



## Five Principles for Teaching Genre with Purpose

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## NOTE ABOUT HANDOUT

- This handout contains the prose-focused slides from the presentation, but not the photographs or artifacts from projects. To refresh your memory about the projects, I discussed:
  - Jill Hoort's Northeast Region games project
  - Kate Roberts' Zoo Guide project
  - Sheila Bell's Organizing Your Desks project
  - Niki McGuire's Body Systems Book Project
  - Kathleen Jayaraman & LeAnn Thelen's Books of Hope project



## Defining Genre

A distinctive profile of regularities across four dimensions: a set of texts [we would say text forms and features], the composing processes involved in creating these texts, the reading practices used to interpret them, and the social roles performed by writers and readers.  
(Paré and Smart, 1994, p. 147)


A recurring and recognizable communication with particular communicative purposes and particular features to accomplish those purposes.  
(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, in press, p. 6)



## The Genre-Specific Nature of Reading Comprehension

- A reader can be better at comprehending one type of text than another
- Readers use somewhat different processes and in different proportions depending upon text genre
- Readers have different orientations depending upon text genre
- Different factors predict success in comprehending different genres

Duke, N. K., & Roberts, K. M. (2010). The genre-specific nature of reading comprehension. In D. Wyse, R. Andrews, & J. Hoffman (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of English, Language and Literacy Teaching* (pp. 74-86). London: Routledge.




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## In some sense, we have long suspected that reading is genre-specific. . .

- The reading done in the so-called ‘reading period’ has been largely narrative. Yet studies have demonstrated that the pupil who reads narrative material quite well may read very poorly when the passages tell the conditions of an arithmetic problem or give directions to be followed in the study of grammar. Such situations indicate that there must be a broader conception of the variety of skills and habits to be developed before pupils can be said to read adequately.

(Ballou et al., 1925, p. 97)



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## Yet in another sense. . .

- We do not always expose students to all the genres we want them to be able to read and write.
- We often provide instruction that is not sensitive to genre.
- We administer many assessments that are not differentiated by genre.



## Five Principles for Teaching Genre

1. Design compelling, communicatively meaningful environments.
2. Provide exposure and experience.
3. Explicitly teach genre features.
4. Explicitly teach genre-specific or genre-sensitive strategies.
5. Offer ongoing coaching and feedback.

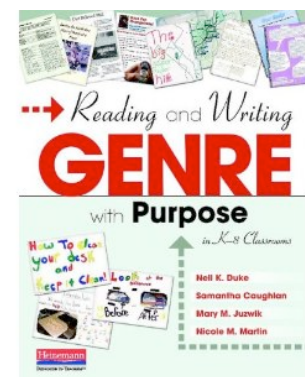
These principles come from:

Duke, N. K., Caughlan, S., Juzwik, M. M., & Martin, N. M (2012). *Reading and writing genre with purpose in K-8 classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

in which they are

applied to

- narrative genres
- informational genres
- procedural genres
- dramatic genres
- persuasive genres





### 1. Design compelling, communicatively meaningful environments.

- Genres come from and are defined by specific rhetorical situations (Miller, 1984).
- We teach genre better when we create those situations in our classrooms (e.g., Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007).



### For every assignment, ask yourself. . .

- Am I engaging students in reading and/or writing a type of text that people read and write *outside* of schooling (as opposed to school-only texts such as worksheets, textbooks, five-paragraph essays)?
- Are students reading and/or writing this text for the same purposes for which people read and write this genre outside of schooling? For reasons other than just because I told them to, I am grading it, or I want them to learn or practice how to do it?

(See Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006/2007 for tools to use when for this.)



### 1. Design compelling, communicatively meaningful environments.

The principle is also consistent with the CCSS. For example, College and Career Readiness Standard #4 for Writing is:  
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



### From the Common Core

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students . . . learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose” (p. 18).



## 2. Provide exposure and experience.

- We have to provide exposure to and experience with the specific genres of text we want students to be able to read and write.
  - (e.g., Duke & Kays, 1998; Kamberelis, 1999; Park, 2008)
- Model texts are powerful tools in developing speaking and writing.
  - (Dean, 2008; Dressel, 1990; Hillocks, 2007)
- Modeling comprehension processes through think-alouds appears to be a powerful tool for developing comprehension.
  - (Kucan & Beck, 1997)



## 2. Provide exposure and experience.

In the zoo guide project, designed by Kate Roberts, children:

- read letters from the head veterinarian at the zoo and sent her letters in return
- emailed questions to zoo personnel and interviewed them in person
- listened to presentations by zoo personnel
- listened to factual books that were read aloud to them
- observed animals and took notes or drew pictures of what they saw
- gathered information from books and websites about animals (with help from mentors).

(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)



## 3. Explicitly teach genre features.

- There is research support for explicitly teaching genre features, such as
  - story elements (e.g., Baumann & Bergeron 1993; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker 2001) and
  - informational text navigational features (Symons, MacLatchy-Gaudet, Stone & Reynolds 2001).
- This may also develop *metatextuality*.
- BUT it is easy to overrely on identifying and reproducing text features as an approach to genres. We need to avoid these pitfalls and make sure we encourage creativity and innovation!



## 4. Explicitly teach genre-specific or genre-sensitive strategies.

- Again, good readers often use different strategies, and use strategies differently, with different types of text (Duke & Roberts, 2010).
- Yet we often teach comprehension strategies generically, and teach “the” writing process. We do not often share the ways in which reading and writing processes may differ by genre.

Genres	Example Genre-Specific Strategies
Narrative genres	Visualizing the setting, characters, and events; Evaluating the significance of reading
Dramatic genres	Inferring character appearance and personality; blocking
Persuasive genres	Identify the audience; weigh quality of evidence
Informational genres	Skimming and scanning; predicting (what the author will <i>tell you</i> next)
Procedural genres	Gather or ensure you have the materials or ingredients needed; read steps in order from beginning to end; pause frequently

(Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012)



### The “Octopus Approach”

Informational author Stephen R. Swinburne, as quoted in Robb (2004), explains:

“I have what I call an “octopus” or “multi-armed” approach to research. I get in lots of field time [for observing]. I read books and magazines. I check references in the library. I surf the Internet. I telephone experts and scientists. I interview people. I rely on all these sources to give me a foundation of fact on my subject.” (p. 82)



### 5. Offer ongoing coaching and feedback.

- More effective teachers spend more time coaching students, often in small groups (e.g., Fleischer & Andrew-Vaughan 2009; Langer 2001; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole 2000).
- More time as “guide on the side,” less time as the “sage on the stage”



### Genre-specific Revision Prompts

For informational text:

- Does the text grab the reader’s attention?
- Does the text alert the reader to the topic?
- Does the text help the reader find the information she/he wants or needs to know?
- Does the text (sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph) present the information clearly?



### Genre-specific Revision Prompts

For informational text:

- Does each graphic help the reader learn and understand? Are there additional graphics that would be helpful?
- Does the text, page by page, keep the reader's attention on the information?
- Do mechanical issues (sentence by sentence or in the text as a whole or both) get in the way of focusing on the information?



### 5. Offer ongoing coaching or feedback.

- Possible sources of feedback:
  - Teacher
  - Students within the classroom
  - Students from another classroom
  - Guest reviewers visiting the classroom
  - Guest reviewers reached electronically
- *Some feedback should come from an audience that very similar to the target audience.*



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