done in the future, followed by an explanation of they type of research is being conducted now.  
[7] points out another practice-related direction that the research can take |
| Problem-Solution | Reducing or Eliminating the problem of Superbacteria | [1] the emergence of super-bacteria and introduction to the problem: these super-bacteria are immune to antibiotics  
A description of its strength and how harmful it is.  
[4] A problem with the first solution: Humans eat antibiotics through food, or create good environments to grow by taking certain supplements  
[5] Discussion of the second solution: using medication against super bacteria  
An introduction of specific developments in the field that attempted to find a drug that could counter the effects of superbacteria  
[6] Some problems with the findings of these studies: The resulting drug is so strong that it harms the human body |

(Continued)
The outline presented above represents the “intended message” of Boram’s drafts. Compared with Angel’s drafts in the previous section, it can be seen that there is a greater variety and depth in the contents of her drafts, possibility due to their different educational stage – Angel was pursuing an MA, and Boram was in a PhD. program, had a research position, and had substantial preparation in her MA in the same field.

For the **extended definition paper**, Angel, who was still listening to lectures and taking quizzes on terms and concepts in her field, wrote a rather impersonal paper that contained only factual information about the topic. Boram, having had experience in research, was able to articulate the significance of the research of the topic, *RT*, and provide a short literature review on recent developments in the field. Again in contrast to Angel, whose **problem-solution paper** tended to offer extended definitions of solutions, Boram attempted to weigh the pros and cons of
the possible solutions to her problem, countering the effects of superbacteria, and once again extends the paper into a discussion of recent developments in the field. The same can be seen in her data-analysis paper. While Angel’s papers leaned toward presenting factual information, Boram’s seemed to show more awareness of recent developments in the discipline, and thus portrayed her as a genuine participant in her field. The opinions and criticisms she offered in her writing, and her sense for appropriateness, seemed to achieve the purpose of the academic genres, which, roughly speaking, would be to “demonstrate understanding of the field” more effectively.

Despite her sense for content and appropriateness in the genre, Boram had tremendous difficulty putting her intentions into words. For example, in the first paragraph of the extended definition essay, she starts off her introduction with the intention to express the following:

[1] background information on the significance of RT

This intention was realized as follows, with brackets added by me:

[2] It is accepted that DNA are transcript to RNA and RNA translated to Protein, what is called, Central Dogma. [3] However, there is an enzyme that can make this rule reverse. [4] It is reverse transcriptase (RT). [5] RT is a RNA dependent DNA polymerase. [6] That is, RT makes DNA strand by using DNA template. [7] Retroviruses have RT because their genome is single strand RNA but replicate this RNA through double strand DNA. [8] The most famous RT is human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)’s. [9] Only RT use the host system’s replication system so the reverse transcription that RT does is found in Eukaryote.

The first sentence, sentence [2] seemed ungrammatical to me, first because the second and third verb phrases, “are transcript to” and “translated to” are unparallel. If they are being used to explain the concept of “Central Dogma”, then one can suppose that the verb tense for these two verb phrases should be present tense. Secondly, “be transcript to” conveys no meaning to me, but there was a possibility that this was a specialized way of using language in this field. Thus, the best that I could do in terms of offering feedback on the first draft was to simply highlight it in yellow and allow the student to examine this sentence again. Sentences [3] to [6] are quite simple in structure, and from this, I could guess that the significance of RT was that is reverses a well-
known rule in molecular biology, and the reverse of this rule was that “RT makes DNA strand by using DNA template” (sentence [6]). It is obvious that a simple change in verb tense will do little to clarify what the writer in trying to express in this paragraph.

Boram knew the relationship between RTs, RNAs, DNAs and how they make up “Central Dogma,” and was able to explain this relationship to me in Korean in our tutorial. Yet, she did not have the eyes to see the mismatch between her intentions and what she actually expressed in her draft due to her limited control of English. One general advice for writing tutors of native speakers is to “have the writer read her/his draft aloud,” so that they can self-detect the grammatical errors they may have made. For Boram, this practice was out of the question. Thus, I was put into a position in which I had to learn about these concepts in order to help her realize her intentions.

From what I understand, the Central Dogma of molecular biology is basically that “once information gets into protein, it can't flow back to nucleic acid.” Thus, genetic information can flow in only one direction; from DNA to RNA to protein, and not the other way around. The verbs, “transcribe” and “translate,” are highly technical; again, roughly put, the information flow from DNA to RNA is “transcription,” and the information flow from RNA to the protein is “translation.” Thus, the original sentence,

[2] It is accepted that DNA are transcript to RNA and RNA translated to Protein, what is called, Central Dogma.

is incorrect content-wise because the agent of transcription and translation, genetic information, is entirely missing. This was only revealed after a painstaking effort to understand these concepts myself. In the tutorial, Boram used the word “정보” (jeong-bo, Korean for information) repeatedly while explaining this to me, and suddenly I pointed out,

여기 정보라는 말이 어디있어요?
(“Where is the word information here?”)
(from transcript of audio-recording of tutorial)
Due to her limited proficiency in English, Boram was actually mis-representing the content of her discipline, despite the fact that she knew and understood it in her native language. Had I not communicated with her in Korean, I would not have been able to help her with her revision process, which ended up being a series of “mini-grammar lessons.” As can be seen from above, a grammar error was often revealed only after a “mini-biology lesson” by the student.

Boram’s third paragraph in her problem-solution essay was intended to have the following content:

[3] Discussion of the first solution: reducing the use of antibiotics

The corresponding paragraph starts off with a rather misleading sentence. The italics were added by me for presentational purposes:

[10] There are two methods that the one is prevention from these bacteria and the other is medication of these bacteria

This is reminiscent of the rhetorical structure that Angel repeatedly used in her writing. The easiest way to achieve such a structure would be to use skeletal sentences such as the following:

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p.3)

Then, the reader can expect to read about two points: “prevention from these bacteria” and “medication of these bacteria”. Yet, this structure is absent from her draft. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[11] When prescribed and antibiotic, people may well take all the pills or liquid suspension in the bottle. [12] Also, they may not stop their taking their medication when patients start to feel better and patients never keep and save unused antibiotics. [13] Moreover, the temptation to take antibiotics without consulting patient’s doctor is too great. [14] People may not share antibiotics with family and friends. [15] Also patients can check the expiration date on patient’s medication and discard when it becomes too old.
The paragraph starts out with a first sentence that is very similar to the skeletal sentence provided above, but from then on, it is difficult to see what the she is trying to say. An obvious way to improve the paragraph, then, seems to be to add skeletal sentences such as “The first is to prevent the growth of this bacteria”, and “The second is to use medication against this bacteria.” Yet, sentences [11] through [15], while they are difficult to follow, seem to be discussing the use and misuse of antibiotics, which could only be supporting sentences for the first point she is making, “prevention from this bacteria.”

In sentences [11], [12], and [14], the auxiliary “may” is used for several different meanings. In sentence [11], the student is saying that there is a general tendency for patients to overuse antibiotics that were prescribed to them. For this, she correctly used the expression “may well + Verb”. In the following sentence [12], she is incorrectly expressing that the patients should not do so, thus making the paragraph quite difficult to follow. The discourse marker, “also,” is not aiding her, either. All-in-all, despite the depth of thought that she put into planning the draft, the actual outcome seemed to fall considerably short of what she intended.

The revised version of this paragraph was as follows. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[16] There are two methods that the one is prevention from these bacteria and the other is medication of these bacteria. [17] On prevention, the solution is very simple. [18] The usage of the antibiotics can be reduced. [19] When prescribed an antibiotic, people may well take all the pills or liquid in the bottle. [20] Patients should not stop taking their medication just because they are feeling better. [21] They need to finish the medication as prescribed. [22] Also, patients should never keep and save antibiotics. [23] Moreover, the temptation to take antibiotics without consulting patients’ doctor is too great. [24] People should not share antibiotics with family or friends. [25] Also, patients can check the expiration data on patients’ medication and discard when it becomes too old.

She has inserted sentences [17] and [18] to clarify the main idea of this paragraph, and the meaning and flow of sentences [19], [20], [21], and [22] are clarified. Yet, sentences [23], [24], and [25] are not much different from the original draft, and it is difficult to understand what they
mean and how they relate to the main idea. It was not difficult, however, to recognize why this had happened. In the tutorial, I had gone through each sentence, one-by-one, clarifying the intended meaning of the paragraph, showing her how there was a mismatch between her intentions and the actual draft, and then providing some suggestions on how to revise them. Sentences [17] through [22] had been discussed in the tutorial, and she had simply took them from her notes and typed them in. I then asked her to revise the rest of the sentences on her own, but she was not able to do so. She could explain what her intentions for the sentences were in the tutorial in Korean, but even after telling me what they were, she was not able to see that there was a meaning and grammar mismatch. Telling her to re-write according to what we did in the tutorial was just as ineffective as telling her to “read it aloud” so that she could “hear” where she was grammatically incorrect.

**Genre Learning in Course YYY**

A foundational grasp of English grammar seemed to be impossible for Boram to master in one quarter. Even after the XXX experience, Boram’s drafts in YYY were no different than in XXX. I could gain a glimpse of what she had planned to do from our conversations in the tutorials and the “outlines” she turned in for her papers, but the actual drafts needed extensive revision. In order to revise a draft, we needed to go through the draft sentence by sentence, which was not only time-consuming but also unproductive because each sentence was its own grammar case. It seemed that my role had been reduced to that of a copy-editor. I did try to use the tutorials as an opportunity to teach her the grammar that she needed to write her papers, but there were so many isolated grammar points that I doubted that any of what we talked about would be retained for future writing.
The Critical Review

To see this pattern once more, we can contrast Boram’s plans for the critical review assignment and what she actually did in her first draft. In this draft, she is comparing and contrasting two articles that were published by her advisor and her research team, one in 2002, and the other in 2003. The latter is a follow-up of the first study, and at the time I was teaching her, Boram was working on yet another extension of the same project in her lab.

The intended structure of her paper was as follows. The entire focus of the discussion was on the methodology of the studies discussed, and how the methodologies of each study contributed or failed to contribute with respect to the research question. Again, this information was drawn from three separate sources: (1) the preparation handouts that she was required to submit before handing in her first drafts\(^5\), (2) her actual draft, and (3) what she explained to me about her drafts in our tutorials.

[1] Introduction: Stating the issue that is being studied and introducing how the two papers dealt with this issue.
[2] Explanation of the relationship of the two articles; specifically explains how the 2003 study extends the findings of the 2002 study.

[3] The significance of both studies: that they present a “logical relationship” between the three subjects of study, “Bud 1, Cdc42, and Cdc24”

[4] Explanation of how the 2003 is an improvement of the 2002 study

[5] The shortcomings of both articles

[6] A summarization of the argument and an explanation of how the project she is currently participating in relates to these two studies (How her current project is aiming to improve the previously mentioned shortcomings)

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\(^5\) Before handing in their first drafts, students were required to hand in a mini “proposal” that stated the main idea of their paper and its planned outline. While it was not a “contract” that the students had to follow, this aided them in preparing to write the draft, and served as a tool for me to monitor their progress on the assignment before they turned in the first draft. It also turned out to be a useful document in understanding the first drafts. As the students were writing about contents in their own discipline, it was often difficult for me to follow their argument due to my lack of knowledge of the field.
As seen from the outline above, Boram seemed to be cognizant of the purpose of a critical review, to “express [her] evaluative comments within [her] field’s accepted standards of judgment” (Swales & Feak, 1994, p.180). She has identified two studies that are directly related to what she was currently doing. After stating that the 2003 study is an extension of the 2002 study, she first plans to explain the significance of both studies, and then explain how the 2003 is “better” than the previous one. She then wants to extend her argument by explaining how her current work is related to these studies.

Compared with Angel’s first draft of the assignment, which contained discussion of the (1) topic of the two articles that she had chosen to critique (which were identical), (2) the rhetorical structure of the two articles, and then the (3) the scope of information covered, Boram’s outline does seem to reflect a better understanding of what it means to “critique” studies in a given field. The following is part of her initial draft that is discussing the shortcomings of both articles (part [5]). The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[7] Moreover, both of these articles could not give the detail about the mutant which some researchers made before these articles. [8] In previous article (2002), the author used the mutant the Glycine changed to Valine in 12 portion of Bud1 but the author dropped the fact what this portion and what function of this portion. [9] Also in the article (2003), the author used the mutants, cdc42-101, cdc42-118, cdc42-129 but the article did not showed what function these mutation portions had. [10] The author may had better show the detail clearly because the explanation of the detail could be understood more.

In sentence [8], Boram writes, “...the author dropped the fact what this portion and what function of this portion”. Sentence [10] is a conscious effort to apply an “evaluative” comment as recommended in a class session (as told by Boram in her tutorial). The following comments are portions from Swales & Feak’s (2004) possibilities for evaluative statements, which were discussed in class:

The article would have been more persuasive if the author had related the findings to previous work on the topic.

It would have been better if the authors had given their main findings in a form of a table.
The author should have provided more data about her sample.

Although this is an interesting and important paper, the authors could have given more attention to the fact that their model of consumer choice is based entirely on U.S. data.

The intention of these skeletal sentences is to provide the student writer with not only an idea, but also a template to utilize when making evaluative comments about a study. Boram was aware that these were possible resources to draw on, yet, she did not, or could not. In Boram’s case, the mismatch between sentence [10], “The author may had better show the detail clearly because the explanation of the detail could be understood more,” and the sample sentences above is one of many cases where she did not have the eyes to see the grammar in her own writing.

Discussion of Findings for Boram

Boram’s understanding of the field and awareness of the authentic and hypothetical writing context were eclipsed by the fact that she simply did not have the linguistic means to express this knowledge. Second language writing research and instruction have come a long way from viewing writing as simply a means to elicit grammatical linguistic output via a prolonged planning period that is absent in speaking activities. Boram’s case is significant in this study in that it reminds us that attentiveness to the rhetorical context should be an addition to linguistic knowledge, and can never be a replacement for it. Boram, like most international graduate students, is highly literate in her first language. Had the course required her to write in Korean, the interpretive journey may have been quite simple for her. It was her inability to see the grammar of her target language that kept her from traveling the interpretive distance in these courses.
4.3.3. Carrie (M.A., TESOL)

Overview

Carrie was a complete newcomer to her field, TESOL, and started off the first course with what I thought was a lack of experience in communicating in the language rather than an overall lack of proficiency. Her experience in XXX and YYY can be summarized in the following table:
Table 12. (Carrie: M.A. TESOL) Experience in XXX and YYY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment(topic)</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXX</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Summary</strong>&lt;br&gt;(summarization of a “state of the art” review article)</td>
<td>Had trouble with deciding whether nouns were discipline-specific terms or not. This hindered her ability to include enough details in the summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Extended definition</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Extended definition of “competence”)</td>
<td>Due to her lack of understanding of the topic, “competence”, needed to restructure the entire paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Problem-Solution</strong>&lt;br&gt;(A discussion of the issues arising from CPH)</td>
<td>Changed topic to “the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)”. Wrote a well-motivated paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Presented and compared two sets of data on the CPH)</td>
<td>Continued with the topic, “CPH”. Managed to “imitate” the rhetorical moves of a research paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YYY</td>
<td><strong>Annotated Bibliography</strong>&lt;br&gt;(five sources on prescriptive and descriptive grammar)</td>
<td>Needed to re-write altogether because it was difficult for her to clearly understand the sources and how they relate to her topic, “descriptive and prescriptive grammar”.&lt;br&gt;Some of the sources that she had chosen were not focused on descriptive and prescriptive grammar at all.&lt;br&gt;(For example, Ferris’ article on giving feedback on grammatical errors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Critical Review</strong>&lt;br&gt;(descriptive and descriptive grammar &gt;&gt; The “Ferris-Truscott” debate)</td>
<td>Chose two sources that were not relevant to her topic, “prescriptive and descriptive grammar”. For revision, selected a new topic, a critique of the “Ferris-Truscott” debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Long paper”: Mini-research paper (the usage of relative pronouns “who” and “whom”)</td>
<td>Did a data analysis on the use of the relative pronoun “who” and “whom”.&lt;br&gt;The target data set was the entire script of the 10 seasons of the TV sitcom, “Friends”. After defining “descriptive” and “prescriptive” grammar, showed how the use of “who” and “whom” could explain these concepts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carrie often had trouble at the planning stage of her drafts due to her lack of content knowledge. Regardless of grammatical and rhetorical issues, this negatively influenced her drafts. Carrie’s case is an interesting one because she did not have prior knowledge about her field. In order to help the students concentrate on language and rhetoric rather than content, I encouraged them to find topics in their field that they already knew well instead of new, contested, or expanded issues in the current journal articles. In Carrie’s case however, she did not know any topics without consulting academic journals. All of the topics she chose came from her recent readings. Thus, her case shows the inherent role “content” plays in writing an academic genre.

**Genre Learning in Course XXX**

**Summary Assignment**

For the summary assignment, Carrie chose a review article, or a chapter of a book that reviewed the “State of the Art” of a topic, as opposed to a data-based research article, as I recommended. In the tutorial, she simply stated that this was because this particular chapter was required reading for her in another course, and she wanted to utilize what she had already spent so much time reading for her writing assignment.

The first draft of her summary started with the following first sentence:

In “Bridging Multiple Worlds”, Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor and Whittaker, 2003), point out that building partnership among schools, families and communities is indispensable to students.

This was followed by (numbers added by me for presentational purposes):

[1] In the present day the forms and background-cultures of family are getting diverse, so for teaching students effectively, the understanding of family characteristics, functions, and life cycle is required. [2] Furthermore, communities are necessary to support the

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6 Obviously, she is not experienced in using APA style. In the subsequent draft, this was revised to:

In “Bridging Multiple Worlds”, Taylor and Whittaker (2003) point out that building partnership among schools, families and communities is indispensable to students.
school financially, materially, and to give family referrals. [3] The Comer School Development program is guided by consensus, collaboration, and no-fault, and is operated by the three mechanisms, which are parent team, school planning, and student and staff support team.

The latter part of this summary is quite difficult to follow. Carrie’s intention was to (1) show why it is important for schools to have a good understanding about families (sentence [1]), (2) elaborate on the important role that the community plays in schools and families (sentence [2]), and (3) point out a good example of this partnership that was introduced in the source – the Comer School Development (sentence [3]). However, she encountered several problems.

It could be said that Carrie’s summary needed more discourse markers to establish the relationship between each sentence, but more importantly, the problem is her use of numerous lists of nouns and adverbs, as though the terms are commonly understood by a reader: “family characteristics, functions, and life cycle”, supporting the school “financially, materially and to give family referrals”, “consensus, collaboration, and no-fault”, and finally, “parent team, school planning, and student and staff support team”.

In terms of formal grammar in each specific sentence, there is little to be faulted. Yet, most of the summary is difficult to understand. While there is some possibility of guessing what an understanding of family characteristics, functions, and life cycle may mean, the difference between supporting the school financially and materially is not clarified. Furthermore, she assumes that the agent of “giving family referrals” is understood. Furthermore, the term “family referral” is also treated as a given.

After reading this draft, I asked Carrie to bring her copy of the source text to our tutorial. As we reviewed the text, I could see that she had selected key words and used them to write her summary. For example, one sentence of the source text was as follows:

Three major components of the family system are its group and individual characteristics, its functions, and its life cycle. (p.53)
Following this sentence were three separate subsections elaborating on what “group and individual characteristics”, “functions”, and “life cycle” specifically meant. The following is the definition of “group and individual characteristics”:

Size and form, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and geographical location are examples of family characteristics. Individual characteristics of the family may include educational level, employment, language proficiency, abilities, talents, and disabilities. In addition, families may be faced by special challenges such as poverty, substance abuse, and HIV-AIDS. (p.54)

Family functions were introduced as follows:

Functions of the family include (1) sharing verbal and physical affection and unconditional love, (2) developing self-esteem in its members, (3) meeting the family’s economic needs, (4) meeting physical and health needs, (5) addressing the need for recreation and socialization, and (6) meeting member’s educational needs. (p.55)

Finally, “life cycle”, which was the term that I was personally curious to look at in terms of how it fit with the larger idea of linking families to their schools and communities, was defined as follows:

The life cycle refers to the changes in a family over time as it goes through certain predictable and stable changes with accompanying transition periods. Families generally experience birth, early childhood, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, with the related tasks and responsibilities. (p.55)

The three noun phrases that Carrie used in her summary, “family characteristics, functions, and life cycle”, were, in effect, anchor words to introduce the sections which followed. In order to entirely capture the gist of the text, Carrie needed to include a summarization or paraphrase of the three terms, instead of using them in a list without further context.

Her next sentence [2] was problematic, too. She writes, “communities are necessary to support the school financially, materially, and to give family referrals.” This sentence needed to be revised entirely because in our tutorial, I discovered that she had misread the source. I was most curious, however, about the expression “give family referrals”. This expression was not in the source text, as was the previous list of nouns in sentence [1]; rather, it was a title of a table in
the text. The table was depicting community resources to which a family was entitled and to
which the school could refer the family.

A similar phenomenon could be observed in sentence [3]. The actual phrases, “consensus,
collaboration, and no fault”, and “parent team, school planning, and student staff support team,”
actually existed in the source text. Yet, lifted from their original context, these lists lost their
meaning.

For her initial written feedback, I had marked the noun phrases and commented on each,
“This list doesn’t seem to make sense on its own. Please check the original source”. Thus, in the
tutorial, Carrie was eager to show me that she had not made an error in utilizing the original
source. As she explained in Korean:
선생님이 원본 확인해 보라고 하셨죠? 여기 보세요. 여기가 정리해 주는
단어들인데, 그렇게 쓴 거지든요? 근데 왜 이상해요?
(“You told me to take a look at the original source, right? Well, see here? These are the
words that organize the text, and I just used them. Why? Are they strange?”) (tutorial
recording, Carrie, translated from Korean)

The words that appeared in her summary were highlighted and circled in the original text. Instead
of treating the nouns as organizational devices that were precursors for further explanation, Carrie
had treated them as concrete concepts, or as core terminology in her field. Had it been the former
case, it would have been necessary to add more detail into the summary; had it been the latter
case, the “mentioning”, or “listing” of the words would have been sufficient.

Carrie’s case is contrastive to the relatively straightforward experience Angel had with
her initial draft. The concepts that were in Angel’s source text, P-2-P communication, Client-
Server model, security, privacy, and application, are quite different in nature from family
characteristics, functions, and life cycle. The former concepts from Computer Science are actual
definable concepts that are used as terminology in the field, whereas the latter words from
Carrie’s source text are simply “anchor words” that were used to provide organization to a text. It
seemed that because Angel was a computer science major in her B.A. program and had worked as a computer programmer for several years, she was able to identify these words as commonly known terminology in her field. She knew which phrases corresponded with these words, and she knew not to paraphrase them. However, Carrie was a newcomer to her field, and so she did not have this kind of eye for well established disciplinary knowledge. From our conversation in our tutorial, it seemed that she assumed that when she wrote that schools need to understand a “families’ life cycle,” or that the community can give “family referrals,” or when she wrote that a program is running on “consensus, collaboration, and no-fault,” she believed the reader was familiar with how these terms were being used in this context.

The content knowledge of whether a noun phrase is a disciplinary concept or not was essential in selecting the main idea of a subsection and deciding how much information is needed to support this point. While this was a non-issue for the science students, it was an area that caused difficulty for the education students, and especially in Carrie’s case, since she was new to the education field. This was another way in which Carrie’s work was hindered by being a novice in her discipline.

Extended definition paper

While it was recommended that students stay within one topic, this was not mandatory. Carrie changed her topic after the first essay assignment in XXX because she had a difficult time with the topic. The hierarchy of importance of the sources and the importance of using them in an appropriate way, or how to do so, was invisible to Carrie. Her newness to the topic seemed to have affected her ability to choose and utilize appropriate sources to prepare for the writing up of the topic.
The following paragraphs are the first part of Carrie’s extended definition essay, which aimed to define the term “competence”:

The general definition of competence is “the ability to do something well or effectively (Collins-Cobuild Dictionary)” Ottenheimer likewise notes that in a sense of linguistics, competence can be defined as “a speaker-hearer’s ability to speak and understand language in a grammatically-correct manner (Ottenhiemer, 2006, p.95).” The term had been originally coined by famous linguist Noam Chomsky when he referred it to as knowledge of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). He compared competence to performance, the actual language that is used by a person.

According to Damerau (1971), understanding Chomsky’s idea about competence must follow two things: (1) the subject of linguistics, and (2) the properties that are necessary in a model for it to be regarded as an adequate model for language. Ottenheimer (2006) noted that Chomsky viewed real situations as distractions.

As a TESOL major myself, I had expected a summarization of Chomsky’s original notion of “competence”, which would be fleshed out by contrasting the notion to “performance”. It was difficult to see why she did not consult Chomsky, or why she did consult the sources that she did. The Collins-Cobuild dictionary is obviously a dictionary. “Ottenheimer, 2006” turned out to be recommended reading for an introductory TESOL methods course she was taking that quarter from an introductory book on anthropological linguistics. “Lightbown & Spada, 2006” was the main textbook for the same course, which was an introductory book on the foundational notions of the TESOL field. “Damerau, 1971”, of which the title is “Markov Models and Linguistics Theory: An Experimental Study for a Model of English”, was found as a result of a random keyword search at the University library’s website.

All in all, this draft was not successful. In fact, the very nature of the sources that were selected to write this paper, the way these sources were used, and the strategies that she used or

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7 The intended rhetorical structure for this draft was as follows;

[1] formal definition of “competence”, and the geneology of the term
[2] Some further explanation of Chomsky’s notion of “competence”
[3] an example of “competence”
[4] another example of “competence”

8 This information was obtained during our tutorial.
did not use to define “competence,” all seemed to display her lack of knowledge of the term, rather than her understanding of it.

This seems to be highlighted by the nature of the term that she had chosen to define. The topic that each participant of the study chose to write about for this assignment is as follows:

Angel (M.A. Computer Science): P2P communication
Boram (PhD, MCDB): RT (Reverse Transcriptase)
Carrie (M.A. TESOL): competence
Dawn (M.A. Drama Education): Running Records

Angel’s topic was a computer system, Boram’s topic WAS a biological entity, and Dawn’s topic concerned a specific procedure. They were concrete entities with clear boundaries. Moreover, their very names seemed to show that they are specialized “terms” or jargon that are used in a specific way in each discipline. Carrie’s topic, “Competence,” is a more abstract concept. Despite its familiarity in our everyday language, it is a term that is used in a very specific way in Applied Linguistics. Thus, where the term comes from, and how it has been used in the literature, is very important to express when writing an extended definition about it.

Thus, it could be said that even before going into the syntactic errors in Carrie’s first draft, there needed to be a re-assessment of her understanding of the concept and how the sources that she chose related to it. In this assignment on a key term, it is highly unusual to consult a dictionary, which turns the focus to the term’s use outside the discipline. However, the motivation for using it does reveal an understanding of how academic genres work. Carrie had used it to form a “funnel introduction,” an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention by starting off with a “general” topic, and then spirals down to a more “specific” topic, until it is specific enough to state the main idea, or the thesis of the entire paper. In the tutorial session, she seemed a bit annoyed that I did not appreciate her use of this source:
This is a word that is used in everyday life, right? So I wanted to start with a meaning that everyone knows that then work my way to a more specialized meaning.

The assignment was based on Chapter 2 of Swales & Feak (1994), which was about “General-specific” texts.

As a TESOL major, if I were to have done the assignment, I would have used, or at least have consulted, Chomsky’s original works. If they were unobtainable or difficult to understand in any way, I would have relied on “Spada & Lightbown, 2006” to obtain a thorough understanding of the meaning, as this is a textbook on foundational concepts of the field. I am not sure if I would have used “Ottenheimer, 2006” or “Demerau, 1971”, but if I did, I would have known that the reason that these sources were chosen to be cited needed to be expressed. Moreover, in the discipline, the term “competence” can only be understood by juxtaposing it with “performance.” The motivation for this term was to assert that linguistic research should concentrate on what constitutes this “competence” as opposed to “performance” which could be influenced by random happenings such as a “slip-of-the-tongue”. The following paragraph is part of Carrie’s first draft of the assignment:

We can easily find a competent person in our language life. For example, a bottle of water is currently held in someone’s hand, he/she would say “I have a bottle of water.” After he/she drank that water, he/she would say “I had a bottle of water.” Another example which is employed by Ottenheimer (2006) is the use of tu and vous in French. In French, “tu” is a singular form of you, and “vous” is a plural form of that. When someone is linguistically competent, he/she can use “tu” to refer to one person and “vous” to group of persons.

In this paragraph, she refers to using “tu” and “vous” correctly as a sign of linguistic competence, but this is a bit misleading. The knowledge of the correct usage of “tu” and “vous” would be considered competence, whereas the actual utterance of the two words would be in the realm of
performance. I say misleading instead of incorrect because indeed, if a speaker can use these two words correctly in context, she/he can be said to have competence in that specific language item. If the topic of the essay is “competence,” a student more learned in the field would have known that a contrast between “competence” and “performance” is essential and expected. All-in-all, this paper needed to be re-written and re-organized.

**Problem-Solution Paper**

The topic for Carrie’s problem-solution paper was “the critical period hypothesis.” This change of topic seemed to help her in writing the paper considerably. The “problem” was the debate over whether a critical period in language learning exists or not, and the two possible “solutions” discussed were (1) re-establishing the critical period from a younger age to around puberty or to (2) abolish the idea of the critical period altogether. Her paper had the following outline. The following description is based on my own document analysis, her explanation of the draft in her tutorial, and her pre-planning worksheet that she handed in before the first draft:

[1] **Problem:**
Starts off the paper with the following sentence; “One of the liveliest debates in language acquisition research is when the critical period to learn language is,” then, extends this “problem” to second language acquisition research. “This theory has extended to the second language acquisition; however, it is not much widely accepted. Researchers have debated about the existence of a critical period in second language learning.” This part of the essay ends by mentioning the two possible “solutions” to the problem; “Some researchers suggested that the early is the better in second language acquisition, especially before puberty, while the others proposed that the older learners have advantages, and yet others demonstrated that there is no critical period to acquire second language.”

[2] **Solution:**
This section starts with a review of studies that examined the critical period in second language acquisition. She starts the section by saying that most studies that do point towards a critical period in second language acquisition are in pronunciation and accent. She cites one study on overall proficiency that concludes that there is no critical period, and then another on “grammar” proficiency that concludes that one exists. She then goes on to cite one particular study that showed that in the earlier stages of second language learning, older learners actually do better than younger learners, and thus concluded that a critical period does not exist.
The first draft of the assignment was not without problems, but my impression was that it was well motivated. Carrie had read and incorporated other sources to explore the issue and provided a thoughtful discussion of the matter, succeeding in putting forth her own position on the issue, rather than ending up with a paper that resembled an impersonal encyclopedia entry. The following is a paragraph where she discusses some studies in second language acquisition on the existence of the critical period:

Most studies about critical period in second language acquisition are focused on pronunciation. Mark Patkowski (1980) studied especially accent of second language acquisition. He hypothesized that someone who started to learn second language before fifteen with ignoring accent could achieve native-like mastery. After doing some researchers, he finally found that to native-likely master the age of acquisition is significant factor in setting limits and this limitation does not use only accent. According to Singleton (1995), “younger = better in the long run” in second language learning, however he pointed out that five percent of adult who had learned second language after their puberty could acquire completely in second language. He also reported that in vocabulary learning there is no critical period. In grammatical area, Jacqueline Johnson and Elissa Newport (1989) studied the relationship between grammatical acquisition and age of arrival in the United States. They pointed out that the earliest who achieved got the highest scores on the judgment task. In addition that Robert DeKeyser (2000) reported that they way adults learn second language is different from the way children learn.

There are some noticeable problems in the paragraph. However, the selection and organization of the four sources are understandable and well-motivated. It is only mid-paragraph when the reader can see that the first sentence is not the topic sentence of the entire paragraph. There are some language errors, and the overall flow of the paragraph is difficult to follow. Still, the four studies that are cited in this paragraph are (1) studies on second language acquisition, and (2) explore whether there exists a critical period or not. Each study seemed to have investigated a different aspect of language acquisition, although it is not entirely clear; according to what she wrote, that “Patkowski, 1980” focused on pronunciation, and “Johnson & Newport, 1989” on grammar. The other two, “Singleton, 1995”and “Dekeyser, 2000” were not clear to me when I first read the draft. According to our conversation in the tutorial, “Singleton, 1995” was a study on pronunciation as well; since, it was mentioned right after “Patknowski, 1980”, Carrie did not feel the need to
reiterate the information, and “Singleton, 1995” was about language learning strategies⁹. The experience with this assignment fed into the following assignment, the data interpretation assignment.

**Data interpretation assignment**

For the data interpretation assignment, Carrie stayed with her changed topic, the critical period hypothesis (CPH), and took two studies on the CPH, compared the results that were presented in the studies, and discussed what these two studies reveal about CPH. The following is a description of the contents of her paper. The information was drawn from three sources: (1) the document analysis of the actual first draft, (2) the explanation of the draft that Carrie gave to me in the tutorial, and (3) the pre-planning worksheet that she was required to turn in before the first draft. Each bracketed number represents a paragraph in the first draft:

[1] Introduction

An introduction of the critical period hypothesis in second language acquisition

[2] Two important questions that remain in the studies, “(1) …even though someone who is adult or adolescent is especially talented, if he/she learned L2 in adulthood, could he/she speak L2 as native-like?; and (2) it is uncertain when foreign accents emerge first.”

[3] Summary and introduction of “Flege et al., 1996”. Introduces the context of “table 1”, which appeared in this study. The study is about adult Italian learners of English, and “table 1” shows the relationship between how often they use their first language (Italian) and how accurate their American accent is. The accuracy of the accent is presented by a number, but Carrie has not sufficiently explained where these numbers come from.

[4] Summary and introduction of “Flege, et. al., 2006”. Introduces the context of “table 2”, which appeared in this study. The study is about young (6 to 8 years of age) Korean, and

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⁹ In this case, the student should not have paraphrased “language learning strategies” into “learning languages in different ways”. She had had a similar issue in the summary assignment. This also seemed to be related with the fact that Student D was not familiar with the important concepts in the field.
“table 2” shows the relationship between the age of arrival to the United States and how strong their Korean accent is in their speech. Again, this is presented by a number, or index, but Carrie has not sufficiently explained where these numbers come from.

[5]
Discussion of the similarities and the differences of the results represented in the two tables. Because I am personally skeptical about “indexing” foreign language accents, and because Carrie has not presented the contexts clearly enough, it is difficult to follow her reasoning, but ultimately the conclusion in this paragraph is that no matter how young or how old a person starts learning a foreign language, it is difficult to eradicate the accent of their first language altogether.

[6]
In the conclusion, Carrie revisits the question that she posed in the first paragraph, and concludes that “there is no preferred age [for non-native speakers to begin to learn English in order to avoid foreign accents]”.

The question that was explored in this paper was whether it was possible to acquire a foreign language without retaining the accent of one’s first language. In order to investigate this, Carrie presents results from two studies. The first is about older learners of English, and the second is about younger learners of English. Both results show that regardless of age, the accent from the learners’ first language lingered on. This, Carrie concluded, showed that the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) did not stand, even in the one area of language learning that it has been known to have some relevance – pronunciation and accent. The attempt was not without flaws, and it took a tutorial to fully appreciate the intention of what Carrie was trying to express and thus to be able to help her make her message clearer. Nevertheless, I thought the first draft was an impressive and thoughtful attempt. The conclusion that she is drawing from these two studies is Carrie’s personal understanding of the data rather than a “canned” theory that any student in the field would already knows about.

By this assignment, which was due by the end of the eighth week of the quarter, it seems that Carrie has gained a “sense” of what writing in her discipline looks like and how it works. The following is the opening of her essay. The errors in APA citation conventions are from the
The critical period hypothesis (CPH) is one of the most important issues in a second language acquisition. The origin of this theory is proposed by Lenneberg (1967), who suggests the primary language acquisition always occurs in their puberty. Lenneberg (1967, p.167) also points out that foreign accents in a second language acquisition “cannot be overcome easily after puberty”. This concept has developed by several researchers, such as Suter, 1976; Asher & Garcia, 1969; Oyama, 1979; Purcell & Suter, 1980; Tahta, Wood, & Lowenthal, 1981; and Thompson, 1991 (cited in Flege et al., 1997, p.169). However, there are also a number of studies which do not support CPH. Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978) challenge the CPH based on their findings which is the 3-5 year-olds groups are worse than the older groups and the 12-15 year olds groups are the most rapid acquisition. Otherwise in several articles, such as Bialystock, 2001; Birdsong, 2005; Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000, 2001; MacWhinney, 2005; Moyer, 2004 (cited in Nikholov & Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2006, p.236), the CPH is not supported.

Although numerous researchers study about CPH, two important questions are still unsolved; 1) even though someone who is adult or adolescent is especially talented, if he/she learned L2 in adulthood, could he/she speak L2 as native-like?; and 2) it is uncertain when foreign accents emerge first. These questions align the aim of this study. The most important objective of this study is to find the relationship between the amount of L1 use and the degree of foreign accents. The second objective is to find the proper age to learn L2.

Given that the purpose of the paper is essentially, to “discuss data,” it is inevitable that the introduction will resemble that of a Research Paper (RP). The rhetorical structure of an introduction of an RP is introduced in Swales & Feak (1994) is as follows:

Move 1 Establishing a research territory
   a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way (optional)
   b. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (obligatory)

Move 2 Establishing a niche
   a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, or by extending previous knowledge in some way (obligatory)
Move 3 Occupying the niche
   a. by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research (obligatory)
   b. by listing research questions or hypotheses (PISF*)
   c. by announcing principal findings (PISF)
   d. by stating the value of the present research (PISF)
   e. by indicating the structure of the RP (PISF)
* PISF = probable in some fields, but rare in others

(p.244)

This part of the textbook was allocated for the following course, YYY, and was not dealt
with in class at the time. Yet, in order to present her data, Carrie had established a rhetorical
structure that fit with Move 1(a) through Move 3(a). The corresponding sections are as follows:

[1] → Move 1 (a)
[2] → Move 1 (b)
[4] → Move 3 (a)

Move 1 (b) is problematic in that the content of this move is not a result of a real review of
literature; it can be said that this move is an imitation of Move 1(b). It can be said that she is
“applying” the generic RP structure onto her own writing in an acceptable way.

Genre Learning in Course YYY

After the XXX course had ended, I was under the impression that there was a linear
progression in Carrie’s abilities to write her assignments in XXX. While she struggled with the
first assignment, the extended definition essay, her attempt at the second assignment, the
problem-solution essay, seemed to show promise, and by the third assignment, the data
interpretation essay, it seemed that she knew how to conform to the most easily recognizable
conventions of academic genre, the RP, in order to make her point. There were issues in language
use, and getting her point across, but overall, I felt that she had made progress, and I anticipated
her continued progress in the following course. Thus, I was quite surprised to see her first draft of
the first assignment of YYY, the annotated bibliography.

The Annotated Bibliography

The topic that Carrie chose for her long paper was the relationship between prescriptive and descriptive grammar. The annotated bibliography would document five sources regarding this topic, and in the critical review, she selected two sources to compare, contrast, and critique. Ultimately, she intended to write a mini-research paper regarding prescriptive and descriptive grammar for the final long paper. This was a topic that was being discussed in one of her content classes, and she wanted to make use of the reading that she did for that class to write for the YYY class. The following is the first entry for her annotated bibliography. The sources that she used for this assignment were all reading material for the other content class she was taking. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes.

[1] In this article, Truss (2004) insists that spelling in written English needs to be correct. [2] She also points out that the highest aim of language is not to transmit the exact meaning and if people starts to write as they speak, the social status will be more clarified. [3] Ironically, the more technology developed, the more we need to write. [4] For making communication clear under this situation, the standard of written English is necessary. [5] The author supports her conclusion with numerous and adequate examples. [6] According to Truss, there are a number of reasons that the spelling in written English has to be correct. [7] Some examples that she uses are about spoken English or vocabularies for daily life. [8] Spoken English can be changed by the people, the correction of the spelling can be ignored, and sometimes people use grammar incorrectly in communication. [9] However, in written English some incorrect spelling can change the meaning of the sentences. [10] Moreover, the example which usage of standard English may cause the social status is well supported by her opinion.

The issues that she initially had in the XXX course seem to have returned. First, there is the issue of understanding the topic thoroughly. The concept that lies at the heart of the distinction between
prescriptive grammar and descriptive grammar is “correctness”. The premise of prescriptive grammar would be that this “correctness” is determined by the inherent logic of the language and thus can be transcribed and relayed to the public by linguists and grammarians. The premise of descriptive grammar would be that this “correctness” is determined by usage, and that the role of the linguist or grammarian is to describe how the language is used among its users. In this case, the “correctness” of a language would be buoyant.

Then, in sentence [1], when Carrie states that the author of the original text maintains that spelling should be “correct”, she is not clearly communicating what the stance of the author is. Sentences [2] through [4] are difficult to follow. It was only in the tutorial when I talked to her and saw the original source text that I learned that the point that the author was trying to make is that there needs to be a widely recognized way to spell words when writing in English, or else it would be difficult to understand each other. There is no mention of prescriptive or descriptive grammar in this bibliography entry simply because it was not the intended topic. The main point was that people should strive to spell correctly in written communication. In order to revise this, Carrie needed to be able to clearly articulate her understanding of the two concepts, “prescriptive” and “descriptive” grammar, and how these concepts are related to the article that she was writing about. Further, the example of the word “blingbling” that she gives in the second entry seems to reveal that she does not fully understand the concepts.

In the following entry, Carrie writes about the source:

…However, as a language teacher, we cannot ignore the prescriptive rules completely. For example, “blingbling” is not a word in these days dictionary, however, we use this word in reality and there is no other word instead of this word.

Again, whether a word is listed in a dictionary has little to do with prescriptive or descriptive grammar. If there was a connection that she was thinking of, she failed to express it, resulting in yet another entry that seemed to point to her lack of understanding of the content.
Critical Review

This lack of disciplinary knowledge continued on into the following assignment, the critical review, the topic of which was to compare two articles, “Pullum, 2004”, and “Ferris, 1999”. The following are the first three paragraphs of her first draft of this assignment. The intentions of the paragraphs are to [1] introduce the two concepts, “prescriptive and descriptive” grammar, [2] introduce the first source, “Pullum, 2004” and [3] introduce the second source, “Ferris, 1999”. This is exactly as the assignment sheet recommends the students to write this paper. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[1]
In English language academic area, the usage between the prescriptive grammar and the descriptive grammar is a critical issue. The prescriptive grammar is based on the traditional grammar, is not attended to actual usage, and governs rules about the structures of a language. The prescriptive grammar is concerned about spelling, grammar or syntax, therefore this rules more politically and socially (from Wikipedia). In the contrast, the descriptive grammar focused on actual usage of language, even if the usage is nonstandard. It is more experientially and scientifically (from Wikipedia). In these opposing two options, many arguments are still occurred.

[2]
Pullum, one of the representative linguists, points out in his article, “Ideology, power, and linguistic theory (2004)” that the descriptive grammar is the right rule which can be used in language area. According to him, the prescriptive rules can be justified by nostalgia, classicism, authoritarianism, aestheticism, coherentism, logicism, commonsenism, functionalism, and ascerticism. However, all of them are refuted by some evidences. For example, in the explanation about the coherentism, he confutes the famous prescriptive grammar supporter, Sherwooks’ opponent by using evidences from the Cambridge Grammar.

[3]
On the other hand, in Ferris’ article, “The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996)(1999)”, she insists that the prescriptive grammar is necessary.

Before addressing the grammatical accuracy of each sentence, there needed to be a re-assessment of the nature of the two sources. “Ferris, 1999” is a frequently cited article in second language writing research, and I knew that it does not “insist that prescriptive grammar is necessary”. The
article was written to oppose “Truscott’s (1996)” assertion that writing teachers should not correct grammatical errors. Other than the fact that “grammar” is involved in the discussion, it was difficult to see how this source would be relevant in the discussion of prescriptive and descriptive grammar.

Form-wise, this is a well-motivated draft. Yet, content-wise, it is simply unacceptable in her disciplinary context. This left me with a dilemma; I felt that I knew little about the disciplinary content of all the other students, and wondered whether or not it would be fair for Carrie to re-write her draft all over again just because she happened to have a writing teacher who was familiar with her discipline. On the other hand, although the content of her paper was unacceptable, the rhetorical structure and flow were well-motivated, and this was the criterion I used for the students whose content I could not know. Luckily, Carrie was willing to learn, and did revise it altogether. For the next draft, she critiqued “Truscott (1996)” and “Ferris (1999)” and expressed her position on whether she agreed or disagreed that grammar correction should be part of writing instruction. Incidentally, she received the exact same assignment the following quarter, in a content class.

Discussion of Findings for Carrie

Carrie’s case reveals an inevitable “blind-spot” in ESP/EAP instruction. If the student can disguise false content with well-motivated rhetorical strategies, then there is no way for the writing teacher to identify this unless she/he has some knowledge of the student’s academic field.

However, it was not the case that Carrie consistently had problems throughout the two courses. The latter two papers that she wrote in XXX, which were about the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), were well-motivated and seemed to reflect her understanding of the purpose and function of the assignments. My own speculation is that the topic, CPH, was easier to write about because it has concrete discussion points such as “when the critical period is,” “whether the
critical period exists,” and “in what areas of language development can we see the critical period”. Depending on the conclusions of these points, the ultimate action that is to be taken in language teaching will differ. In contrast, in order to define “competence”, there needs to be an understanding of the genealogy of the term in the field. “Prescriptive” and “descriptive” grammar seem to be on opposing ends of a spectrum, but they are simply approaches to grammar rather than a teaching method or a decision making process that leads to different actions.

Carrie’s case reminds us once more of the importance of content in genre writing. A thorough understanding of the topic influenced every aspect of the planning process- the selection of sources, how these sources would be used, and what rhetorical strategies to use in order to make herself clear. In an undergraduate class, this is controlled by extensive pre-writing exercises in and out of the classroom. When the students are introduced to a topic, they read the source texts and participate in reading comprehension activities. Through this process, they immerse themselves into the way the topic is talked about and discussed. This process is inevitable in the success in writing up the genre (see (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993).

In XXX and YYY, it is expected that the student does have some knowledge about the topic. Carrie’s case shows what happens when this is not the case.

Carrie was eager to know more about her discipline and motivated to write well in it. Had I not been a TESOL major, it is possible that she would have come across as a well-motivated writer with a good control of language. Her experience shows the inherent role that content plays in the entire writing process of a genre, and reminds us that all EAP/ESP courses play the role of an entry into ways of doing in any given discipline.
4.3.4. Dawn (M.A. Drama Education)

Overview

Dawn was taking a leave from her job as an EFL teacher in Taiwan to pursue her
Master’s degree in Drama Education. Her experience in XXX and YYY can be summarized in
the following table:
Table 13. (Dawn: M.A. Drama Education) Experience in XXX and YYY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XXX</th>
<th>Assignment (topic)</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Summary</td>
<td>(a summary of a research paper on the effectiveness of “running records”)</td>
<td>Had to make grammatical considerations that derived from the unique “way of doing” or research methodology of her field</td>
<td>Had an on-going difficulty with citing sources. Found it difficult to make multiple considerations at the same time when citing sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended definition</td>
<td>(definition of “running records”)</td>
<td>Initially had trouble with finding a clearly definable term in her field that did not require an in-depth discussion of various positions depicted in the literature. Settled on a term that was clearly definable, but not necessarily a “key” term in her field, as the assignment required</td>
<td>Although she could not clearly articulate it, she was able to see the assignments through the eyes of her own discipline, and could recognize that there existed an interpretive distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solution</td>
<td>(the shortcomings of running records and some alternate assessment methods)</td>
<td>Was discontent in the less “literal” problem-solution relationship she chose to write about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Commentary</td>
<td>(two studies on “running records”)</td>
<td>Had trouble finding two “data sets” that she could discuss. She was not familiar enough with either quantitative or qualitative methodology in order to thoroughly “comment” on them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YYY</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (sources on the effectiveness of drama education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Review</td>
<td>(a comparison of two articles that were discussing the benefits of drama education)</td>
<td>Seemed much more comfortable with the topics she was writing about.</td>
<td>Was able to “flex” her genre knowledge to fit the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Long paper”:</td>
<td>Extended Literature review (a literature review of sources that cite the benefits of drama education)</td>
<td>Seemed to make conscious decisions about citing sources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dawn asked many questions before starting on a draft. Although she could not clearly articulate it, she was able to see the assignments through the eyes of her own discipline, and could recognize that there existed an interpretive distance. The generic examples that were given in the classroom seemed more compatible with content from the hard sciences than from hers. For her own writing, Dawn could not take the information from the assignment sheet as literally as the science students could. For example, she needed her content to be more theoretical, which led to heavy use of citations. Her grasp of her discipline enabled her to re-specify the assignments in way that would make sense for the type of material that was common in her field.

**Genre Learning in Course XXX**

**The Summary Assignment**

Before committing to one source for her summary assignment, Dawn scanned many articles, trying to find one that looked similar to the experimental research article presented in Weisburg and Buker (1990). In class, I had told students to find articles that they thoroughly understood, and to save time, effort and to sustain interest, find an article that they were reading in another course as part of their disciplinary curriculum. Most students did this. To my surprise, Dawn was not able to hand in this seemingly simple one-page paper for over a week after its due date. Instead, she met with me individually after class and agonized over her difficulty in finding something suitable to summarize. She was determined to find a source text that fit the experimental model in the textbook. It took three meetings with me over the course of a week for her to finally settle on a source text that she had found in an academic journal. During her search for an appropriate text, she had been skimming through articles only for their rhetorical structure rather than for whether the topic was interesting and meaningful for her. Nor did she display an ability to recognize what was actually taking place in the texts. For instance, at one point she exclaimed to me: “Hyunju, take a look at this article. There is no data here!”
In fact, the data was there. The article was a qualitative study, which featured a description of how children learned through using drama in a literacy classroom. I found myself explaining the basic assumptions of qualitative research and how it contrasts with quantitative research, a topic that I did not expect myself to be discussing while teaching summary writing. This experience taught Dawn important aspects of her discipline: that there exist both quantitative and qualitative studies, and that in her field more recently, the latter was more commonly seen.

The article that she finally settled on was a quasi-experimental study that intended to assess the effectiveness of certain methods of reading instruction. The author had established three groups of students and employed a different teaching technique with each group. Then, all three groups were tested for reading proficiency. Dawn’s summary of this study starts with the following sentence that states the main idea. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[1] The study, “The Efficacy of Orthographic Rime, Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence, and Implicit Phonic Approaches to Teaching Decoding Skill”, discusses the efficacy among the two explicit programs, orthographic rime and grapheme-phoneme correspondence program, and the implicit phonics program.

Then, she goes on to say the following:

[2] Through the experiment, children in the two explicit groups performed better than the implicit group in reading and spelling words. [3] In all interim and posttest measures, children in grapheme-phoneme correspondence group outperformed among the three groups, whereas the implicit phonics group performed the poorest in every part.

My observation notes show how perplexed I was about the initial reaction I had to this draft. In terms of form, it is not much different from the first draft of Boram’s summary. Boram had three elements in her summary: background information about the study, the key findings of the study, and further elaboration of the key findings of the study. Likewise, Dawn’s summary featured three important components of the original study. Sentence [1], although it essentially restated the title, captured the purpose, or objective, of the study. Sentence [2] states the study’s key finding,
and sentence [3] is further elaboration of the key finding, expressing that while explicit teaching methods were more effective overall, one method in particular was found to be especially effective. Despite these surface similarities with Boram’s summary, I found that this draft required more revision than did Boram’s.

Sentence [1] obviously needed to be revised so that it could avoid redundancy. Sentence [2], despite its brevity, revealed an important difference between the social sciences and hard sciences. The use of the definite article “the” in front of the noun “experiment” signals that the nature of the study is indeed an experiment, and that this is not news to the reader. Dawn refers in her summary to the first two programs as “the explicit” groups, and the third one as “the implicit” group. The “implicitness” of the third approach is expressed in the title of the article, but not the “explicitness” of the first two. This assumes that the first two approaches are defined by their “explicitness” and thus, that the entire readership of the article will know that the two groups are juxtaposed concepts. Seen from the perspective of a language choice that may or may not be a conscious one, Dawn appeared to assume that there was a considerable amount of shared knowledge regarding the three approaches to teaching reading and works according to that assumption in her summary.

Dawn needed to first acknowledge that her article generated new information by reporting on an experiment. In addition, she needed to consider whether or not the reading programs -- orthopedic rime, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and phonics -- are commonly understood by readers in the field. If they are foundational concepts, she could mention them casually without adding more context to them. If they are concepts or constructs that are still

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10 The definite article’s strength in alluding to assumed information can be illustrated in the difference between these two sentences, “Someone left a black dress in the Laundromat” and “Why don’t you wear the black dress?” In the first sentence the indefinite article refers to the existence of a cat on the fence; in other words, new information; in the second sentence, the definite article refers to a black dress that is known.
being formed through discussion in the field, then they need to be dealt with as such. The presence or absence of these subtle nuances distinguishes a blunt newcomer from a "knowledgeable" student of the field. Hence, subtle issues of language needed to be considered in Dawn’s case. The summary assignment thus offered a meaningful look at her genre-based knowledge.

Thus, in our tutorial, we were again discussing topics that did not occur in the case of the science students. In Boram’s case, for example, the distinction between “the” and “a” was not important, at least in her draft. In biology, it is natural to assume that a summary of a research paper would discuss a quantitative experiment, whereas in the field of education, the summary writer needs to show, however subtly, that she is cognizant of the research method that is discussed in the original source. Thus, the conversation in the tutorial was mostly about how to express these subtle considerations using grammar.

Dawn’s final draft was as follows. Again, the numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[4] The study, “The Efficacy of Orthographic Rime, Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence, and Implicit Phonic Approaches to Teaching Decoding Skill”, discusses three programs, orthographic rime, grapheme-phoneme correspondence program, and phonics program.[5] In addition, based on their approaches orthographic rime and grapheme-phoneme correspondence program are grouped as explicit group and phonics program is the implicit group.

[6] An experiment examined the teaching efficiency among the three programs. [7] Its result revealed that children in explicit groups, orthographic rime and grapheme-phoneme group, performed better than in implicit group in reading and spelling words.[8] Also, in all interim and posttest measures, children in the grapheme-phoneme correspondence group outperformed the best, whereas the implicit phonics group performed the poorest in every part. [9] This showed Symbol-Sound correspondences instruction benefited children on decoding unfamiliar words and reading recognition.

The second draft reveals subtle but effective changes from the first draft. First, she has explained that the three programs were assigned to the “explicit” group and the “implicit” group by the author(s), rather than assuming that explicitness and implicitness are commonly known characteristics of the programs. Then, by simply using an indefinite article “an” at the beginning
of the second paragraph, she avoids appearing to be unaware of the various research methods in her field. Seen after-the-fact, the summary portion is not very different from the model summary reviewed in class. Yet, due to the nature of the disciplinary discourse of education and her lack of background in methodology, Dawn needed to make some adjustments and learn how to express these considerations linguistically.

Genre Learning in Course XXX

The Extended Definition Essay

Dawn’s next assignment involved choosing a term in her field that warranted detailed explanation. She seemed hesitant to commit to a particular term. After the class session in which the assignment had been discussed, she once again stayed after class to ask some more questions about it and stated, in exasperation: “The important terms in my field are too difficult for me to write about!”

I understood her difficulty. The first writing assignment I had as a graduate student in a U.S. university had been to write an extended definition of “language, literacy, and culture”. The terms or concepts “language,” “literacy,” and “culture” are undoubtedly important and familiar in the field of education. Yet, I was also cognizant of the fact that crafting a balanced definition of the terms would be difficult, for defining a concept entails delineating it from similar, related concepts, and the three terms, “language”, “literacy”, and “culture” seemed to constantly bleed into each other. This assignment required a fundamental understanding of the literature in the field. In a sense, while the assignment was to “define” the three concepts, in essence it needed to be a “critique” or “discussion” of the existing views of them. Petrified by fear of plagiarism, inexperienced in utilizing sources to express an argument, and embarrassed by the fact that a doctoral student was having such trouble with a seemingly straightforward assignment, the assignment took me days and nights to complete. The nature of such an assignment is quite
different from defining more concrete terms such as those that are suggested in the assignment handout: *six sigma, central dogma, chord*, and so on. Had the assignment focused on the writing product itself—writing an academic essay—and not the content, it may have been easier to read, research, and write about these terms even though they have nothing to do with my discipline.

Dawn tried to find a term in her field that matched the concrete nature of those offered in the assignment suggestions. She finally settled on “running records”, a certain testing technique. Still, she was having second thoughts. Before beginning to write her draft, she met with me and confessed that she thought her chosen term was not a central concept in her field; she had chosen it because it would be easy to write about, not necessarily because she was interested in it, or because it was an important topic in the field\(^\text{11}\).

While she could not articulate it, she was clearly seeing the distance between the instructions on the assignment sheet and the writing process that she actually had to go through. The nature of the “important concepts” in her field was different from those in engineering, music, or business, and thus, writing an extended definition entailed an in-depth discussion of the competing views, which seemed to be an overwhelming task at her stage of study. Thus, she had actively searched for a concept that would be more clearly definable. This way, her writing process could resemble what was recommended in the assignment sheet, and she could neatly organize her paragraphs according to the “definition strategies” introduced in it. The content of her paper, as seen by my own document analysis, her preparatory worksheet that she submitted before submitting the first draft, and our conversation in the tutorial, was as follows:

1. formal definition of “running records”: while it is easy to administer, there are some cautions to be taken
2. first step: to select reading material
3. second step: to mark the child’s reading behaviour

\(^{11}\) Paraphrased from observation notes.
third step: to analyze the test

[5] conclusion: administered properly, “running records” can yield valuable information about a child’s reading ability

In contrast with the students in the science group, another issue that surfaced in the first essay assignment was the use of citation.

The following paragraphs are from her first draft.

Running Records are an assessment that is taken as a child reads orally from any text. There are three purposes of running records: assisting teaching, examining the text difficulty, and analyzing readers’ progress. (Clay, 2005) In addition, the main purpose is to ascertain students’ strategies in decoding unfamiliar words (Clay, 2005; Gunning, 2006). Only a piece of paper and text and needed in this process, so running records is not difficult, there are some guidelines before, during, and after records.

Before recording, start an easy or familiar text and shift to the text leveled as instructional text that is a child who reads 90 to 94 percent correct. An easy level offers the administer to review recording skills and helps the reader to apply their previous experience and skills. Clay clarified the reason for using simple test as start because

The prime purpose of a Running Record is to understand more about how children are using what they know to get to the messages of the text, or in other words, what reading processes they are using. (Clay, 2005)

In addition, the record for instruction level revealed how readers monitor themselves in reading and process the information.

The two major sources that she used for this draft are “Clay, 2005” and “Gunning 2006”. While there are some surface level language issues in this portion of the draft, the biggest issue seems to be the use of sources. While the first two citations in the first paragraph can be understood as paraphrases of the original sources, and thus may be overlooked, the second paragraph seems to give away the fact that Dawn is not yet using sources in a purposeful manner. In the tutorial, she told me that the entire paragraph is utilizing one source – Clay, 2005. In this case, the portion that comes before the block quote is not properly documented, as is the portion after it. Moreover, the usage of the block quotation is awkward. The remainder of the draft has no citations.

Before any sentence level revision could start, Dawn needed to assess whether she had used citations in an appropriate and effective way, beginning with assessing whether or not she
needed to use documentation at all. The following information was selected from a power point presentation that I used in the classroom. Each heading represents contents of a single slide:

**What to document**
- Facts, statistics, graphs, drawings, ideas, interviews, or others’ opinions, whether written or spoken (such as at a conference) that are not your own.

**What you don’t have to document**
- Ideas, interpretations, and opinions that are your own
- Widely known ideas and information (common knowledge) in your field
- Famous quotations from literature such as Shakespeare’s “To be or not to be, that is the question.”

**Common Knowledge?**
1. Is this information original or unique to another person (or only appears in one book or article)?
2. Is there doubt or another point of view about the information?
3. Would a reader want more information about the source of this information?
4. Are there several sources/authors that support/agree on an idea, theory, or trend so that you need to list several sources after the statement?

If any of the answers to the questions above is YES, then you have to document it.

**General Guidelines on Quoting**
1. Paraphrase others’ words whenever possible unless there is a specific reason to use a direct quote. In most fields, paraphrasing (summarizing or changing the original words to your own words) is preferred over direct quotations.
2. Summarize a larger section of work instead of quoting the entire part. Ideally, two or three sentences will summarize several paragraphs. Pick out only the most important points.
3. Give a generalization, citing several authors who have come to the same conclusion. For example,

   Decisions made within the UN Security Council are typically filled with conflict because of strong political motivation. (Powell, 1988; Kim 2007; Polenski, 1992)

   (power point presentation prepared by me, contents adapted from Holt, 2004)
The science students in the class did not seem to have much issue with whether to document or not, because they were aware that the terms were indeed central terms in their field. Dawn had chosen a testing method, and as a first year Master’s student, it was difficult to know whether this was common knowledge or not. In the tutorial, Dawn expressed that this was quite confusing to her, and that this was the reason that she had stopped documenting the sources after the second paragraph. However, another operative guideline in the practice of citing sources is that when the writer consults a specific source and is paraphrasing the information, then the source needs to be cited. Thus, it would have been necessary to document the sources. Still, it is difficult to see value in the abrupt use of block quotation, which is in essence, a lengthy direct quotation.

A general rule on using citations was introducing in class, followed by a group activity aimed to help the student see how these general rules were adapted in their own fields. The rule introduced was:

A direct quotation is appropriate to use in the following four cases:

1. When the exact wording of the original writer is important such as when an author makes a controversial statement
2. When the original writer’s EXACT position needs to be emphasized or when accuracy is essential.
3. For literary references (from literature such as novels and poems).
4. To report exact statements from an interview

A direct quotation should NOT be used solely because it is difficult to paraphrase other’s work.

(Holt, 2004, p.138)

Unfortunately, an exact rule for whether you should quote or paraphrase does not exist. These general guidelines will help.

1. Paraphrase others’ words whenever possible unless there is a specific reason to use a direct quote. In most fields, paraphrasing (summarizing or changing the original words to your own words) is preferred above direct quotations.

2. Summarize a larger section of work instead of quoting the entire part. Ideally, two or three sentences will summarize several paragraphs. Pick out only the most important points.
3. Give a generalization, citing several authors who have come to the same conclusion. For example, Decisions made within the UN Security Council are typically filled with conflict because of strong political motivation (Powell, 19XX; Kim, 20XX, Polenski, 20XX). (Holt, 2004, p.136)

These general guidelines are recognizable to an experienced academic writer. However, to a novice writer who had never consciously made a decision whether to use a direct quote or a paraphrase, they are still quite confusing. The resulting draft is a random imitation of what Dawn guesses to be appropriate. The roadblock she has in traveling the interpretive distance here is not the concept of genre itself (as opposed to a formulated model, as seen in the case of Angel) or proficiency in the target language (as seen in the case of Boram), but rather, the discipline-specific conventions, or decision making processes that she was still quite new to. In a sense, this problem should have resolved itself, through conscious and continuous participation in disciplinary practices, particularly in reading academic journals.

In the tutorial, we went over her source text, “Clay, 2005”, and identified the direct quotes and paraphrases, and discussed the rationale for choosing one form over the other. Up to this point in her study, she had been busy retrieving information from her reading; the way citations were expressed had not been “noticed”. She finally looked up from her paper and exclaimed, “OK, now it’s going to take even longer to read!”

**The problem-solution essay**

Dawn had similar difficulties in the problem-solution essay. Like the previous assignment, she sensed a difference between the literal interpretation of the assignment, and the further interpretation that was needed for her to write the assignment using content in her own field. In addition, the use of citations was still confusing for her.
The rationale of the problem-solution essay, as presented in the assignment sheet provided by the course coordinator, is as follows:

In every field of study, there are problems which arise and to which there is more than one possible solution. Write a paper in which you (1) present a problem that is current and/or well-known in your field and (2) discuss one or more possible solutions to the problem. Refer to the pattern presented in Swales & Feak (situation-problem-solution-evaluation) in deciding on the format for your paper.

As discussed in previous sections, the two science students had chosen the following topics for this assignment:

**Angel (Computer Science)**
Problem: At times, data travelling from network to network is lost in transit
Solution(s): Three different types of data transmission techniques: “stop-and-wait”, “Go-back-N”, and “Selective repeat”

**Boram (MCDB)**
Problem: The spread of superbacteria
Solution(s): Limiting the use of antibiotics, developing drugs against superbacteria

Because of the reading load that she already had in her content courses, Dawn wanted to stay with her topic for the extended definition essay, “running records”. I had encouraged the students to find a topic or issue that was familiar and interesting to them, and extract topics for “extended definition”, “problem-solution”, and “data-interpretation” around it, so that they could concentrate on writing rather than reading material to write for it. The problem-solution that Dawn had decided to write about was as follows:

Problem: The shortcomings of running records

Solution: A discussion of two alternative testing methods that can complement running records

In contrast with the topics of the students in the science group, the “solution” does not literally resolve the “problem.” A more literal way to interpret the assignment might have been to say that running records are a solution to not knowing how well the students read. When Dawn stayed
after class to check if the content above was acceptable, I made this suggestion. Obviously, Dawn had spent much more time on the task than I had, and she shook her head saying, “I can’t make it that simple in five pages.” Again, as she had done with the summary and the extended definition essay, she was seeing potential difficulties that were visible to her because she was viewing the assignment in light of her discipline’s content, which rendered the material presented in class problematic.

Citation conventions continued to be an issue in this assignment. The following paragraph is an excerpt from the first draft of the problem-solution essay. The numbers in brackets were added by me for presentational purposes:

[1] However, since running records emphasize the decoding skill, Gunning(2006) argued that “It is quite common for students just getting the hang of letter-sound relationships to devote an overabundance of effort to them, even to the extent that meaning is lost as attention is exhausted by the process of decoding words (Gunning, 2006, p.109).” [2] In addition, there is no clue in running records about a child’s comprehension strategies, background knowledge, and other language approximate levels. (Gunning, 2006) [3] Therefore, even though the teacher keeps the records as the references of students’ improving process, there are still many things missing in running records. [4] The missing is obvious shortcomings of running records, especially for an advanced reader who’s comprehension level is higher than the word decoding level. [5] As a result, Gunning(2006) suggested, “…because of its[running records] focus on decoding, it work best with students who are operating on the earlier levels of reading.” [6] This suggestion reflects that relying only on running records is not sufficient for assess students’ running ability.

The purpose of the paragraph is to discuss the shortcomings of running records. The cited information comes from one source: “Gunning (2006)”. Despite her previous experience with citation in the extended definition assignment, the paragraph still seems to have a random mixture of direct quotes and paraphrases, but it is difficult to see why she has chosen one type of citation
over another. Moreover, she seems to be making a rather simple mistake regarding APA style citation in the first sentence. In the tutorial, Dawn exclaimed how difficult it was to make so many decisions at once: “It would be so easy if I could say what I want to say without APA style,” she says. The following is an excerpt from the tutorial:

H: OK. Let’s start with the first sentence. Is there a reason why you used a direct quote here?

C: (silence, then exaggerated moaning…pretending to fall off of her chair)

H: What? What?

C: I couldn’t paraphrase it!

H: Why not? It’s not that hard.

C: (more moaning, and exaggerated groans)

H: (laughter) what?

C: There’s so much to think about!

H: Well, yeah, but this one should be easy for you. He’s saying that the reader can concentrate too much on the letter-sound relationship…so that they forget to try to understand what they’re reading. Right? You know that!

C: But then where is this part?

(points to the part where it says “as attention is exhausted”)

H: Hmm….Well it’s OK. You have to think about the big picture. You’re allowed to take out the most important idea.

C: Well, that’s confusing! I thought we have to keep the meaning!

The conversation, and the difficulty that Dawn was having with her draft, made me realize that the term “paraphrase” can be misleading. When discussing paraphrases in classroom instruction, the focus is often on (1) preserving the meaning of the original text so as not to distort the original intention of the author, and (2) to change the wording and the syntax enough to not be plagiarizing. I had used a handout for the in-class activity regarding paraphrase, which involved taking direct quotes out of a text and paraphrasing them. When you paraphrase in order to write a
text, however, you are not taking phrases or clauses out of the text and changing the wording; the most important thing you take out of the text is the thought. Thus, the first decision the writer needs to make is not what physical portion of the text she/he is going to quote, but what thought she/he wants to extract from it. This is not what was said in the course material, or any material that was given in class regarding paraphrasing. Thus, it was up to the student to gain a “sense” of how this worked by analyzing the texts in her own discipline.

All in all, in order to paraphrase a source correctly, the student writer needs to (1) decide whether there is a need to document the source, (2) decide whether to paraphrase or quote, (3) extract the central thought from the original text, (4) change the thought into his/her own words so that it does not resemble the original phrase too much in terms of lexicon and syntax, and while doing so, (5) weave the paraphrase into the entire flow of the argument. The burden of this complex decision-making seemed heavier to Dawn because she was aware of the perils of plagiarism. Issues of plagiarism were discussed at the beginning of XXX, and because Dawn was submitting several response papers to her content area instructors on a weekly basis, she was extremely worried that “she might get in trouble” (her words).

Data Interpretation Essay

For the final assignment of XXX, the data interpretation essay, Dawn had an extremely difficult time with finding a “data set”. Again, as was the case for the summary assignment, she found that it was extremely difficult for her to find quantitative data in her field. She was very frustrated when she explained her predicament: “All the tables have t-tests or something like that. I don’t know what a t-test is. So, I don’t know if the numbers are good or not. The table means nothing to me. I can only say again what was in the conclusion.”

She finally settled on two different studies that attempted to measure the reliability of “running records”. On submitting her first draft via CARMEN (an online course support system),
she wrote, “I spent so much time on this paper, and I have such a terrible draft….” Having seen her fret about this assignment after class for several class meetings, I felt guilty that she had had such a difficult time with it. For this assignment, I allowed her to focus on a synthesis of the conclusions that were given in each paper and had her discuss their findings.

Genre Learning in Course YYY

Course YYY consisted of three major assignments: the annotated bibliography, the critical review, and the “long paper”. The long paper was to be any academic genre that the student felt would be useful to their study, and the two most popular genres among students were the research proposal and a critical literature review. Dawn chose to do the latter.

While Angel, the M.A. student in computer science, found the YYY assignments to be quite distant from what she was doing in her content courses, the situation was completely opposite for Dawn in her field of drama education. Throughout her first quarter, while she was taking the XXX course, she had been writing weekly response papers for several of her content courses, so she was familiar with the notion of critiquing source texts. Most notably, her initial confusion regarding citation conventions seemed to be resolved.

The following is an excerpt from her first draft of her YYY critical review paper:

Edmonston (2000) also discovered that through the whole mission, the visual impairment students found themselves in the classroom and learned to recognize directions that are the most difficult part in learning. Besides, they used to be shy and lack of self-confidence but now they become self-confident astronaut or prepare for the map of Mars. As a result, he claimed that students could find their positions in the society because this mission brought them to know their competence. Unlike traditional drama, Moran (2006) suggested readers theater, a variation of drama, for emergent learners since it is beneficial for reading fluency and can be applied in to diverse skill level. In this paper, she stated several suggestions in teaching young children or emergent readers through theatre.

…..
In the mission, all the students needed to incorporate their background knowledge using materials like clay and Legos to make the rocket, machines, or even the Mars; also, they had to use standard language to communicate with the president who supported the mission. In this way, every student had their responsibility, and no one thought of the blind members because “no one can see anything in a dark space or planet”(p.339).

Compared with the random use of direct quotes and paraphrases in her previous assignments in the previous quarter, the draft does seem to show that Dawn is using citations in a principled manner that can be accepted by readers from her own discipline. There is only one direct quote in the second paragraph. I asked Dawn about this in her tutorial:

H: … do you know why you used quotation marks here?
C: Yes. Because this is what the children said. Do you think it’s wrong?
H: No, no, I think it’s a good choice.
(from the tutorial regarding the first draft of the critical review assignment)

Here, she is using the direct quote as a means to convey how the students (who were young children) perceived the make-believe environment in their own voices, a conscious rhetorical choice.

The following paragraph is from Dawn’s (M.A. Drama Education) first draft of the long paper:

Drama has a diverse usage in education and the most popular one is being applied in literacy teaching. In this area, with the different of target students, the application varies. Edminster (2007) demonstrated how to use drama for teaching special needs students. Also, Moran (2006) explained the variation of Drama, readers theatre, which is an effective way for teaching young readers. Besides literacy, drama can be used in teaching history and science. Burke and Peterson (2007) practiced multidisciplinary approach to literacy, and their result reflected drama offered students chance to experience the historical background. Whitney (2006) stated the example of how drama was used in teaching writing and of which fostered students to think themselves as a writer. In science field, Francis (2007) showed students had better test scores after applying drama.
By this time in the quarter, Dawn was not fretting over “preserving the meaning” of a paraphrase. In this paragraph, she has extracted the main idea from several sources to introduce studies/reports on the application of drama in literacy education.

Discussion of Findings for Dawn

In some sense Dawn was the ideal student for the course and the textbook. Her English language skills and field knowledge enabled her to understand what she read and in turn notice when the models were not going to work for her tasks. The only knowledge she needed, in addition to a crash course in research methodology, was genre instruction. She had a good sense for her material and the purpose of the assignments, and these enabled her to focus on rhetorical moves and writing techniques for achieving it, just as the course materials were designed to do. She made rapid progress in adjusting models to fit her needs. She also knew which parts of it to disregard. In some respects the course was designed to most benefit students with her abilities. Unfortunately, not all of them come to the course with her strengths in content knowledge and English language ability.
CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I look across the four cases to identify the key findings and themes that emerged from the study. The chapter begins with a brief look at the study’s research questions and the answers the study produced. These answers are then enriched by a summary of the study’s findings relative to its research questions. The findings are then discussed in the larger context of the literature on genre-based instruction. While doing so, I explore the implications arising from the study. I conclude by discussing the significance of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

As stated at the beginning of Chapter Four, the essence of the curricula was the repeated journey back and forth from the generic version of the genre that was presented in the classroom to the actual application of these genre forms to the students’ own discipline-specific writing. The purpose of this study was to examine that journey for each of the four participants in order to explore how they responded to genre-based instruction as they moved through and across two genre-oriented academic writing courses. The first research question that guided this study was as follows:
How do international graduate students learn to “see” and apply genres in an EAP writing class intended for students of all disciplines?

The short answer to this question is that the students learn by going through the experience of taking a generic version of a genre that was introduced in the classroom and applying it to individual writing tasks that involve writing in their academic disciplines (i.e., traveling the interpretive distance). Here, the role of instruction is three-fold; first, classroom instruction initiates the student to a model of a genre by providing explicit descriptions and instructions; second, classroom activities and discussions sensitize the student to the notion that these models need to be flexed in various ways in each writing task; third, individual attention to student drafts diagnose aspects of genre knowledge that the student may not be receptive to. That is, if the student does not have the “eye” to see certain aspects of genre, instruction can diagnose this equip the student with such vision.

The second question was as follows:

What does it mean for a student to “learn genre” in these first-year academic writing courses?

In short, it means that the student is equipped with the aptitude to grow and improve in areas that are needed to write genre successfully within their own disciplinary context. In this study, I identified three crucial variables that impact on genre learning: genre knowledge, language proficiency, and disciplinary knowledge. The extent to which these variables impacted on the participants’ responses to genre-based instruction varied from one participant to another, thus suggesting the variation underlying students’ experiences with genre-based instruction. Thus, the study showed that there is not one overriding, generic explanation of “what it means to ‘learn genre’” in a genre-based writing course. This suggests that instructors who are attempting to build a course around one approach that will address each student’s needs equally well, without accounting for the individual characteristics students bring to such a course, will not be effective.
The study showed that there are nuances and complexities inherent in genre learning that writing instructors must be sensitive to in course planning and delivery.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The motivation for the study was the perplexing difficulty an ESP/EAP practitioner often faces in trying to meet the specific needs of her students when a) they study in a range of academic disciplines, and b) the instructor is not familiar with the genre-based conventions of those disciplines. While it is true that in any teaching context, students come with individual differences and have different needs, in the context of a graduate-level EAP writing course, this difficulty is exacerbated by the students’ different disciplines and stages of academic exposure (masters or Ph.D. level). In the two consecutive writing courses that students in this study were required to take by university regulations, it made sense that they bring in their own topics and materials in order to write the seven assignments of the courses. Given, however, that international students are learners of their disciplines as well as English language and American academic culture, and given that the teacher is an outsider to the students’ disciplines, what constituted learning, and teaching, became interesting and complex.

This study focused on the inevitable interpretive journey that each individual student needed to travel in order to make progress toward discipline-specific writing competence. Because the courses were geared toward students from various disciplinary backgrounds, classroom instruction was confined to “generic” versions of the genre, and focused on supplying the students with various examples, so that s/he could learn to see the “model” or “example” provided in class as just that, a model or example of the genre to be interpreted and applied to his/her disciplinary writing. Such seeing, however, relied on recognizing the kind of considerations that needed to be made, which was strongly linked to students’ reading comprehension, which in turn was linked to their general English proficiency and disciplinary
knowledge.

The relationship between these factors can be visualized as follows:

![Figure 1. The Tools Needed to Travel the Interpretive Distance](image)

Figure 1 utilized the primary colors of light. Each color symbolizes an aptitude that is needed to write genre competently. The way they are linked together show how each aptitude is inter-related with each other. The middle, where the light is clear, symbolizes the vision competent genre writer, who is not only competent in all three areas, but has the ability to draw on all three areas simultaneously when writing, a clear vision.

Even after an average of three to four weeks of instruction (classroom instruction, multiple drafts, written feedback, and one-on-one tutorials), it was still difficult to say that a student was able to produce a summary, critical review, or academic essay that would be
compatible with the writing of experts in his/her field. However, repeated experience of interpreting the genre in the context of their own work helped the students realize what they needed to see in addition to what they already could. They learned that in order to write genres successfully in their fields, they needed to look for certain aspects of genres that they were not quite seeing in the beginning. Furthermore, they needed to understand that these aspects could show up in various forms and places in the writing of experts in their field. If they wanted to be instructed by the writing in their discipline, they had to learn to look for and find these features. In many cases, to do this requires an understanding of the work they do rather than the actual form they take. The work that certain rhetorical, syntactical or organizational features perform requires a certain level of competence in reading, language, and disciplinary knowledge. The acquisition of all of these skills must proceed simultaneously in courses like XXX and YYY, for they cannot be teased apart. As daunting as this curriculum is, students do leave the courses with a better grasp of them. Their progress seems to depend on what resources they possessed when they came into the course (e.g., their English language level, their familiarity with their discipline, and so forth); in other words, where they each stood in relation to the curriculum they were required to learn – an interpretive journey.

The four cases described in this study suggest that this interpretive journey is influenced by a multitude of individual factors that exist before instruction even begins. The four cases illustrated in this study show how what these factors may be. These can be summarized in the following table:
Table 14. Key Characteristics of Interpretive Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Key Aspect of Interpretive Journey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel (M.A. Computer Science)</td>
<td>Understanding of the Task (Influenced by the <em>similarity</em> between the model genre and the actual application of it, i.e., the nature of her discipline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boram (PhD, MCDB)</td>
<td>English proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie (M.A. TESOL)</td>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn (M.A. Drama Education)</td>
<td>Understanding of the Task (Influenced by the <em>difference</em> between the model genre and the actual application of it, i.e., the nature of her discipline)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 illustrates the complex and highly individual nature of the “interpretive distance” each participant had to travel while responding to genre-based instruction. The ease with which a student communicates in English with peers in his/her classes, peers in the disciplinary field, lab partners and supervisors, instructors, and advisors is an important factor because they enable access to disciplinary social practices. Knowledge of the field, generally by virtue of at least a Master’s degree, also influences access to genre. Students who had limited exposure to their new disciplinary area were at a disadvantage. The more participants understood about the content of what they were reading, the more easily they could make connections between content and genre, particularly in terms of rhetorical and syntactical choices. In one case, however, a participant’s high level of content knowledge was counterbalanced, perhaps, by a struggle with English in terms of reading comprehension and access to genre. It appears that in the courses a number of factors stood out as important: English language competence, content knowledge, and genre knowledge.
Genre theory is beneficial in writing instruction because it provides an occasion for the teacher and the learner to account for the various contextual, linguistic considerations that need to be made simultaneously in order to write for the target discourse community. The key to classroom instruction is to help the learners see that the genres that are presented in class need to be adjusted and re-applied to their own writing context. In this study, I named this the “interpretive journey”.

Four aspects of the interpretive journey are demonstrated in this study, as shown in Table 14 earlier: expectations of the task (Angel, M.A. Computer Science), knowledge of grammar (Boram, PhD, MCDB), knowledge of content (Carrie, M.A., TESOL), and the ability to adjust genre knowledge (Dawn, M.A. Drama Education) are only four of the multiple layers of genre knowledge that need to be applied to the task simultaneously. The cases show that even when other aspects of genre knowledge are strong, a lack of understanding of even one area will lead to a not-so-acceptable draft of a paper.

To demonstrate this visually, we will re-visit figure 1.
Angel’s language proficiency or content knowledge were not up to par with an expert of her field, but she knew enough to rely on them as strategies to use when writing her assignments. However, she did not understand the nature of genre well enough to know that the models that were used in the classroom needed to be flexed to meet the purpose of the assignment and the content she wished to convey. In other words, she could not “see” this aspect of genre; thus, her vision initially had a pink tint. Likewise, Boram had difficulty utilizing her L2 in communicating her good understanding of genre and content. Thus, her vision had a yellow tint. Carrie had difficulty employing her content knowledge in her writing and see how this affected the way she used language and the genre model; her vision initially had a light blue tint. Finally, Dawn
seemed to straddle on the edges of the white tint; she was clearly aware of the distance between the classroom model and her actual writing assignment, but she did not yet know how to deal with this distance. None of the participants were complacent or neglectful; they simply could not see what they needed, i.e., they did not know what to look for. Thus, the most important aspect of instruction was to eliminate that “tint”, and help the students gain an awareness of what it is to travel the interpretive distance with a clearer vision.

5.3. Significance of the Findings to the Field of Genre Based Writing Instruction

The findings of this study contribute to the field of ESP/EAP writing instruction by giving further insights on the “learner” in ESP, and what “learning” constitutes in an ESP/EAP writing course for first year graduate students.

5.3.1. The “Learner” in ESP

As Cheng (2006) pointed out, ESP literature to date consists of two major strands: identifying the genres that are useful to learners and developing pedagogical materials that reflect these findings. He called for research on learners in ESP settings as “complex and instantiated agents” (p.86) with a sensitivity to “ESP conceptualization of language and genre” (p.83), which would be “applicable to the ESP genre pedagogical realities, and capable of explaining how targeted learners intersect with the results of genre analysis”(p. 83). The present study was motivated by this call for action and contributes to the existing literature by (1) offering a new way to conceptualize classroom studies and hence open up the possibility for more productive ways to research the classroom learners, and by (2) providing a new insight into the complex variables that the learners bring into the classroom.

Cheng (2006) articulated the need “to observe the full intricacies of learning in the ESP genre-based classroom” (p. 80), particularly with respect to what he called the “advanced
learner,” whom previous research had not investigated meaningfully. Cheng (2006) went on to assert: “I argue that, equally important, if not more so, the L(earner) word also needs to be put into a more focal position in the ESP genre-based approach, which is an important strand of EAP. Doing so would require revisions of the current research agenda” (p. 86). This, he said, entails moving beyond ESP’s traditional research emphasis on analyzing the rhetorical and linguistic “moves” of published research articles (and then teaching those moves in genre-based writing courses). Instead, there also needs to be a focus on how learners respond to what occurs during genre-based instruction. This study took up Cheng’s call for such research, and in so doing has helped shift the focus of genre research to the learners and to the dynamics of the genre-based classroom. By situating itself within the framework of Cheng’s advocacy of such research, the study is helping to reshape the boundaries of genre research.

In addition to drawing heavily on the kind of research Cheng has promoted, the study has contributed to genre research in other ways. First, as Johns (2002a) and Tardy (2006) noted, the scariness of classroom-based studies may be due to the fact that it is difficult to design them. In such a limited time frame (which is bound by the academic calendar) and in a context in which a myriad of factors operate (a classroom), it is difficult to establish a cause-effect relationship between classroom instruction and the way students’ writing changes from point A to point B (Belcher, 2004). This study approached this problem from an entirely different angle. By utilizing Erickson’s (1986) view of learners as active agents who react to their perception of what is required of them, this study carefully analyzed what the students did in reaction to instruction; that is, what students do when they are put into a context in which they are required to learn genre. To gain a realistic sense of what the participants’ perceptions of the assignments were, this study utilized direct analysis of student drafts and their actions in class, out of class, and in their one-on-one tutorials. The learners’ response to instruction was analyzed as a logical and legitimate response to what the learners perceived to be the task required of them, and they demonstrated
commitment to their assignments. Thus, the first drafts of the students, and the conversations we had about their first drafts in the tutorials turned out to be the most important sources of data. It was never the purpose of this study to document the effectiveness of genre-based writing instruction. By avoiding this altogether, this study was able to gain a new insight on how learning happens in a genre-based writing classroom.

The findings do show, however, that the students were able to gain a new perspective, or vision, on how to approach an academic writing task. I refrain from noting this as an “effect” of genre-based writing instruction, as the scope of my analysis does not cover the extent of how this vision influenced the quality, or acceptability, of their subsequent drafts after the courses had ended. In Dawn’s case, the experience immediately boosted her writing ability and she was soon able to write competently in her content courses. In the later tutorial recordings in YYY, it could be heard that she is much more relaxed and confident about her writing. In Boram and Carrie’s cases, their enhanced visions included a new sensitivity to L2 grammar and content knowledge, respectively. However, this new awareness did not lead to an immediate proficiency boost in L2 grammar and content knowledge, as these are not areas that can be improved in a short amount of time. Rather, it could be said that they gained a receptiveness that would enable them to continue to grow in all three areas in a more balanced manner.

Second, this study shows that “learning genre” is filtered by a myriad of factors that were already there, before instruction even begins. More often than not, teachers are bewildered by students’ doing something entirely different from what they were instructed to do, leading to complaints that their students “do not follow directions”. This study suggests that because what we are asking the students to do is so complex, and because this complexity interacts with many personal attributes the learners’ bring into the classroom, this breakdown in communication is to be expected and an inherent aspect of classroom instruction. The cases of the four participants collectively display four of many individual attributes that the learners bring into an ESP/EAP

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12 This information was conveyed to me in after-class conversations and in tutorials.
classroom. To use a genre successfully in a discourse community, the writer needs to make complex, multi-layered decisions regarding the various contextual, rhetorical considerations that influence the writing. This is what is called in the literature, genre awareness. The mis-steps of the four participants in this study shed light on the kinds of obstacles they needed to overcome and, in doing so, brought about a more vivid awareness of what constitutes genre awareness, an awareness of how genres work that most experienced writers possess subconsciously, and thus may have difficulty articulating.

5.3.2. “Learning” in first year ESP/EAP Writing Classes

This study reveals that ESP/EAP writing classes cannot be seen as remedial “how-to” classes, after which the students will have complete knowledge about “how-to-write” academic genres such as summaries, critical review, and research papers. Rather, the key purpose of these classes is to help students gain the ability to flex their genre knowledge within the context of their own disciplinary discourse. This supports the ESP/EAP literature that recommends that classes be as discipline-specific as possible (Hyland, 2002), but at the same time, provide the students with the ability to navigate academic discourse on their own after the courses have ended (Hyland, 2006, 2007; Johns et al., 2006; Lea & Street, 2000). The issue of specificity and the role of ESP/EAP courses are at the heart of the on-going discussions in ESP/EAP research (see Chapter Three). This study contributes to the existing discussion by providing a specific description of what it looks like to teach “specifically,” and, at the same time, equip the students with academic literacy (of which genre knowledge is a big part of).

ESP/EAP writing classes are to be seen as a crucial part of an interpretive journey - an endeavor that involves learning how to perceive and adopt the social practices of the discipline. This is not to say that such practices are static and easily defined; rather, they can best be understood as tendencies or preferences. Over time and immersion in the published work of the
field, which will happen in the subsequent years of their academic training, however, students gain exposure to a wide array of contexts and situated writing, which make disciplinary tendencies or preferences in writing more visible.

Due to the complexity of contextual and personal factors in each student, an interpretive journey is essentially a solitary quest. Students begin their first year as a graduate participant with varying degrees of background and motivation. For example, some Masters students may have spent years in an undergraduate program acquiring a knowledge base that is a prerequisite to understanding the literature in their field (as was the case with Angel and Boram). There are also students like Carrie, who was relatively new to her chosen academic field. In contrast with the Masters students, it seems that doctoral students have an advantage in first year ESP/EAP courses, in that their content knowledge enables them to understand how elements of genre serve communicability of material in a research article. This study shows how this understanding supports the students’ own attempts to write within a genre.

As this study has shown, there are quite a few obstacles in the interpretive journey. Some fields are more demanding of learners, and some learners come with more familiarity of their field than others. Some learners have a better grasp of how writing (rhetorical choices, command of syntax) serves ideas and arguments. In the case of second language learners, this knowledge must all be applied in an L2. Moreover, some disciplines’ writing preferences are more difficult to understand or acquire than others. As observed in this study, qualitative studies were more challenging to work with than quantitative studies because they are more contextualized and rely on an argument rather than sets of numerical data. Courses like XXX and YYY are designed to assist students’ access to the writing practices of their disciplines by offering instruction in genre; however, this study finds that in the course of instruction, some students trip on, and thus expose, some of the elements and obstacles of an interpretive journey toward competent, professional participation in a discipline.
5.4. Pedagogical Implications

While the findings of this study reveal an important aspect of learners and learning in and ESP/EAP classroom, they also yield pedagogical implications that are useful for the ESP/EAP professional. Hyland (2002) advocated that ESP professionals go “as far we can” in order to meet the discipline-specific needs of ESP learners, asserting that not only is this approach pedagogically effective, but also that the ability to do so constitutes the professionalism of ESP/EAP specialists. Yet, a key question lingers: how does an outsider who knows little or nothing about a student’s discipline, i.e., the ESP/EAP specialist, attends to the diverse needs of the students? To answer this, many ESP/EAP programs have adopted team-teaching methods or a mentoring system, where the participant is in contact with a content specialist as well as the ESP/EAP instructor (Belcher, 2006).

The findings of this study show that this shortcoming did not necessarily inhibit students from discovering disciplinary practices. *My role as the instructor seemed to be more about being “student-specific” rather than “discipline-specific”*. In other words, my role as an instructor was to identify and diagnose the roadblocks of a student’s interpretive journey, rather than to teach them about their own disciplinary practices. The curriculum of such courses becomes that of warning students *that* they will have to make their own discoveries rather than telling them *what* to look for.

Thus, it seems, the professionalism of an ESP/EAP instructor lies in the ability to recognize the difficulties that the individual student is having in applying their newly acquired genre knowledge to their own disciplinary writing practices. An expert genre writer makes multi-layered decisions regarding various aspects of the genre simultaneously and subconsciously. The role of an ESP/EAP instructor is to recognize which layer(s) it is(are) that the learner is having difficulty with, and helping the learner gain the eye to *see* what s/he was not able to see initially.
It is hoped that this awareness of what to look for will enable the student to write competently in his/her own field as components that are not necessarily in place in the first year of study—content knowledge and participation in research—fall into place as they advance.

This study shows that learning genre appears to be a much greater endeavor than some teachers, students, and institutions believe it to be. This has implications in terms of (1) who teaches these courses, (2) how, (3) to what students, (4) at what stage of their study, and (5) for how long.

First, this study suggests that the most important role of the ESP/EAP teacher is to diagnose and remedy some of the roadblocks in a student’s interpretive journey. However, due to the wide variety and the sophistication of the content that the students bring into the classroom, it may be beneficial to enlist the help of people from each discipline. If co-teaching or team-teaching is not plausible at the moment, there could be ways to be more efficient in gaining assistance. For example, for these courses, I asked the students to select readings from their own disciplines to compile a collection of reading samples for the students to analyze. It was difficult for me to ensure that the readings did represent “typical” ways of writing in their fields and that the content was basic enough for first year students to write about. It would have been beneficial to have had more experienced writers in the students’ own disciplinary area to compile these readings. Repeatedly used over time, these readings could have enabled me to claim some familiarity with what the students were reading in their group work activities.

Second, given that genre instruction starts first as a template or model, and then moves toward being adjusted to accommodate different contexts, ESP/EAP courses need to be taught this way. For example, I would argue that the concept of a paragraph with a single idea, normally expressed at the beginning with a topic sentence, is not at all novel to graduate level students. While certain students, for example, refugee students with little or no prior literacy education, may benefit from familiarizing themselves with this model paragraph, it would have been a
frustrating waste of time for these students. A more fruitful use of class time would be to see why this is considered a model paragraph, see how this model functions in authentic genres, and then see why and how this model is adjusted in various circumstances.

Third, this study reveals that the learning experience can greatly differ depending on a student’s discipline or level of study. For example, the summary assignment was essentially a “paraphrase-and-weave” assignment for the two science students, whereas for the two humanities students, the assignment presented more complex opportunities to learn more about the nature of their discipline. PhD students generally had more knowledge about the discipline-specific decision making that was required in writing drafts. Thus, it could be beneficial to separate students according to their discipline – hard sciences, humanities, education, performance arts, business management, and math/ sciences- or their level of study – M.A. and PhD.

Fourth, this study supports the idea that it may be beneficial to wait until the students have gained some content knowledge and a certain level of participation in their field before mandatorily enrolling them in these courses (i.e., Hansen, 2000). It is inevitable that first year students are at the beginning level of their disciplinary study. In addition, the difficulty in communicating in English many international students experience when they arrive in the new country resolves itself to some extent after time. This, it may be beneficial to offer these courses later on in the students’ academic career, when they will be more prepared in terms of being aware of what they need and what to look for.

Finally, the findings of this study reveal that learning genre requires increased knowledge in at least three areas: the disciplinary content, the English language, and the nature of genre. None of these areas can be “mastered” in a relatively short period of time. Thus, any proposition or advertisement claiming that the student will be able to write a certain genre, such as the research paper, after a course has ended is unrealistic and misleading. It is important that not only ESP/EAP programs but also disciplinary departments acknowledge this. While an ESP/EAP
course may be able to identify and treat problem areas for a student, the “treatment” will take time and prolonged participation in a discipline. Thus, it may be beneficial for disciplinary departments to set up a support system or mentoring system between advanced and novice students to support the writing development of their students.

5.5. Limitations

The findings of this study, while not generalizable, are transferrable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to learning environments that are using principles of genre theory to teach writing. In this section, I would like to highlight some aspects of the context that should be taken into consideration when doing so.

A notable aspect of this context was that the two courses, XXX and YYY, were required by university regulations to be completed within the first four quarters of academic study. The participants in this study were first year international students who had just begun their studies at the university. While they understood why there were placed in these courses, i.e., as a result of their test scores (TOEFL) and the results of their placement tests, their initial understanding of what they needed to learn in these courses was limited by newness to the learning environment altogether. The findings may have been different if the students were able to choose to take these courses when they felt that they needed them, as they would have come into the classes with a more specific idea of what to achieve from the instruction.

Another notable aspect of the context is that the length of one course is relatively short—ten-week academic quarter. The skills that are touched upon in these courses require life-long quests toward competence. This made it difficult to assess student work meaningfully in terms of “progress.” Thus, it was difficult to make complete comparisons between draft A and draft B and claim authoritatively that there has or has not been progress as a direct result of instruction. The “effects” of instruction may or may not have been physically present in the students’ drafts.
These two limitations—the fact that the participants were in their first year of study at the university and that, by the nature of the quarter system, the amount of instructional time per course was restricted—were unavoidable in conducting this study. However, these limitations reflect realities commonly encountered in EAP writing courses and are notable for that reason. That is, it is uncommon for university writing programs to delay students’ participation in mandatory writing courses until later in their graduate study, when such courses might be more beneficial. In addition, whether in the shorter quarter system or the longer semester system, the length of EAP writing courses will be problematic in terms of students fully learning the complexities of genre. These limitations in this study actually help shed light on how such limitations impact on EAP writing instruction.

5.6. Recommendations for Future Research

With respect to possible future research, research on classroom applications of genre theory is an under-researched area in the ESP/EAP literature (Cheng, 2006; Johns, 2002a; Tardy, 2006). Given that the key objective of ESP is to tailor instruction to the needs of the students, the relative lack of knowledge on how learners respond to instruction in the context of the classroom is problematic. What I identified in this study was what I called “interpretive distance,” the distance between the generic version of a genre and its actual application in the context of a specific discipline. I found that a myriad of factors can influence the traveling of this distance. In other words, even with the existing knowledge of academic genres and instructional materials (Cheng, 2006), we cannot ensure that what we teach is what students learn. Thus, the classroom is an exciting area that can yield insightful findings in the area of ESP/EAP writing instruction.

To this end, the interpretive framework, which treats every student reaction to instruction as a logical and legitimate response, could be very helpful. In this study, what seemed to be difficulties, or “failure” to complete the assignments, were informative in that they revealed
aspects of genre writing that experienced writers may not be able to consciously identify, but are important for the novice writer to move towards mastery of the genre.

In this study, three of such obstacles were identified as language proficiency, content knowledge, and the understanding of the nature of genre. Yet, little is known about how these factors interact with each other. Boram’s case was an extreme one in which one element, language proficiency, was significantly lower than the other two. In most situations, however, a deficiency in one area could influence the access to the other two or more areas. Further research on how isolated factors such as language proficiency, content knowledge, or genre knowledge influence the overall development of genre proficiency is needed.

In addition, an important question to answer is the impact that classroom instruction has on the development of genre. This study showed that an important role of first year ESP/EAP courses is to equip the students with knowledge of how genres work and how they need to be adjusted in actual disciplinary discourse. It will be beneficial to investigate what genre learning looks like in latter stages of their academic study, to see which areas they still struggle with, and what areas resolved on their own.
References


